



**Department of Media Studies**

**RELIGIOUS SPEECHES IN MEDIA**

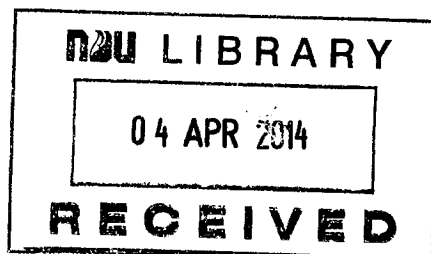
A Thesis  
Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Media Studies Journalism

By

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Department of Media Studies  
Notre Dame University – Louaize  
Lebanon

Fall 2013



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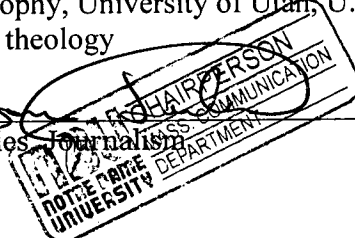
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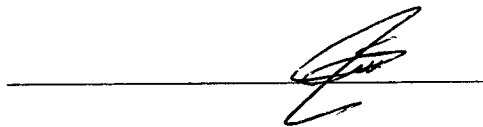
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**Date: 17 Feb. 2014**

I hereby declare that the project work entitled “**Religious speeches in the media**” submitted to the NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY, is my original work under the guidance of Mr. Vatche Donerian from the Faculty of Humanities at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU). This project work is submitted in the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Journalism. The results embodied in this thesis have not been submitted to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

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### Abstract

The relationship between religion and politics is critical, particularly in a multi-confessional country like Lebanon. Against this backdrop, this study explores the impact of religious speeches and news reports broadcasted by a number of Lebanese TV stations to decode the specific propagated message via these news texts. In other words, in order for Lebanon to progress and mature politically, it is necessary that there be a clear distinction between religion and politics. But given the nature and history of Lebanon, this distinction should not amount to total separation. A healthy distinction (but without separation) would enable both religious leader and political leaders to pursue these policies that used to prevent genuine religion and political values from degradation into ideology. Although there are a number of religious and political leaders in Lebanon who identify and promote the importance of this distinction and were against reducing politics and religion values to ideology, the sad truth is that media seem bent, then reducing all political and religious speech to ideology. The news coverage of religious integration in the political life is presenting a negative image of Lebanon, specifically its practices in the context of using or manipulating religion for further divisions. Knowing that the audiences have in minds the idea of “US” vs. “THEM” , the study investigates the difference between news media and the social reality by articulating dominant ideologies in representing religious speeches in the political life. The thesis is divided into chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction about the topic. The second chapter gives a historical overview of the mass media in Lebanon. Chapter three focuses on the two theories chosen for this thesis project. As for chapter four, it includes selected speeches for religious leaders and their interference in the political decision life. This chapter also talks about the media effects and its cultural, traditional, and ideological influence on the Lebanese society. Chapter five studies and analyses through a survey the effects of those



selected speeches on the audience political opinion and the effects of mass media especially on the young Lebanese population. The survey is a limited sample of 300 Lebanese university students, its purpose is to highlight and examine the media effects on the Lebanese youth. The representation focuses on two areas Keserwan and Tripoli. The respondents are mainly from Notre Dame University and from Jinan University; their ages vary between 18 and 25 years old. Finally, the study aims to deepen our understanding of the role of religious leaders within news discourses and political events, and on how they shape the body of a society.

**Keywords**

Religion, Politics, Media, Ideology, Inter -Religious conflicts.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Although the topic of this study might seem a little uncommon, its originality lies in the fact that it combines two important fields which increasingly constitute the subjects of our daily concerns.

This research begins with an analysis of the history of mass communication in Lebanon. Unlike most developing countries the initiative to establish television in Lebanon does not belong to the government but to private sectors driven essentially by business goals. The Lebanese government's role was limited to license issuance and the control of political content. No overall content vision and policy have been established and controlled by the government, even after a substantial engagement of the state in Tele-Liban (1977). In the mid-eighties and due to the raging civil war, some of the warring militias established their own private television stations. There are factors that led to the birth of such TV channels. The first one is this political media segmentation.

The economic level is the second factor whereby LBC television for example, search to extend its market share, dedicated programs for Muslim audience (e.g. "Fawazir Ramadan, in around 1988").

On the social level, religion and politics were lately the focus of many articles, conferences, and are a rich source of information for media to talk about. This study is to examine the way Lebanese TV stations can lead the religious speeches to result in the political ideology even if this latter does not mean In a previous study that I had conducted in 2011 about the media propaganda for religious and political sectors, 77% of the Lebanese audience agreed with the statement that media is a window to broadcast the leaders' perspective and opinions to

shape/manipulate the minds. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the religious leaders' role in politics focusing on the TV as the top medium to society.

Many articles and TV segments caught my attention; I realized that this is an important critical issue that should be explored. In addition, studies about the link between religion and media are still somehow scarce in Lebanon. Thus I saw a challenge in this topic. My idea was confirmed when I listened first to the speech of Al Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, followed on the next day by a speech for the Patriarch of Antioch Mar Bechara Boutros Al Rahi, both speeches fall under the "Peace" concept.

### ***Statement of the problem***

TV is used as a medium where all religious issues are discussed through political events. We cannot ignore the priority given by religious leaders to give a positive image/identity via media outlets. This research will clear up the body format of these speeches broadcasted by the media focusing on the religious perspectives and speeches and their emergence in Lebanon and identifying where the religious events fall in the context of media research in Lebanon.

### ***Why religious leaders and media?***

Being a young Lebanese citizen exposed to this kind of discourses daily in the news, I find myself grabbed by issues that concern the interference of the religious leaders in the political life using the media as their primary outlet to spread their message to a specific audience. Especially in Lebanon, youth are attracted to political leaders who indirectly represent a religious sector.

*Objectives and Rationale*

This study explores the topic of religious speeches affecting the Lebanese political sphere.

The first aim is to explore the effects of television and show how media organizations and personnel have hidden agendas that may influence the political beliefs of the audience. The second area of importance is where religious speeches and events fall in the context of media research in Lebanon. Still, the interrelation between religion and media should be investigated in depth.

## Chapter 2: Literature review

The following review covers the role of media in broadcasting religious speeches that may affect the political life.

The media have added new perceptions to our knowledge. The American scholar of religion and communications, Stephen O'Leary, analysed the role of the new media for religious communities and stated that the advent of the Internet has been as revolutionary for religious growth and dissemination as the invention of the printing press. The political system usually follows certain strategies: when the government wants to inform people about news, it submits them to the Parliament and the information is announced by the press. Media is the voice sender of any religious sect or political party; they use it to restructure the Lebanese society.

As previously mentioned, each media organization follows "a certain code of ethics" as they claim, basing their agenda settings on the society's values from religion to culture. The media institutions play a major role in broadcasting news. Some religious leaders do not mean to deliver any political speech or to reduce their "divine" message to ideological concept, but media always want to reduce it to ideology so at that time it will fit its agenda setting and will gain a large popularity, and this what media need. Moving to journalists, they are supposed to work objectively, and report news honestly without personal interpretation and opinion on the topic. Some critics have suggested that all news have interpretation, even when reporters wish to be accurate. But this is not the case in Lebanon, due to the political media categorization; reporters send the message to the reader according to the point of view of their outlets. For instance and during the 2006 Israeli war on the Lebanon, the reporters of Al Manar covered the news from a social point of view different than what LBC did, where they reported it from a political perspective. Another example, a reporter who writes for his outlet about an event for 14<sup>th</sup> March

group should not show his interest even if he is pro or against them. Every channel today is representing a political-religious party and has its own particular audience.

Lebanon's broadcasting scene is lively and diverse, and reflects the country's pluralism and divisions. Approximately all the Lebanese TV stations are founded by leading politicians  
 MTV: Mr. Gabriel El Murr (Orthodox); LBC: Former President Bachir Gemayel (Christian);  
 Manar: Al Sayed Hasan Nasrallah (Shiia) Future: Former Prime Minister Rafic Al Hariri (Sunni). Most broadcasters were set up after the civil war between Muslim and Christian factions. While there are no censorship laws, the media cannot defame the president or other heads of state or incite sectarian conflicts. (Starrett, G (1995), *The Political Economy of Religious Commodities in Cairo*)

According to the Open Net Initiative “Lebanon is one of very few countries in the Middle East where it has found no evidence of technical filtering.” With the multiple choices that are offered for the leaders, they can choose any media through which this political, religious community will express themselves (Moussallem, A. 2012). Therefore, the receiver of the message who follows accordingly the news in Lebanon will know what to listen to and what is bias because he is well informed and educated. Media make its audience as machines; their role is just receiving information without making any efforts to know how to think about the information received. Media disable its audience to assess any political situation or even the performance of the leaders.

In Lebanon, Comedians grab from the Lebanese situation good materials for their scenes, because they make people laugh on their miserable situation. The newspapers use Caricature to reflect reality. Politicians and religious leaders and others use the media in all shapes

(Newspapers, radios and televisions) to spread their word and share their ideas. But it is not necessary that the religious leaders meant to spread message that will result in the political ideology but media shaped to fit the audience context. The public can monitor daily the political confessional and social events that they are interested in. The media tools used by a religious leader to deliver a speech announcing his opinion about the political situation are mainly the link between the government and the citizens.

The mass media scene in Lebanon is very energetic. It changed over the years. Previously people had to wait for the next day to read the newspapers, nowadays with the internet infusion and the technology, the news is always available. Lebanese media are shaping their priorities in a way to satisfy the desires of their audiences. This concept derives from an old system of values/traditions/or lifestyles that media already did establish. The Lebanese audience should give value to the power of the Lebanese television, and admit how the media influence their opinion towards any event especially when a political incident occurs.

Freedom in the media field is considered to have reached a high level due to the development in communication, especially through the internet. Freedom of the press is articulated in most talk shows and even news. Therefore the media have the power to decide which issues will be brought to the public, the terms in which they will be presented, who will participate, and under what conditions. The way the subjects are covered, the priority given to an issue, the mass media tell the Lebanese audience what to think about, sometimes even how to think about it. (McCombs, 1972).

In 1989, the Lebanese war ended with the "Taef agreement" which was incorporated in the Lebanese constitution and which called for the reorganization of the media in Lebanon. However, after this Agreement many key politicians and businessmen hurried to establish TV

stations considering it as their right to obtain a television license. By the end of 1991, new stations were on air transmitting on both the UHF and VHF channels. (Dajani,2001“the changing,” TBS Journal, 2001:1-2).

At the beginning of President Elias El Hrawi’s presidency, the government felt that it was urgent to introduce a new legislation to put in order the broadcasting field. Therefore, in 1991, the Minister of Information, Michel Samaha, recommended to have all broadcasting media reorganized in Lebanon, by setting up an Independent National Communication Agency that would grant licenses to stations that are fully owned by Lebanese, and that would operate within technical and professional regulations. The TV stations were divided in a way to keep a religious and sectarian balance, which is the basis of the Lebanese system. However the division went as such: 1) the Lebanese Broadcasting Company International (LBCI, formerly LBC), represents Maronite Christians but included shareholders from the government and non Maronite Christians. 2) Future Television represents the Sunni Muslims and owned by Former Prime Minister Rafiq El Hariri. 3) Murr Television (MTV) represents the Greek Orthodox Christians and is owned by the brother of the former Minister of Interior, Michel El Murr, and an additional television station, Al Manar, owned by the Islamic party Hezbollah. All these TV station that have been granted licenses did not create any change between the Lebanese broadcast media and the public. Therefore, like any set of institutions rooted in a political system, the broadcast media in Lebanon reflects the existing political system.

The framework of the study is to investigate the multi-role of the media specially the TV with regard to religion in Lebanon. The initial focus is religious uses of media when they interfere in politics, relating to the religious perceptions of this medium. In this research, I am interested in the latest forms of speeches done by religious figures, and their effect on the



different religious sector in Lebanon. We should take into consideration the process of this global role taken by media and its expansion. Religion is an important facet to the media on the level of manipulating/creating the audience's opinion. As a mode of communication, the media has become the primary source for broadcasting religious ideas. The media shape religious perspectives in accordance with the popular culture and environments, providing both moral attitudes and religious spirit. (Street, j (2001) Mass media, politics and democracy).

The theory chosen for this study is the propaganda model; it is chosen because it adds new aspects and shows how religious leaders use media to promulgate their opinions.

Based on this review, the study investigates how the media's coverage can either aid or harm the public. Most of the owners of the media institutions are influenced by traditional Lebanese values; they want their stations to expand and to be seen by a large number of audiences in order to earn a respectable reputation in the larger society. In sum, they want to gain profit and have a certain prestige, but profit and prestige are not always well-matched. In Lebanon profit always comes first. Thus, in the case of the Lebanese population, every politician relies on a specific TV station that he/she is familiar with (Wheeler, D. 2002). As a matter of fact, television teaches its audience about the norms it enforces: the expectations, values and standards of judgment. Therefore, television goes beyond the provision of reassurance: it socializes.

Another useful theory for this thesis project is the agenda setting theory. Media outlets in Lebanon play a significant role in the Lebanese society because their goal is to inform the audience about different events. Media use agenda setting to "control our access to news, information, and entertainment" (Wilson 2001). This theory shows how news media are not

necessarily reflecting the real world events in their coverage; on the contrary, they are creating false events.

This study also deals with how religion and politics in Lebanon are considered to be the culture mother of the Lebanese people. Media also blurred the lines between what is private and what is currently public. Due to the freedom given to the media, people are involved in a public world and use media as their source of information, because they are convinced with what media can transfer to them, as the only truth. Unlike the traditional modes of receiving information, in this era citizens have unlimited access to different sources of news and can compare between what is true and what is fabricated. (Lebanon Profile, 2013)

Nowadays media figures are respected by our society due to the image they circulated via media. Society is accepting those figures promoted through media. “The media need politics and politicians because what politicians do are by definition news, and therefore must be reported by the media” (Guido, H, 2003).

Finally, this study is using primary sources such as critical discourse analysis for selected speeches and a questionnaire surveying a sample of 300 Lebanese university students. The secondary sources include books related to religion and media along with print and online newspapers.

### **Hypotheses**

This study hypothesises that “because we live in a multi-confessional country, separating politics from religion would not result in social acceptance”. The role of religious figures is to send a message to the reader/ receiver and create the image they want to enhance their political role.

**H1:** News media are not necessarily reflecting the real world events in their coverage. They may focus on some details and hide part of the truth.

**H2:** Media can frame positively the religious speeches in order to generate positive results and gain popularity among their target audiences.

**H3:** In a multi-confessional country, media can use the religious speeches to serve its agenda setting and thus invest it for political purposes.

### **Research questions**

My research questions are:

**RQ1:** How does the medium work on creating a specific profile for religious sectors leaders and how does this affect people's political perceptions?

**RQ2:** Why do the religious sectors in Lebanon interfere in the political media sphere? Is their segregation a necessity?

### Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

#### *Theory 1: Propaganda theory*

Propaganda is when media play the role of the seller and consider the leaders their clients. These clients may buy a space in the news to advertise themselves in order to convince the receiver with something. Chomsky and Herman studied how media can shape the population mind, and how propaganda can manipulate the audience attitude. They concentrated on the American population. It is chosen because it shows how the religious leaders use media to propagate their opinions to manipulate the audience through giving speeches expressing their own political views. In this sense, I will give an example about Al Manar TV station that is representing the Shiite ideology: As for Al Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, when he gives a speech “Al Manar” TV directly broadcasts it because both of them are representing the Muslim Shiite sector. According to Herman and Chomsky, propaganda is a model that reflects both power and money of its user. This phenomenon helps media to create a certain line by giving the priority to the leaders who pay more and have the power so the news will be framed to suit the client. In Lebanon, the news is always shaped and formulated according to a certain agenda.

This theory adds new aspects and shows how religious leaders use media to disseminate their messages. These following sections elaborate on the 5 structural factors through which information should pass

#### **1- Size, Ownership and Profit orientation of mass media**

The media organizations in Lebanon are in the hands of a few elite. The channels present information according to their audience interests. The main owner of this institution may

jeopardize the quality of news in order to satisfy his personnel interest. In Lebanon, Media are controlled by different political leaders. Example: MTV owned by Mr. Michel el Murr will not publish negative details about the Patriarch al Rahi speech.

## **2- Funding**

Advertising and media are in correlation. Advertisement is the main source of funding in mass media. Media filter the news to fit the buyer which is in this case the advertising agency. Every outlet tailors its code of ethics according to the advertiser needs

For instance, the political talk show of the host Marcel Ghanem on LBC "Kalam Al Nas" is sponsored by luxurious advertisers due to its high ratings and standards. But if the host attacks one day these advertisers, they will definitely pull their ads which may put the show at a high risk. Same applies for religious and political leaders.

## **3- Source**

Every medium has its sources that should be protected. Even the biggest media institution in Lebanon cannot afford to have reporters who can cover the whole Lebanese territory due to the lack of financial resources. Therefore the media are supposed to protect their sources. As Edward and Chomsky stated: "The relationships have to be maintained with these sources and it is common that the news are published keeping the 'source' in mind."(Edward.S & Noam Chomsky).

Example: The vogue spokespersons of Prime Minister Najib Mikaty or the grand mufti Sheikh Mohammad Rashid Qabbani are considered as powerful sources of news especially that they

represent the Sunni community in Lebanon. "For making sure of a proper flow of news the media institution keeps the sources delighted by fine-tuning the news" (Noam Chomsky, 2005).

#### **4- Flaks**

Flaks refer to the negative responses to the broadcaster, when it is considered destructive. This factor role is near to the filter meaning. The broadcaster should avoid any news that brings negative feedback about its public figure.

Lebanon is a multi-confessional country where media will never publish negative news or images about any religious leader without strong evidence. For instance, LBC cannot give a bad image about the Patriarch Mar Bechara Boutros al Rahi because this will harm their reputation. And LBC is considered a medium representing Christians so if they did so this will lead to lose the Christian audience which is their main target.

#### **5- Anti-communism**

The Anti- communism factor is the last one in the theory of propaganda, which talks about Media owners who adopt a policy to bring censorship to the news which talks about the good side of communism.

When the caricature of Sayed Hassan Narallah was published on LBC station, a revolt occurred. Therefore media now are afraid from publishing this kind of news/caricature because this will harm the peace of the state.

*Theory 2: Agenda setting theory*

Media outlets in Lebanon play a significant role in the Lebanese society. Their goal is to inform the audience about events. Media use agenda setting to “control our access to news, information, and entertainment” (Wilson 14).

Agenda Setting is the process where the mass media determine what we think and worry about (Edward. S. Herman, 2000) Walter Lippmann pointed out that the media is formatting the news as pictures in our heads and the public reacts not to actual events but to these pictures. Therefore the agenda setting model is used to shape all the events and simplify them before they reach the mind of the audience. Researchers Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw have then followed this concept. In other words, they structure the audience priorities. So TV can tell its audience which stories are relevant and important. (McCombs and Shaw, 5)

This theory is helpful to reflect on the fact if media are framing positively the religious speeches in order to generate positive results and gain popularity among their targeted audiences and vice versa. Therefore, the concept of the agenda setting in Lebanon is that media select what the public received in order to create certain views within the audience. This theory has two levels: the first level consists of collecting the most important subjects, and the second level decides which sort news are listed as important for the media.

As mentioned, the theory of agenda setting has many useful usages in our society. First of all, it gives the media power to choose what news the audience can see or hear and decides what part of the news is important to be publicized. Hence, agenda setting is used to form the opinion of the public. Media have a great importance in the political aspect, because at that time

the media focus on news that the audience needs especially if it fits their political views and this will lead to improve the ratings of the outlets.



#### Chapter 4: Methodology & Results

This study was conducted using mixture between qualitative and quantitative methods. The first technique is qualitative; it is based on discourse analysis of religious speeches for three leaders representing the major Lebanese sects.

And the second method is a questionnaire surveying 300 Lebanese youth from 2 different universities (one Muslim University – al Jinan and a Catholic University – NDU). This will help to make some comparison between the empirical findings of the survey and the data of the discourse analysis.

Before formal coding began, instructions were tested twice for reliability.

##### *Method and sampling*

Critical discourse analysis will be used to decode the speeches content of the different religious icons (Hezbollah secretary general Al Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, Patriarch of Maronite Mar Bechara Boutros al Rahi and Mufty Al Joumhouria Mhamad Rachid Kabani).

A survey was conducted to collect data and answer the hypotheses. The sample is formed of 300 university students (50% from an Al Jinan university and 50% from Notre Dame University). It is also equally divided among genders.

The questionnaire included a consent form (See Appendix 1). The participants were notified that their contribution would remain anonymous. They were also verbally informed of the purpose of the survey. The questionnaire included 2 sections. The first was about the status of the respondents defining their age, school, gender, and education, whereas the second part was about opinions on the topic understudy.

## Chapter 5: Data Analysis

The topic is examined by analysing the speeches of the 3 major religious leaders reflecting on the linguistic structure and the script of the speeches, and the connotation behind each one. This will clarify how those leaders are sometimes trying to reach a large popularity, and as previously mentioned how media sometimes try to use the speeches for political perspectives so they suit the audience desires.

To test the hypotheses a questionnaire was designed and its results were presented through graphs and diagrams followed by a narrative description to discuss the findings and compare them with the literature review. It will show how the study unite and deviate from the literature review. The hypotheses will be proved or refuted based on the findings of the critical content analysis which focus on the use of those religious leaders for certain TV stations to send their message.

### *Findings and Discussion*

The hypotheses have been supported by the findings of the content analysis which show that the segregation between politics and religion and its effectiveness on society. We point out that the language use in those speeches does affect the public opinion. However, the findings of the questionnaire confirm that students are involved in the political life. They also show that males and females differ in the way they adapt information from media and that language plays a significant role on this level. The data of the survey also proves that media have a considerable positive impact on both the behaviour and beliefs of the audience.

In this section, collected results from the questionnaire are presented. This questionnaire was distributed to university students. In each university a random sample of about 150 students were

asked to complete the questionnaire. Since the early year of television, there has been great interest in whether people grab most of their news from television. The television is the most used medium for news cognition. In fact, there are important demographic differences in media use; the main differences in media usage are between men and women, as it will be shown later on.

The agenda setting theory and the questionnaire should prove the hypothesis which states that that the news media are not necessarily reflecting the real world events in their coverage. They may focus on some details and hide part of the truth. Media have the power to manipulate the audience mind; this means that media pick news to please the community. For instance, Christian respondents answered that the medium can work on creating a specific profile for religious sectors and political personalities as MTV did, and that this may affect the audience political perceptions.

In the context of the propaganda theory, media frame the religious speeches and emphasize on the religious leaders priorities. And it is interrelated with the agenda setting since the main aim of the different media institutions is to generate positive results and gain popularity among their target audiences.

We cannot talk about media without mentioning their agenda setting role. Media choose on behalf of the audience what they receive or get in order to create certain views or reinforce existing ones. Due to the plurality in Lebanon and the polarization of the media outlets, religious leaders try to put their speeches in the context that matches the agenda setting of the channel.

### Critical Discourse Analysis

#### Mar Bechara Boutros al Rahi Speech Analysis

**LBCI**, The Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation was launched on August 23, 1985. It was founded by The Lebanese Forces (a political party headed by Dr.Samir Geagea). The ownership of this station is now a conflict matter between Mr. El Daher (chairman and CEO) and the above mentioned party. On their website, they mention that **LBC** is an advocate for social justice and a guardian of democratic practices and freedom of speech to inspire audiences to improve their social conditions.

Another Christian TV station in Lebanon is MTV. It was established in 1991 as a TV channel with a different editorial line, which allowed its base of viewership to grow and flourish.( MTV official website)

I mentioned those two channels because they are considered Christian channels that give the speech of the patriarch Bechara al Rahi a very high priority. In his speech, The Patriarch Cardinal Mar Bechara Boutros al-Rai, the Maronite Lebanese Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, stated that: “The situation in Syria and Egypt proves the existence of a plan carried out by foreign powers to destroy the Arab World.” In this statement the Cardinal is expressing clearly his fear from the international plans set for the new Middle East. He also pointed out that Middle Eastern Christians are paying the price of these plans.

A subliminal message is sent to the audience when Al Rahi tried to aware Christians about the danger coming from their Muslim counterparts when he stated “Muslim will never live in coexistence with the Christian.” Every side wants to prove itself.”

Also we should focus on the choice of some terms that have very specific religious connotations. For example, the word “The Christians” is to prove that he is speaking on behalf of all Christians. The patriarch is afraid that his audience will be eradicated due to external pressures and internal ones. And this is also showed by the wordage use when he stated: “That there is a plot originating in the West to destroy the Middle East.”

Using the word “West” in this speech is intended, he is trying to push his community to defeat their rights in protecting their own country and to be the source of power.

The Patriarch recalled the negative role played by the Muslims during the war and how they attacked the Christian community. That was clearly stated first in the title of this speech, and re-mentioned later on “As always, when there is chaos or war, Muslims in general attack Christians, they use them as scapegoats” (Cardinal Mar Bechara Boutros al Rahi, 2013). He reflected the image that the audience can easily relate to, because they were used to it which is the US vs. THEM. In fact, the Christian audience will agree with such a statement because back in history the Lebanese Christians tend to think unconsciously that Muslims are inferior. On the other hand, Muslims will always fight to become more powerful. “Unfortunately during chaos situation Christians are attacked by the Muslims without even knowing why.”(Cardinal Mar Bechara Boutros al Rahi. 2013)

The Cardinal also declared “We have created a certain moderation in the Muslim world”. The Patriarch used words as: “We as Christian”, “Allah”, “Christian and Christianity” the “Cross” to also spread out the spirituality and the image of Christianity, and that the power or in other words the presidential position in Lebanon will always be for the Christian community. This is shown when he added, “We have spread the human and moral values of multi-confessionality, plurality, and modernity in these lands”. (Cardinal Mar Bechara Boutros Al Rahi. 2013)

Finally, he concluded his speech by saying some words that promote peace between Christians and Muslims. The whole analysis shows also in an indirect way that media can stress on whatever they want even if it is not accurate and that the religious and political leaders do not create events but comment on the events highly covered by the Media system. Media is the professional liar in front of its audience. They give space to the leaders to deliver their speeches to mirror the religious/social, political image of this media outlet. Secondly, giving a specific speech a high importance will set it as a priority among its audience.

*Al Sayed Hassan Nasrallah Speech*

In this section, I will start with a quick history about Hezbollah political party and its channel Al Manar to stress on their religious Islamic figure. A critical discourse analysis will be conducted for Al Sayed Hassan Nasrallah speech given on August 15, during the anniversary of July War celebration held in the bordering town of Aita Shaab.

The image of Al-Manar TV is not just Islamist but also owned by a political party with a militia, which is Hezbollah. Al-Manar, the television affiliated with Hezbollah in Lebanon, creates an image that the organization sees it as strategic and important for its future. Hezbollah is an Islamic social movement and political party represented in the parliament.

In May 2000, Al-Manar began transmitting via satellite as the Israelis withdrew from southern Lebanon. This withdrawal of the foreign enemy of Hezbollah, from Lebanese soil has been viewed as causing an identity crisis for them. (Voltmer, 2013) At the beginning it was a station that broadcasted the news fight of Hezbollah against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon; it also covers Hezbollah military operations.

In 2003, Al Manar began targeting a wide audience beyond its core Shiite constituency. Some individuals said that the station does air some extreme statements. Al-Manar appears to be popular in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon due to its coverage of Palestine and the news there. As for the Christian population many followers of the Free Patriotic Movement, led by former General Michel Aoun, allied to Hezbollah from early 2006, watch the station's news regularly. Funding for the station comes primarily from Hezbollah, whose main revenue is through such sources as donations, and the funding from Iran, and other incomes. Al-MANAR operates on

\$15 million annually; it relies little on advertising, similar to many other Arab and Lebanese media.

Al-Manar is classified as terrorist by the U.S., since most topics deal with Hezbollah and its resistance. Even in Lebanon al-Manar is categorized as politicized and religious media outlet.

The television demonstrates Hezbollah's desire to enlarge its legitimacy within the Lebanese multi-religious community.

The media presentation of other communities should lead viewers for more acceptance of diverse lifestyles and ideas, often highly Westernized, that is communicated in the sphere of popular media run by Hezbollah members.( Marie, B 2009)

Since media can reach wide segments of society, the message differs between each station especially in the political speeches; an example of this, Al Manar gives its audience the images and behaviours that they want them to adopt

In this thesis an initial analysis is provided about Al Sayed Hassan Nasrallah speech to the Lebanese population. Hassan Narallah publically announced the decision to commit Hezbollah military forces to secure Syria. He also mentioned how the "Takfiris" are trying to poke Sunnis against Shiites and vice-versa with their terrorist attacks.

In this speech, he explained how Lebanon as a country is endangered by the war against Syria. Nasrallah began by reminding his followers of Hezbollah history, their victories including their defeat of Israel in 2006. He emphasized the role of "Hezbollah-Lebanese military" as he called it.

During delivering his speech several time Al Sayed Hassan Nasrallah tried to send in a way a subliminal message saying that Islamic movements are recruiting members and supporters.



They organize themselves following specific frameworks which fit social and cultural perceptions and ideologies. We can also realize clearly how he started his speech by naming God which is a link to cross the bridge between politics and religion and saying that anything happening on the political level is under the protection of Allah and that “Allah” wants that to happen. Even more we can see the repetition of the word Allah; Allah Al Mighty; Al Jihad and extracting some passages from the Qur’an to make connection then to clarify why he is interfering into the political life. For example during the speech he said: “Allah Al Mighty tells us: No one would bear the burden of another, this is a very great responsibility that requires awareness and tolerance. Let no one drag us and you to such places.”(Al Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, 2013).

Then he tackled the issue of the car bombing at the southern suburb of Beirut and he stressed on the role of Hezbollah in Syria saying:” If we have 5000 fighters in Syria, they will be 10000...You are mistaken. You are hitting in the wrong place.”(Al Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, 2013).

He described the role of Media toward the Muslim audience: “Now following the tensions in more than one Arab country, some media outlets disseminate the image according to what their audience want to see. Al Sayed Hassan Nasrallah excalimed: “I want to talk from a media perspective. Watch the two sides. These talk against these. The data are totally contradictory. Who are you to believe?

Nasrallah wanted to say that even with a bigger margin of freedom, the Arab audience and press are getting back level. The press nowadays are not giving us false news; they are fabricating lies to come up with news that suit the appetite of the audience.

**Sheikh Mohammed Rashid Qabbani speech**

In this section, I will start with a small introduction about Future Television, which is considered a Lebanese medium for the Sunni sector. It was founded in 1993 by the Sunni Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. It is also available via satellite. Politically; the channel supports the views of the Future Movement.

This paragraph is a critique for the speech of Mufti Al Jomhourya Sunni grand Sheikh Mohammed Rachid Qabbani. This speech was entitled as following: “Qabbani held former premiers Saad Hariri and Fouad Saniora for any attempt on his life or any harm he may suffer”

In his speech, Qabani tried to clarify and emphasize his authority toward the Sunni’s and the Future Movement when he said: “I will remain Lebanon’s Mufti until the end of my mandate... if they succeeded in the attempt of releasing the Mufti from his duties, the al- Mustaqbal party leaders will be stigmatized.”(Daily Star Newspaper, 2013). In this assertion: “I say to them, if you are able to fire the grand mufti, do it.” Qabbani wanted to tell the Lebanese people and his opponents that his position will always be for the Sunni sector in Lebanon, knowing that today the Grand Mufti is abused by a segment of the Sunni Community. And they want him to be released from this position because they do not see him anymore as their religious leader. The mufti is also trying to give the impression that he is not afraid of being fired because no one can fire him.

Qabani finally said: “The conflict in Lebanon is not Sunni, Shiite or Christian, but a reflection of a regional and international conflict. This last quote is to calm down the ambiance; he also said that he is representing all the Lebanese in his position and not only one sect. He is trying to be friendly with all the parties that represent different religious sectors. He also stressed on the

same idea of Patriarch Mar Bechara Botrous al Rahi that Western countries are benefiting from the Arab tensions to impose their agendas.

### *Summary of the Speeches*

For these 3 speeches, the common point is that Western countries are benefiting from our divisions for their own interests. The Cardinal tried to calm the ambiance when saying “The inability to understand that peace is not achieved with war.” On the other hand, Al Sayed Hassan Nasrallah ended his speech by making his audience feel that they should always be ready to fight in the name of God “Peace be upon you and Allah’s mercy and blessings”.

As shown in these two speeches the Patriarch Bechara al Rahi has concluded by using words that can calm the tension among the entire Lebanese population whereas Al Sayed Hassan Nasrallah ended his speech by injecting his audience with hate, sectarianism and pushing them to fight under the name of Allah and al Jihad. So what we should be aware of is that both of them drag us toward their set of beliefs playing on our emotional reactions which might lead to more segmentation.

Qabbani speech was about his political-religious power highlighting the importance of his role within his community.

I have chosen the three religious leaders’ speeches, because first of all they are recent speeches given by the mentioned leaders that are related to my topic. Secondly they are related to my topic. Finally and most importantly, they propagate ideas that might create conflicts between Lebanese sects.

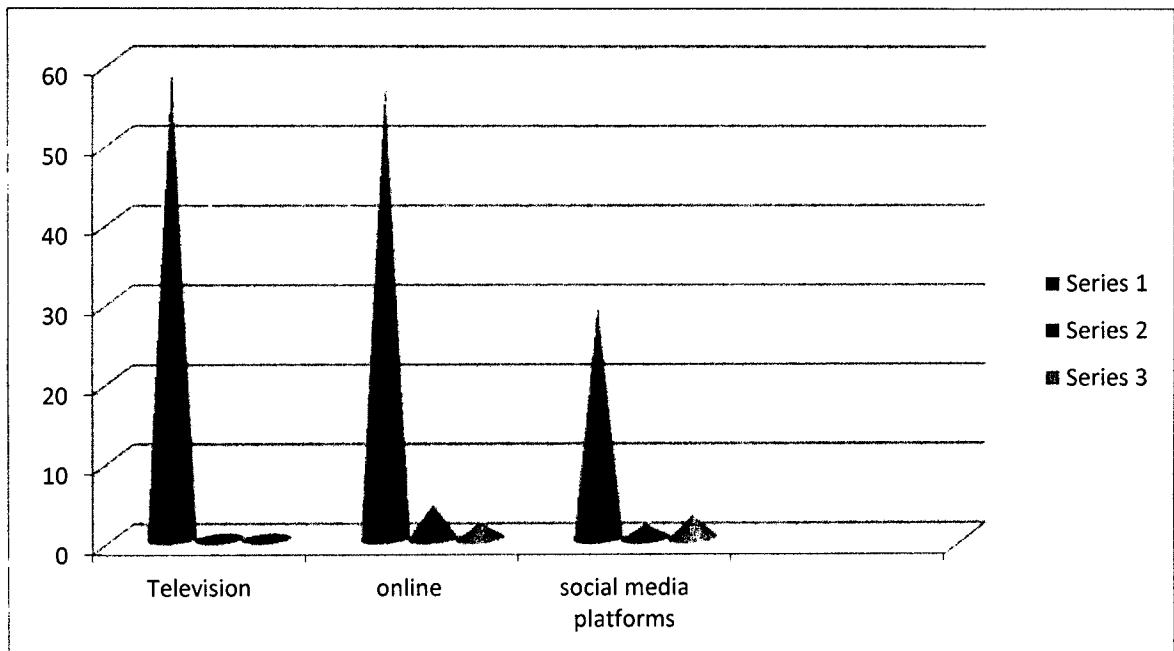
We should be aware of what the media want from us when broadcasting specific speeches and what those leaders intend to communicate.

At the end, those three religious leaders' speeches fall under the word of peace, but "Peace" is a relative concept.

## Chapter 6: Questionnaire

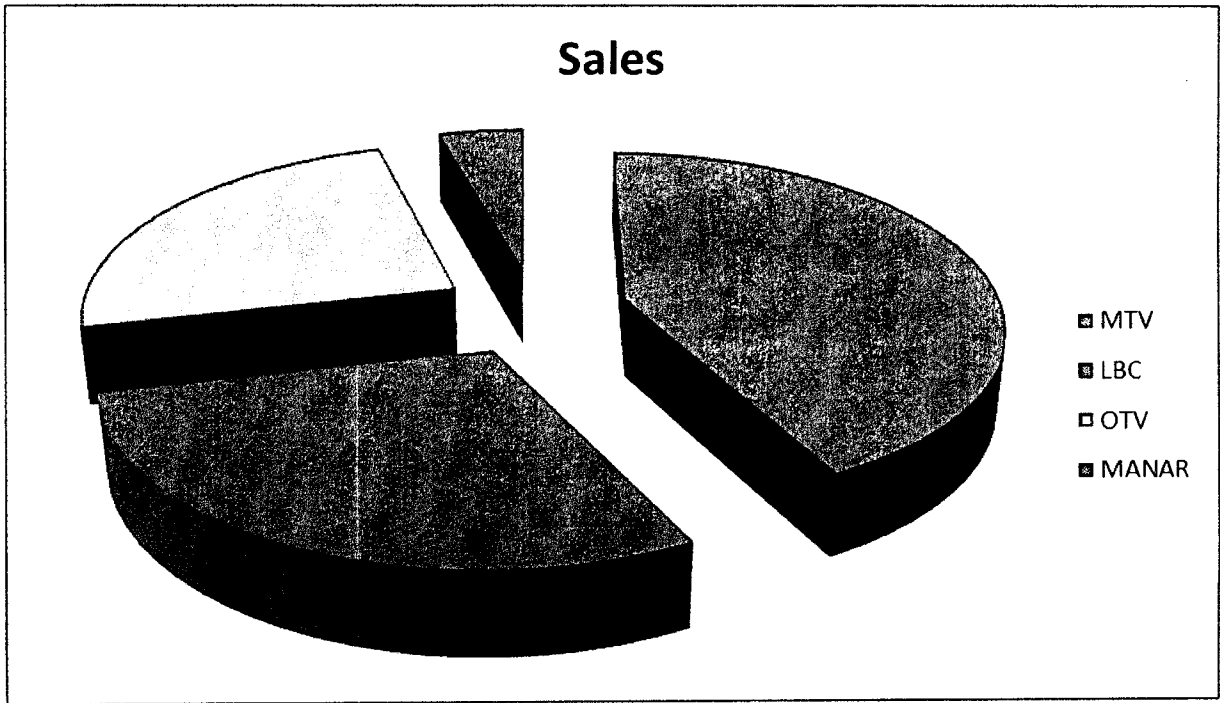
**From where do you currently get your news about local politics?**

**Table 1: General View**



As shown in the table above, 60% of the students aged between 18 and 25 answered that they follow news on TV. Whereas for the online news websites, the percentage was 58% and 30% for the social media platforms such as Twitter, Face book, YouTube etc... This shows that despite all the technology today, the young generation is still affected by the TV as a trustful source of information.

**RQ1: How does the medium work on creating a specific profile for religious factions leaders? And how does this affect people’s political perceptions?**

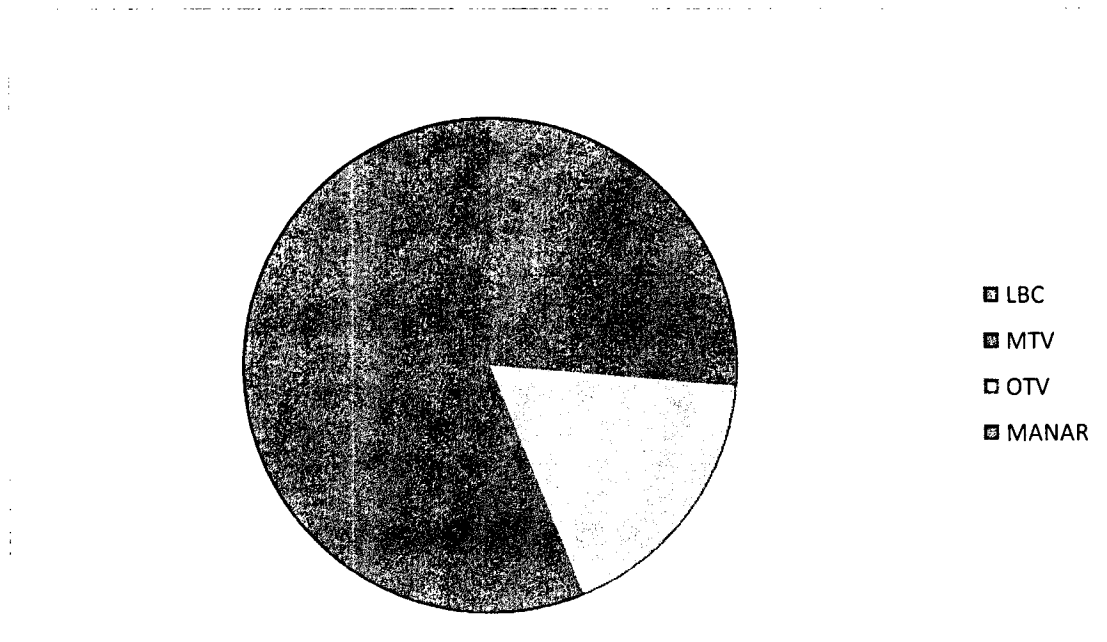


**Table 2- Christian respondents**

This table highlights how people trust certain TV channels because they believe that it will match their political points of view, so linking this ideology indirectly to this TV channel will also call attention to their news on their preferable religious icon. For example, if the Cardinal Mar Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir or Mar Bechara Boutros al Rahi want to deliver a speech 44% of the audience will watch MTV specially the Christian audience. This audience believes that MTV did represent the Lebanese Christian community fairly, and it respects the freedom of the press. In their opinion, MTV covers fairly all the political parties and it is the major TV station that represents their Christian identity and their political views. Then after MTV, we have LBC with a percentage of 34% which is fair for the Christian community. The percentage for OTV is 16%

which is considered low especially that it is owned by a politician who is from the Christian sect and AL Manar for a 4.5% which is almost true because it is a very extremist TV station talking about the glories of Hezbollah, and that is why it is considered biased for Christians and almost null with the lowest percentage among other TV stations.

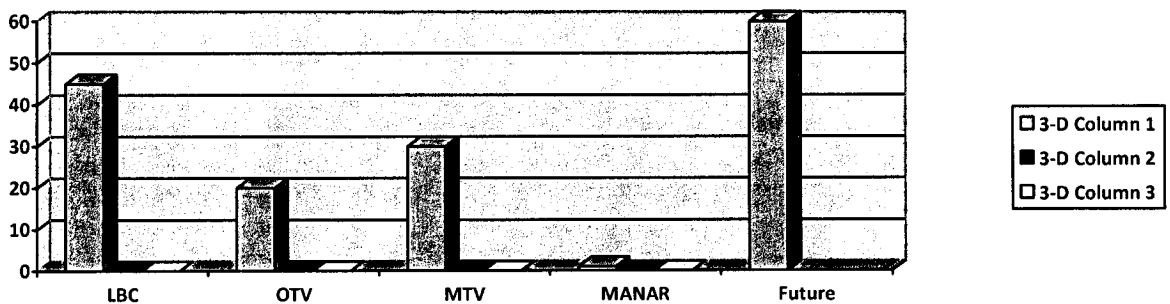
**Table 3: The Shiite respondents**



When it comes to listen to Sayed Hassan Nasrallah speech for example, the highest percentage is for Al Manar TV station. The Shiite community believes that Al Manar is the only TV channel that represents their ideology with a percentage of 78%. The other TV channel that has a percentage of 12.24% is LBC and an equal percentage for MTV and OTV 24.49%. Even Christians if they need to get news about Islam especially the Shiite they almost directly switch their TV to Al Manar because they indirectly know that this is where they will find every single news they want about the Shiite sect especially Hezbollah. Al Manar is a TV station that represents the Islam in general and the Shiite community specifically. Its audience will follow it

directly and trust it whether it broadcast real news or fabricated. For them, AL Manar TV station is the channel that acts in place with their identity. They feel that they are related to this channel since it gives them the directions and signs they need to make decisions and views.

**Table 4: The Sunni Respondents**

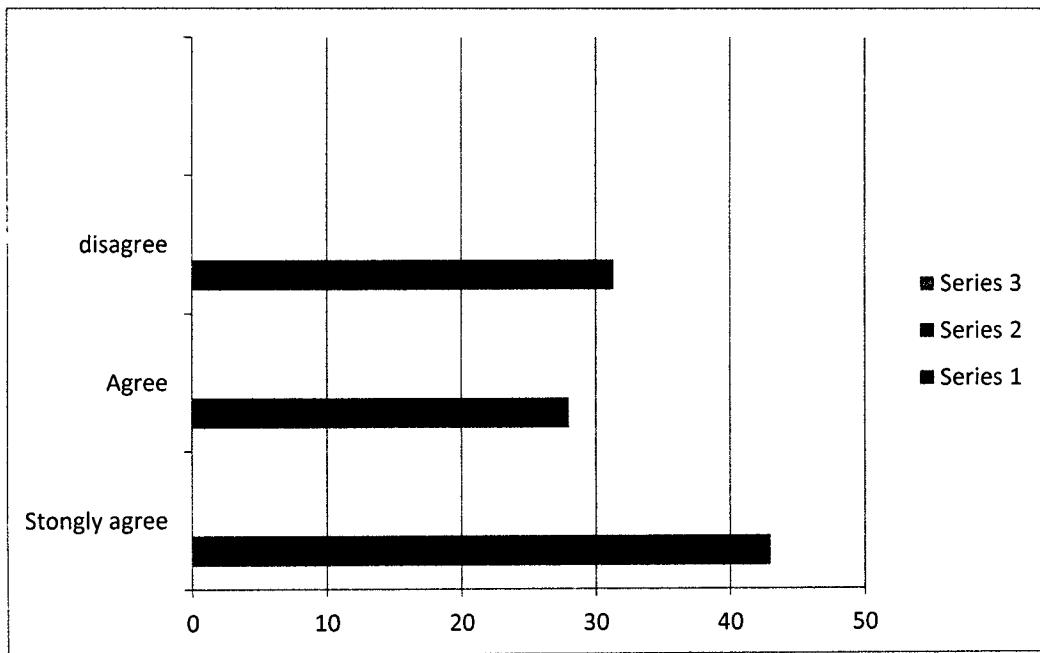


60% of the Sunni respondents follow the Future station to get information about their major leaders or any other politician. They are extremely loyal to Future as a premium outlet, and in the second place came LBC with a percentage of 45%, because they feel it is more related to them than other TV stations. Then OTV got a percentage of 20% and MTV 30%. On the other hand, the percentage for Al Manar (the opposite TV station to the Sunni sect in Lebanon) was only 1%.



**RQ2. Why do the religious sects in Lebanon interfere in the political media sphere? Is their segregation a necessity?**

**Table 5: Segregation of politics and religion**



This table represents the distribution of the Lebanese people (Muslims and Christians) on whether religion should interfere in the political life or vice versa. The respondents from both sects who strongly agreed that segregation is important are 43 percent. 28% slightly agreed on the importance of this separation. Finally around 32 % disagreed that the segregation of politics and religion is a solution to the local problems

This table shows clearly that separating religion from politics will not necessarily lead to more social acceptance.

This enlighten the importance of the topic, the Lebanese Christians indirectly follow the channel that suits their views to reinforce their beliefs.

*Summary of the questionnaire*

The findings of this survey show clearly that television is considered as a shared cultural environment which presents different images to people. It is assumed that media do affect, whether positively or negatively all youth. However, when asked about the effects of media on them few agreed that the impact is huge.

These answers might be considered somehow open to discussion especially because the effect of the media is not a tangible issue. It reaches the subconscious and would show its results at a later stage. Those young convince themselves that they are the only ones responsible of their political opinions.

Finally, due to the diversity of the political TV stations in Lebanon that represent, in an indirect way, different religious sectors, and to the lack of governmental presence and parental control, it is not unusual to learn that many of the Lebanese youth, regardless of age, do not have any immunity, and would be affected negatively by such speeches whether consciously or unconsciously.

### Limitations

The first limitation of the study was its validity since the sample of the survey was limited to university students.

Additionally, the number of speeches in the critical discourse analysis section was very narrow, which may affect the reliability of the results.

Moreover the literature on the interrelation between politics/media and Religion is still scarce in Lebanon. That is why the review of literature was not very rich.

### Conclusion & Recommendations

The focal point of this thesis, as previously stated is to have an overview of the Lebanese media system and its effects on the Lebanese Youth especially when a religious leader use the media to deliver his political speech.

As the ink dries on the writing of this research, because no single study is perfect, this research thesis will add a perspective on the future interference of religion in media. This might be useful to clarify what is considered ethically right for media in broadcasting events and speeches and not just for financial benefits. In this research, I also examined the linguistic structures used for propagating specific ideologies through which discourses of broadcasting news texts construct ideological representations of the t events and situations in Lebanon to the readers. Both the quantitative and the qualitative analysis did contribute to the understanding of the ideological role of speeches within news discourses in constructing representations of the real world.

However, recent studies have demonstrated how news media linguistically play significant role in shaping information and have the ability to create, influence and perpetuate religious discourses. After all, religion and politics are a global issue that affects every human being in every culture, country, and community.

Hezbollah has used violence in the quest of their political goals. The idea of mixing religion and politics is being problematic and help in the rise of secularism, often regarded as one of the hallmarks of modern society, and how they have come to play such an important role in mediating our understanding of religions impact on politics.

Moreover, it goes without saying, the media in Lebanon has failed to awaken and motivate the Lebanese youth's political consciousness and to prepare a more sound and modern background to rescue Lebanon from its current socio-political problems. I believe that in Lebanon religion and politics should always be linked but with some constraints to prevent war. Convincingly, media will always be the mirror of the leaders (political and religious), their space to deliver their speeches and create their identities. Even more it opens a space to engage its audience to give news not just to get news.

The government must take into consideration that the media are an important tool for fighting corruption and through it they can redeem the cultural, traditional and educational aspects of the Lebanese society.

The public should be aware of what is presented to them and to their children, through the media. They must teach their children how to differentiate between the decent and indecent programs.

The role of these private TV stations is to be objective and show the political and religious leaders' opinions by covering them equally without giving personal opinions. If these recommendations are considered seriously then it might be possible to achieve a noticeable change on the socio-political awareness level of the Lebanese society.

To conclude with, I will open a window for future studies by posing a question: is it possible for Lebanon to accept the segregation of Religion and Politics eliminating the US vs. THEM mentality? And what are the actions to take in order to accomplish such a valuable goal?

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A: Questionnaire**  
*Media, Religion and politics*

Thank you for participating in a research project conducted for an academic institution. You will be asked to complete a short, completely anonymous survey about your attitudes, behaviors, and opinions. The entire process should take no more than five minutes to complete. Your participation will not subject you to any apparent physical or emotional risk. As the information gathered is completely unidentified, you are kindly asked not put your name anywhere on the questionnaire. You may discontinue your participation at any time. Please respond to each statement quickly, without too much thought. Try not to change your responses after you choose them. Please answer all the questions.

Demographics: The following items ask for some general information about you

*Age:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Gender:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Sect:*-----

**Answer the question by choosing one of the statements you want.**

**1. From where do you currently get your news about local politics? (Check all that apply)**

Magazines - hard copy

Newspaper - online

- Television
- Internet blogs
- Radio
- Online Magazines
- Newspaper - Print edition
- Internet news websites

**2. When it comes to the local political news, which of the following television networks do you trust the most?**

- OTV
- MTV
- AL MANAR
- LBC
- Future

**3. When it comes to Sayed Hassan Nasrallah speech, which of the following TV do you trust the most?**

LBC

MANAR

OTV

MTV

FUTURE

**4- As for a speech to one of the Christian Maronite religious leaders, which of the following TV station do you trust the most?**

LBC

MTV

FUTURE

OTV

MANAR

**5. On which local channel do you usually follow your preferred religious leader?**

**6. How many days in a typical week do you talk about politics and the role of religious leaders in the political field with family or friends?**

**7. How much do you consider that politics and religion are the mother culture of the Lebanese People?**

**8- In your opinion, do media hide details especially related to the religious-political situation in Lebanon?**

**Appendix B*****Speech 1: Cardinal Mar Bechara Boutros al-Rahi***

Christians are 'always the scapegoat': Mideast church leaders reject war with Syria

BY HILARY WHITE, ROME CORRESPONDENT

Thu Aug 29, 2013

(LifeSiteNews.com) – The head of the Maronite Catholic Church has accused the West of deliberately fomenting sectarian unrest in the Middle East for economic reasons and at the expense of millions of Christians.

Speaking from Lebanon, where thousands of Syrians have fled the conflict in their country, Patriarch Cardinal Mar Bechara Boutros al-Rai, the Maronite (Lebanese Catholic) Patriarch of Antioch, went so far as to say that there is a plot originating in the West to destroy the Middle East. The patriarch told Vatican Radio of his fears of a plan to destroy the Arab world for what he said were “political and economic interests,” saying he had already written to the pope twice warning of this. The West, for reasons of economics, have contributed to the “wars without end” in the Middle East “by giving billions of dollars to the [Egyptian] Muslim Brotherhood, so that they could get into power.”

He added that in such conflicts in the Middle East, it is always the indigenous Christian populations who suffer most, “as if they were always the scapegoat.” “As always, when there is chaos or war, Muslims in general attack Christians, they use them as scapegoats. I am sorry, but in Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood were the ones to attack Coptic churches – and Copts as well. Unfortunately this is the mentality of certain Muslims: every time there is a situation of chaos, Christians are attacked without even knowing why.”

“There is a plan to intensify inter-confessional conflict in the Muslim world, between Sunnis and Shi’ites,” he told Vatican Radio this week. “Unfortunately this is a policy that comes from abroad. There are countries, especially Western ones but also Eastern ones, that are fomenting these conflicts.” Cardinal Rai told Vatican Radio that the Christian presence in the Middle East has created what stability there is. “

Thanks to the presence of us Christians and our daily life in all these Arab countries, he said, “we have created a certain moderation in the Muslim world,” the cardinal said.

“We Christians,” Rai said, “have been living alongside Muslims for 1,400 years, and we have spread the human and moral values of multi-confessionality, plurality, and modernity in these lands.” Now, however, they are seeing “the total destruction of everything that Christians have built over the past 1,400 years.”

“In Iraq, out of a million-and-a-half Christians, we have lost one million without hearing a word from the international community,” he added.

At the core of the crisis in the Middle East is the “grave moral and economic crisis” of the West. Its “distorted idea of progress” stems from its “distorted view of man,” a highly placed Catholic prelate in Egypt has said. Monsignor Giuseppe Nazzaro, the Episcopal Vicar for the area of upper Egypt and Cairo and former Vicar Apostolic of Aleppo told the Italian paper *La Perfetta Letizia* that everything that is happening in Syria “comes from the inability to understand that peace is not achieved with war.”

Inside Jerusalem’s Orthodox Patriarchate, Archbishop Theodosios (Atallah Hanna) of Sebastia, also referred to the “supporters” of the “ruthless terrorists” seeking to destabilize the Middle

East. He said that there are those who want to bring Syria and the whole Middle East back to an era of ignorance, a new “dark ages.” The same groups setting fire to churches in Egypt are the ones who “want to destroy Syria.” These “enemies of Syria,” he said aim at destroying the Arab communities and “national unity, and fraternity, and religious values.”

Speech 2: “Foreign plan to destroy the Arab World” *Saturday, 24Aug 2013*

### **Cardinal al-Rahi: Foreign plan to destroy the Arab World**

Patriarch of Antioch and all the East of Maronites, Cardinal Mar Bechara Boutros Al Rahi stressed that the situation in Syria and Egypt proves the existence of a plan carried out by foreign powers to destroy the Arab World. AFP quoted al-Rahi as saying that there is a scheme to destroy the Arab world for political and economic interests and to fuel sedition in it, asserting that some foreign powers work for inciting disputes.

He pointed out that the Christians are paying the price of the foreign interference either in Egypt or in Syria, asserting that “the Christians’ efforts exerted throughout 1400 years to maintain coexistence with the Muslims were completely destroyed.”



Grand Mufti of Lebanon Sheikh Mohammad Rashid Qabbani warned Tuesday that former Prime ministers Saad Hariri and Fouad Siniora would be held responsible in the event of any attempt against his life.

“I hold both [former] prime ministers Saad Hariri and Fouad Siniora responsible should my blood [be shed] or for any harm that targets me,” Qabbani told reporters following his meeting with the head of the Journalists’ Union, Elias Aoun, at Dar al-Fatwa.

Despite the wishes of his opponents, Qabbani said that he would remain in his position until his term expired in September 2014: “I am staying in my office until the end of my term or if I die before my term expires. I say to them, if you are able to fire the grand mufti, do it. The move would shame the legacy of some Future Movement leaders.”

The rift between Qabbani and the Future Movement began to surface in 2011, when the mufti visited Hezbollah officials after the Special Tribunal for Lebanon indicted four members of the resistance group for their involvement in the 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

He also opposed the toppling of Prime Minister Najib Mikati’s government which was demanded by the Future Movement following the 2012 assassination of Brig. Gen. Wissam al-Hasan. “They don’t want a strong grand mufti. Their claim that I don’t have the authority to call for new elections is a lie. I am committed to holding elections for the Higher Islamic Council, even if some regions in Lebanon want to boycott it,” Qabbani added.

The strained relationship between Qabbani and the Future Movement has led to disputes within Dar al-Fatwa. Tensions were heightened when 21 members of the council met last December, in

The strained relationship between Qabbani and the Future Movement has led to disputes within Dar al-Fatwa. Tensions were heightened when 21 members of the council met last December, in a session chaired by the deputy head of the council, Omar Miskawi, and extended the term of the 32-member body for one year without the approval of the grand mufti.

Qabbani claimed that the extension had been illegal and called for the electing new members of the council on April 14.

Attempts to resolve the crisis within Dar al-Fatwa have failed, despite numerous meetings held by leading figures in the community and the council to agree on an emergency session and resolve the ongoing disputes.

“I am entrusted with holding the elections and I support amendments but [only] after the elections. Those that called for reforms prior to the polls had met with Siniora and then later held a session that involved fraud. We have evidence of this and the probe will reveal this in the lawsuit against them,” Qabbani said.

*Speech 3: Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah's*

August 15 Speech, committing troops to Syria

Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary General of the Lebanese political and military organization Hezbollah since 1992, leads the Lebanese people in defense of Syria on August 15, 2013 in Beirut.

In his August 15 speech to the Lebanese people, Hassan Nasrallah publically announced Hezbollah's decision to commit their military forces to defend Syria. Nasrallah also provides great detail on the US/Israeli-backed *Takfiris* who are at the centre of the al-Queda war against the Syrian government and how the Takfiris are trying to pit Sunnis against Shias and vice-versa with their terrorist attacks. In this speech, Nasrallah also rallies the Lebanese masses to defend Lebanon and Syria. The clarity, precision and care he takes to explain the defense of Lebanon as a country endangered by the war against Syria and his reverence for martyrs of the aggression are impressive. Nasrallah begins by reminding the people of their history, their past victories including their defeat of Israel in 2006 and the strength of the people and the Hezbollah-Lebanese military.

Here I am telling you: Our response to this kind of bombing is as follows. We will be transparent too. If we have 100 fighters in Syria, they will be 200. If we have 1000 fighters in Syria, they will be 2000. If we have 5000 fighters in Syria, they will be 10000. You are mistaken. You are hitting in the wrong place.

"If this battle with these Takfiri terrorists require that I myself and all of Hezbollah go to Syria, we will go to Syria. We will go to Syria as we did for the sake of Syria and its people, and for the sake of Lebanon and the people of Lebanon. By God we will do so for the sake of all of the Lebanese – Muslims and Christians alike – as well as for the sake of Palestine and Al Qods and

battle. It's we who will put a decisive end to the battle. It is we who set the time for the end of the battle. In May 25, we fired the last bullet. In the Grapes of Wrath in 1996, we fired the last bullet. On August 14, 2006, we fired the last bullet....

"Yes, this battle will cost us much. However it will be less costly than we being slaughtered as sheep or less costly than waiting for the killers and criminals to come to the middle of our houses.

**The speech delivered by Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah during the anniversary of July War celebration held in the bordering town of Aita Shaab on Friday August 16, 2013**

#### **In His Name**

I take refuge in Allah from the stoned devil. In the Name of Allah, The Compassionate, The Most Merciful. Peace be on the Seal of prophets, our Master and Prophet, Abi Al Qassem Mohammad and on his chaste and pure Household and on his chosen companions and on all messengers and prophets. Peace be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessings.

First, I would like to thank you for this *massive and honored attendance* in such an atmosphere and such circumstances especially that you came to this bordering town that is adjacent to the bribed wire and neighboring the entity which is usurping the land of dear Palestine.

Many thanks for this attendance. I salute you with every possible salutation. First, it is inevitable that we recall what happened yesterday. We pray for Allah to have mercy and raise the status of the martyrs who died oppressively in the terrorist explosion in Dahiyeh. We also pray for Allah Al Mighty for the haste recovery for all those who were injured in this enormous and critical terrorist aggression. We offer our consolations and our condolences to the families of the martyrs

and the injured and to everyone who was bodily, psychologically, spiritually, and materialistically afflicted in yesterday's aggression.

I also highly appreciate and stand with awe and reverence before the patience of the people – the people of Dahiyeh – and their tolerance, responsibility, awareness, and civilized and controlled conduct. We also laud everyone who condemned this grave incident and showed solidarity and expressed sympathy whether presidents, ministers, political and religious leaderships, deputies, parties, groups, personalities, media outlets, countries, and governments. We must also condemn the silence of the countries which remained silent and which with days would be revealed to be supporting terrorism, killing, and the crime taking place in our entire region

**The first section has to do with the anniversary of the war.** Call it as you wish: July War, the War of the True Promise, or Lebanon War II as the enemy called it. In the second section, I would like to tackle the internal situation starting with the terrorist massacre that was perpetrated against our people in Dahiyeh yesterday and the rocket and explosive aggressions that preceded it. As I would be addressing you in the second section, I would be addressing through you all those who are listening now in the various regions and countries. Allow me to talk clearly, calmly, and with responsibility and transparency. Let me say things in their names and set a road map so that we cooperate together to cripple the afflictive, destructive, terrorist project.

This year we wanted to mark this anniversary in the town of Aita which is adjacent to the bribed wire. It is on the border and it outlooks Occupied Palestine. Its air is that of Palestine, and its breeze is that of Palestine. From where you are standing you smell the fragrance of Occupied Palestine. So this is the symbolism of this place. Now you – men, women, elderly, youths, and political, religious, military and security figures – are gathering in this place. You are at stone's throw from the enemy. This massive rally after 65 years of the establishment of the usurping

entity has great significance and indications that you and everyone who sees this platform know. We wanted to rally today and mark this anniversary in Aita for its significance. Just like all our towns, villages, neighborhoods, and cities in the South, Bekaa, and the other Lebanese regions, Aita stands for all of these. Its steadfast, kind people who stick to their land, its brave heroic resistance men, its alive martyrs, its patient wounded, and its freed prisoners are a symbol for all the towns which fought for 33 days, remained steadfast, and were not defeated. Aita is a symbol for this steadfastness, courage, and determination. It is also a symbol for fighting with insight. It is a symbol for fighting and sacrifice-offering with love.

What took place in Aita over 33 days was from its moral value above religious duty and national obligation. That was above the obligation and above the law. That expresses the human and moral value of this resistance, the people of this resistance, and the land of this resistance. Thus I say the background of this steadfastness and killing was knowledge and adoration. I do not forget during these days when most of Aita's houses were demolished. It was under savage shelling by Israeli artillery and air force. There were repetitive attacks by Israeli tanks. It was in grave danger. Its fighters along with some of its residents were in great danger of being killed – all of them.

I sent to them via the direct responsible brethren and told them that you are not obliged to remain in Aita. You are not obliged to remain in a village at the borderlines. No one would blame you. That does not contradict with our strategy which was not based on sticking to geography but on fighting in guerilla war so as to afflict the enemy with the greatest casualties. However these brave heroic resistance men themselves decided to remain in this bordering village. They decided to fight until the last bullet, missile, drop of blood, and breath. They wanted to send a message to the Lebanese and to the whole world on the true moral identity and

value of this resistance and this people.

When I remember this stance I recall the companions of Al Hussein (Peace be upon him) on the tenth night of Muharam. Imam Hussein told his companions: *"Night had befallen you. Why don't you then ride the darkness of the night to flee? Let everyone of you hold the hand of one of my family members, and leave me to face this group by myself."* The resistance did not tell these fighters in Aita to leave in the darkness of the night. We told them to move to another fighting position. However, they insisted to remain in the front lines. It is as if their souls, hearts, bodies, cells, and blood that moves in their veins were calling around the clock for 33 days in Aita Al Shaab: At your service. O Hussein!

Aita stands for every village to which its residents returned at the first hour of the ceasefire. They returned to their ruined houses. They unrolled their mats, built their tents, and lived amid ruins and insisted in remaining in their land. They rebuilt their houses, planted their fields, and resumed their honored life which was offered to them by the dear martyrs from among their children. Aita today is that beautiful, loyal, and proud town just as all our beautiful, loyal, and proud towns. It is as such and even more.

Brothers and sisters! Your historic victory on May 25th, 2000 – as we said some days ago and in more than one occasion – put an end and delivered the deathblow to Great Israel. That's because Israel and its army which could not remain in Lebanon – indisputably the weakest Arab state apparently – cannot establish a state from the Nile to the Euphrates. Your historic victory on August 14th, 2006 put an end and delivered the deathblow to the project of Major Israel which wanted to impose itself as an arrogant, dominant, capable force and to impose its conditions on the Palestinians, the Lebanese, the Syrians, the Jordanians, the Egyptians, the Arabs, and all the peoples of the region as well as on Iran and to be a frightening, terrifying power which makes the

hearts and nerves shake when its name is mentioned. That was toppled on August 14th, 2006.

You who are rallying today in Aita are asserting that this was toppled. This Israel came out of this war defeated, frustrated, weak, and beaten. This was acknowledged by its leaders, generals, and people. It is still addressing its wounds until this very day through drills, maneuvers, and schemes....

These two great victories had two strategic results for Lebanon and the peoples and governments of the region. The first result of the first victory was that the popular, organized, armed resistance which was embraced by its people is able to make victory. We do not talk philosophical theories. The evidence is that what took place on May 25th, 2000, and what took place in Gaza Strip later on was a strategic outcome on the intellectual level, on the level of options, on the level of vision, and on the level of action. The second outcome is related to the second victory. Some might say the popular resistance is a liberation power because it depends on guerilla wars, the long breath, war of attrition, making use of time, the variety of tactics, and the inability of the enemy to tolerate for a long time and thus the resistance would impose on the enemy to pull out. However the popular resistance could not be a defensive power before a fierce strong military attack with multiple dimensions and levels. However July War and its experience clearly asserted that the organized, popular resistance which is embraced by the people is able to be a true defensive force at a time the aggressed country does not own the military and technological capabilities and the number of soldiers and the war equipment which the attacking enemy owns. The evidence is what took place in July War. July War presented a comprehensive school which has been taught in research centres around the world since that time. It is taught also in the world military academies. Still some people here bet on getting rid of this school and on discarding with it.



Today, we are asserting our commitment to this school and this path – the path of resisting for liberating our occupied land and defending our people, villages, and homeland Lebanon and its sovereignty, land, waters, wealth, and capabilities. We are also asserting our decisive faith and final conviction which was proved by experience over 65 long years. That's because what we are in now is the result of all of these experiences which the governments of the region, the peoples of the region, and the armies of the region, the parties of the region, and the resistance factions and movements in the region went through. Thus we reach this decisive conviction that the most precious, the best and the most powerful thing that Lebanon owns now is this golden equation: The Army-the people-the resistance.

This is what we are asserting today. We tell the foe as well as the friend: We will remain here on the borders and the bordering village besides the deep and the rear regions. We will remain. We will plant our field with our hands on the borderlines. We will build our houses not only on the borders but also on the bribed wire – with the permission of the UNIFIL and others. We will build our houses on the bribed wire and you have done so. We will guard the waters of our rivers whether it went deep in the land or was wasted in the sea. However, we will not allow it to be rubbed by the enemy. We – indeed I mean our state – will extract oil and gas from our sea and our sea frontiers with Occupied Palestine. The Israelis won't be able to do anything with us.

Today I will say even more than the message of the qualitative ambush and qualitative operation in Labbouneh. Today, I will recall what I said days ago: It is no more allowed that any Israeli soldier under whatever title or condition take one step to blemish our Lebanese territories which was purified by the blood of martyrs. These feet would be cut along with the heads.

We will not be merciful in defending our villages, land, and people. Here I will tell the Israelis that the time of Israeli military tourism on the Lebanese borders and in the Lebanese internal had

come to an end with no return.

Brothers and sisters! I assert to you that your resistance today and after seven years following the victory of July, despite all what happened during these hard years, is stronger than any time in the past. It has the greatest number of fighters and equipment and its will and determination are firmer than any time in the past.

Now I will move to the second section. We will talk calmly so that we together shoulder the responsibility. It is not something new for the enemy to target this audience, these people, this milieu, these children, women, men, elderly and owners of stores and shops in Dahiyeh or in other places. When the Israeli enemy – or any enemy including the Israeli enemy - used to fail in confronting the fighters as was their case always, they used to resort to hitting the people, the audience of the resistance, and the people of the resistance which embraces the resistance. At times these people may not be with the resistance but they exist in this country and in these regions. The history of Israeli wars and Israeli massacres is full of such crimes : Qana I, Qana II, and what took place even before and after that in Suhmur, Higher Nabatiyeh, Hula, and many other towns as well as in Dahiyeh, in Chiah, in Baalbeck, Nabi Sheath, Ali Nahri and many other places in July War. These evidences are clear.

Indeed, the enemy acts as such because this is our point of weakness. Here we are hurt. This grieves us. That's how the enemy exerts pressure on us when they fail to confront us militarily. This is a point of weakness but also a source of pride. It's because that indicates that the relation between the resistance, the leaders of the resistance, the men of the resistance, and the people is an emotional, human, moral, and spiritual, relation. They are one and united.

Never did the resistance in Lebanon act as if it is coming from the jungles of Africa or imported its fighters as some imported fighters of nowadays. They are imported from other places around

the world. Consequently, what took place and what afflicts people do not concern them at all.

Thus for over decades, in its conduct, the resistance took pains not to take any military resisting action without taking into consideration the reactions of the enemy and without taking into consideration protecting the people and civilians. This in fact was one of the reasons of the gathering of the people around the resistance. Thus April Agreement was made, and it could – for a great extent – impose a formula to guard the people especially in the south against targeting the Israeli settlements.

So when the resistance and the people share the very feelings, when the resistance is happy for their happiness, is sad for their sadness, feels their pain, rejoices for their joy that would be a point of strength from one perspective and a point of weakness which the enemy exploits from another. In fact, some sides do not care for the people. What is important is that the leader is good and his family is good no matter what prices the rest of the people may pay. That's of no concern to them.

Brothers and sisters! What took place yesterday targeted people. It was not an assassination operation. It did not target a Hezbollah cadre or a leader who was targeted. It did not target a center, an office or an institution for Hezbollah. Whoever perpetrated the massacre yesterday in Dahiyeh wanted deliberately and knowingly to afflict the largest number of casualties among women, children, and civilians? That was the target.

So far some media outlets said that the explosive device weighed 50 or 60 kilograms. In fact, it weighs much more than that. Later on, the brethren Inshallah will announce the true facts and figures. It is more than 100 kilograms. This explosive device which was detonated in that place in particular as in the case of the previous explosive device in Bir Abed meant to kill and cause casualties. The aim was to kill people and not to assassinate a cadre or a leader or to target a

center or an office or the like.

Anyway, this massacre comes in the framework of this great and open battle that started decades before Hezbollah and carried on with Hezbollah. As long as this struggle exists, these would be among the tools and details of this battle. As long as there is a party which is resisting and which refuses to yield to the international will and the Zionist will, and as long as there is an environment that embraces this part, this party and its embracing environment will have to assume the repercussions and the sacrifices. That is natural and not something new.

Today we need to take a stance and to see the details so as to share responsibilities. We need a road map as I said. Today we do not want to stand and shed tears on ruins. We never got accustomed to that. We hold our martyrs – especially these martyrs - on our shoulders and bury them with pride and pain. We cure our injuries and rebuild our houses. The state indeed will assume its responsibility and stand with the victims. However we too will stand with the victims and we will not desert them. That's what we do; however, we have to move on in confronting what is upcoming. This is not the beginning or the end of the world. This is not the beginning or the end of the battle. It is a chain in this long path. During the past months and weeks, rockets were launched on Bekaa, Hermel, and some villages in Hermel, Sirin, Nabi Sheath, the neighborhood of Nabi Sheath, and the city of Baalbeck. Those who launched the rockets were known. That's because the rockets were launched from inside the Syrian territories. So the so called Syrian armed opposition groups launched the rockets. Here the perpetrator is known. So there is no need to inquire and gather information or analyze. The perpetrator is known.

Other incidents took place. Explosives were detonated on Hermel Main Road and hit civilians and a Lebanese Army force. Explosions took place on Majdal Anjjar Road and on Zahle Road. Rockets were launched on Dahiyeh. On July 9, the explosion in Bir Abed took place. Later on,

rockets were launched from some regions in the eastern suburbs of Beirut towards Mount Liban including rockets towards Yarzeh in Baabda. The last was what took place yesterday. It was a terrible massacre perpetrated in Dahiyeh.

Now let me talk about the events that took place before yesterday's explosion.