

**Department of Mass Communication**

TELEVISION BRANDING IN LEBANON: THE BIRTH OF MODERN LEBANESE  
TELEVISION IN 1995

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Media Studies/ Advertising

By

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**Department of Mass Communication**

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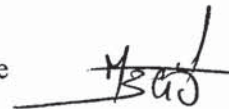
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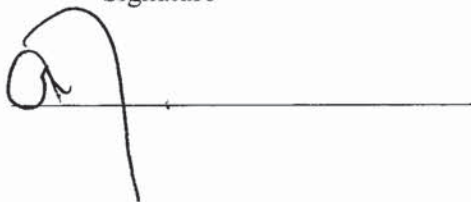
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### **Abstract**

In the mid nineties, the Lebanese television went through a critical transitional phase as Lebanon was moving towards peace following 15 years of civil war. In this stage, an Audio Visual Media Law was introduced to regulate the ownership and operation of the militia owned de facto radio and television stations. This law was the first of its kind in Lebanon and the Middle East. To cope with the country's new media scene, the Lebanese television stations had to restructure themselves on the corporate level, reposition their status, and rethink their programming policies. This mission was accomplished successfully by most of the newly licensed stations, and it paved the way to the rise of modern Lebanese television on both terrestrial and satellite levels.

The purpose of this study was to examine this particular phase through three self promotional music videos that were produced and aired in 1995 by three of the most prominent television channels of the time: Tele Liban, the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation, and Future Television. The significance of those clips has been largely overlooked by Lebanese media scholars.

This thesis also aimed to archive those clips in their historical context, and to explore the symbols and techniques used in the execution to show that they were part of a comprehensive media branding effort.

The theoretical framework of this study was based on Aaker's brand identity planning model (BIPM). The literature review covered brand formation, branding, media branding and Lebanese television history. As for the methodology, it entailed content analysis and in depth interviews with the key media personalities who stood behind the making of those clips.

The findings of this study proved that these clips were actually part of a brand identity formation process. This process may be seen today as the first branding effort in the history of Lebanese television. Moreover, the findings of this study showed that those clips have actually formulated the brand identity of TL, LBC and FTV for years to come.

Keywords: brands, branding, media branding, self promotion clips, TL, LBC, FTV, BIPM, Lebanese Television, Arab Television.



## Introduction

### Branding

With the increase of competition in global marketplaces, brands and branding have become one of the central tenets of modern time marketing. One of the classical definitions of branding is that it is the name, term, sign, symbol, design - or the combination of all - that intends to identify a certain product, good or service and to differentiate it from those of its competitors. (Kotler, 1988, p. 463). Those associations are “organized usually in some meaningful way” to make this differentiation obvious. (Aakar, 1992, pp. 109 -110).

The power of a brand lies in “what resides in the minds of the customers”. (Keller, 2008, p. 48). In this context, the brand of a certain product is perceived to be different from its actual function. Branding here comes to complete the transformation process of a product from being a functional product to an immortal brand. (Kim, 1990, pp. 63-67). Kim thought that while a product is a “physical thing”, a brand “has no tangible, physical, or functional property” and that it exists like a “myth in the imagination of the consumer” becoming “as real as the product itself”. (Kim, 1990, p. 65).

Meenaghan (1995) listed some of the many reasons behind the enlarged emphasis on branding in modern marketing as follows:

- The marketer’s increased recognition of the behavioral aspects of consumer decision making;

- The rich society's preference of the symbolic rather than purely functional aspects of the products;
- The variety of relatively homogeneous products that involve high product complexity and confusing messages. This increase is due mainly to technological innovation and rapid imitation.

The augmented understanding of how consumers make their purchasing decisions have motivated already existing brands to consider the necessity of redefining themselves. This process is called rebranding, and it occurs on a minor or major scale. Major rebranding includes structural changes such as the name of the company or brand. Minor rebranding, on the other hand, involves aesthetic changes that involve the logo or slogan. On both scales, the implementation of rebranding strategies may be costly, and at the risk of losing customer loyalty. Rebranding is inevitable when it comes to dealing with reputation issues, mergers and acquisitions that bring changes in ownership structure, diversification, internationalization and / or localization. Some external factors may also play a role in this aspect like legal or regulatory changes or technological breakthroughs. (Muzellec, Doogan & Lambkin 2003, 34.)

### **Media and Branding or Rebranding**

As it is the case for products, goods and services, maintaining a strong brand identity is essential for media institutions as well. International media scholars consider that media involvement in brand management is new and underdeveloped. McDowell noted in 2006 that it is mainly in the past 15 years that media industries embraced brand management. (2006, p. 1). This embracement was described as far from being “fully developed”, and that it was

materialized only in “promotional programs rather than strategic processes”. (Chan-Olmsted 2006, pp. 6 - 9).

The driving force behind this “relatively new” media interest in branding was the technological advancement that increased the number of content providers and made it possible for many more competitors to seek the attention and loyalty of audiences and advertisers. (Ots, 2008, p. V). As a result, media corporations had to resort to branding management techniques to separate themselves and their products from those of their competitors. (Ots, 2008, p. V). Another reason that ignited media corporations’ interest in branding, according to Siegent, was that media content is immaterial, and it can be copied easily and at low cost. Therefore, it was essential for media firms to differentiate their organizations, services and / or products when compared to their competitor’s organizations, services and / or products. (2008, p. 11).

### **Lebanese Television and Branding**

Branding challenges hunted Lebanese television stations and audio visual media in general, in the mid nineties. Following the 15 year long civil war (1975 – 1990), the Lebanese television decision makers had to cope with the country’s new post war social and political challenges. Thus, they had to shift from being heavily involved in the war activities to being associated with peace. Those stations (except for Tele Liban which was semi owned by the government) had also to find legal grounds for their existence since they were operating unlicensed. So they had to wait for the government’s plans towards the organization and regulation of the country’s airwaves. This task was not regarded only as a national organizational issue, but rather as a vital cornerstone in the country’s reconciliation and reconstruction process.

In 1994, following two years of national discussions that involved the state, the civil



society, and the advertising and media sectors, the Lebanese government issued the first law of its kind (law 382/94) in the country to regulate its airwaves. This decision was unprecedented in the whole of the Arab World since none of the Arab states had legalized before the private ownerships of radio and television stations. (Rinnawi, 2006).

The three main stations that were operating then, and that were covered in this study, are: Tele Liban (TL), Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC), and Future Television (FTV):

Tele Liban (TL) was founded in 1977 during the civil war on the wrecks of the two channels that created the classical pre-war Lebanese television which is widely called “the golden era” of television in Lebanon. Those two stations, the “La Compagnie Libanaise de Télévision” (CLT) and the “Compagnie de Télévision du Liban et du Proche Orient” (Tele Orient) were the first commercial television stations to broadcast in the Arab world. TL inherited the heritage of those two stations and quickly became to be seen as a national icon of prosperity and “good days”.

The Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC) has been leading the Lebanese television industry since its debut in 1985, in terms of its advanced technology, innovative programming and coverage of the news. LBC went on air in August 23, 1985. It was operated by the Christian “Lebanese Forces” militia, as a media organ to promote its politics and views towards the future of Lebanon. LBC preached in its early political shows a federal political system in Lebanon. However, it was due to its joyful and international entertainment content that it gained popularity, and came to enjoy in no time highest viewership rates on the local level.

Future Television (FTV) started broadcasting on February 15, 1993. It was founded by Rafic Hariri who was then the acting Prime Minister of Lebanon. Politically, FTV’s main



objective was to promote the process of peace and reconstruction in Lebanon headed by Hariri. In its first years, FTV became Lebanon's fastest growing station with regard to its ratings and advertising revenues. The station was specifically famous for airing latest American series and introducing new visual trends, and for mirroring the rising influence of Premier Hariri on the Lebanese political scene.

In preparing themselves to survive Lebanon's post war challenges, those three stations launched three big budget marketing projects that were named after three self promotional video clips that they produced and aired in 1995. Those clips were: TL's "From Grandfather to Father" (Aban A'an Jed), LBC's "The Sun of LBC Rose" (Sharaket Shams el LBC) and FTV's "For Your Eyes" (La'ayouniak). Still considered by a generation of viewers as unforgettable television moments, this study aims to show that those clips have ended Lebanon's "war time television" era and paved the way to Lebanon's modern television era in the beginning of what was then called the national peace and reconstruction process.

Except for TL (as it will be seen in the coming chapters), those clips were not considered by their creators to be comprehensive branding efforts but simply self promotional advertisements. This study explores if and how those clips match with the international branding strategies known today, and whether they have intentionally or unintentionally shaped the brand image of their respective stations.

### **Needs for this Study**

Little has been written on the Lebanese television production and on the history and structure of Lebanese television broadcasting as a whole. In the words of Dr Nabil Dajani in 2001 most of the academic literature related to Lebanese television is either outdated, too general

or lacks precision (Dajani, 2001, p. 1). The local and international resources reviewed for this study cover either the foundation stages in the sixties (mostly in forms of memoirs) or the post satellite era in the millennium. The international interest in this latter phase is due to the role that the Lebanese television was considered to have played in changing the television viewing habits and popular perspectives in the Arab world. The nineties Lebanese television in general, and the three self promotional video clips produced by TL, LBC and FTV have failed to receive adequate attention by media scholars.

The thesis attempts to fill this gap by providing a chronological account of this medium's development in the nineties following the first Audio Visual law of Lebanon (382/94). The importance of studying this phase remains in understanding how three of the Lebanese major television stations branded themselves to cope with Lebanon's post war era. This era has launched the beginning of Lebanon's satellite television transmission which dominated the Arab markets in the years to come.

### **Objectives and Aims**

The objectives of this study are to:

Prove that the three 1995 promotional clips of TL, LBC and FTV have served in branding those three television stations.

Show that those clips were produced intentionally or intentionally coping with the same international standards of branding and brand formation known today.

Analyze the symbols of the brand image developed by TL, LBC and FTV via these promotional tools.

Archive those clips in an academic context since they reflect the transformation between war and post war television eras in Lebanon in the mid nineties.

Place them in the historical development of the Lebanese television industry.

### **Research Questions**

This research considers that the three promotional clips produced and aired by TL, LBC and FTV in 1995 were cornerstone variables in their branding processes. Thus it attempts to answer the following questions:

How branding theories were implemented in the creation of those clips?

What were the strategies adopted in designing those clips?

What were the symbols used in those clips?

### **Literature Review**

Marketing scholars agree that brands and branding concepts trace back to thousands of years ago when mankind started to trade, consume and deal with different goods. However, those scholars acknowledge that it was only towards the end of the fifties that branding related research started to become popular, and to be taken seriously in the world of academia. Earlier, branding concepts were seen as topical research issues that were met with controversy due to US legislative restrictions and strong consumer movements that called for products to be promoted and labeled according to their content and functional characteristics. (Moore, Reid, 2008, pp. 419 - 432).

Television also is relatively a new subject in academic research. It was only in the seventies that western scholars of humanities and social sciences started to consider studying television content, as part of their interest in popular culture. This interest reevaluated the traditional view of pop culture (generated by mass media) as degrading, and elite culture as uplifting. This has eventually resulted in the breakdown of conceptual barriers between so-called high and low cultures. (Mukerji, Schudson, 1991, pp. 1 - 2).

The literature reviewed for this study included books and academic articles on branding, branding theories, media brand formation and Lebanese television. The aim of these two parts was to understand branding concepts in order to investigate later whether those were implemented in the making of the three clips subject of this thesis.



## **Branding Theories**

As established in the introduction, branding is a marketing strategy that aims to differentiate a product from its competitor products. (Aaker, 2000). This process includes various aspects like building brand awareness, brand identity, brand preference, brand loyalty, and brand segmentation. Although apparently those concepts look to be connected and interconnected, it is surprising to find that there is little academic literature on the cause and effect relationship between these theories. Instead, these concepts are often discussed as isolated events with no mutual influence on each other. (Hampf, Lindberg-Repo, 2011)

The following part summarizes some of the most popular branding theories that form the cornerstone in the evolution and development of branding theories. Those theories are presented in their historical context. The limitations are not discussed.

The first of branding theories to stand out is the concept of segmentation, founded in the mid fifties by Wendell Smith. According to Smith, any heterogeneous market consists of consumers with diversified demands who might form smaller homogeneous markets. Therefore, those market segments may be established by using different variables depending on what category of consumers one is aiming for. (1956, pp. 3 – 8). Segmentation is still an important concept in dividing markets into smaller sub-markets to reach out specifically desired target groups, seeking similar benefits or having similar unmet needs. (Aaker, 2002, pp. 189 -192).

Brand loyalty and brand lifestyle are other two theories that evolved in the fifties. Brand loyalty was coined by Ross Cunningham who stated that household loyalty had a strong impact on consumers' purchase decisions, showing that consumers were loyal to certain brands in more than 90% of the times while purchasing household goods. (1956, pp. 116 – 128). Cunningham's findings evoked heated debate when published in 1956 because it was supported with scarce

empirical evidence. On the other hand, the concept of lifestyle in branding which was first used by William Lazer in the early sixties, had a major influence on marketing, at a time companies were still associating their work with mass production and mass communication. With the lifestyle theory, consumers' income was not anymore the only variable in market segmentation but their lifestyle and how they presume to see themselves became a major factor in fragmenting markets. (Drucker, 1994, pp. 95 - 104).

In the early sixties, a branding milestone was formulated by Pierre Martineau who laid the theoretical foundation of brand personality. Martineau established that in spite of the fact that two similar stores could offer the same prices and quality of good products and services, yet customers would still show partiality toward one of the stores and not the other. (1958, pp. 47 – 55). The reason for this behavior, according to Martineau, is the personality of the store. In order to create a desired personality, he asserted, one has to use the power of the brand image because consumers will always choose the store that meets the way they wish to be perceived. (Martineau, 1958, pp. 47 – 55). Those findings paved the way in front of the marketing mix concept, known also as the four Ps of marketing. This concept was introduced by Neil H. Borden in 1965, and later popularized with E. Jerome McCarthy, who proposed the four Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) as a marketing tool that companies could use to achieve their goals (Kotler & Keller, 2006, p. 19). Borden's mix included branding, product planning, pricing, distribution channels, personal selling, advertising, promotions, packaging, display, servicing, physical handling, fact-finding and analysis. (1965, pp. 386 - 97). The marketing mix (and later the four Ps concept) had a major role in the development of marketing and branding for a long period. These concepts, however, lost their academic research value today and are best suited as



simple theories describing the basic thinking in marketing in undergraduate studies. (Hampf, Lindberg-Repo, 2011).

Showing the evolution of this concept, Lebanese marketing and advertising expert Kamal Darouni introduced a fifth P in his book *Advertising and Marketing Communications in the Middle East*. Darouni's P stands for people, which involves the consumers at large, as well as the employees working for the brand - the internal customers. (2006, p. 178). He argued that the marketing and thus branding process should not include only the understanding of consumers' needs and wants but also it should take into consideration satisfying the needs and wants of the firms' or brands' employees.

Back to its historical evolution, branding techniques and strategies imposed themselves as strong players in the entire marketing discipline in the 70s, and became an important subject of academic and marketing research. This was due to studies that proved that branding does add an extra value to branded products and thus affects on consumers' purchase decisions. (Hampf, Lindberg-Repo, 2011). At this stage, companies started to adopt immaterial value approaches in marketing their products, and to take into account the social factors and their effects in building the brand identities. (Hampf, Lindberg-Repo, 2011). The "factor of the society" paved the way to the rise of the positioning theory posited by Al Ries and Jack Trout in 1972. In simple words, positioning defines brands not through their qualities or functions only, but instead through related external elements, like pricing and packaging. (Ries, Trout, 1972).

In the 80s, brand management attracted an escalated amount of interest. Now companies became more aware that the identity of their brands could mean the difference between success and failure. (Riezebos, 2002, p. 6). Among the popular theories of the time was brand equity or

the market value of the brand, which became quickly one of the most researched areas in the field of marketing. (Hampf, Lindberg-Repo, 2011).

As of the 90s, the role of branding was included in relationship theories due to the need to understand how relationships could benefit both companies and their customers. Several researchers investigated in this direction and concluded that as it is the case between humans, relationships could develop to involve people to objects, symbols, and / or brands. (Gummesson, 1993, pp. 52 - 56). Relational branding lead to the idea of brand communities: This concept stands for “specialized, non-geographically bound communities based on structured set of social relations”.

The contemporary theory of Country-of-Origin “COO” ends up this snapshot of ‘branding theories’ evolution. Although when first introduced it was not well embraced, COO is one of the most investigated aspects of branding in the past decade. (Peterson, Jolibert, 1995, pp. 880 - 900). Research related to COO has shown that knowing the country of origin has become an important issue in the minds of the customers to evaluate the quality of the products they want to purchase. This interest is a result of the increasing international brands competition, and the move of manufacturing and production outlets to the Far East countries. COO branding is mainly used on products that are dependent on their brand image, like expensive wines or perfumes. (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1999, pp. 255 - 267).

### **Media Branding**

Although media brands have become so present and powerful in the recent years, it is surprising to find out that only Disney, MTV and Reuters have made it to the Interbrand’s “Best



100 Global Brands” annual report in 2012. This was the case also in the annual charts between 2007 – 2011. Interbrand’s chart is self described as one of the most influential benchmark in the world. Gabriele Siegert explained that the reason behind this shy presence of media brands on the Interbrand’s charts is because media institutions are either local, regional, or national businesses, and only few serve an international market. (Siegert, 2008, p. 11).

### **Differences in Branding Between Media and Other Products.**

Whether local or international, media branding strategies focus mainly on differentiating a media brand’s organization, service or product from that of the competitors. (Picard, 2004, p. 11). Unlike other goods and products, media content, in general, is immaterial, and thus might be copied easily, and at low cost. This is why branding has to be based on differentiation, competence, credibility and quality.

In showing the difference between the branding process of media and other commercial brands, it could be argued that media content is measured only after consumption and valued referring to its individual and societal functions, and not its price and quality especially when it comes to journalistic information. (Siegert, 2008, p. 14). Elaborating on this particular point, Siegert exclaimed that media users can neither measure the journalistic agenda setting, i.e. the selection of the topics for reporting, nor the journalistic framing, i.e. the context the reporting topics are put in. (2008, p. 14).

Siegert indicated three points that should be taken into consideration while studying the aspects of the media brand communication process: First, media brand communication addresses at least two markets, the audience market and the advertising market, and must nevertheless send a credible and consistent brand message to both. Second these messages might be interpreted in

many different ways. This is why television stations for example rely on trailers and promotional ads to develop specific expectations in the minds of their audiences before airing special media content like soaps, magazine shows, etc. Third, in media brand communication, media firms use their area of competence, creating contact with the audience to gain attention, in order to promote their own products, services and interests. (Siegert, 2008, p. 15).

Furthermore, in their brand communication message, media institutions tend to become the advertisers, advertising objects and advertising vehicles all in one. The message here also addresses at least two markets: the audience market and the advertising market, and to both it should send a credible and consistent message. (Siegert, 2008, p. 14). Also media institutions “often choose to create and promote several brand levels - the corporation as a whole, each TV channel, each featured TV show, and sometimes also blocks of shows”. (Wolf, 2006, p 129).

### **Media brand Communication.**

Talking about advertising, Siegert mentioned the growing so called ad-avoidance phenomena and considered that the importance of traditional advertising and the media as advertising vehicles in brand communication management is shrinking. Brand communication tends therefore towards public relations for example or creative integrated marketing strategies or sponsoring events or hybrid advertising formats like placements. However, “the media are still indispensable for building brand awareness and brand knowledge”, Siegert wrote. (2008, p. 14).

One of the other means to overcome this ad avoidance for media institutions in particular is called editorial reference, which is primarily described as mentions referring to media outlets and / or their brands in their own programs or editorial content. The aim of editorial referencing is to persuade people to continue watching, listening or reading. (Siegert, 2008, p. 17). A good

and simple pattern in this context might be a magazine's table of content, which aims clearly to invite readers to continue reading. In the case of radios and television channels trailers and teasers promoting various shows and special events are considered to be editorial references.

Another form of media editorial reference is news selection. News selection includes for example the publication of latest audience research data to show increasing numbers of readers or it might also include extensive coverage of prizes given and mentions made by other institutions. References to single media as a source for other media, on another hand, can also have an enormous positive effect. This form of referencing includes the mentioning of one's own brand as a source by other media. That is why, also according to Siegert, news magazines have begun interviewing far more politicians than before because there is then an increase in the probability that those interviews are quoted, and their source is referred to. (Siegert, 2008, p. 18).

Concerning entertainment content, those editorial references are firstly found in the form of appearances made by prominent media representatives on talk shows to introduce and advertise their work. Secondly, TV formats refer to already existing formats by imitating their presentation style or studio décor (e.g. The Larry King Show). A third form is TV parodies mentioning brands, presenters, formats. (Siegert, 2008, p. 18). Siegert also mentioned the importance of outdoor advertising (like billboards) to build brand awareness and knowledge, particularly when it comes to the introduction of new brands like shows, and programs or timing slots. This also applies to the three Lebanese stations under study since they made great use of outdoor media in communicating their new visual identities as shaped in their clips, and used their shows, and even news casts, to explain their campaigns and promote them as news material.



### **Self Promotion in Media Branding.**

Siegert described self promotion to be the most effective model of media brand communication. Self promotion refers to the form of advertising in which media institutions promote themselves, their brand(s), programs, titles or products within their own programs or titles. (Siegert, 2008, p. 16). Siegert classified self promotion into various types: a more informative type and a more persuasive one. Both of those types have a persuasive character; since although their main function is to give information and direction (2008, p. 16).

### **Media Branding at Times of Transformation**

When the environment is anything but stable, media firms cling on to their most important assets—their users. Unstable conditions might be due to social, political, or technological changes. It might also be related to changing viewing habits and audience fragmentation. In those times, media institutions want to build strong and long lasting bonds with their audiences—to connect to existing and potential viewers, listeners or readers in ways. (Ots, 2008, p. 2)

In his book *Brand Management: A theoretical and practical approach*, Rik Riezebos (2002) described the adoption of brand strategies as having two important motives. The first is to enhance competitive advantage through emphasizing differentiation. Thus a brand tends to help consumers understand and remember what distinguishes an offering from that of a competitor (Ries, Trout, 1997). Secondly, a brand strategy could and should add value to the product or service offering. From this perspective customers might see more than the functional use of a product, and brands might signal benefits based on the meanings and uses that customers associate with them. (see also Levitt, 1980). In this sense, it is good to remember Keller's

definition that “the power of a brand lies in what resides in the minds of the customers” (2008, p. 48).

In building brands, also consistent communication at various contact points where brands meet their audience is of a major asset. (Duncan, Moriarty, 1998). Adopting a branding philosophy from this perspective means moving from product-centric marketing to trying to put consumers’ perceptions in the centre. Media brands offer value propositions about what their customers can expect in terms of content, interactivity, and user experience. While traditional media, such as newspapers, sometimes are accused of being rigid and old fashioned, consumer studies show that television brands, such as BBC, Discovery, or MTV, come across with associations such as “drive” and “innovation” (Grande, 2006).

Likewise, studies of media-consumption experiences demonstrate a wide spectrum of emotions and associations that consumers attach to their household media (Calder, Malthouse, 2005). In other words, the large majority of media have only just begun to explore the ‘real’ meanings that their brands carry, the images they evoke and feelings they engage. (Ots 2008). In this course, the very fact that television channels own and control communication tools reaching thousands or even millions of consumers every day makes a difference. In this scope, this thesis explores if TL, LBC and FTV’s were aware of their needs to change some images or perceptions among their audiences and create new brand identities.

### **Lebanese Television: Historical Background**

The following chapter draws a timeline that summarizes the development and evolution of the Lebanese television in four decades. This timeline starts in 1959 and ends in 1999, and categorizes the Lebanese Television into three major eras: pre-war television (1959 – 1975), war time television (1975 – 1990) and post-war television (1990 – today). The purpose of this timeline is to put the three TL, LBC and FTV promotional clips understudy in their historical context to enable readers understand the conditions that led to their making.

Media scholars often address the relationship between governments and television stations in the context of either a western societal structure or a third world structure. In the first, this medium usually operates within the private sector, and in the latter, it operates within the public sector, typically as a government arm. (Dajani, 2001) Referring to Lebanese media institutions, Dr Nabil Dajani pointed out that Lebanese television fits neither of these models because unlike most of the developing countries the initiative to establish television in Lebanon belonged not to the government but to businessmen. Those business oriented people had little care or experience in the necessities of television broadcasting and this is where the main weakness of the Lebanese television industry lies. (2001)

#### **CLT & Tele Orient**

At 6.30pm, May 28, 1959, Lebanon witnessed the birth of its first television station – the “La Compagnie Libanaise de Télévision” (CLT). The first televised images of CLT were transmitted live from the Camille Chamoun Sports City Stadium because the station’s studios in Talet El Khayat were not ready yet to operate. Even if it was to close down next day, CLT made



history since it was the first non-government operated advertising-supported television station not only in Lebanon, but also in the Arab World. (Boyd, 1993, p. 73). CLT broadcasted a grid of Arabic, French and British drama, news and music shows. Few months later, it launched a second television station - "Channel 9", addressing particularly Lebanon's elite francophone community with mainly French programs and news.

Two years later (May 6, 1962), another commercial station started its transmission, under the name of "Compagnie de Télévision du Liban et du Proche Orient". Better known as Tele Orient, this second station ignited fierce competition with CLT over advertising money and audience ratings. With both stations, the Lebanese audience was able to zap between three different TV programs, at a time this option was still limited to two channels in France. (Boulos, 1995, p.69)

Another landmark moment in the history of Lebanese television is October 21, 1967, when CLT started broadcasting in color, becoming the third television station in the world (after the Soviet Union and France) to introduce the French SECAM color technology. (Boulos, 1995, p.88). Most of the world, at the time, was still watching television in black and white.

CLT and Tele Orient operated under strict censorship regulations that were clearly acknowledged in their respective transmission permits granted by the government. (Dajani, 2001).

Unwilling to jeopardize their relationship with the government, both stations showed little interest in airing local political controversies or talk shows. Thus the bulk of their programming was non-political, and consisted of imported films or videotapes. (Harb, 2011, p. 94).

CLT and Tele Orient, according to Boulos, reflected the country's economic growth and prosperity in the first half of the seventies, as well as its cultural and touristic boom, and helped create common values that unified Lebanese viewers. Those values contributed in the rise of the "Lebanese dream" success story in the late sixties and early seventies. (Boulos, 1995, pp. 98 - 100). On the regional level, Tele Orient and CLT (on a smaller level) were the main content suppliers of the newly emerging Arab television channels in the Levant, the Gulf and North Africa towards the end of the sixties. As a result, Lebanese soap dramas took over Arab airwaves. Those productions, whether in Lebanese dialect or classical Arabic language, spread the image of Lebanon as the Arab hub of entertainment, fine arts and television production, and made Lebanese actors become modern Arab icons of romance, love, magnanimity and manhood.

### **Lebanese War Time Television**

With the outbreak of the civil war in 1975, the glorious days of Lebanon television were over. By 1976 both CLT and Tele Orient were controlled forcefully by different political parties or militia factions; the Nationalist and Islamic forces, backed by Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), took charge of CLT headquarters in West Beirut, while President Sleimian Franjeh, and his supporting Christian factions, laid their hand on Tele Orient premises in East Beirut.

At this stage both stations were broadcasting contradictory news flashes and exchanging threats and accusations of betrayal and felony. (Boulos, 1995, p. 106). From entertainment to propaganda, CLT and Tele Orient suddenly, and unwillingly, found themselves heavily involved in the war activities. Nothing could better have better portrayed at that time the image of the shattered country.



**Tele Liban (TL)**

TL came to existence in July 1977 as a result of a partnership agreement between CLT and Tele Orient on one hand and the Lebanese Government on the other. Two main reasons pressured the birth of Tele Liban: the first was that both stations were under heavy financial losses because of the war, and the other was that the newly elected president of the time, Elias Sarkis, was in need of a media tool to promote his presidency and mission to bring back peace and unity to the country.

TL was half owned by the government, with the remaining half equally divided between CLT and Tele Orient. (Boyd, 1993, p. 80). The newly born station was to be run by a board of 12 members, 6 of which – including the chairman, were to be appointed by the cabinet (Council of the Ministers), and the other 6 by the private sector holding half of the companies share. (Dajani, 2001). TL was granted a 35 year monopoly over the airwaves till 2012 to strengthen its position, and encourage businessmen to invest in its private shares. This decision also aimed to protect the new and still weak company from any unwanted competition and to spare the government from any possible pressure to license militia owned television stations.

Tele Liban broadcasted two independent programs, one on channel 7 from Talet El Khayat (West Beirut), and another on channel 5 from Hazmieh (East Beirut). Both channels run autonomously under one programming administration and broadcasted one news bulletin.

President Sarkis failed to restore peace and stability, and as a result Tele Liban's self enhancement plans went in vain. TL's political stand point, at this stage, was to keep all rival militia factions satisfied. However, as it may seem to be impossible, none of the rival parties were happy. By this time, most of the militia factions were running their won mouthpiece radio

stations and were heavily involved in war coverage and propaganda. TL's constant assurances that "everything will be all right" were received as to be outdated and even ridiculous. As a result, the audience lost their trust in TL and tuned instead to local and international radio stations, thus making radio the Lebanese people's main source of news and information.

As for entertainment shows on TL, low budgets, damaged studios, unstable security situations, and immigration of talents, were among the many reasons that weakened the quality of Lebanese drama soaps and entertainment shows. Obviously, the days of Lebanese entertainment television were over. It was time now for the rise of political TV in Lebanon.

In February 1984, fierce confrontations between the Lebanese army and the Muslim opposition militias in West Beirut ended up in the division of the Lebanese army for the first time. The direct reason behind this round of violence was the signing of President Amin Gemayel's government on a peace treaty with Israel. Another Lebanese national icon was among the casualties of this round of war: the united "official" news bulletin of Tele Liban. As a result, two rival Tele Liban news bulletins came to coexist; one was broadcasted on TL's premises in dominantly Christian East Beirut (Channel 5) and the other from the dominantly Muslim West Beirut (Channel 7). The first bulletin reflected the views of Gemayel and his government, and the second was controlled by the Shiite Amal Movement militia and its allies. Never again the Lebanese knew a one news bulletin on their home screens. With some irony, it could be said that the rival news broadcasts of TL introduced political diversity on Lebanese television screens, but, as William Rugh put it, at the price of "even greater bias by individual broadcasting units". (2004, p. 198).

In the following years of the ongoing civil war, Lebanon's militia fractions realized the power of television as a war tool, and begun to seriously consider launching their own mouthpiece stations. By this time, running a television station had become easier and cheaper to afford due to the enhancement of broadcast technology. Consequently, unlicensed television channels began to emerge across the country. The result was confusion and chaos on the airwaves. Those stations were operated by the rival warlords and political parties, as part of their propaganda machines, alongside their military organs. (Sinno, 2008, Vol 2, p. 976).

### **Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC)**

The Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC) was the first unlicensed station to be owned by a militia faction. It was founded by the Christian "Lebanese Forces" militia. LBC started its transmission on August 23, 1985. Its main objective was to address the autonym Christian enclave, according to a declaration made by Karim Pakradoni, at the day of its launch in 1985. Pakradoni was one of the founding members of the station, and was in charge of its newsroom. In his media statement given in the opening ceremony of LBC, Pakradoni said that the station's priority was first to mobilize the Lebanon's Christian community, and second to reach out to the rest of the Lebanese. Lebanon, at the time, was practically divided into self ruled sectarian and religious regions with well defined borders and demarcation lines. Unable to set up terrestrial transmission antennas in the regions outside the control of the "Lebanese Forces", LBC's coverage during its first years was limited to the geographical area extending from Achrafieh (East Beirut) to Jbeil (North Lebanon).

Since Tele Liban's Channel 7 transmission was limited, at the time, to the Muslim enclave in West Beirut and South Lebanon, LBC's main competitor was TL's Channel 5 which



was broadcasting from the Christian area. Channel 5 was accused by the Muslims of favoring the Christian side, while the Lebanese forces accused the station and Gemayel behind it of being indecisive and not standing fast the interests or political privileges of the Christians.

Shortly after it started its transmission, the general manager of Tele Liban, Michael Samaha, (who was running Channel 5 and was a close political figure to President Gemayel) took LBC to court, under the accusation of violating TL's sole right of television broadcasting granted till 2002, but the civil war had weakened the judicial system in the country and the case never produced a judgment. (Harb, 2011, p. 100)

LBC attracted many TL senior employees and a cast of young and talented media graduates, who were able to put together a series of popular comedy and music shows. The station also produced a modern and dynamic newscast, with on the spot reports that introduced a new approach of covering news. (Dajani, 2001). Unlike Tele Liban's news bulletin revolving around the daily activities of the government officials, LBC's bulletin was more interested in its viewer's social needs and daily living difficulties. Of course "Lebanese Forces" were always in the headlines, but not in a way that would make their opponents refrain from watching. (Najjar, 2010).

LBC's chairman and CEO was Pierre El Daher, a fresh graduate from the University of Southern California, and a son of a prominent family from North Lebanon close to the "Lebanese Forces". El Daher knew from the beginning of his mission that in order for him to make the voice of the "Lebanese Forces" heard, he should not run a "Lebanese Forces" propaganda tool, but rather a successful commercial television station. (Boulos, 1995, p. 155).

LBC marked a turning point in the television broadcasting history and changed the spectrum of television in Lebanon forever. (Boulos, 1995, p.153). In the words of Jean Claude Boulos, “The public was eager to see modern content on their screens, and suddenly LBC appeared to do so. They used to record international satellite transmission and air them on their wavelength in Lebanon. This way LBC captured the Lebanese audience and drew advertising away from TL”. (Boulos, 1995, p. 156) From 1985 till 1989, LBC took advantage of the relatively stable security and economic conditions in the Christian East Beirut, and was able to operate and expand its broadcasting reach, popularity and advertising revenues.

In 1988, there were two governments exerting power in Lebanon; one was headed by the leader of the Lebanese army, General Michel Aoun in East Beirut and the other by acting Prime Minister, Dr Salim Al Hoss in West Beirut. Both governments were claiming their legitimacy, and accusing the other of being unconstitutional, using Tele Liban as their mouthpiece. Now, Channel 5 was the voice of General Aoun, and Channel 7 the voice of the Al Hoss government (Boulos, 1995, p. 144).

Those two governments were engaged in severe military clashes that brought Lebanon back to the international spot light as a hot zone, and resulted in the Taef accord that marked the end of the civil war. The regionally and internationally supported agreement was signed in 1989 by Lebanon’s parliament members (elected in 1972) in the Saudi Taef city and was later incorporated in the country’s new constitution. Taef urged to restructure the media sector in Lebanon. Dajani stated in this context that the deliberations in Taef clearly touched upon legalizing the existing de facto radio and television stations (2001).

On 31 January 1990, fighting erupted in East Beirut between the previous allies, Aoun (who opposed the Taif Accord) and the Lebanese forces (who endorsed the Taif Accord). Putting aside all their journalistic values, both TL Channel 5 and LBC transformed themselves to military barracks, and waged fierce campaigns against each other using graphic images, provocative hate speech, contradictory news flashes and military marches. Both stations were subject also to heavy artillery, losing much of their transmission power. With the end of the war after nine months, both channels were too weak to survive. (Boulos, 1995, pp. 147 – 148)

The end of this so called “War of Elimination” signaled the beginning of the reconstruction process. However, it was in this period that Lebanon was witnessing an unprecedented audio visual boom. As many politicians and businessmen hurried to set up television stations to establish their "right" for a television license (or their piece of television cake), Lebanon experienced in this period the birth of forty six television stations in a matter of few months. (Dajani, 2001). Among the big new comers was Future Television in 1993.

President Hrawi’s first government felt the urgency for introducing new legislation that puts order into the broadcasting field. (Dajani, 2001). This mission was seen as an essential part of the reconciliation process and militia disarmament. The acting Information Minister of the time, Albert Mansour, started working on an Audio-Visual Law in May 1992. At the same time, he worked on unifying TL under one administration.



**Media Law (382)**

The Audio-Visual Media Law (382) was issued in 1994. It was the first media law of its kind in the in Lebanon as well as the Arab World. (Rinnawi 2006). The law sets the grounds to regulate the airwaves and legalize private ownerships of radio and television stations in Lebanon.

For Tele Liban, the Law 382 was not much of good news because it deprived it from its monopoly over the airwaves till 2012. TL was given no compensation in return, other than exempting it from the fees generally required from all other media outlets (IIM, issue 5, November 2002). The law required that stations apply for licenses valid for 16 years. The licensing decision was made by the Council of Ministers.

In accordance with Law 382, the cabinet offered licenses to four commercial stations besides TL: The National Broadcasting Network (NBN), Future Television (FTV), Murr Television (MTV) and the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBC). The rest of the operating stations were given a time limit of two months to liquidate their businesses. Critics of this decision considered that the licenses were given on sectarian grounds. (Sakr, 2001, p. 50). Furthermore, speculations were raised that five stations was an excessive number for a small country like Lebanon with a television advertising market that could support two or three stations at most. (Sakr, 2001, p. 50).

Law 382 institutionalized “confessionalism” in broadcasting according to the words of Sakr, who wrote that with the licensed channels the Maronite Christians were supposed to content themselves with LBC, Sunni Muslims with Future TV, Christian Orthodox with Murr TV and Shia Muslims with NBN. (Sakr, 2001, p. 51). The sixth temporary license was eventually awarded in 1997 to Al Manar TV, affiliated to Hezbollah party, in support of its anti

Israeli occupation activities. The station was supposed to close down after the end of the Israeli occupation to South Lebanon.

After the election of President Emil Lahoud in 1999, the government of Prime Minister Salim Al Hoss that succeeded Hariri's government licensed further three stations: New Television (NTV), the Independent Communication Channel International (ICNI), and United Television (UTV). Those stations were owned by personalities close to Syria's Al Assad regime, and their applications were said to be rejected in 1996 because of their anti Hariri policies. Only NTV came to light, and the other two never started broadcasting.

### **Satellite Broadcasting**

Even before they were officially and fully licensed by the Lebanese government, LBC and FTV channels ventured into satellite broadcasting in 1996 becoming the first Arab satellite stations to broadcast from the Arab world: The Saudi MBC was then broadcasting from London and ART from Italy. (Rinnawi 2006).

As the Arabs wanted to "believe" that Lebanon's 15 year civil war was finally over, they tuned to the satellite programs of LBC and FTV (named: LBCSAT and Future International) and they liked what they saw! Those two stations promoted through their entertainment programs the face of the new Lebanon, emerging from the ashes of the war. The diversity and liberalism of both channels took the Arab World by storm, and quickly became the most popular and highest rated channels across the Middle East and North Africa.

This stage of Lebanon's satellite era will be fully discussed through different resources at a later stage in this study.





### **Theoretical Framework**

Since, as established in the literature review, branding theories are connected and interconnected, it would be unjust - not to say irrelevant, to study the brand formation of TL, LBC and FTV in 1995 based on one or two theories. Thus the theoretical framework of this study is based on the brand identity planning model (BIPM) developed by David Aaker. This model has been described as “the only comprehensive and cohesive model providing tools and theories on all aspects regarding the creation and communication of a brand identity”. (Friis, 2009, pp. 10).

#### **The Brand Identity Planning Model (BIPM)**

Aaker’s BIPM (2010, 79), illustrated in Figure 1, demonstrates how companies may plan and create their identities in terms of 12 elements categorized around four different perspectives: the brand as a product, brand as an organization, brand as a person and brand as a symbol. Those dimensions allow a brand not to be confined narrowly and widen its chances of development. Figure 1 also shows that brand identity comprises a core identity and an extended identity. The model relies primarily on the brand identity theory and consists of three major components that will be explained in the following parts. These components are: the strategic brand analysis, the brand identity system and the brand identity implementation system.

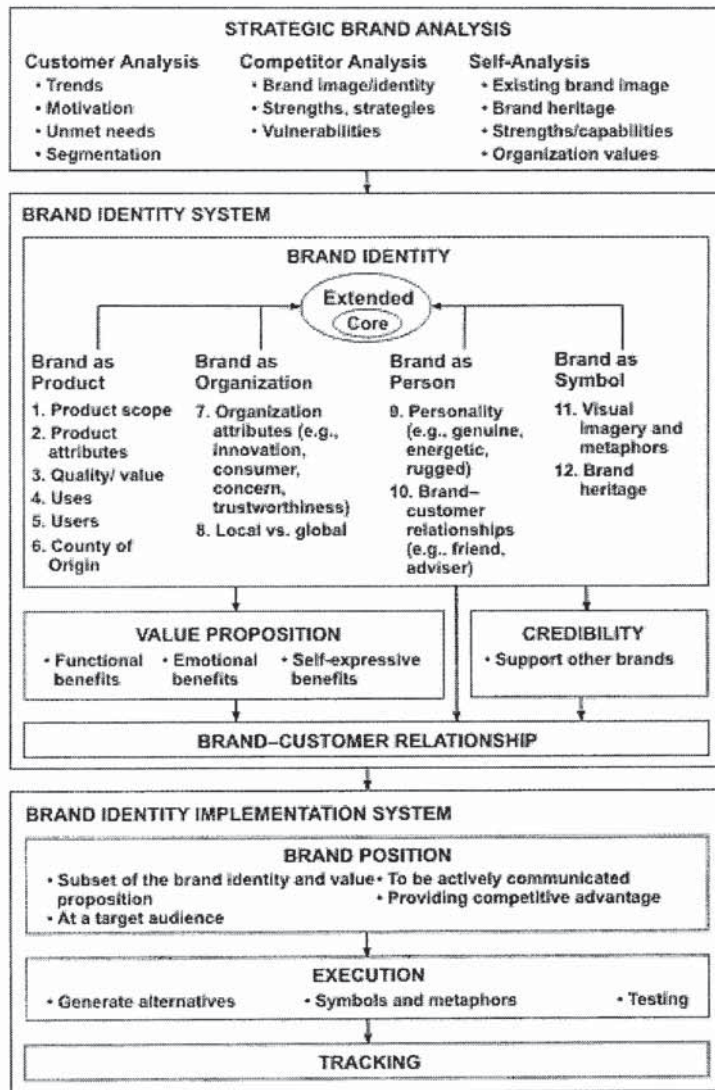


Figure 1. Brand identity planning model (Aaker, 2010, p. 79)

**BIPM: Definition of Brand Identity Theory**

A brand identity represents what a brand stands for and what it means. It communicates the purpose, principle, background and ambitions of the brand (van Gelder, 2005, 35) and also it establishes the relationship between the brand and its customer by generating a value proposition that involves emotional, functional or self-expressive benefits. (Aaker, 2010, p. 68).

A brand identity consists of its name, trademark, communications, and visual appearance. (Neumeier, 2004, p. 20). Those variables show how a brand is perceived by its owners, and reflect also by extension to the brand's company, organization or other related products. As stated, one of the most important aspects of brand identity lies in what is called the brand visual identity, which is the visual presentation of the brand. The visual brand identity includes the use of a logo (brand mark), specific fonts, colors, and graphic elements. Color, in particular, is an important element of visual brand identity since it provides "an effective way of ensuring differentiation in a visually cluttered marketplace" (O'Connor, 2011).

For example the use of the blue color was so dominant in the case of Future Television's brand identity formation that when the owners of Future TV decided to launch a political movement they adopted the blue color to resemble them in the Lebanese political sphere. It is interesting to note here that all Lebanese political parties have colors to differentiate them from each other to the extent that colors became a strong political identity by itself.

### **BIPM: Strategic Brand Analysis**

A brand analysis is the first stage in BIPM. It implies first defining the brand and second understanding how a brand identity is created. This process includes: Customer, competitor and self analysis. Those three variables provide information and tools to understand the factors influencing the creation of the brand's essence, as well as core and extended identities. Competitor analysis implies studying the competitors' strength, weaknesses and points of differentiation. Self analysis includes the understanding of the brand's existing image, heritage, and values. A good branding strategy aims to bridge the gap between a brand identity and a



brand image which represents how consumers - and not the owners, see the brand. (Neumeier, 2004, p. 20).

Customer analysis, on its turn, is a more complex task. Investigating consumers, according to Aaker, needs to be measured through four variables: trends, motivation, unmet needs and segmentation. (2002, pp. 189 - 193). Trends are best defined as the “direction or sequence of events that have some momentum and durability” that come to reveal the shape of the future. (Kotler, 2006, p. 77). Motivation stands for the fulfillment of the consumer’s definite functional, emotional and self expressive benefits. (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2006, pp. 98-100). The unmet needs are important for brands to state what makes them different when compared to their competitors. Finally, segmentation is dividing consumers into groups that either look for similar benefits or have similar unmet needs. (Aaker, 2002, pp. 189 - 193). The unmet needs are the focus point of brands, as they provide opportunities for points of difference. The purpose of the brand analysis aspects all brought together is to answer a set of four questions:

Who are you? (This question defines the core and extended identity of the brand)

What are you? (Defines the core and extended identity)

What about you? (Suggests value proposition)

What about you and me? (Suggests brand-customer relationship)

The fulfillment of these questions ensures that the brand identity has been successfully communicated to the audience. (Keller, 2008, pp. 59 - 61) it is to be mentioned here that the core identity of a brand consists of its most important elements. Those elements should reflect the strategy and values of the organization/brand. Furthermore they should differentiate the brand and most likely remain constant as the brand travels to new markets or extends to new products.

(Aaker, 2000, pp. 43-45). The extended identity, on the other hand, has a broader perspective. It provides texture and enables consumers to access more tangible elements related to the brand. So the brand can use the extended identity to increase the number of associations that are linked to it. (Aaker, 2002, pp. 87 - 89)

### **BIPM: The Brand Identity System**

The second stage of the BIPM includes treating a brand as a (1) product, (2) organization, (3) person and/or (4) symbol in order to well define its brand identity. In the words of Aaker, the purpose of those different perspectives is to guarantee brand texture and depth. (2002, pp 60–67). Those perspectives help brand strategists clarify, enrich and differentiate their brand's identity from those they are competing with.

Brand as product: The product perspective consists of six categories; product scope, product attributes, quality/value, uses, user and country of origin. The product factor is often over emphasized by managers, because it is linked to the brand choice criteria and the use experience. To avoid falling in this trap, managers are to distinguish between the product and the brand. The brand here must be more than the product itself for the obvious reason that the product could be copied. (Aaker, 2002, pp. 72 - 82)

Brand as organization: Here the product is seen through the attributes of the organization (company) behind it rather than on those of the product or service itself. Those attributes might include innovation, youth, or concern for the environment, and they form a code of values that according to Aaker are permanent and resistant to competitive claims compared to product attributes. Furthermore, unlike product attributes, they are often intangible, and give brands a sense of credibility. (2002, pp. 115 - 136)

Brand as person: Perceiving a brand as a person gives it a richer, stronger and more interesting perspective or character rather than when linked to product attributes. It also builds a personalized relationship between the brand and its customers. Aaker cited also that seeing a brand as a person may create “a self-expressive benefit that becomes a vehicle for customers to express their own personalities or personalities they desire to be” and also may help communicate the product’s attribute and thus, contribute to its functional benefit”. (2002, pp. 115 - 136). The relationship between brand and consumers can take various forms, such as a committed partnership, a childhood friendship or an arranged marriage. (De Chernatony & McDonald, 2001, p. 131)

Brand as symbol: According to Aaker, anything that represents a brand can be a symbol. A strong symbol provides consistency and structure to an identity, making it much easier to be recognized and remembered. Aaker highlighted different types of symbols: visual imagery, metaphors and brand heritage (the latter is only relevant when a brand has been established for an extended period and will therefore not be explained further in this thesis. (Aaker, 2002, pp. 153 - 135) The process of creating a brand identity includes primarily deciding which of those perspectives is to be considered more prominent for the brand. As there is no need to mention that those perspectives should be believable, it is said that general perspectives or values apply to all brands within the industry, while specific values separate the winner brand from the average. (Nilson, 2000, pp. 75 - 82). If a brand identity does not offer compelling reason to choose the brand over competition, consumers will look upon the brand as average and the mission of creating a strong identity will thus be unsuccessful. (Kotler, 2006, p. 315)

The next step in BIPM’s brand identity system is the value proposition and brand credibility, and both lead to the definition of the brand – consumer relationship. Value



proposition includes the statement of the functional, emotional, and self expressive benefits delivered by the brand that provide value to the customer. To explain more, it may be derived that strong brands need to have strong values that fulfill the needs of their current and future consumers. Those strong values provide the brands with commercial powers, and keep them in the customer's minds for a longer period of time. (Nilson, 2000)

Customer "needs" vary from meeting functional and rational to spiritual and emotional needs. (Pringle & Thompson, 1999, p. 26). The functional benefits are characterized by product attributes, which provide a functional benefit for consumers. If a brand can create a dominant benefit, it can dominate the market category. (Aaker, 2002, pp. 95 -97). The functional benefits, however, fail to differentiate the brand and limit the opportunity of brand extension. (Aaker, 2002, p. 96). On the other hand, the emotional benefits, unlike the functional benefits, are intangible and relates to the ability of a brand to evoke feelings from consumers during the communication process between the two. (Aaker, 2000, p. 49)

By having both functional and emotional settlements, brands will therefore be more effective in communicating with consumers. (Agress, 1990, pp. 1-18) As for the self expressive benefits, they exist when the brand provides a vehicle by which the person can proclaim a particular self image." (Aaker, 2000, pp. 50 - 51). In other words, it is when consumers are looking for a brand that offers them the opportunity to communicate who they are or want to be.

The other two features of the brand identity system are credibility and brand identity system. If the brand elements and value proposition are not correctly chosen and efficiently communicated, according to Aaker, the brand identity will not be perceived as credible by the consumers. (2002, p. 103). As for brand customer relationship, building a positive relationship

with customers is very important and vital. The relationship between brands and consumers requires constant attention since it is always evolving and it is affected by numerous factors.

### **BIPM: The Brand Identity Implementation System**

The previous stage of the BIPM analyzed the creation of a brand identity and communications that originate from it. This third and final stage of BIPM establishes how the brand identity is to be communicated to the consumers. This also leads to the execution stage where the general alternatives, symbols and metaphors are designed and tested. The stage of brand identity implementation system includes:

Brand position: Aaker defined the brand position to be an essential element of a brand's identity and value proposition. He said a brand's position should be "actively communicated to the target audience to demonstrate an advantage over its competing brands." (2002, p. 176). In brand positioning, communication objectives are developed and executed. Marketing and branding scholars put great emphasis on positioning. It is essentially a tool to develop more relevant and effective advertising. The position is the starting point for the advertising campaign, as it emphasizes which elements will be the most important in the communication process. (Nilson, 2000, pp. 130 - 133). The importance of the connection between what is communicated and the brand identity is very essential. It is extremely important that the brand identity, value proposition, etc. articulate logically with what is being communicated. If not, there is a problem.

Target audience: Stating the target audience is a major factor in creating the brand positioning. A successful brand positioning process must seek a well specified target audience. This target audience can be a subset of the target segment or be divided into a primary and secondary audience. The brand position will differ depending on each approach, but should ensure that the

position does not antagonize any of the audience groups. (Aaker, 2002, p. 179). Active communication is associated with brand image and how this image can be shaped depending on the situation possible changes. The use of active communication means that there will be specific communication objectives focused on changing or strengthening the brand customer relationship. (Aaker, 2002, p.180). If a brand relies solely on the brand identity and value proposition to passively and silently communicate itself, the brand identity will not be correctly decoded by the consumers.

Competitive advantage: Brand position should demonstrate a competitive advantage. This point of superiority should be generated from the value proposition and resonate and differentiate the brand from competitors. (Aaker, 2002, pp. 181-182). By demonstrating points of difference and superiority brands can access not only other target segments, but also attract consumers from other brands and industries to the brand. The points of difference are the most salient factors in choosing between various brands and by emphasizing the uniqueness of the brand identity, a brand can create more brand equity and a higher perceived value in the mind of the consumers.

Based on the Brand Identity Planning Model (BIMP) and the brand identity theory, this study investigates how the administrations of TL, LBC and FTV actively communicated their respective brands to their target audience (the Lebanese population in general). It also analyzes the visuals and lyrics used in those music videos to portray the identity they wanted to communicate to their audiences, towards who they are, what they are, and how they are different from their competitors.



### Methodology

This section describes the methodology deployed in this study. The nature of this study has called primarily for the application of the qualitative research methodology. The purpose of qualitative research is to explore and understand the meaning individuals ascribe to a social problem. (Creswell, 2009). In doing so, the qualitative approach, examines both the social settings and the individuals within this setting.

Qualitative approach might be confusing because there is no commonly accepted definition for the term qualitative. According to Wimmer and Dominick in their book “Mass Media Research”, qualitative researchers resist defining the term for the fear of limiting the technique. (2006, p. 113). They also considered that the term qualitative has been used to refer to (1) a broad philosophy and approach to research (2) a research methodology (3) a specific set of research techniques. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research use small samples that eliminate the ability of the researchers to generalize their results to the population. However, here it might be argued that it is easy to increase the sample size to avoid this problem and to eliminate the arguments against this type of research.

The main characteristics of qualitative research is that it uses a flexible questioning approach to collect and reach in depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. This understanding is reached with a set of static or standardized questions that are asked to all respondents. With the collected answers, the qualitative research provides a means for accessing “unquantifiable facts”. (Berg, 2007, p.8). Berg argued that qualitative techniques thus allow researchers to “share in the understandings and perceptions of

others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives". (Berg, 2007, p.8)

The techniques used in this study consisted of desk research, in depth expert interviews, and content analysis.

### **Desk Research**

A careful desk research was conducted in this study to review and extract existing literature on the concept of branding in general and branding concepts in media establishments in particular, as well as on the history of the Lebanese television industry. Local and international publications related to both areas in print and online were widely cited and included as primary literature. By definition, desk research involves collecting data from existing resources; hence it is often considered to be a quick and low cost technique as compared to field research. Desk research was very effective in the starting phase and was used as a benchmark in the process of data analysis.

### **Expert Interviews**

To have a better understanding of the conditions and motives that led to the production of the three self promotional advertisements studied in this research, intensive one-on-one interviews were conducted with seven Lebanese media professionals who were either involved in the making of those advertisements or were in a decision making position to design them and set their objectives. Those interviews were based on the general interview guide approach which

intends to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee, allowing at the same time a degree of freedom and adaptability.

The value of those interviews lies in the fact that the interviewees were at the highest level of decision making in 1995, and were directly involved in the making of those clips. The answers obtained provided this study with in-depth and first hand information and gave great insight to the conditions that shaped the branding decisions that they had in mind while producing those clips. They also served to confirm or correct some of the data obtained through the desk research.

### **Content Analysis**

The third technique used in the execution of this study is content analysis. This approach is frequently used and widely popular in all areas of mass media research because of its efficiency in investigating media content and answering questions related to it.

Content analysis is a systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information. (Walizer, Weinir, 1978). The analyzed content has to be selected according to explicit and consistently applied rules, including proper procedures and equal chances for all variables to be included. Another factor that should be respected in content analysis is objectivity. The researcher's own views, personal feelings and beliefs should not affect his or her approach or findings. Best way to ensure that, is to establish a clear criteria and procedure that justifies and explains the sampling and categorization methods. (Wimmer, Dominick, 2006, pp. 150 – 151).



### **Philosophical approach**

It is also of significance to mention here that this study has adopted the epistemological discipline – interpretive approach. When referred to in media analysis, or any communication model, epistemology describes the process of knowledge and its discovery. In brief, it is the way in which individuals use information to understand the society, or the world. This could be achieved by drawing connections between several aspects of learning while relating theories to the aspect of knowledge. As for the interpretive approach, it is due to the nature of this study, which included variables of specific nature (the three self promotional video clips), communicated through a specific medium (TL, LBC and FTV), in a specific time frame (1995).

In other words, the philosophical position to which the interpretive paradigm refers is the way we as humans attempt to make sense of the world around us. Adopting the interpretive pattern is used to understand and explain what is going on through the analysis of those TV branding commercials. The concern of working within this paradigm is to understand the fundamental meanings attached to the TV stations life or evolution. Consequently, studying those TV stations branding strategies means understanding the intentions of management or maybe giving interpretations which are not apparent even to those involved with the branding strategies. This interpretation would lead us to analyze the TV stations politics and branding orientation.

In the content analysis and discussion chapters, this thesis will discuss, through this interpretive approach, how those clips – messages – were analyzed, perceived and communicated by their senders. These parts will not touch upon how they were perceived by the viewers / the receivers.

### **Hypotheses**

This study raises and discusses two hypotheses:

Hypotheses 1: TL, LBC, and FTV aimed to transform their brand identities after the end of the Lebanese civil war to cope with the reconstruction process via three self promotional video clips produced in 1995.

Hypothesis 2: TL, LBC, and FTV intentionally or unintentionally followed the major international branding concepts and succeeded in establishing their unique brand identities.

### **Limitations**

The major limitation was the lack of academic studies on Lebanese television in general, and on Lebanese television branding activities in particular. This gap was solved through focusing on this angle in the extensive interviews conducted for this thesis with the key personalities involved in the making of the clips. Another limitation is the political factors that have affected the evolution of the Lebanese channels in the 90s. This factor was ignored in this paper. As for whether the brand identities of the three stations are still in effect, it was difficult to answer this question in light of the dramatic changes that the three stations underwent after the political turmoil in 2005. Another limitation could be the objectivity of the researcher since he has worked for TL in 1995, and is currently working for FTV.



### **Data Collection**

This chapter includes a detailed description of the three TL, LBC and FTV promotional clips, and summarizes the intensive interviews conducted with the personalities who were either involved in the creation of those clips or were in a decision making position to design them.

### **Description of the Clips**

#### **TL: Aban Aan Jed.**

(Concept by Ramzay Najjar and Eli Khoury, music and lyrics by Ziad Rahbani, directed by Sharif Sabri).

Tele Liban's "Aban Aan Jed" clip (From Father to Grandfather / Duration: 2 minutes 35 seconds) opens up with a night scene: A shooting star passes above a two floor villa establishing the "magical" nature of this music video. The second shot takes the viewers inside the house where a family (the husband, wife, and their 10 year old son) is watching television in a modern style sitting room. The parents ask their son to go to bed, and they continue watching television.

In the kid's room, suddenly something strange happens: the bicycle outside the kid's room moves, its mirror reflects a light on his face, and then his closet door opens. The television in the living room starts blurring and its screen projects into the Kid's room wall. The kid's phone rings, he picks up to hear "Allo... Hayete"—an immediate reference to the iconic 1970s TL "Allo Hayete" hit series. Looking astonished and overwhelmed, the kid finds himself in a dimly lit studio among dancers preparing to start a performance. Then comes a montage edit sequence of black and white shots and sound bites from TL's famous television moments, including

classical iconic figures to the likes of Hind Abillama, Abo Melhem, Abo Salim, Said Akel, Nabih Abou Al Hossen, Fairouz, Georgina Rizk, ChouChou, etc. The shots also include archive footage coming to life in a modern context: actress Elsie Fernaine gets out of her rigid frame and moves around as the kid passes by here. The next scenes were chosen from the seventies such as some famous detective series genre, “Gone with the Wind” American classic motion picture, Julio Iglesias equivalent character and an NBA basketball scene to show the diversity and international edge of the station’s programming.

As the child looks stunned in this fantasy sequence, suddenly he appears himself on the television screen in the sitting room. The surprised parents run into his room to discover that he is actually sleeping. Still astonished, the boy smiles in his sleep and the clip ends with the TL’s new logo and the capture line “Tele Liban: The Nation’s Imagination.”

Concerning the “Aban Aan Jed” song, it offered very little in terms of promoting the station, or mentioning it. The lyrics were more of playing on words - the famous Ziad Rahbani style. A repetition of disconnected sentences that meant: “From father to grandfather (a famous Lebanese saying), seriously, I love you. I love you when you talk to me, when you complain, when you sing”. Another play on words was on “bess” as “broadcast” and “bass” as only. (Rahbani, the son of the famous Lebanese music legends Aasi and Feriuz, was and is still known for being a subversive, rebellious, and youthful music composer and leftist political activist, always the face of the rebellious generation and modernity in the Lebanese modern pop culture).

#### **LBCI: Shara’et Shams el LBC**

(Concept by Pierre El Daher, music by Ziad Boutros, lyrics by Elie Salibi, directed by Toni Kahwaji)

LBCI's clip "Shara'et Shams el LBC" (The Sun of LBC Rose / Duration: 4 minutes 44 seconds) starts with night scenes of old Lebanese fishermen sailing their little boats at the break of dawn. Then people emerge in the darkness of night into a forest holding up lanterns, and lighting up candles as the lyrics of the song open with "When it was night and there were tears, and people lit up candles and lanterns", the visuals literally match the lyrics. The lyrics continue to say the main refrain of the song repeated at every verse: "LBC's sun rose, and changed the whole story", and that is when a light – in the shape of LBC's logo – is flashed across a window. When a man opens that window, a strong light hits his face – the sun literally rises, stronger than ever, rather blinding the scene. This is when "LBC's sun" starts rising across the entire nation bringing light over darkness, and eventually, as will the clip show later, over the whole world.

From the seaside (probably Jbeil – the coastal city with the famous ancient Phoenician port), the sun rise shots continue in an edit intercut over the famous Roman Heliopolis of Baalbeck (the city of the Sun) and then over the cedars in Beshare (the cedars of God) – the two locations being the most iconic and symbolic sites of Lebanon, indicating heritage and diversity.

From Lebanon, the clip moves to Thailand with shots of Tai dancers wearing traditional Tai costumes and dancing near "10 Years LBC" banners. Then a transition to the deserts of Tunisia with a little boy running to his uncle and yelling in Tunisian dialect that he saw "LBC's entourage" pass by in the desert. Here a troupe of men on camels in the desert is seen carrying flags of Lebanon with LBC's logo imprinted on them. We get the notion that LBC is expanding its territories, shining its sun around the world, and sending troupes or missionaries to spread the world across the world. The lyrics at this stage say "No matter how small the dream is / even if it does not have wings to fly / LBC's dream will soar above the clouds like an eagle".



As the music shifts between Thai and oriental beats the lyrics say: “It spreads its light across the world / with willpower, sound, and vision / Ten years with LBC, we have become a legend”. The journey continues to Fiji in the South Pacific Ocean with LBC flags on elephants around exotic Fijian tribal men shouting that LBC is here, and later Spain (Europe) with LBC flags all over a stadium witnessing the Spanish traditional bull fight. Momentarily, the music shifts into traditional Spanish guitar tone and the camera follows a matador first doing his prayers in front of a small church and then celebrating his victory in the stadium.

A quick shot at Sydney Opera House passes by, and then a fast paced montage of Thai, Fijian, Lebanese, and Spanish dancers dancing for LBC in their own traditional way. Among the scenes one archival shot is used of through a television set in the ruins of Baalbek showing black and white scene from TL of Caracalla performance in Baalbek, same place where the new shots were taken with Caracalla dancers dancing with LBC flags in their hands. As the music reaches a crescendo, the song ends, with footage of a Lebanese flag fluttering as well as a collage of all scenes, symbolizing the diversity and the “international” feel that the entire clip has been made to advertize and push.

### **FTV: La' Younak**

(Concept, lyrics and music by Ahmad Kaabour, directed by Rashid Kanj)

“La'Younak” (For Your Eyes, 1995) was the title of two promotional clips that were produced and aired by FTV in 1995. Both set the mood of the message (or brand) that the station wanted to transmit to its audiences, they were both also within the same musical genre; they featured the same characters and theme. The duration of the first clip was 50 seconds, and it consisted of one verse: “Darling, go search for your future, do not cry over the past, the future is

yours". The second clip (duration: 3 minutes) was more elaborated, and had a stronger impact. That is why this study will focus on the latter.

"La'Younak" begins with a scene of a young woman (Sana Ghorab –one of the station presenters) in rather conservative Arab clothing - an abaya gown with a blue veil loosely covering her hair. She opens the window of her traditional 19 century style Beirut house to a scene of a calm house. She holds on to the bars of her window to overlook her calm and peaceful garden. In an external shot, the woman looks as if she is behind prison bars waiting for something to happen. After that bubbles come out around her head to show a black and white scene from the first "La' Younak" clip. Then an Abou El Abed like character (a traditional Beirut figure) appears approaching the house wearing a black-and-white suit and the red Beirut tarboush (fez) on his head. He also (amateur actor Sami Hamdan) stops to remember the first clip. During that, he envisions the woman opening the door for him and then slamming it in his face. As he stops to see if she is on the window, a traditional Arabic "takheth charki" music band follows in a Charlie Chaplin silent film manner. FTV's Abou El Abed is the lead singer of the band, and he is there to show his love to the lonely woman inside the house. The band members sneak into the garden and they start playing their music, while the singer jumps up the fence and sings: "O darling of my soul, you bet you can take me for granted / Your eyes are the most beautiful eyes / I loved you from the first sight / And everything for your eyes goes easy".

This verse is repeated for three times in three different tunes and audio arrangements. Visually, the clip continues with the band playing, the artist singing and the woman listening in parallel editing. They never meet in one shot. The two location video clip (inside the house and in the garden) ends with a sound of applause that sounds to be taken from Em Kalthoum live

performances in the 60s: The band salutes the camera while the woman overlooks the scene from above with a smile of content as if she will never stay alone anymore.

### **Content Analysis**

In “From Grandfather to Father” clip, TL based its strategy to make use of its old, black and white, past tense, and “sleeping on its glories” persona and converted it to a strong attribute to create credibility and nostalgia. This nostalgia and the clip behind it was intended to replace “old” station with “pioneer” station, and to make TL’s “black and white, past tense” experience stand for a colorful fantasy like experience that embodied “the nation’s imagination”.

For LBC, the goal was to change its image from being a militia-owned, Christian station to a pan Lebanese station. To do so, LBC branded itself to be an international channel that went from Lebanon to conquer the globe. The “LBC Sin Rose” clip also presented the station to be a global success story that brings pride to Lebanon. By going international, LBCI did not condone LBC. To the contrary, it made use of its success in the mid-eighties when its transmission was limited to target solely the Christian enclave to say that “in the worst times of war, it was alone to stand by the Lebanese viewers who were abandoned by the rest of the stations”. Moreover the clip associated LBCI with the sun and Lebanon: the sun being the source of light and life and Lebanon being another synonym for LBC. This is why the main location of shooting the clip in Lebanon was Baalbek – the city of the sun in its Roman civilization. As for Lebanon the song said bluntly: “When the world sees LBC flags, it says this is Lebanon”.

FTV, on its part, was in a different position. It was still young and inexperienced and its main objective of “For Your Eyes” clip was to show that it has roots and that it is well grounded



in the Lebanese society. To attain this sense of belonging and legitimacy, it resorted to the “Abou El Abed – the popular folk Beirut character as a national and authentic value.

The following part analyzes the three clip’s content through their conceptual ideas and featured characters and semantics. This analysis is supported later in the interviews conducted with the key makers of these promotional clips.

The TL clip was based on Lebanese classical television characters either through actual black and white archive footage or through reenacted scenes from popular Lebanese drama shows in the seventies. Those scenes were performed by the same actors who have initially played them. Also the clip featured some young Lebanese actors in situations to support the story line of the clip (the television backstage fantasy). Those scenes were fully framed and in colors, while the archive footage were showed in classical wooden picture frames. The aim of those shots was to create nostalgia, and to personalize the memory of TL’s classical footage. TL clip featured 21 of those television characters in an overall duration of 1 minute 30 seconds, or 58% of the whole clip’s duration. Out of this 58%, 26% (24 seconds) were black and white archive footage, and 74% (66 seconds) were reenacted scenes.

The characters in the archive footage featured: one singer (Feiruz), one poet (Said Akel), one talk show host (Najib Hankash), one society starlet (Lebanese winner of Miss Universe pageant in 1971 Georgina Rizk), and five actors (in order of appearance: Fehman, Abou Melhim, Hend Abi Alaameh, Nabih Abou Elhesn, ChouChou). It is interesting to note here that two of those actors were Christians, two were Muslims, and one was Druze. The creators of the clip deny that their choice of those characters was made on any sectarian grounds. The non actors chosen for the clip were all Christians. This remark derives its importance from the main

message that Tele Liban belongs to all the Lebanese regardless of their political or religious backgrounds.

The link between the archival footage and the new reenacted scenes was made by famous actor Elsy Ferneyini who comes to life from her wooden frame when the boy passes by her. As she moves, the sequence of the senior actors from her generation starts: These scenes include famous actors: Elie Sneifer as a mafia person, Philippe Akiki as the crazy lab professor and Antoine Kerbaj, as a detective.

The clip also included three shots to indicate the international perspective of TL: a black basketball player wearing NBA outfits, French singer Julio Iglesias look-alike performing on stage, and American actors Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh look-alikes reciting a famous scene from “Gone with the Wind” motion picture. The scene is accompanied with an audio sound bite of the film’s famous “Frankly my dear I don’t give a damn” line. The other only sound bite used in the clip is “Al o Hayete” (Hello my dear) taken from the famous “Alo Hayete” soap and considered one of the most memorable lines from the Lebanese seventies drama.

Unlike TL personalized clip which was based solely on the station’s post war, classical TV entertainment personalities, LBC’s clip promoted the station as an organization. Among the many adjectives used in the clip to describe LBC were: “leading”, “challenging”, “dream come true”, “international”, “epic”, “big eagle” and “sun”. Those semantics were used to generate a feeling that LBC was strong and not to be compared to any of its competitors: “When it knew what it wanted, it started its challenge... it placed itself with the stars, and forgot all the others next to it”. The “others” implied to in this verse were no other than Lebanon’s other local television stations.

The main variable used in the clip was the LBC logo which appeared for 68 times in 28 different shots or same shots taken from different angles. 44 of those times the logo appeared printed on the Lebanese flag to associate the station to Lebanon. This connection was further reinforced in the verse: “Wherever you mention LBC, they say this is Lebanon”. With the repetitive appearance of the logo, the word LBC was mentioned 15 different times in the 4 minute song.

With its “modesty apart” descriptions, LBC clip also sought to communicate a message of being credible and trustworthy. In this respect, LBC’s clip started with the following verse: “When the night was tears and candles – in an indication to war – the sun of LBC rose and the subject was changed”. This idea could also be seen in a latter verse: “It came from here (Lebanon), and it will stay here (Lebanon), and its sun will shine on the world”. The significance of this verse comes from the fact that LBC, at the time, was still broadcasting without any official licenses, and it was in the middle of a fight with the government on whether it will be granted legal permit to continue its transmission or not.

Another strong variable in the clip was the use of international locations to communicate the message that LBC is diverse and going international. The clip showed the Lebanon- LBC flags and the LBC logo in the desert of Tunisia (38 seconds), streets and bull fighting stadiums of Spain (51 seconds), jungles of Fiji (35 seconds), and in front of Buda a temple in Thailand (40 seconds). Some quick shots show also some locations in Australia without establishing it as a major site. The only explanation for that is that they were archive footage and were not actually intended for the clip.



In Lebanon, the clip was shot in three locations: Baalbek, Byblos and Arz (The forest of Cedars). Those three locations represent the Phoenician, Roman and biblical heritage of Lebanon, and they were correlated to different Lebanese religious communities during the war. Through those three locations (almost 50% of the clip's duration), LBC was communicating a message of national unity and diversity.

In comparison to TL and LBC, FTV clip is closer in its approach to the TL clip rather than the clip of LBC. Like TL, it was personalized and there was no direct reference to FTV as a television station. The word "future" was mentioned only in the first clip in the context of: "Do not cry over the past, the future is yours". Obviously, Future television had no "past" to rely on. This is why it referred to popular symbols from the sixties: the choice of the music style (60s popular melody) the old Beiruti house, Abou El Abed figure, the oriental band, and of course the veiled woman. Those choices aimed to give the station, perceived as "modern" and "new", some authentic Lebanese roots. Black and white shots for two of the clips main characters were also used - in the second clip specifically - to consolidate this authenticity.

"Simplicity" is another attribute that can be attached to FTV's "La' Younak" clip, and the message it wanted to communicate. Owned by a billionaire - listed on Forbes' richest and most famous people of the world, FTV would have been expected to produce a high budget, more sophisticated clip. However, the clip's basic, not to say minimal and amateurish style, came to reflect the station's aim to give itself a popular twist that would speak to the hearts of its average Lebanese audience. In short, FTV wanted to show that it speaks the same language of its audience. The channel, in Ahmad Kaabour's words, has felt that it had developed an "alienated" brand image because of what it was famous for: high budget, up to date American series, and also because of the controversy that was surrounding then Hariri's plans to build a new,

cosmopolitan city over the ruins of the “Beirut”. If Hariri, through FTV, was trying to reach the population of this old Beirut, “Abou El Abed” was the only person to help him out and that’s why “Abou El Abed” was more present in the clip than FTV as a corporate brand.

Another factor that could be discussed in comparing the three clips under study is identity. LBC portrayed a cosmopolitan identity through going international. Even the shots taken in Lebanon sounded as if taken from an international guide promoting the country’s touristic sites. The presence of the Lebanese people in the clip was through the “Caracalla” folk dancers in Baalbek and two long shots of a villager next to a cedar tree and two fishermen in Jbeil. In contrast the clip showed close ups of street people in Spain and popular market places in Thailand and Australia, and tribe members in Tunisia and Fiji. So did TL through the choice of the family in its clip (supposed to be the station’s audience). This family with their modern furniture house, if shown in a different context, would have been easily taken to be European or American. This sense of no definite national identity portrayal of Lebanon and the Lebanese in both TL and LBC clips is a common practice in Lebanese media. The channels wanted to avoid the country’s historic turbulent debate over its national identity since Christian communities used to perceive themselves as the ancestors of the Phoenicians and Muslim communities wanted to be part of a bigger pan-Arab nation. As a result, various Lebanese historians argue that Lebanon developed to be a nation-state with no sense of nationality to unite its people. (Nasr, 2010, p.1)

TL, being involved in the post war process addressed this issue by the portrayal of its fictional drama characters to be national icons since they were the main and only source of home entertainment before the war. LBC put Lebanon in a cosmopolitan context and dealt with its Lebanese footage almost the same way it did with Fiji and Thailand. The significance of FTV clip, compared to TL and LBC’s clips is that it portrayed a direct and clear national identity of



how it saw itself, its audience and Lebanon in general. With no doubt, FTV stood out to be Arab and this gave its brand a strong sense of belonging.

Looking at LBC's clip from this context it might be argued that the "Christian" station echoed in its subtext the Christian version of Lebanon since the Phoenicians were known to be an enterprising maritime trading culture that spread across the world. The dominant "Arab" identity in the FTV clip was given an international twist through Abou El Abed's imitation of Charlie Chaplain, the American actor, who had a strong fan base in Lebanon as an international cult symbol. It is worth to mention here that FTV's Abou El Abed and his oriental music band were put in a musical competition with a western rock band in a third "La' Younak" clip produced few years later. In this completion it is needless to say that Abou El Abed won the heart of the clip's this time "more liberal" female model!

### **In depth Interviews**

The seven key-people behind those three music videos were interviewed for this study. The aim of those interviews was to underline their contribution to the making of those clips and to the setting of the branding strategies behind them. Those interviews also aimed to recall the political and media conditions that shaped their decision to understand the messages embodied and how they reflected the political and social situation in Lebanon in the mid nineties.

The questions were asked within the general interview guide approach and the same general areas of information were covered with each of the interviewees. Those questions will lead to provide evidence or refute the hypotheses of this study. The main points were covered through the following set of questions:



- What was the main target of your branding plan and how did you implement this plan in the produced video clip?
- What were the conditions that led to your decision?
- What were the strategies used in designing the produced music videos / promotion?
- How did this music video incarnate your branding messages?
- What were the symbols used to serve your branding messages?
- Do you evaluate your work to be successful or not and how has it affected the image of your brand and its future growth and development?

### **The Interviewees**

This section entails: a brief biography introducing each of the interviewees (in alphabetical order) and then the data collected from these subjects to elucidate their vision and aims on the branding level. The seven personalities interviewed were:

- Mr. Ahmad Kaabour (1955) is a singer, music composer, actor and political activist renowned in Lebanon and the Arab world. While still very young, Kaabour became famous for his 1975 song “Ounadikom” (I am calling you out) considered to be a national anthem by Lebanon’s leftist and Islamic factions during the civil war. He is also known for his songs dedicated to Palestine and the Palestinian cause. After the war, Kaabour’s name was associated with Future Television’s “La’ Younak” (For Your Eye) series of promotional music videos that branded the station and became smash hit songs on the local music charts. Kaabour has released six studio albums and acted in many films including the French “Carlos” motion picture in 2010.

- Mr. Ali Jaber (1961) is a media consultant and TV celebrity. He was the CEO of Future Television, founded by Lebanon's Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, between 1992 and 2003. He led the station to become one of the highest rated television stations in the Middle East. After FTV, he chaired Dubai Television and was part of its rebranding process. Since 2011, Jaber is the Group TV Director of MBC, responsible of the Arab world's largest satellite broadcaster's 13 operating television stations. He is also the current Dean and Assistant Professor of Communication and Information Studies of the Mohammad Bin Rashid School Of Communications at the American University of Dubai. Jaber became lately a house hold name after serving as a celebrity judge on MBC's Arabs Got Talent popular show.

- Mr. Eli Khoury (born 1960) is a strategic communications professional, specialized in corporate and government image and brand development. In the early nineties, he cofounded Saatchi & Saatchi - Levant which produced TL's "Aban Aan Jed" clip and designed its branding. Currently, Khoury heads a multimillion communication group, Quantum, which includes: Quantum Communications (a strategic communications consultancy) / Brand Central (a branding and strategic design firm) / Vertical Middle East (a regional media planning and buying agency) Firehorse Productions (a television content company).

- Mr. Fouad Naim (1945) was the CEO and General Manager of Tele Liban between 1993 and 1996. Working to introduce public service television model in Lebanon, his main mission during his TL mandate was to reunite and rebrand the shattered semi state run station. Naim started his artistic career in the 70s as a theatre actor and director. Along with his wife, famous actress and activist Nidal Achkar, and many other prominent names, he was part of what is called a "reformist revolutionary" movement in Lebanon's elite cultural scene. This movement was associated with politically controversial theatrical plays banned by the government. With the

eruption of the Lebanese civil war, he moved to Amman, where he headed the office of the French News Agency (AFP) in Jordan (1976 – 1987), and then the agency's Arabic service offices based in Cyprus (1987 – 1993). Naim chairs since 2002 the Paris based "Radio Orient", broadcasting to an international Arabic speaking audience in Europe.

- Mr. Pierre El Daher (1957) is one of the leading names in the television and entertainment production in Lebanon and across the Middle East. Best known to be a pioneer businessman and media personality, he managed to keep LBCI as the highest rated television in Lebanon. El Daher has been the chairman and CEO of the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC) and later Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI) since 1985. In its early beginnings during the civil war, LBC opened the age of political television broadcast in Lebanon paving the way for more than 80 channels to operate soon afterwards. On the other hand, LBCI was the first satellite commercial television station to broadcast from to Middle East in 1997. In addition to Lebanon, he has been involved in setting up television channels in Saudi Arabia and Iraq. El Daher made it to the list of Top 100 Most Powerful Arabs in 2007 by Arabian Business.

- Mr. Ramsay Najjar (born 1950) is the CEO and founder of the Strategic Communication Consultancy (S2C). As a media and marketing strategist and consultant, he worked for various Arab governments and leading businesses. He chaired Saatchi & Saatchi – Levant which he cofounded with Eli Khoury, Rouge Inc., and the marketing department of the School of Advertising at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA). He was also the President of the International Advertising Association - Lebanon Chapter. Najjar has written several media and philosophy books: "Views, Reviews & Previews", "Arab Philosophy through History" and "So That God Comes Back to Lebanon".



- Mr. Tony Kahwaji (born 1966) is a prominent television producer and director. His name has been associated with LBC's most popular entertainment shows for the last decade, including the famous Star Academy reality talent show. Kahwaji is also known for being behind Lebanon's first music videos. In 1995, Kahwaji directed LBC's "Sharakit Shams el LBC" clip and was involved in branding the channel as a whole.

### **The Interviews**

TL: In an interview with him, Fouad Naim considered that the 1995 "Aban Aan Jed" clip was not just a video promotion, but it was part of a bigger plan. TL's CEO of the time and the mastermind who planned and designed the station's comeback said: "We were not only reviving TL's heritage and trying to regain its position as a leading Lebanese television station, but also we were telling our audience that the war is over, and that the glamorous days of the 60s and the 70s, when Lebanon was named the Switzerland of the Middle East, are back".

To translate his vision in a creative visual message, Naim commissioned Saatchi & Saatchi – Levant to create an integrated marketing and advertising campaign to bring the TL across. The Saatchi & Saatchi – Levant was well known for setting new standards in brand design across the region and had become a key component of the Saatchi & Saatchi Worldwide network. The contract aimed to create a new brand identity that reflects the station's new spirit and a new strategy. It included the creation of the promotional video clip, in addition to a new logo, graphics, press kit and outdoor advertising material for the station in general and for each of its new shows in particular.

In my interviews with them, both Najjar and Khoury who work now in separate competing corporations recollected their TL project experience with enthusiasm. Khoury

affirmed that TL's "Aban Aan Jed" campaign was the first comprehensive television station branding project in Lebanon and the Middle East. He said: "If we were to consider one of the popular definitions of brand identity that it appeals to the senses - meaning it can be seen, heard, watched, then I would easily say that never before any Lebanese or Arab television station has went through a brand identity building. We used to work all over the Middle East and thus I know what I am saying. What we worked on was to build awareness and extend viewer's loyalty to TL. Our aim was to invest in the future of TL and for that we used the station's past which is in this case its most remembered classical moments". In accordance with modern branding disciplines we based our campaign on TL's heritage to express why people should trust and choose it over other competing stations and with people we meant elder viewers of TL as well as younger generations who have lost touch with the station".

On the strategies adopted in designing the "Aban Aan Jed" campaign, Najjar and Khoury said their goal was to fuel recognition, amplify differentiation, and make the big idea of TL accessible. Both revealed that their strategy was based on double approach: one was creating nostalgia towards the past of the station and the other aimed to show the stations modern and diverse face. Our message, Najjar confirmed, was to stress that TL is for everyone, not an old station for the elderly audience only, but a young and modern station for all generations of viewers. Concerning the nostalgia factor, Naim pointed out that "Our past, usually referred to as the golden age of the Lebanese television, was our asset that we wanted to build on to let the audience come back to us and believe in us". This came to coincide with big hopes prevailing in the country that the war is over. The majority of the Lebanese people were singing at the time Zaki Nasif's 'Raje'e et3amar Lebnan' song" (Lebanon will be reconstructed again, and will become better that it was). It was that moment that we captured". In this sense, TL's facelift was

received by the wide audience as part of rebuilding the Lebanese state and reinforcing all government related organizations in what was called then “the return of the legitimacy” and the process of reconstruction and reconciliation.

Naim, Najjar and Khoury agreed that TL embodied the collective memory of all the Lebanese people regardless of their religion or politics. The black and white archive, they confirmed, reminded the Lebanese audience of the old good days of peace and prosperity, and its drama characters ignited nostalgia to the united Lebanon”. This image was what the Lebanese wanted to identify with in the mid nineties and this is what they got.

As for portraying TL as a modern and young channel, Khoury assumed that the aim was to target younger audiences who had lost touch with pre war Lebanese television. He added: "When combining iconic and highly evocative footage with young and modern icons, TL was calling for change. Post-war Lebanon belongs to the new generation. In other words, the past, present, and future, are all interlinked and are all being brought forth by TL’s rich history and its passion to evolve itself’.

This is why, Khoury argued, the archive material was presented in a very modern context through a young and modern looking family watching TL, as well as through a modern dance choreography (for the time) merging Western and Oriental dance techniques. As for the use of the 10 year old boy to be the hero of the clip living the TL experience in his dream, Khoury claimed that it was to create emotions and attachment. The boy stood for the future... and that was the centerpiece of the story. The aim of this choice was also to target elder generations of viewers to identify with according to Khoury who asked: “Isn’t TL a part of childhood memory to half of the Lebanese elder population”? On this point, Najjar considered that the whole story



was in the kid's imagination and the TL as we branded it in the slogan of the clip was the nation's imagination".

To achieve their goals, TL management had to reinforce their new branding image through working on the enhancement of the channels production content both in entertainment and news. According to Najjar, TL under the Naim administration achieved this goal to a large extent due to a series of new talk shows and news programs that were launched in this period. "Naim worked to be independent from both commercial and state intervention", Najjar affirmed: "It was an impossible formula to achieve... but he was successful to a large extent". On his side, Naim considered that "because TL belonged to none of the political parties or political figures, we were able to operate more freely and without political constraints. All we had to do was to preserve a balanced coverage of the political activities. As we succeeded in doing that, our main focus was on covering public interest stories and opening to Lebanon's civil society that was on the rise. Thus the daily formal news of the president of the republic, for example, was not anymore our first item in the news casts as it used to be traditionally". According to Naim and Najjar, this back in 1995 was a big change for TL and for Lebanon's political / media scene.

TL's campaign paid off quickly. The "Aban Aan Jed" clip was received by the audience and critics with enthusiasm. "The feedback was very positive from all over Lebanon" exclaimed Naim and added, "The station succeeded in reestablishing itself as being first television to broadcast in Lebanon, and in one year of time it became second in terms of ratings after LBC".

LBCI: At a time when TL was branding itself as being the first in Lebanon in terms of history, LBC was working on a different line to establish itself in the leading position not only in Lebanon but in the world. "LBC is big. It is international and no other local station can compete

with it. This was our message and we made sure to say it clear and cut". In those words Pierre El Daher remembered the message of "Shara'et Shams el LBC" that he designed eighteen years ago. Then satellite broadcast for local Lebanese television stations was still considered science fiction. El Daher added: "Going international was the vision of all LBCI. We wanted to take Lebanese television broadcast one step ahead. It was a step that other local stations were short to think of... In two years, we started our first satellite broadcast on ArabSat and our dream came true". Prior to that not all LBCI's staff was on the same wavelength with El Daher. Director Toni Kahwaji, recounting his experience in directing "Shara'et Shams el LBC" clip confirmed he did not share El Daher's view: "After all those years, I can say that we dealt with this clip as if it was the boss's whim or caprice. One thing was for sure, we were not international. Our transmission was hardly covering all Lebanese territories, and we were going through some administrative crisis because of the political situation. But this is how El Daher saw LBC and we were translating his vision into a visual message hoping that he proves us wrong". Kahwaji added: "We wanted to impress our audience and the Lebanese in general who were not used to watching LBC during the war for political or sectarian reasons".

No matter what their initial motives were, LBC's clip succeeded in making an impression and its impact was strong as its lyrics suggest "LBC changed the standards and became the star that made all other stars envy".

In his book "Television: History and Stories", Jean-Claude Boulos considered that 1995 was a turning point in the history of LBC following three years of crisis on the political and media levels that raised speculations on the future of LBC due to its connection with the Lebanese Forces.(Boulos, 1995, p. 167).

When asked about this, El Daher agreed but it was obvious that he did not want to go into the details: “Yes it was a crisis of existence for LBC, but we were wise enough to win the battle because the audience was on our side” El Daher assumed. At the time, the Lebanese Forces party was opposing the Syrian backed government and LBC was taking a stand in favor of what was called then the “Christian frustration” facing the post “Taef Accord” regime in Lebanon. In this context, Kahwaji assumed that: “The anti LBC political sentiment reached its peak in 1994 when the government took the decision to ban news and political shows on all operating television stations in Lebanon except for TL. The decision was mainly directed towards LBC which was accused of provoking sectarian hatred”. Those accusations came following an explosion that hit Al Najat church in Jounieh, 15 km north of Beirut, killing ten people at Sunday mass. The leader of the Lebanese Forces Samir Geagea was accused of being responsible; he was jailed and the Lebanese forces party was banned and the government put its hand on its possessions. “Those were really tough days”, Kahwaji added: “We were expecting the army intelligence to shut down our transmission at any moment. All Lebanese Forces properties were being taken over by the army.... We were just waiting”. Kahwaji considered that what gave the LBCI the strength is that it succeeded to present itself as the voice of the Christian community in Lebanon. Shutting down LBC would have meant silencing the strongest Christian media establishment and no one wanted to hold that responsibility”.

In 1994, LBC had cut off its relation with the Lebanese forces. Its ownership was transformed to El Daher, and a coalition of dominant Christian and Muslim business men and politicians, including the pro Syrian politicians Sleiman Frangieh, Micheal Faroun and Issam Fares. The station changed its name as well from LBC to LBCI and increased its capital to 36



million dollars. This move paved the way to LBCI to gain its license in the previously mentioned Audio Visual law 382.

Putting the “Shara’et Shams el LBC” in its historical context, El Daher explained: “We wanted first to rebrand the station. Our brand identity was that LBCI is international, it is glorious and it is big. Our second aim was to say LBC was loyal to its audiences during the war hardships, and it is their only hope and inspiration for a better future, and those ideas were well mentioned in the lyrics. Our third goal was to promote the new name of LBC as LBCI. Knowing how difficult that was, we worked on branding the new logo and name in the clip and in different languages and settings”.

El Daher added: “Our other aim was also to associate the LBC with Lebanon because this is how we wanted to shift from addressing the Christian community only”. This explains why LBC logo was in printed on Lebanon’s national flag while the song literally said: “Every time they see the LBC, they say this is Lebanon”. On this point, Kahwaji affirmed that the best way to promote the new identity of the station was resorting to the symbols of the most famous mythology in the Lebanese popular culture: the Phoenician epic of the phoenix that rose high out of the ashes. He said: “Because this concept better appealed to the Christian community, we thought referring indirectly to this symbol will keep us close to our audience and at the same time it will not provoke the Moslem audience. By that time the Phoenician origin of the Lebanese people was not a matter of dispute and all parts were over this endless discussion”.

Kahwaji refused to consider that the mere concept of the LBC crews spreading all over the world also echoes indirectly the Phoenicians - known as sailors. He considered that this was not how they saw it... they were promoting the concept of international, and this reference was

not preplanned: “What we really cared about was to brand LBC with a sense of glory, victory, even majesty. After all this was the first time the station was broadcasting legally. It was a won battle on LBC’s tenth anniversary.

Another dimension in the stations new identity was religious and national diversity. On this issue, Kahwaji affirmed that their priority was to show that LBC stands for diversity, not only on the Lebanese, but on the international level.

This is why, he said, the station showed Bedouin tribe members in a praying like position in the desert of Tunisia, as well as Buddhist monks in Thailand, and Christian believers praying in front of the Statue of Virgin Mary in Spain. This was all shown in a big context of Lebanese, Thai, Spanish, Fijian traditional dancers dancing all together under the flag of LBC.

Looking at it from another angle, Kahwaji pointed out that at the time LBC clip was aired the video clip industry was at its peak on the international level with multimillion striking clips of Michael Jackson and Madonna. The Lebanese young audience was taken with those clips, and our clip came out to be on the same level of glamour and grandiose. “The success of this clip would best be measured that no one cared to ask if LBC hardly covering Lebanese soil was really international!”

Alongside the clip, LBCI launched a series of new popular talk shows and programs that increased its ratings.

FTV: Comparing the three 1995 promotional clips under study, Ali Jaber considered that unlike TL and LBC, FTV’s “La’ Younak” clip did not aim to rebrand the station’s image, but rather it was its first serious effort to brand itself in the first place. Jaber, who was FTV’s CEO at

the time, thought that it was very important to highlight this fact because it makes the whole difference as he said, clarifying: “FTV had no history to hide and it was not carrying any burdens of the civil war on its shoulders like the other two stations. We were new, young and fresh. Right our image was appealing to what might be considered niche market, but still there was no specific brand identity attributed to us”.

As shown in previous chapters, Future Television was one of the tens of television stations that came to existence following Taef Accord that brought the Lebanese civil war to a halt in 1990. Future Television had the biggest budget and was the fastest growing among those newborn stations because of its owner’s persona, Rafic Hariri. “Hariri was a rising star on the Lebanese political scene and that was a big asset to Future Television” Jaber affirmed: “With our state of the art equipments of the time, ‘Anglophone’ programming choices and ‘sophisticated’ or ‘avant-garde’ use of color and graphic designs we were considered to echo the emerging political class which represented the new image of Lebanon. This image, we have to confess, was not very popular in many circles not because it was good or bad, but because it was new... and people as much as wanted change they were afraid of it”. He added: “The target of “La’ Younak” campaign was to bring FTV, and what it represents, closer to the wider audience, to give the station the popular twist that it missed”.

FTV assigned the popular singer and composer Ahmad Kaabour to design the last piece of its branding puzzle. “He was the best man to do it”, affirmed Jabber, “And he did a great job”. Kaabour put his “La’ Younak” experience in the context of his personal career as a leftist political activist and an artist committed to the national causes of Lebanon and the Arab world. “I belong to a generation that lived the rise of big dreams and bigger defeats during the years of the Lebanese civil war. In the mid-nineties, most of my fellow activist friends were living



confusion and loss... some had resigned from public life, others were imprisoned into their sectarian cocoons. In this state of mind, I entered FTV to meet an energetic, young and creative group looking forward for a fresh start. It was the new Lebanon. I sensed a project of national mobilization in the making and I wanted to be part of it. This group of youngsters was working with great enthusiasm. What they lacked, however, was the experience, the wisdom and the sense of direction. I felt I can fit in and that was my contribution”.

Out of this entire political and social backdrop came the philosophy of “La’ Younak”, said Kaabour and added: “For Lebanon, it was a political rebirth momentum. In this moment, my message to FTV audience was it is time to let free of frustration and refraction and to be part of the rebuilding process of Lebanon. My aim was to bring about a positive inspiration and as the song said: Do not cry over the past, the future is yours”.

Kaabour denied allegations that the clip was meant in one way or another to revive the “Sunni Beirut” or the Sunni population of Beirut. He said: “Beirut was open to diversity all through history. It is a coastal city and like all coastal cities it can not be sealed off. My Beirut is the capital that opened its heart to all the Lebanese”. For Kaabour his achievement was on a different level. “My most impotent contribution to Beirut as a city was that I brought it to the Lebanese popular culture. The local in most of the Lebanese arts has always been the village, and the values have always been the village values... here, the local was the city and the clip was preaching values of the big city population. I wanted to say that Beirut city was not only about highways and commercial malls, it was about the ordinary Beirut people who made the real spirit of the Lebanese capital”.

As for the creative concept of “La’ Younak”, Kaabour remembered that he caught this popular slang term from a conversation he was having with a taxi driver on his way to Future Television headquarters. “It stood out. It was real, popular, and it had a visual context. I started my creation process from this word, and the rest just came along”, Kaabour said: “My priority was not only to promote for FTV, it was to revive lost values”. About the “La’ Younak” melody, Kaabour said: “The music was inspired from a repertoire of the popular Egyptian mid fifties and sixties songs. There was a sense of a noble popular feel in those songs and thus the “La’ Younak” came to echo a long memory that was overtaken by contemporary music”. Kaabour’s expectations did not prove him wrong. The song quickly hit the Lebanese charts competing with the pop songs of the time and it was often played as well in nightclubs all across Lebanon.

In addition to its music, Ali Jaber considered that the “La’ Younak” clip appealed to the viewers of the station and attracted their attention for its simplicity, the Abou El Abed like character played by Sami Hamdan. “Future was standing for the new rich and famous class of Lebanon. But yet the clip was produced to be very simple with no visual effects, no extravaganza, just basic close ups and clear cut shots. It was just a minimal clip with a simple message of nostalgia to the old Beirut that had been destroyed by the war, and that has been lost in its future reconstruction plans”. As for the clip’s main character, Jaber said: “The Abou El Abed like personality portrayed hardcore Lebanese identity, in a modernized, appealing sort of way. It was presented with a Charlie Chaplin twist, another sign to indicate the international diversity of Beirut”. According to Kaabour, the “La’ Younak” character not only echoed Chaplin, but also the famous Lebanese comedian, ChouChou, who had established the first daily theatre in Beirut in the mid sixties. “ChouChou was a Lebanese icon and his shadow was

obvious in the clip to my generation of viewers who had missed the old days of down town Beirut”.

So did this clip brand Future Television? Yes answer both Jaber and Kaabour and both agreed that it did that without one single indication in the clip to Future Television except for the end still caption. “The man singing in the clip was not showing love to the woman behind the window, nor to FTV. He was showing love to himself and to his city emerging out of the war... This love was demonstrated in the melody and symbols used of Abou El Abed and his music band” said Kaabour. On whether there was any political agenda to indicate indirectly to Hariri through this clip, Jaber and Kaabour denied any hidden political agendas. “People started singing this song to Rafic Hariri, we had nothing to do with it”, Kaabour said adding: “In this context, the strength of ‘La’ Younak’ came in the following years when it not only branded Future Television but the Future political movement”.

Does the value of FTV branding video lie in its subtext? It is difficult to answer this question exclaimed Kaabour. It gave the man what he needed, the popular twist for the wide audience to identify with”.



### Discussion

The following chapter discusses the three self promotional clips through the Brand Identity Planning Model to study if and how they match with today's understanding of branding and brand management.

As established in the theoretical framework, BIPM includes several stages. The first stage is brand analysis and it consists of customer, competitor and self analysis. This analysis was well covered in the previous chapters, thus this part will only touch upon the three station's attitude towards segmentation which is one of the main attributes of the customer analysis. It is important to note here that TL, LBC and FTV had it clear to stay away from any direct segmentation of the Lebanese audience. Instead their aim was to address the whole population since the country was in a reunification and reconstruction mood following years of war and demarcation lines. The three stations tried to comfort the "sectarian" suspicions of their most loyal audiences. This is why maybe an old woman appeared in a quick shot praying in front of a cross and a picture of Virgin Mary in LBC's clip. This shot was taken in Spain (and not Lebanon) to avoid any local implications that might imply direct segmentation. This is why also the woman in FTV's clip was veiled and the Sunni face of Beirut was more prominent. As for TL's clip, the choice of featuring classical stars from different religious backgrounds shows the station's attention to this factor.

The second stage of the BIPM suggests that in order for a brand to have texture and depth it must examine itself as a product, an organization, a person and or a symbol. TL and FTV focused on their brands as person approach. TL was the nation's imagination, fantasy and heritage all personified through the faces of its popular actors and singers.

As for FTV, it was Abou El Abed, an oriental band, a veiled woman, or all of those. The word “Future” was not used in the clip as a product or organization, but rather as a meaning or a choice that the viewers should create for themselves.

LBC showed less concern to be perceived as a “person”. In the contrary, it promoted itself as a symbol - through the extensive use of its logo and name (visual brand identity), and as an organization, that “challenges all the rest”, and stands aside its consumers (viewers).

On another level, TL’s archive, LBC’s Phoenician metaphor (mentioned in the content analysis), and FTV’s Abou El Abed demonstrate that the three stations derived their identities from the heritage of Lebanon. In other words, they built on the past to draw their future.

Those choices made by the three stations came in accordance with Ots vision presented in his book *Media Brands and Branding*. In this context, Ots considered that media firms hold tight to their most important asset - their audiences – during unstable environments. As Lebanon (through its peace process) and the Lebanese media (through the audio visual media law discussions) were undergoing a phase of change, the three stations found out that the best way to secure their survival was to build strong, unique, and long lasting bonds with their audiences.

The brand identity system includes also addressing the value proposition and credibility aspects that eventually lead to the shaping of the brand – consumer relationship. In defining their value proposition, TL pursued the heritage value at a time the Lebanese were thought to be in need to reconnect with their past. Similarly FTV worked on the authenticity value, while LBC worked on being innovative and pioneer through going international and breaking all boundaries. By doing so, the three stations chose to stress on their emotional and self expressive benefits to demonstrate their core values, visions, key beliefs, backgrounds and ambitions. Obviously the

aim was to show that they are part of their viewer's lives, not only as images and symbols, or for what they do, but more importantly for what they resemble. Those aspects were communicated in the three clips on the extent of their functional benefits which are mainly to entertain their audiences and inform them of what is going on.

The final stage of BIPM is the brand identity implementation system which includes brand positioning and plan execution. On the execution level, it is important to underline first that the three station's work coincides with the media branding principles drawn by Ots and Siegent in their book *Media Brands and Branding*. As Siegent pointed out, self promotion is the most effective model for media institutions to communicate their brands. Furthermore, because of ad-avoidance phenomena, those self promotions were made in the form of music videos, very popular at the time, to create buzz and have news value for print media to talk about them as entertainment and not merely as promotional material. Those clips were aired heavily and repeatedly throughout the programs, and in peak times, to ensure that they make a sufficient impact.

Concerning the aspect of positioning, TL positioned itself to be above the other stations, and portrayed its brand identity as a national icon through its "The nation's imagination" slogan. However, it was difficult at that time to let the audience forget the past sectarian rival stations. To be up to their new brand identities, TL, along its "From Grandfather to Father" clip, had to unify its transmission, and in hence its production. Thus, the station employed a young and talented media cast, raised its capital, and moved towards to a public-service television model like that in some of the European countries. These efforts marked what is commonly perceived to be the golden era of Tele Liban between 1995 and 1999 and put TL in the second position among its competitors.



LBC, on the other hand, was still perceived in 1995 as the militia owned, illegal channel, that preached a federal Christian state in 1985, and that was heavily involved in the inter-Christian so called “War of Elimination” that shattered the Christian society. The “Sun of LBC Rose” clip escaped this image announced the birth of LBCI and branded the new LBC as an international station at a time its transmission was hardly covering the whole of the Lebanese territories. The station worked on this corporate image through turning into a full-fledged media corporation with a diverse spectrum of new shareholders, as well as through launching a wide variety of entertainment shows that no other station could compete with. The station also sponsored international and local music events, partnered with international affiliations in countries hosting Lebanese immigrants (Canada), and covered extensively the news of Lebanese immigrants. It also started a sister francophone channel “C33”. Those efforts reached their peak in 1996 with the launch of the first free-to-air satellite station (LBCSAT) in the Middle East, allowing the station to reach Arab and Lebanese viewers across the world.

As for FTV, it moved on a slower pace to meet its brand identity as shaped in “La’ Younak” clip. In 1996, FTV restructured its ownership with shareholders from the Lebanese business and social elite. It also brought TL’s Fouad Naim to chair its board in light of his success in TL. (Naim did not last for long at FTV and he soon resigned). In 1999, the station launched a series of more popular social and political shows to address a wider Lebanese audience. By that time, Hariri was in the ranks of the opposition, and thus the station had a wider political margin. In the meantime, FTV had started its satellite transmission. Future International was met with quick popular appreciation with Arab viewers considering it to be more trustful to them, compared to the “Christian” LBC.

TL's branding success could be measured through its increased viewership rates and advertising revenues, as well as through its leading position in Lebanese drama (which reminded the Lebanese of the 70s successful productions) and news coverage. LBC's and FTV's branding success, on the other hand, could have better been measured through their satellite success on the pan Arab level. This satellite era television has been well studied and documented in various international resources because of the West's interest in studying Arab societies in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks that hit the United States of America.

In her book "Arab Television Today" (2009), Naomi Sakr indicated that the Lebanese influence on the Arab satellite realms was huge, and that the Lebanese post war television stations dominated the Arab satellite broadcasting in content and style.

Furthermore, the literature reviewed for this study shows that the Lebanese Satellite broadcast did not only influence the Arab media scene, but also some of the Arab social and political norms, as well as the image of Lebanon in the Arab world. According to Rinnawi, this influence "gave Lebanon a regional influence disproportionate to its small population and geographic size" (2006, p. 45). Here it could be argued that LBC and FTV have contributed in the branding process of the new post war Lebanon. El Daher stated in this context that if all the Lebanese politicians were to be gathered in one place to scream that the war is over and that Lebanon is a safe place for tourism and investment, they would not have been as credible as a one minute of entertainment show on LBC or FTV showing happy Lebanese people singing and dancing in television studios in Beirut.

Rinnawi considered that this Arab transnational media (referring to the Lebanese channels and AlJazeera) have contributed to the rise of what he called McArabism. This term,

according to the Palestinian media scholar, represents a new pan-Arab identity that was a result of the convergence between local tribal identities with globalization. McArabism, in Rinnawi's words, had a huge impact on Arab society, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and new representations of the West and the Islamic and Arab World. (2006, pp. 45 - 48).

Those references and many other underline the role played by the Lebanese satellite television channels, namely LBCI and Future International, in shaping the new Arab world. It is a role that could not have been played by both channels if they were not to go through their 1995 branding process. It might be argued here that if "Facebook" is said to be responsible of triggering the Arab uprisings in 2011, it all has started with the Lebanese satellite television channels in 1996, and this of course is a topic worth to be addressed later in a different study.

Another point that this study wanted to discuss is whether the brand identities of TL, LBC, and FTV are still in effect today after almost two decades of their making. Unfortunately, this discussion in today's conditions is almost meaningless because of the radical changes that have taken place on the Lebanese media scene in recent few years, including the decline of Tele Liban and FTV on the terrestrial level, and LBC and FTV on satellite for various political and media reasons that are outside the scope of this research.



### **Conclusion**

This study examined the three 1995 promotional clips of TL, LBC and FTV were in accordance with the international standards of branding and brand formation known today.

Overall, the importance of those clips does not only rely in branding the post war corporate identity of their respective television stations, but also in signaling the end of war time television in Lebanon, and paving the way to the birth of the modern Lebanese television industry.

In an equally important track, this study framed those clips within the historical development and evolution of the Lebanese television industry, and traced the political and media conditions that influenced their making. Back then Lebanon and the Lebanese audio visual media were undergoing a transitional phase between war and peace on the national level, and between the decline of radio and the rise of television on the media level. It is important to mention in this aspect that this study shows the necessity of a scientific investigation of the programming content presented by those stations during this phase. This will help to better understand the dynamics and thoughts which established modern Lebanese television. Today, as new “transitional” conditions prevail on the national level (the escalation of the political and sectarian tension threatening of a new civil war), and on the media level (the decline of television against the rise of social media and online culture), this study might be helpful to archive what TL, LBC and FTV - and the rest of the operating local stations - had to do to rebrand themselves and to take the Lebanese television industry to the next level.

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