OBAMA'S 2008 CAMPAIGN:

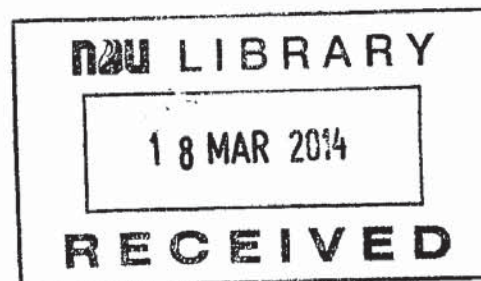LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLIED IN THE LEBANESE CONTEXT

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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Fall, 2013

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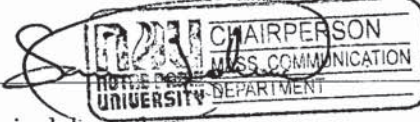Department of Media Studies
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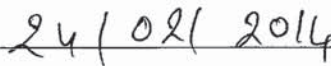Chairperson of the Department: _____

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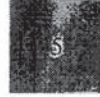
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Acknowledgments

Abstract

It was Obama's 2008 brilliant campaign that shed light on the meaning and importance of a consistent political marketing campaign. It proved to have significant effects on people's voting behavior and it inspired many individuals including the author of this study who accordingly sought out answers on one main question: How can Lebanese political entities use the political marketing lessons developed from Obama's 2008 campaign and apply them in the Lebanese Context? The author conducted several interviews and examined various literatures to collect the necessary data and then interpreted them as per her observation, acquired knowledge, and critical thinking. It all resulted in the idea that the key to a successful campaign lies not in the use of social media but in the selection of the right message and the right strategies that reinforce this message.

Introduction

Overview

The author's educational background in marketing and her personal interest and experience in the political field enabled her to realize that in politics, just as in business marketing, the larger a population, the harder it is for candidates/sellers to reach voters/consumers individually and to build personal relationships with them. Generally, marketers and politicians try to communicate with their audiences using ever-changing and ever-developing media tools. Before 1952, political communication was mainly limited to print media (Rothschild, 1978), however and as time passed, other platforms came in conveniently for elections and political campaigns such as the radio, the television and the internet. As a matter of fact, during the 1930's, radio was "the most immediate and intimate means of communication" ("FDR broadcasts first fireside chat", 2013) and President Franklin D. Roosevelt took the lead to effectively benefit from this period's new medium. He addressed the American citizens with around 30 speeches broadcast via radio, speaking on various topics ranging from unemployment to New Deal economic policies to fighting fascism in Europe. Roosevelt successfully used the radio for what became known as his "fireside chats" and he "reached millions of people who found comfort and renewed confidence in these speeches" ("The Fireside Chats", 2013) and thus elected him. Similarly, in the 1960's, President John F. Kennedy was the first

president to productively use television, the new medium at that time, to speak directly to the American people. He benefited from his remarkable performance and telegenic appearance to conduct, for the first time ever, live televised debates that positively affected millions of viewers while those who merely listened to him on radio believed him less knowledgeable ("John F. Kennedy", 2013). "In November's election, Kennedy won becoming the youngest man and the first Roman Catholic to be elected president of the United States" ("John F. Kennedy", 2013). Following the same suit, President Barack Obama in 2008 took advantage of the new medium of the current period, the internet and particularly social media, and used it remarkably in his campaign. According to The Washington Post (2008) "3 million donors made a total of 6.5 million donations online adding up to more than $500 million. Of those 6.5 million donations, 6 million were in increments of $100 or less." Obama's team worked to make new young voters more involved in the election process and "the campaign was notable for its unprecedented use of the Internet" ("Barack Obama elected as America's first black president", 2013). On November 4, 2008, Obama became the first African-American president of the United States of America.

This is to say that the term "new media" is relative to time; each period of time has its new medium and to this point every medium has had its golden age and Star Politician. Presidents Roosevelt, Kennedy, and Obama, each initiated a new trend in political marketing and knew how to positively affect people using existing mass media tools. Currently it is still Obama's period and trend. Thus,

until a new medium emerges, the author, as a Lebanese citizen, believes that the Lebanese political community should take Obama's campaign as an example to follow and fine tune the lessons learned to fit into the Lebanese context.

Rationale and Objectives

The 1997 film, *Wag the Dog*, a movie produced and directed by Barry Levinson was the first to introduce the author to the concept of political marketing. The movie talks about Mr. "Fix it", a spin doctor, called to adjust the scandalous situation the President got involved in. Eleven days prior to election's day, the President was accused of sexual misconduct with a young girl. His spin doctor had to distract the public and alter their attention towards a different crisis. Using media manipulation techniques and with the help of a movie producer, he created a war with Albania and managed to convince the public that it was real. The citizens believed the whole scenario and forgot about the president's misconduct. In addition, the produced war helped in refining the image of the president by showing his good will and compassion towards the soldiers and the Albanian people.

At the time the movie was recommended by the author's "Media and Society" teacher for the purpose of studying the extent to which media could influence audience's perception and the agenda setting theory with regards to political situations. Today, the approach is different; the author is referring to *Wag the*

Dog as a notable support to the basic concept of this study: the art of using media in political marketing.

Recently, President Obama mastered this art during his 2008 presidential campaign. His main goal was to engage the Youth in the electoral process and increase his popularity among this particular segment. Being aware that this target group is highly technology-oriented and known as the internet generation, he focused his campaign efforts on social media platforms. This played a powerful role in reaching the segment group and changing the election process. In fact, U.S. News (2008) reported that "Exit polls revealed that Obama had won nearly 70 percent of the vote among Americans under age 25—the highest percentage since U.S. exit polling began in 1976".

 Obama's internet campaign changed the way politicians reach out to their constituents (Miller, 2008). This study will show case the important lessons and refine them so they will be applicable to the current Lebanese political agenda. It will offer an academic approach for political consultants to refer to for future campaigns in Lebanon.

Chapter I: Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Marshall McLuhan advanced many thoughts about marketing and technology and developed a number of theories and aphorisms around the effects and impact of new media on society. At the time he talked about the "global village" and the "age of information" and held that "the medium is the message". Many scholars like Jonathan Miller (1971) and Raymond Williams (1990) criticized him and rejected his observations for they sounded irrational. However, with the emergence of the internet and new media technologies the interest in McLuhan's sayings reemerged and "what was once dismissed as typical McLuhan jeremiad is now accepted as the common denominator of our collective lives" (McLean, 1998). Nowadays Marshall McLuhan is considered, as described by Adrienne L. McLean (1988), the "prophet of the future" with "the future" describing the electronic current condition.

His idea of "global village" is now associated with the new media evolution; the world became a single village, an online community where everyone knows almost everything about everyone and individuals around the world communicate easily at any time. But, what relates most to our study is McLuhan's famous phrase "the medium is the message". For him "effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts, but alter sense ratios or patterns of perceptions steadily and without resistance" (McLuhan,

1964, p.18). In other words, how the form of the medium affects people's perception of the world is more significant than the context; for example one unchanged message presented on Television, posted online and, printed on paper will generate three different impacts. To explain further, in his book *Understanding Media*, McLuhan (1964), wrote:

> The railway did not introduce movement or transportation or wheel or road into human society, but it accelerated and enlarged the scale of previous human functions, creating totally new kinds of cities and new kinds of work and leisure. This happened whether the railway functioned in a tropical or northern environment, and is quite independent of the freight or content of the railway medium. (p.8)

Certainly, in the 2008 US campaign, social media did not introduce politics or political marketing or debates or slogans into human society, but it created a new style of communication and a new marketing trend that, independent of its content, generated an unusual impact. This applies with equal validity to the different and continuously evolving media tools.

Definition of Political Marketing

Political marketing is relatively a new concept in the field of political science. As its terms indicate, it is the combination of both marketing and politics. In other words, soundly and simply, political marketing implies the use of marketing tools and methods in political practice (Le Baron, 2008). Most current definitions of political marketing can be regarded as extensions of the meaning of business marketing (O'Shaughnessy & Henneberg, 2002). In the largest sense and according to the American Marketing Association (2007), political marketing is "marketing designed to influence target audiences to vote for a particular person, party, or proposition". Actually, the first definition of political marketing can be attributed to Shama (1976), who held that it is "the process by which political candidates and their ideas are directed at voters in order to satisfy their potential needs and thus gain their support". Both definitions clearly emerge from a business marketing perspective as they describe political marketing as a process of exchange between two actors. Similarly, Mauser (1983) writes, "Political marketing is a set of practical procedures for identifying effective campaign strategies based upon modern marketing principles and techniques." Newman (1999) elaborates by explaining that:

> The procedures involved include the analysis, development, execution, and management of strategic campaigns by candidates, political parties, governments, lobbyists, and interest groups that seek to drive public opinion,

advance their own ideologies, win elections, and pass legislation in response to the needs and wants of selected people and groups in society. (p. xiii)

In the same approach, Butler and Collins (1994) argue that political marketing "employs many of the same techniques used in product marketing, such as paid advertising, direct mail and publicity" to influence people's votes in elections. In other words, as stated by Lees-Marshment (2001), it is about "political organizations adapting business-marketing concepts and techniques to help them achieve their goals."

As for Lock and Harris (1996), they proposed a relationship-based approach that introduces an exchange of values between candidates and voters at both levels: collective and individual. Actually, they described political marketing as "the study of the processes of exchanges between political entities and their environment and amongst themselves, with particular reference to the positioning of both those entities and their communications". Also, building on this former approach yet focusing more on long-term purposes, Henneberg (2002) suggested that "Political marketing seeks to establish, maintain and enhance long-term political relationships at a profit for society, so that the objectives of the individual political actors and organizations involved are met." Finally, Winther-Nielsen (2011) considers political marketing to be "concerned with reciprocated exchange of value between political entities and their environments". (p.29)

So then, with all these definitions, what is political marketing? The various definitions contain several commonalities and lately major differences between business and political marketing have been identified throughout the development of political marketing theory (Baines et al., 2003; Henneberg & Ormrod 2013). Thus, as per all the above examination, it is important to note that in political marketing the focus is essentially on relationship management and exchange of values. Also, political campaigns can be regarded as attempts to pinpoint voters' needs and wants, and to satisfy them with a political service of product (or the promise of one). So the author deduced that, in the broadest sense, the main objective of political marketing would be to convince voters to shift their voting behavior or perhaps to reinforce that behavior which requires a democratic environment. So, simply put, political marketing is an approach that seeks to facilitate political exchanges and establish and maintain relationships with voters through the use of interactive methods within a democratic setting.

Effects of Marketing on Voting Behavior

Even though the practices and methods of modern political marketing have improved and increased, televised political debates remain the most viewed and influencing technique in political campaigns (Norton & Goethals, 2004). Audiences claim that they watch debates to gather information about current matters and to decide for whom they will vote (Sears & Chaffee, 1979) and voting behavior is highly connected with the assessments of debate winners or losers (Schrott, 1990). So, not surprisingly "spin doctors" are called to action

and two key marketing strategies are applied: the 'pitch' followed by the 'spin'. For instance, these strategies can be used before and after a debate respectively. A pitch is a prediction of the performance of a candidate in a debate, while a spin is a contextual analysis of the performance with respect to the pitch (Norton & Goethals, 2004). In other words, assume there are two candidates about to debate where one is more qualified than the other; political analysts supporting the less qualified candidate throw in a "low pitch" deliberately where they predict that the performance will be poor in the debate (Norton & Goethals, 2004). However, these analysts know that the performance will not be so poor and that they are exaggerating so that, after the debate, their predictions would be deliberately falsified. Here, they "spin" the outcome in favor of the candidate by comparing the prediction with the performance, showing that the performance positively exceeded expectations by far, knowing that the expectations were 'planted' (Norton & Goethals, 2004). These strategies are not without risk, but they have worked in the past especially "when the spin was supplied by a credible media source" (Norton & Goethals, 2004). In truth, many political analysts and researchers such as Olson find these strategies to be a gamble. Olson, Roese, and Zanna (1996) stated that people interpret new information by contextualizing it with pre-existent knowledge and expectations, which seemingly makes a pitch a very advanced and effective tool. However, without the right "spin", or with competing campaigns revealing what the pitchers and spinners have done, a candidate can suffer great losses in voting capacity.

Yet again, there are many examples that prove how effective this strategy is, particularly the 2000 presidential elections of the United States. In the second Bush-Gore debate (George W. Bush and Al Gore), Bush was "low-pitched" by the campaign and the press, and when Bush exceeded expectations, he was perceived to have won the debate when perhaps in other context this wouldn't have been the case (Norton and Goethals, 2004). As well, in the 2008 presidential elections, spinning and pitching were not excluded from both opponents' strategies. According to Lashley (2009), the 2008 election presented an unusual amount of media coverage, and of course with that coverage came the spinning of facts. Both candidates Barack Obama, and John McCain were guilty of spinning the facts in order to better present themselves to the public. Lashley (2009) explains that there were many accusations that Obama was Arab Muslim and the republican politicians went as far as to question his "blackness" however, with the right spin, Obama has been evaluated as debate winner.

Furthermore, the author believes that the spinning strategy is not solely used in debates. For instance, the movie *Wag the Dog* cited earlier illustrates the application of this technique in a different context.

On the other hand, there is also branding. Theoretically, Andres (2012) defines political branding as giving powerful "reasons" to people as for why one party or candidate is better than the other, publicizing aspects as to why they are superior whether in their experience, proposals, results or achievements. Practically, in Appendix A, the idea of branding is demonstrated in an inspiring

way by an anonymous blogger who cynically evaluates the credentials of both candidates. Now, the theory of branding has become a way for a public figure to build an identity to communicate to the public (Scammell, 2007).   Brands influence consumer behavior and consumer experience by directly influencing consumer perceptions and opinion (Chandler & Owen, 2002).

In fact, Seelye (2007) writes that in May 2007, a focus group study featuring six Democrats and six Republicans was conducted and the members were asked to imagine the leading presidential candidates in the following dilemma: "Each candidate is standing in a line at an airport, but, there is only one seat left on the plane, and there are six people ahead of the candidate. What does each of them do?" The focus group participants' responses turned out to be simultaneously amusing and insightful:

> Some thought Rudy Giuliani [former mayor of New York City] would refuse to stand in the line, demand to speak to the pilot, or even yell "9/11!" John McCain, they said, would raise a ruckus, demand a seat on the flight, or simply refuse to abide by the rules. Mitt Romney and Barack Obama were seen as quietly and politely negotiating their way to the front of the line. John Edwards would attempt to bribe the people in front of him or "lay on the Southern charm." Hillary Clinton, according to the participants, would, "Tell everyone ahead of her that the flight had been canceled," or "Send her people to take care of the details".

The focus group's responses did reveal what potential voters thought of the candidates' personalities and it demonstrated how each candidate had been branded. According to Staci Zavattaro (2010), Obama and his team knew how to perfect the tactics and carefully build the Obama brand during the presidential campaign. She writes "Using a grassroots effort grounded in social media, Obama became the candidate of the people" and she explains that it was the overall systematic branding effort that shaped a campaign with an unequalled aesthetic cohesion across various platforms from label pins to social networking, fonts, logos, speeches and slogans. He actually won Ad Age's Marketer of the Year for 2008.

Thus, based on the above examination, building a perfect brand and using the right "spin" are very important and influential in the electoral process. However, the choice of the channels and the process of applying these marketing strategies are significant too and shall be consistent with the general purpose and message of the campaign. This notion is further developed in the following section speaking of Obama's 2008 campaign.

The 2008 United States Elections

Social media and youths were both the engine of Obama's unlikely victory. Don Tapscott (2009) writes in his foreword to Rahaf Harfoush's book *Yes We Did*:

Through the internet and other digital technologies a group of young people changed just about everything: how money is raised, how people campaign, how

organizers organize, and how the electorate comes to understand the issues, make choices, and become engaged in political action.

In fact, Obama's 2008 campaign took a step toward participatory democracy and initiated the concept of interaction between politicians and voters through building an online community and using a new set of weapons: digital media. Rahaf Harfoush (2009) confirms that my.barackobama.com became the main and preferred online platform for supporters to connect with each other and amplify their organizational efforts. In addition, she clarifies that other strategic online groups existed and played a major role in the campaign process. One great example is "Students for Obama", a Facebook group created in 2006 by a simple admirer of senator Obama at that time, Bowdoin college student, Meredith Segal. When Obama declared his candidacy, "Students for Obama" turned into a Political Action Committee with 62,000 members and "it had become a powerful online network of connected young people capable of using the internet to draw large crowds of supporters" writes Harfoush (2009).

This vast base of supporters introduced a vast base of volunteers and a vast base of donors. BBC News reporter, Richard Lister (2008) explains:

> Everyone who visited the Obama website was asked to sign up to get more information. Everyone who did so was asked to contribute, or volunteer. If they did, they received several follow-up calls and messages asking for more money, or more assistance.

Lister (2008) elaborates that with the help of one of Facebook founders, Chris Hughes, who created a new online fundraising system, the campaign attracted more than three million donors who donated about $650m. Therefore, Obama had no more problem buying airtime and was ready for the air war knowing the significance of TV advertising as a campaign tool yet its expensive cost.

Obviously the campaign tools were designed and organized to be directed towards potential voters who can make a difference and alter the election process. And as the exit polls show, Obama's campaign revealed an extraordinary level of support among three main segments: youths, African-Americans and new voters. Actually, as per Steve Schifferes (2008) report and based on the National Election Pool exit poll figures presented in Appendix B, Obama impressively won the votes of those under 30 by 66% to 31%. As for the first-time voters, they supported him by 68% while 31% among them supported McCain. Finally, 95% of the African-Americans voted for Obama compared to 4% for McCain and 66% of the Hispanics voted for Obama compared to 31% for McCain. As described by Yekaterina Sazhneva in Moskovskiy Komsomolets "it is not important whether the "black prince" will do anything at all - today poor Americans, as well as middle-class Americans and even rich liberals, simply want this man" (BBC News, 2008).

After all, Obama could be the first digital president, the first database marketing president, the first mobile marketing president, and the first social networking president. He was all of the above.

The 2009 Lebanese Elections

Based on the author's knowledge and experience as a young voter at that time, the 2009 Lebanese elections featured two major competing groups: March 8 coalition[1] and March 14 coalition[2]. It was conducted following the 2008 electoral law which, as described in a report by the Lebanese Information Center Research Department (2009), "distributes the 128 seats of Lebanon's National Assembly [Parliament] among 26 districts with a variable number of representatives per district". The distribution of parliamentary seats by confession across the 26 electoral districts according to the 2008 electoral law is represented in Appendix C and the author shall get back to it in the data analysis chapter.

Throughout the pre-election period, both entities engaged in extensive and competitive campaigning in order to get as more seats as possible. The author came across very few articles and studies related to the use of marketing tactics during this election which limits the scope of the review. As per the "Final Report on the Lebanese Parliamentary Election" executed by the National Democratic Institute (2009), "The candidate [sic] campaign period began on March 2, 2009 and ended on June 5, 2009" and as reported by NDI (2009), during that period:

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[1] The March 8 Alliance is a coalition of various political parties in Lebanon, its name dates back to 8 March 2005 when different parties called for a mass demonstration in downtown Beirut in response to the Cedar Revolution.
[2] The March 14 Alliance is a coalition of political parties and independents in Lebanon, it is named after the date of the Cedar Revolution formed in 2005 as a reaction to Rafic Hariri's assassination.

Parties posted billboards, distributed posters, banners, and T-shirts, aired television and radio advertisements, and held rallies. While billboard battles between the two political blocs captured the country's attention, some candidates used more local strategies, such as door-to-door campaigning. Televised debates gained prominence compared to previous elections. Some candidates also engaged in round table discussions and town hall meetings organized by Lebanese NGOs. (pp.28-29).

On the other hand, in his article "Social Media in Lebanon's Parliamentary Elections of 2009" published online, Ayman Itani (2009) explains that "the parliamentary elections of 2009 in Lebanon have seen an increased online presence by candidates. However, it is only online presence and not active participation and voter engagement." He adds that the use of the internet and social media was only complementary to the campaign. Noting that "Israel, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and the United States were often the focus of campaign rhetoric, while national issues such as the economy, electricity, education, and health care, took a back seat" (NDI, 2009). A detailed examination of the opponents' various campaigns and tools will be developed in the discussion and analysis section.

In conclusion to the literature review, the author realized that Lebanese politicians were not really aware of the importance of political marketing and its effects on voting behavior. And although the previous round happened after Obama's 2008 famous campaign, Lebanese candidates did not seem to be

inspired to try to enhance or diversify the whole political communication process. No breakthrough within the Lebanese 2009 political marketing has been reported. Since the author believes that political marketing is very significant, it should be given more attention in Lebanon and there are so many important lessons to learn from Obama's campaign as stepping stones for successful campaigning.

Chapter II: Research Questions and Methodology

Research Question

The study is intended to answer the following question:

How can Lebanese political entities use the political marketing lessons developed from Obama's 2008 campaign and apply them in the Lebanese Context?

Research Methodology

There are two basic approaches to research: the quantitative approach and the qualitative approach. The former has been clearly and concisely defined by Aliaga and Gunderson (2002) as a way of "explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)". Whereas, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them".

The purpose of this study is to understand political marketing, derive the lessons for successful campaigning from the US 2008 elections and adapt them to the Lebanese framework. In other words, the author seeks to examine, analyze and interpret the data collected in terms of giving meanings to them in order to

generate new hypotheses. Therefore, this study, in its descriptive and analytical nature dealing with the social world and people's behavior, calls for a qualitative approach. In order to answer the research questions and objectives, the author collected existing literature about Obama's 2008 election's campaign and about the Lebanese political marketing in general. The literature included books, reports, articles, images and other relevant material from valid and reliable sources. Furthermore, she conducted three interviews with Lebanese media strategists: Ms. Carol Malouf, Mr. Melhem Riachi and Mr. Sami Saab, and one interview with a new independent young candidate, Mr. Mark Daou, who appeared to be a matching case study to this research. The transcriptions of the recorded interviews are included respectively in appendices G, H, I and J.

Ms. Malouf is a political communication consultant and CEO of "Macaralea Advisory Group", a company specialized in political and investment consultancy in emerging markets in Middle East & Africa. And what is more interesting to this study is that in 2008 and 2009 she covered US elections at Al Jazeera Broadcast Center in Washington, DC. As for Mr. Riachi, he is the current chairman of the Communication Department of the Lebanese Forces Party which is one of March 14 coalition's parties. On the other hand, Mr. Saab is a creative consultant with 20 years of experience in the communication field. He is the founder of "Phenomena", a creative consultancy boutique and was the head of communication in the Free Patriotic Movement 2009 campaign which is a party belonging to the March 8 coalition. In her questions addressed to all three

strategists, the author tried to learn more about the status of the Lebanese political marketing form a professional perspective that is backed up with actual experience in the field. Also, the author tried to reinforce her personal and subjective findings by discussing Obama's 2008 campaign and lessons with the interviewees and consulting them about the adaptation plan so to fit the Lebanese context.

Mr. Daou is a young Druze PR professional and University lecturer from Aley, Lebanon. He decided to take the initiative to break through the political monopoly in the country and he started building his political communication campaign one year ago with the intention of participating in the upcoming elections. In fact, Mark Daou's experience has been implemented as a case study provided that his communication plan highly supports the author's point of view and it has been applied in Lebanon over the past year, thus could offer tangible and verified results that would build up the author's study.

Thus, having collected the necessary data from different sources, the author will examine their content analyze it in order to determine and organize the key political marketing lessons from Obama's 2008 campaign. Then a review of the Lebanese political environment and political marketing situation will follow in an attempt to yield the most appropriate adaptation of the foreign lessons to the local setting. No specific model will be used in the data analysis process and the proposed marketing advice will be the result of a subjective data analysis supported by the experience of the interviewees.

As a matter of fact, the author would like to note her initial idea was to actually choose a candidate or politician and use him/her as a pilot study. In other words, the approach was to retrieve the lessons from the US 2008 elections and really apply them by preparing and implementing an actual marketing plan for a chosen politician and then come up with tangible results to analyze. However, since the next Lebanese election is not happening in the near future the findings of this paper shall remain theoretical and could be tested later in upcoming elections.

Chapter III: Discussion and Analysis

Marketing Lessons from Obama

In an article published on BBC News online, Richard Lister (2008) assured that Obama's "campaign will be a template for those seeking to replace him". In fact, the author believes that this campaign could be a template for the Lebanese political entities as well. Obama's campaign is a marketing brilliance from which many lessons could be derived. In order to do so, the author refers to many different related literatures that she has examined and mainly to the book *Yes We Did*, written in 2009 by new media strategist and one of the talented campaign activists Rahaf Harfouch. In this book Harfoush gives an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the campaign's detailed strategies and tactics.

Actually, Obama had a gift; "he assembled a remarkably cohesive and effective campaign team" (Simba, 2009) and together, they crafted and delivered Obama's message of change and hope for a better America. He is a great speaker and his words inspired people and attracted the support of many voters; "Youth, Blacks, Hispanics, and the distressed White middle class" were rapidly becoming "his base" and as the campaign progressed, Obama won the support of many celebrities who endorsed his campaign such as, Oprah Winfrey and the Hip Hop artist Will.i.am, member of the "Black Eyed Peas", who turned Obama's "Yes, We Can" speech into a hit music video (Simba, 2009). However, as per McLuhan's theory, the art of speaking didn't get him the success; it was the

message and the way digital technology including social media, YouTube, and cell phone messaging was used. All these new digital tools helped then-candidate Obama to interact with the audience and personalize his messages. He was able to reach a wider range of voters especially youth using easy and cheap media tools.

Many might think that the most important lesson would be using new media technologies and social networking. But come to think again, it was not about the tools; it was the framework that directed their use. In other words, the success of these technologies rose from the success of Obama's pursuit of "Change". Actually, right after Obama's victory Jerome Armstrong, "one of the pioneering democrat bloggers" wrote "Until the [Republicans] get ideas to sell that people believe are real, it doesn't matter how good they use new media and the internet, they will be in the minority" (Pack, 2010). In simple words and as confirmed by Mark Pack (2010) "the key factor was the message and leadership from the top" perfected by the use of new digital media tools.

Obama and his team knew what to say and how to say it. They knew what people most needed at that time and accordingly they constructed a message that expresses those needs and they knew the process well to successfully deliver and reinforce this message. American people needed change and Obama proved to be the man of change through his messages and the tools that helped him reach millions of people and potential voters. It all started on February 10, 2007 in Springfield, Illinois, his home state, when Senator Obama launched his

candidacy (Baim, 2010). He spoke persuasively about America's needs and inspired the audience when he said:

> All of us know what those challenges are today -- a war with no end, a dependence on oil that threatens our future, schools where too many children aren't learning, and families struggling paycheck to paycheck despite working as hard as they can. We know the challenges. We've heard them. We've talked about them for years. What's stopped us from meeting these challenges is not the absence of sound policies and sensible plans. What's stopped us is the failure of leadership, the smallness of our politics -- the ease with which we're distracted by the petty and trivial, our chronic avoidance of tough decisions, our preference for scoring cheap political points instead of rolling up our sleeves and building a working consensus to tackle big problems. (pp.4-5)

He simply talked like any American citizen. He made them feel that he was just one of them, and by criticizing and mocking the leaders in authority, Obama indirectly ascertained to his audience that he would act differently. Then he called for their trust when he added:

> I accepted the job [community organizer], sight unseen, motivated then by a single, simple, powerful idea -- that I might play a small part in building a better America. My work took me to some of Chicago's poorest neighborhoods. [...] I saw that the problems people faced weren't simply local in nature -- that the decision to close a steel mill was made by distant executives; that the lack of textbooks and computers in schools could be traced to the skewed priorities of politicians a thousand miles away; and that when a child turns to violence,

there's a hole in his heart no government could ever fill. After three years of this work, I went to law school, because I wanted to understand how the law should work for those in need. I became a civil rights lawyer, and taught constitutional law, and after a time, I came to understand that our cherished rights of liberty and equality depend on the active participation of an awakened electorate. It was with these ideas in mind that I arrived in this capital city as a state Senator. (p.40)

Then, Obama motivated the crowd and gave them hope by bringing up Abraham Lincoln when indeed he was standing outside a symbolic building of the latter (Harfouch, 2009). At that point, he asked them to work with him to make the change they want possible:

[Abraham Lincoln] had his doubts. He had his defeats. He had his setbacks. But through his will and his words, he moved a nation and helped free a people. It is because of the millions who rallied to his cause that we are no longer divided, North and South, slave and free. It is because men and women of every race, from every walk of life, continued to march for freedom long after Lincoln was laid to rest, that today we have the chance to face the challenges of this millennium together, as one people -- as Americans. [...]I know there are those who don't believe we can do all these things. I understand the skepticism. After all, every four years, candidates from both parties make similar promises, and I expect this year will be no different. [...] That is why this campaign can't only be about me. It must be about us -- it must be about what we can do together. This campaign must be the occasion, the vehicle, of your hopes, and

your dreams. It will take your time, your energy, and your advice -- to push us forward when we're doing right, and to let us know when we're not. (p.6)

Obama's campaign gave the American people the opportunity to participate in the process and to work with the candidate and his team through new media technologies. The idea of "change" became tangible and the strategies used proved the message which resulted in a successful campaign. "For many early supporters, mybarackobama.com became the preferred platform [that] allowed them to connect with Obama supporters outside of their personal networks" (Harfoush, 2009), supporters were able to write notes and share their thoughts with each other which was an important step in increasing credibility because nothing is more convincing than hearing a story from someone just like you. For instance, Laura, a first time donor from Washington D.C. wrote:

I decided to take the money out of my son's college fund, because he's only 3 years old and I believe with all my heart that the $25 I spent today will better serve my son (and all children) going towards the senator's campaign fund than it will sitting in a bank account for 15 years.

What Laura and many others shared, motivated many others to do the same, just like Angela Burg who explained that she "had been inspired to donate by reading the stories on the blog of people just like her who had donated" (Harfoush, 2009). Moreover, voters got the chance to be introduced to a more casual and informal side of then-candidate Obama through incentives arranged by the campaign such as a one-on-one call with the candidate or even a dinner

with him. These personal events would be recorded and posted online for people to watch (Harfoush, 2009). On the other hand, "far beyond a simple Facebook group, [Students for Obama] had become a powerful online network of connected young people capable of using the internet to draw large crowds of supporters" (Harfoush, 2009). Harfoush (2009) explains that this group of students hosted over 19 000 events, made 406 000 phone calls, knocked on 4 500 doors, and raised $1.7 million dollars. Obama and his team saw the potential of the youths and realized what a great investment they would be. For that reason they took the campaign to their milieu: the internet and social media. Obama knew as well the significance of minorities' votes; therefore he directed part of his marketing efforts towards them and actually won their support as polls show. For instance, during a CNN/YouTube debate on July 23, Obama confirmed "[the] civil unions that I proposed would be equivalent in terms of making sure that all the rights that are conferred by the state are equal for same-sex couples as well as for heterosexual couples" and in his answers on the HRC questionnaire Obama declared his support for passage of a federal bill that would prohibit job discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity adding that he "sponsored legislation in the Illinois State Senate that would ban discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation" (Baim, 2010). This strong position on gay issues increased his popularity among gays in addition to the fact that he became a source of immense pride for black voters (Harfoush, 2009; Baim, 2010).

In conclusion, the key lessons from Obama's 2008 campaign are:

- Candidates should recruit a solid team of professional and innovative strategists and consultants.

- They should find out the needs and wants of people and then build a message and a campaign around those needs.

- The campaign should reinforce the initial message and actions should back up words.

- Candidates should speak the people's language; they should share their concerns, demonstrate compassion and show their will to do something.

- Candidates should build an informal relationship with voters and voters should participate in the campaign process.

- Candidates should use social media smartly.

- The campaign should offer incentives to motivate supporters and to increase participation such as, a dinner with the candidate or an opportunity to talk to him.

- Candidates should determine their potential segment and find the most adequate tools to reach them.

- Candidates should pay attention to minorities.

- Candidates should mobilize youths and engage them in the campaign process.

Lebanese Political Marketing Review

In order to effectively be able to apply the above acquired lessons, it is important to identify the key characteristics of the target market and evaluate the Lebanese political marketing situation through a review of the most implemented tactics and their effects during previous election periods, mainly the two recent rounds of 2005 and 2009. Actually, according to Carol Malouf, political marketing in Lebanon "is still at a very young age" and she explains that it is with the coming of Saad Hariri and Future Movement that the idea of political marketing started because he introduced the fact that political parties could be spread nationwide and not stay limited in a specific region where politicians are already established and do not need to promote themselves (interview, January 28, 2014). However, Sami Saab insists that although "there have been few attempts to start real professional political communication" it is still "a big disaster" (interview, February 4, 2014). Furthermore, it is a "system dependent on nepotism and favoritism" in which politicians lobby for the services and goods they can get to their supporters instead of lobbying for national issues as described by Mark Daou (interview, February 1, 2014).

Now, starting with the 2005 elections, a study on "The Role and Influence of the Media on Voters' Decision in Lebanon" was conducted by Bernard Abou Jaoude, Tarek Azzi, and Wafica Ali Ghoul during that year and it featured a sample of Lebanese voters from different regions and adhering to different religious sects and political parties. The average age of the participants was 41 years and 45%

of them were females. The study revealed that in small villages, social relationships are much more influential than media and although it plays an important role in most regions, media "[ranked] third after the election law and the political coalitions" (Gouliamos, Heocharous, & Newman, 2013). In addition, this study showed that from all used media vehicles, TV was the most dominant medium with 51%, followed by newspapers with 26%. Finally, 61% of the respondents explained that they voted because they wanted "change" while the remaining portion was distributed among various reasons such as "voting is a duty" and "finding out the truth about Hariri's assassination"[3] and others (Gouliamos et al., 2013). So basically, in the elections of 2005, the Internet wasn't involved and played a limited role, if any (Itani, 2009). Four years later, in 2009, the Lebanese society had become more involved with the Internet and social media in particular which encouraged the political entities to give this new medium more attention (Helou & Najjar, 2009; Itani, 2009). However, the author believes that politicians only improved their online presence without establishing interaction or engaging voters in the electoral process. The majority of the candidates created websites in their names whereas the main parties that already have websites used them for election purposes: advertising their campaigns, writing offensive/defensive articles, sharing their electoral programs, and others. Also, a great number of political figures placed ads and set up accounts and groups on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter

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[3] Mr. Rafic Hariri was a business tycoon and the Prime Minister of Lebanon. He was assassinated on 14 February 2005 when explosives were detonated as his motorcade drove past the St. George Hotel in the Lebanese capital, Beirut.

to connect with the public (sample screenshots are included in Appendix E). "We placed ads on Google and on Facebook but we didn't use social media in a smart way at that time" said Sami Saab (interview, February 4, 2014). Besides the online marketing attempt, candidates and political parties captured the attention of the Lebanese public with their visuals' confrontation throughout the 2009 elections; it wasn't only a war of quantity and colors but also a war of slogans and counter-slogans (Helou & Najjar, 2009). "My challenge was to break [the] existing spirit of communication [...] I was able to lead the course of the communication process because I had something new and different" explained Sami Saab and even though he was playing it solo against multiple campaigns for the different parties of March 14 coalition, he successfully attacked and provoked his opponents and required them to change their strategies at some point (interview, February 4, 2014). As a matter of fact, this argument is clarified in appendices D and F showing the two "hit" campaigns of Sami Saab and FPM: the one attacking the Future Movement's campaign of the torn apart blue sky (the color of the "Future" political bloc) and "Sois belle et vote". "Both created a buzz and that was my goal", added Saab. In appendix F included is March 14's counter-ad "Sois egale et vote" that followed FPM's provocative "Sois belle et vote"; FPM's campaign imposed on them to change their strategy and target women as well. On the other hand, Melhem Riachi believes that the Lebanese Forces' campaign, included in appendix D, should have been "more focused on the Christians and differentiated them from March 14's campaign" and he adds that youths and women should have been more

engaged and active in the campaign process (interview, January 28, 2014). Sami Saab agrees on this idea by saying that "youths and women are of great potential but unfortunately in Lebanon they are not interested in politics due to the current volatile situation" (interview, February 4, 2014).

Finally, over the last few years, politicians have been revealing more and more interest and involvement in social media. For instance, Twitter has become a major platform and few candidates have been using Facebook to promote their local campaigns (C. Malouf, interview, January 28, 2014). Also, Mark Daou has been focusing his efforts on social media to contact people and initiate personal relationships with them (M. Daou, interview, February 1, 2014). As for the Lebanese Forces' communication department, they have established an "e-tree" concerned only with the online communication to help them reach people effectively (M. Riachi, interview, January 28, 2014). "Now is it enough? No. Can they do more? Yes" (C. Malouf, interview, January 28, 2014).

Application of Lessons to the Lebanese Context

It is essential to recognize that there are several cultural, political, economical, and legislative differences between the U.S. and Lebanon. For instance, in U.S., the president is directly elected from the people whereas Lebanon follows the parliamentary system whereby elected MPs select the president. Other differences include the size of each country, the total expenditures on elections, the racial and sectarian variations within each

community, and within the media system. However, these differences should not drastically change the fundamentals of a correct and successful marketing campaign; they may control the particulars of their application. "Marketing is marketing [...] so what Obama did, everyone else can do!" (S. Saab). The author, taking those differences into consideration, fine-tuned the acquired lessons and pinpointed the most suitable approaches to apply them to the Lebanese context.

The key to success in a political situation is a well-planned and well-structured campaign. In other words, the message of the campaign, the media tools, and the actions of the candidate should complement each other. To begin with, politicians should recruit a homogeneous team of professional and creative consultants and media strategists that would build and manage a successful campaign "the point is you need to have good consultants" (C. Malouf). Also, candidates or political parties should have a reliable database and, if they are new in the political field, just like Mark Daou, they should build one; "we were capable of breaking through mainly through building databases" said Mark Daou in his interview. Now having the team and the database, candidates should have a strong and clear message that "should motivate the supporters, provoke the opponents and attract the silent majority" (S. Saab). The message should be different and unique (M. Riachi), candidate Obama built his campaign message on Bush's failed agenda (C. Malouf) and with his slogans "Change"; "yes we can"; among others, he was able to attract the youths and the silent majority,

thus taking advantage of the opponents' failures. Furthermore, and according to Ms. Malouf, today in Lebanon "the division is so vertical between March 14 and March 8 blocs, people are moving closer to the center" and the silent majority is increasing; in the 2009 elections the number of blank ballots was 11,197 out of 1,635,644 votes noting that the number of registered voters was 3,257,243 (NDI, 2009). Two key segments of silent majority are the youths and women whom, according to Sami Saab, are straying away from politics more and more due to the volatile national situation. Thus, Lebanese candidates should focus on attracting these potential segments, the silent majority and mainly women and youth; they should attempt to lower the voting age to 18 allowing a bigger voice for the younger voters and strengthen the role of women in the voting system both as candidates and as voters. In fact, according to Eurostat (2009), individuals aged between 15 and 39 constituted 40.2% of the total Lebanese population. To appeal to these segments, serious research should be conducted to understand the target market's inclinations and habits in order to reach them effectively. For instance, in the 2009 elections Sami Saab succeeded in creating a stir when he addressed Lebanese women based on their beauty. According to the study of the Lebanese Council of Women in 2009 more women voted in the elections than men (52.4% compared to 49.9%). On the other hand, "This year the young voters were born in the 90s after the war, so politicians cannot address them using war vocabulary. [They] should speak their language" (C. Malouf). Obama mobilized the young generation to commit to political activism through social media which is the youths' milieu and Mark Daou is trying to do

the same; he and his team are using social media platforms to "collect information to reach people and build relationships with them" and to inform them. Even in small villages and the "farthest point in Ersal" (a Lebanese town in the Beqaa valley) people, and the youth in particular, are reachable via social media (C. Malouf & M. Daou). As per Ipsos (2013) the internet penetration in Lebanon scored 56% and the internet population consists of 1,716,960 users. On the other hand, based on Obama's campaign, personal interaction with people is important as well. Mark Daou subscribes to the same idea; he "started talking to people [he knows] who took [him] to people they knew [and] it was branching out quickly" they were gaining more and more activists in their campaign. In addition, traditional media are also significant in Lebanese campaigns because traditional people still rely heavily on TV, newspapers and radio and in Daou's opinion "if they don't see you on TV, for example, you are not a real politician". As agreed by all interviewees, money is crucial for any successful campaign. In Lebanon, "a candidate is allowed to spend $100 000 as a base and the $2 per voter in his respective district" (M. Daou) so campaigns need sponsors. Obama used social media for fundraising and that should be applied during Lebanese campaigns as well recognizing, of course, that fundraising is an art that was perfected by Americans and Lebanese have a long way to go in that aspect.

As for the personal requirements for a successful candidate, he or she should have "leadership skills; leadership is very important" and should be a good

orator that's why candidates should undergo extensive trainings just like Obama did (C. Malouf). Also, based on Obama's experience, candidates should have good speech writers that are able to tap into potential segments; most of the times the right words targeted towards the right audience can do miracles. Candidates should be active and get involved in projects and interact with people just like Mark Daou did and continues to do. Certainly, candidates should hire image consultants to take care of their looks and images because it is as important and influential as any other element in the campaign. Lastly, candidates should be young or younger so that youth could identify with them. To sum it up, "If you have a good speech writer, if you can mobilize people through social media, if you have sufficient funding, if you are a good orator and you are able to convince people, along with extensive media training and good image consultancy just [as] Obama, [...] it would work!" (C. Malouf). Of course Lebanese candidates must tailor their messages, tactics and strategies taking into consideration the local culture, local needs, and the local issues that distinguish the Lebanese experience from any other. It seems naïve, illogical and irrational to believe that copying the styles and approaches of U.S. candidate will translate into a sure success in the Lebanese market.

Finally, the above learned and applied lessons are only the stepping stones for a correct and successful political marketing campaign. The point of this study is to set the basic directions that politicians should follow in order to build a healthy political campaign. Moreover, politicians and their teams are called

upon to release their personal creativity when constructing their campaigns and adapt their strategies to the Lebanese society while they are trying to learn from the Obama experience.

Chapter IV: Conclusion, Gaps and Recommendations

This study confirmed the need of the Lebanese society to improve and work on its political marketing communication and to stay up-to-date with the latest trends and approaches in the fields of both technology and political communication. Actually, Lebanese politicians lack awareness of the meaning and importance of political marketing. Candidate Obama did not add much to this field, yet he understood the basics and knew how to implement them and thus was able to prove that successful political communication can yield positive results. Mark Daou, through his budding political communication apparatus is proving that it is possible to break the existing political monopoly and monotony in Lebanon. So at this point, the author believes that Lebanese candidates and politicians should take into consideration the essence of this study and do something with it. As a Lebanese citizen, the author would like to see her country take this step. It is about time that Lebanese politicians understand political marketing and apply its basic elements in their political work in general and during elections in particular.

The findings of this study may somehow remain theoretical and may not even be tested soon due to the fact that the elections have been postponed this year which constitutes a first limitation for the study. Also, the developed lessons are the result of a subjective observation and analysis of the author and the four interviewees. Lastly, time limitations and the precarious security in the country

made it difficult for the author to conduct more interviews with media strategists and politicians from major political groups in order to gather more information and thus increase the study's credibility and validity.

Now that the author came up with political marketing lessons and theoretically applied them in the Lebanese context, she looks forward to having them implemented and tested in a real election. The author also recommends surveying voters and potential voters on their use of media and particularly social media, knowledge of political marketing, level of involvement in politics, and other attributes. After all, Quantitative and qualitative data provide different outcomes, and are often used together to get a full picture of a population. Therefore, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data can improve the evaluation by ensuring that the limitations of one type of data are balanced by the strengths of another.

In his speech on February 5 2008, Obama said "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." And thus, this paper is an attempt to stimulate "change" knowing that it is a long process that needs time to take place.
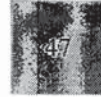
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Appendices

Appendix A (anonymous Blogger)

I'm a little confused. Let me see if I have this straight . . .

If you grow up in Hawaii, raised by your grandparents, you're "exotic, different."

Grow up in Alaska eating moose burgers, a quintessential American story.

If your name is Barack you're a radical, unpatriotic Muslim.

Name your kids Willow, Trig and Track, you're a maverick.

Graduate from Harvard Law School and you are unstable.

Attend 5 different small colleges before graduating, you're well grounded.

If you spend 3 years as a brilliant community organizer, become the first black President of the Harvard Law Review, create a voter registration drive that registers 150,000 new voters, spend 12 years as a Constitutional Law professor, spend 8 years as a State Senator representing a district with over 750,000 people, become chairman of the state Senate's Health and Human Services committee, spend 4 years in the United States Senate representing a state of 13 million people while sponsoring 131 bills and serving on the Foreign Affairs, Environment and Public Works and Veteran's Affairs committees, you don't have any real leadership experience.

If your total resume is: local weather girl, 4 years on the city council and 6 years as the mayor of a town with less than 7,000 people, 20 months as the governor of a state with only 650,000 people, then you're qualified to become the country's second highest ranking executive.

If you have been married to the same woman for 19 years while raising 2 beautiful daughters, all within Protestant churches, you're not a real Christian.

If you cheated on your first wife with a rich heiress, and left your disfigured wife and married the heiress the next month, you're a Christian.

If you teach responsible, age appropriate sex education, including the proper use of birth control, you are eroding the fiber of society.
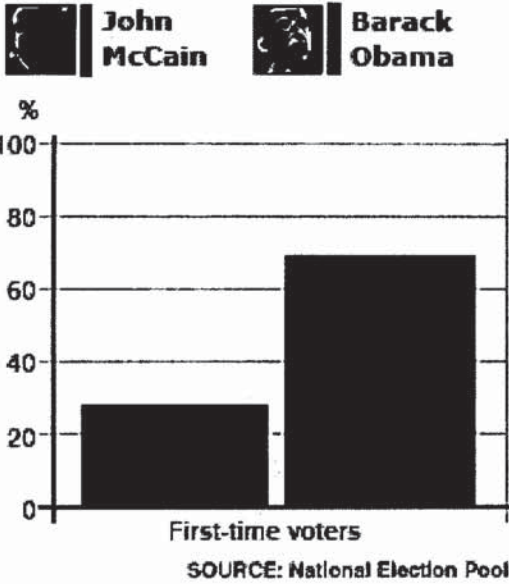
If while governor, you staunchly advocate abstinence only, with no other option in sex education in your state's school system while your unwed teen daughter ends up pregnant, you're very responsible.

If your wife is a Harvard graduate lawyer who gave up a position at a prestigious law firm to work for the betterment of her inner city community, then gave that up to raise a family, your family's values don't represent America's.
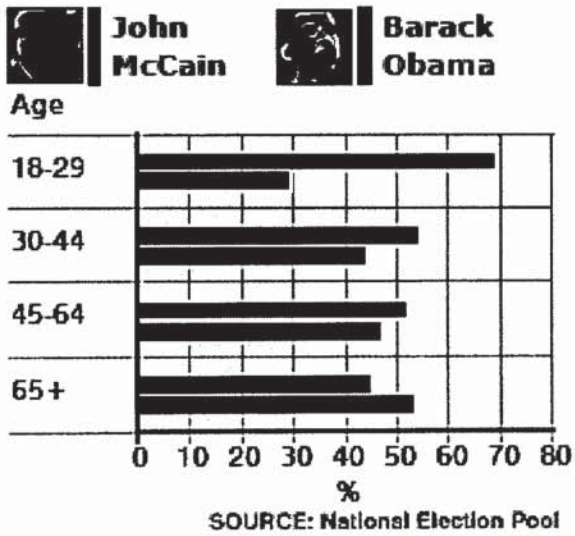
OK, much clearer now

Appendix B (National Election Pool)

EXIT POLL - FIRST-TIME VOTERS

John McCain   Barack Obama

First-time voters

SOURCE: National Election Pool

EXIT POLL - AGE

John McCain   Barack Obama

Age

| 18-29 |
| 30-44 |
| 45-64 |
| 65+ |

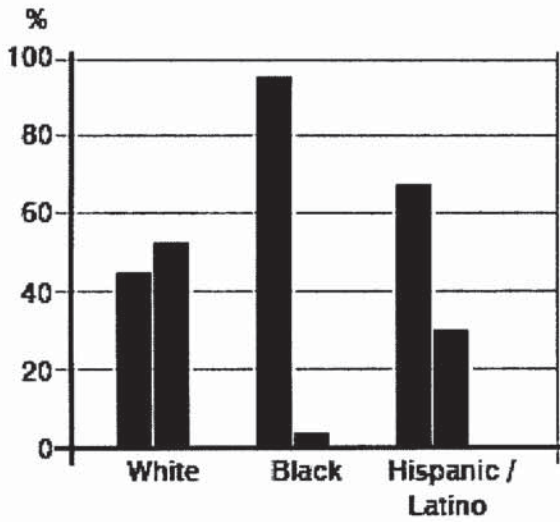0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80
%

SOURCE: National Election Pool

EXIT POLL - RACE

John McCain   Barack Obama

SOURCE: National Election Pool

Appendix C (Distribution of Parliamentary Seats by Confession among the 26 Electoral Districts in Lebanon)

District	Sunni	Shi'ite	Druze	Alawite	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Arm. Orthodox	Arm. Catholic	Evangelical	Minorities	Total
Akkar	3			1	1	2						7
Aley			2		2	1						5
Baabda		2	1		3							6
Baalbek-Hermel	2	6			1		1					10
Batroun					2							2
Becharre					2							2
Beirut 1					1	1	1	1	1			5
Beirut 2	1	1						2				4
Beirut 3	5	1	1			1				1	1	10
Bint Jbeil		3										3
Chouf	2		2		3		1					8
Jbeil		1			2							3
Jezzine					2		1					3
Kesrwan					5							5
Koura						3						3
Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	1	2	1			1						5
Metn					4	2	1	1				8
Minieh-Dinnieh	3				•							3
Nabatieh		3										3
Saida	2											2
Tripoli	5			1	1	1						8
Tyr		4										4
W. Bekaa-Rachaya	2	1	1		1	1						6
Zahleh	1	1			1	1	2	1				7
Zahrani		2					1					3
Zgharta					3							3
Total	27	27	8	2	34	14	8	5	1	1	1	128

Appendix D (Offensive/Defensive Lebanese Campaigns)

Future Movement Billboard Ads

FPM ad attacking the Future Movement Campaign

Lebanese Forces ad attacking March 8's parties

Appendix E (Online Presence of Politicians in 2009)

Appendix F (2009 Elections: Billboards' Slogans and Counter-Slogans)

FPM ad addressing women

March 14 counter ad also addressing women

Appendix G (Interview with the political communication consultant and CEO of "Macaralea Advisory Group" Ms. Carol Malouf, January 28, 2014)

Q: How would you describe and evaluate political marketing in Lebanon?

A: It is still at a very young age and we still have a very long way to go. Unfortunately, the problem in Lebanon is that proper party politics has only begun with Saad Hariri and the "Future" Movement. Prior to that, it was a family business so it was based more on feudal lords and warlords and that is why even though we have a quasi-form of democratic rule, people didn't really need to promote or market themselves politically because they were already established within their region, religion, family or within the local municipality or in all of those. Hariri introduced the idea that political parties could spread nationwide and not just be limited to a specific region; I think here the idea of political marketing started. Of course at the early stages with Hariri, his campaign included people like Ali Jaber who really knew what they were doing. Today of course they have people like Asma Andraos and I think they are doing a very good job but still they need larger funds. Now, what we have seen lately in terms of political marketing is the rule of social media with a few local campaigns in certain places like Aley where a Druze candidate, Mark Daou and his team have been involved in "Matmar El Naamah" (Naamah's Landfill) and the "Kfarmatta event" when the Christians went back for the first time since the civil war of 1975 to celebrate Saint Barbara's holiday, so the word is spreading and new candidates are becoming known because of activities they are doing and

they are promoting on social media. Now is it enough? No. Can they do more? Yes. But is social media helping? Of course.

Q: Since you covered Obama's 2008 election, what do you think are the main lessons to learn from his campaign?

A: Social media! Obama succeeded because he did three things; first he went after the young people through social media and mobilized them not just to vote but also to donate because he wanted a "pressure group free" political campaign so he moved people nationwide to donate $15, $20, $50 etc. Second he had a really good speech writer who tapped into that market as well so he appealed to young people and he mobilized people along non-partisan lines. They managed to mobilize the independent majority, and I think that for the first time in the US they managed to do that, they managed to mobilize people who were really in the center. Obama understood that the democrats are democrats and the republicans are republicans so his focus was on this silent majority. If you want to draw a parallel between that and Lebanon: today because the division is so vertical between March 14 and March 8 political blocs, people are moving closer to the center so whomever today wants to come and work in politics he should be able to address this uninterested majority. Thirdly, he took George W. Bush's failed agenda and he worked on it.

Q: In the U.S., the president is directly elected from the people whereas Lebanon follows the parliamentary system whereby elected MPs select the president. Other differences include the size of each country, the total

expenditures on elections, the racial and secular variations within each community, and the media system. Do you think that what Obama did and succeeded would succeed as well if applied in Lebanon noting all the cultural and legislative differences between both countries?

A: Of course, if you have a good speech writer, if you can mobilize people through social media, if you have sufficient funding, if you are a good orator and you are able to convince people with your ideas along with extensive media training and image consultancy just like Obama did, I believe it would work. Also, even before you take it that far, you have to examine the demographics of your potential voters, you look at the age scales, for example this year most of the young voters were born in the 90s after the war so you cannot address them using war vocabulary. You should speak their language and I think that today parties do not speak the popular language. Actually, nowadays, youths aged between 25 and 40 are abroad working so your target audience is mainly university students who are first time voters so you have to speak to them in their language and go after them; Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and others because these people don't watch talk shows, they don't care about them, they are concerned somewhere else. So you have to learn and understand their habits and I think this is what the Obama campaign succeeded in.

Q: How can we reach people living in small villages and towns? They wouldn't have access to social media!

A: you will be surprised! I go to Ersal every week end you would be surprised to see that people there have smart phones, Wi-Fi and 3G. Everybody is on Whatsapp, Twitter and Facebook. So this is a misconception because we don't study people's habits we assume that people are only like us because they live in a place like ours but this is not true; in the farthest point in Ersal everybody is connected. So never assume that because people are in rural areas they are not connected. Actually, social media is only the platform to deliver your message but also you need to be active, to actually do something, to have leadership skills; leadership is very important and that is a problem March 14 coalition is facing; they don't have leadership.

Q: So, briefly what are the key characteristics for a successful campaign in Lebanon?

A: the nature of the candidate, someone who has track record, someone who proved that he or she has been really involved in civil society projects, someone who has been politically active. The other component is money; to be able to run a campaign you need money. Also, you need to relay the message to people whether through social media or personal interaction with people or through the media tools. The point is you need to be active and to have good consultants.

Appendix H (Interview with the chairman of the Communication Department of the Lebanese Forces party Mr. Melhem Riachi, January 28, 2014)

Q: You've been assigned this position 2 years ago thus you didn't participate in the 2009 elections. Today, how would you evaluate the Lebanese Forces' 2009 campaign?

A: It wasn't bad! Of course there are things that could have been done differently like targeting more the regions with a Christian majority and creating a message that targets this segment ... Briefly, I think the campaign should have been larger, more focused on the Christians and differentiated from March 14's general campaign. The Lebanese Forces' candidates in different regions of Mount Lebanon specifically should project the same image and speak the same language. Also, the LFSA (Lebanese Forces Students Association) and the females segment in the party should be more involved and active in the campaign process.

Q: What about social media? Do you plan to use it in future campaigns?

A: Definitely! Actually we have established something called "e-tree" office in our communication department, that is independent of all other offices because we believe that the internet and social media are very important and through them we can reach millions of people easily and at very low costs.

Q: Who are your target audiences?

A: We don't focus our efforts on one segment, it depends on the message we are trying to deliver if it's something related to drugs for example of course we're going to direct it towards youths and if it's something related to healthcare it would be directed towards older segments and so on.

Q: How do you choose your campaign message?

A: Based on the political situation on one hand and based on our accomplishments and our opponents' failures. We try to invest on the opponents' weak points by knowing them and pointing them out and that's the job of our strategic unit. Also, you can't promote an idea or a person without knowing your target audience well and having clear objectives such as to attract the silent majority and to mobilize our supporters and move our opponents' supporters to the center and that requires great work and effort.

Q: How do you reach voters in the different Lebanese regions?

A: the message is one across the entire nation. However, the sub-messages differ from one region to another according to the needs of that region and its inhabitants. As for the tools to deliver this message, we use both traditional and new media.

Q: What do you think about Obama's campaign? Did it inspire you?

A: The idea of change is very effective and it attracts the youths greatly and social media is the very right tool to reach this segment. So the combination of the message and the tools was brilliant.

Q: So, briefly what are the key characteristics for a successful campaign in Lebanon?

A: Number one; good research, you should understand your target audience very well. Number two; choose the right message and the right tools to deliver it. Number three; choose the right timing to launch your campaign and finally and more importantly; uniqueness, be different!

Appendix I (Interview with the founder of "Phenomena" consultancy boutique and head of the Free Patriotic Movement's 2009 campaign Mr. Sami Saab, February 4, 2014)

Q: How would you evaluate and describe political marketing in Lebanon?

A: A big disaster! It is evolving but still it is a disaster. There have been few attempts to start real professional political communication, however it didn't work because in Lebanon they still think that political communication is all about politics. Every party and every candidate is a product and just as in business marketing they need to work on their identity, positioning, strategies, the whole communication process from choosing the right message and delivering it in the best possible way ... pure marketing! But here in Lebanon they don't do it this way.

Q: What about you experience with the Free Patriotic Movement, one of March 8 coalition's parties, during the 2009 elections?

A: It was really a challenge. I was bored of commercial communication so I needed to do something different. The elections were near and I knew that my ideas were very close to those of FPM so I took the initiative and I prepared a proposal on how I envision their political campaign. Then I met with General Michel Aoun, the leader of the FPM, and I discussed my ideas with him. It was a full package that included the messages, the strategies, the promotional items, the events, the media tools, everything... He was really excited about it and we proceeded with it. My challenge was to break the existing spirit of

communication and actually I was dealing alone against so many big agencies working with the opposing groups; March 14 coalition had its own campaign and each party within it had its own campaign as well whereas it wasn't the case for March 8, the main campaign was ours. Now, throughout the campaign period I was able to lead the course of the communication process because I had something new and different. I was even able to change their strategies through two hit campaigns: the one attacking the Future Movement's campaign of the blue sky followed by "Sois belle et vote". And both created a buzz and that was my point. Eventually we moved them to address women as well because they felt that they had a gap to fill so they did the "Sois egale et vote".

Q: How do you choose your message?

A: the message should be intense; it should attract people's attention and should provoke the opponents. Messages in political communication are like open wars, you find a weak point and you attack it.

Q: Did Obama's 2008 campaign inspire you?

A: No, not at all. But, now everyone knows that solid political marketing is very efficient and could make anything happen.

Q: Why didn't you use social media as a tool in your campaign?

A: It wasn't well established yet, it was only used to share the visuals. We placed ads on Google and on Facebook but we didn't use social media in a smart

way at that time. But definitely in future elections social media would be a main tool of communication.

Q: Do you think that the political marketing tactics and strategies are universal?

A: Sure! Marketing is marketing so the guidelines are the same they just need to be adapted to the situation. So what Obama did everyone else can do!

Q: In your opinion, who are the potential voters in Lebanon?

A: Youths and women are of great potential but unfortunately in Lebanon they are not interested in politics due to the current volatile situation.

Q: Briefly what are the key characteristics for a successful campaign in Lebanon?

A: Passion and conviction. You can't promote an idea if you do not believe in it. The message of the campaign should be clear; it should motivate the supporters, provoke the opponents and attract the silent majority or the "neutrals". The campaign should be solid and consistent and should be unique and honest to gain credibility.

Appendix J (Interview with PR professional and new independent Lebanese candidate Mr. Mark Daou, February 1, 2014)

Q: How would you describe and evaluate political marketing in Lebanon?

A: The political campaigning in Lebanon is very basic. It still depends on social networks, not social media but real life social networks; the patriarch in the family, the leader of the tribe, key gatekeepers, head of municipalities and so on. So the entire process is based on a very traditional approach to politicians. Plus it's a system dependent on nepotism and favoritism so that you track records and provide physical goods and personal "services" to individuals is more important; no one is really lobbying for legislation or national issues, they're mainly lobbying for how much they can deliver to their voters. That's why if you compare what's happening in the US or Europe versus what's happening in Lebanon, we're still very much a third world when it comes to practicing democracy or elections.

Q: Knowing that you are a new candidate and you've been working on your campaign for quite a period, do you think you succeeded in creating an impact? How?

A: Definitely! Now our campaign had a major challenge as we didn't know if there will be elections or not. We were working without deadlines, so performance was more limited on mobilization of people but with time, things started cooling down as people lost interest because of a lack of decision if

there were elections or not. But what we did is we were mainly able to break through social media, mainly through building databases, we built a couple of software to identify voters based on geographic location, where they are based, and how we can work with them. We divided the entire region to sectors and key individuals; we tried to integrate the traditional system as well to build on it because we had support within existing communities, club societies, NGO's in the region so we were basically trying to integrate the old system while mobilizing the younger generation with tools that they are more familiar with.

Q: How did your existing community help you?

A: Basically what we were doing was a grassroots campaign, so it was visits door to door, creating lists of people, visiting them, talking to them, following up with them, and adding them to mailing lists, asking them to like the Facebook page so we were building it step by step on grassroots level . Basically what we were doing is: we had the region's directory index, it included 72 villages, towns, cities etc. so we were dividing those cities into segments, the bigger cities were divided into sub parts and everyone was active within that community and they had to target Facebook pages of that community, and the clubs of that community. We did the personal contact and then tried to collect all that information in a digital database as well as a social media database.

Q: In your opinion, what is the best way to reach the Lebanese voter?

A: It varies with respect to age groups; if we're talking about people from 21 to 30 I would say social media maybe is the best. The traditional target audiences are people who will not respond to our type of campaign; they stick to the traditional political parties. So our core bulk and focus was on people under 40 years old, that was the entire effort that we were doing and most of our campaign was built on recruiting activists not voters because we were at the first stages of the campaign before the elections were to take place. Our entire focus was on recruiting more people to work in the campaign. I will give you an example: I started talking to the people I know who took me to people they knew so it was small meetings one on one or with 2 to one, 3 to one and so on. At some point there were a lot of momentums, I would go into a house and I would find 15 or 20 people. In one meeting in Aramoun I had about 27 people sitting and listening to our campaign and our plans and out of those 27 there were around 13 who were half way activists with the campaign so it was branching out pretty much quickly.

Q: How do you fund your campaign? Do you have sponsors?

A: Initially, and as in all cases even in business entrepreneurship your core funding comes from you, your close friends, family and key supporters. Because I have been active in the public sector with NGO's for a long time, I have developed a database of people who would sponsor my campaign, and they actually did. We started gathering small amounts of money and then when people trusted us and believed in our clear plan and objective we started getting

bigger amounts from individual donors. In fact you need large amounts to run the campaign so you need key donors. Now based on the Lebanese law as a candidate I am allowed to spend $100 000 as a base and then $2 per voter in the district so in my district in Aley it was somewhere around $360 000 the legal amount that I could spend on the campaign during the last 60 days. However, in our case we were collecting money and spending them even if the elections were out of sight. We are outsiders and Lebanese people need time to accept new political groups so what we have been doing is building a solid infrastructure so if the campaign comes and go we can still continue. For example the municipal elections are coming in 2016 so what we're doing is that along with the team that has been working in different villages, we're starting to identify candidates for the upcoming municipal elections so by the next time we have parliamentary elections we already have our people in the municipalities and this would give us a key edge. We are simply working on building a sustainable network of individuals because every activist you get will get you 10 votes for sure.

Q: This is what Obama did in 2008, is your campaign inspired from his campaign?

A: Yes, partially it is but Obama had the Democratic Party so he had a lot of resources whereas we had a lot of challenges, we had to build the database and then we needed to make people know.

Q: But don't you think that Lebanese people are bored and tired of the traditional candidates and parties and they are willing to cooperate and support new ones?

A: Statistically speaking, no! Everyone wishes for a new thing but in reality they know that these are the available options so if you have to change that you have to practice it and build it gradually. We're trying to build something through finding people who are willing to cooperate and willing to change.

Q: Aley is one of the Lebanese cities, how do you reach people there? Do you use social media as well?

A: Yes, people in Aley are very active on social media so our core tool was social media. There are lots of Facebook pages and groups, everyone has a page, everyone has a group; in the district now I have a list of about 140 pages and groups for churches, small communities, municipalities, and clubs. We add those pages and keep track of the events and the people and we try to communicate with them and turn them into real life activists.

Q: So what is your purpose of using social media?

A: To collect information about important topics of discussion, to reach out to people and build relationships with them, we send them messages, we invite them to like our page, and we meet with them and sit with them in real life. We also share with people posts about the region and national issues.

Q: What is the purpose of your candidacy and campaign?

A: Our political pitch was the following: there is a monopoly by religious leaders or sectarian leaders controlling Lebanon, all we needed to do was show that this monopoly can be broken. If we break it in one place in Lebanon we would inspire people in other places to do the same.

Q: So your aim is to create a list of new candidates...

A: A new political reality, yes!

Q: Briefly what are the key characteristics for a successful campaign in Lebanon?

A: Well organized and targeted, credible enough to raise funds and smart enough to use media. We need all types of media and I think that even if social media is good we still need traditional media tools like TV, radio, and newspapers. They are still dominant and even for the younger generation they are still the most credible sources; if they don't see you on TV, for example, you are not a real politician.

Q: Based on your experience, who are the potential Lebanese voters?

A: The highest percentage of voters in Lebanon are people between 40 and 60, the older age people commit more to elections, younger people still stay away from elections. What Obama did is he moved younger generations to commit to politics, if we are capable to do that we are able to get a large number of voters

that we only can reach because we speak their language. And by the way, another lesson to learn from Obama is micro targeting of potential voters which is targeting specific groups within a specific segment, for example young Christians in Achrafiyeh Lebanon.