Goldsmiths Research Online

Goldsmiths Research Online (GRO)
is the institutional research repository for
Goldsmiths, University of London

Citation

Persistent URL

Versions

Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Religion, Resistance and New Horizons of Nationhood:

A Study of Hizbullah's Promotional Communication (2006-2018)

Ph.D. Thesis

Sarah Hamdar

Ph.D. Candidate

Department of Media and Communications

Goldsmiths University

University of London

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also declare that this thesis has not previously been submitted for assessment in any other unit, and that I have not copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of others.

Signature

Date

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This thesis draws on the conceptual tools of communication theory, and on studies of promotion and branding, to examine Hizbullah's communication strategy and the way the Party has promoted its identity, values and nationalist discourses in the period between 2006 and 2018. To do so, it examines five different sites including buildings and leisure sites in Dahiya, 'Ashura rituals and their mediation on al-Manar, 'Ashura posters, and children's magazines and television programming.

By paying particular attention to Hizbullah's religious channels and activities such as 'Ashura rituals and posters, and treating them as part and parcel of the Party's political communication strategies, the thesis emphasises an aspect of the Party's communication practices that has so far remained largely overlooked. It understands the Party's communication channels as educational and socialising agencies that seek to create and maintain Hizbullah's religio-politico nation and to ensure the Party's survival within an increasingly tense regional political environment.

The thesis's focus on the specific time period from the 2006 war with Israel until the present day shows that Hizbullah is expanding its resistance and nationalist discourses as it attempts to appeal to a wider local, Muslim, Arab and regional audience. The thesis argues that the Party does this as a tactical and pre-emptive calculation to gain support for a regional war yet to come with Israel. It draws on the modernist and ethno-symbolist schools of nationalism and argues that both are

necessary in order to understand the Party's multiple nationalisms. However, the thesis argues that core to Hizbullah's nationalism is one centred around its religio-politico nation that adopts the Karbala battle for resistance activities against whatever Yazid that is declared. Hence, resistance and religion are intertwined within the Party's discourse.

Table of Contents:

Note on transliteration

In this thesis, I use the common spellings of Arabic names and phrases that are most familiar to English-speaking readers. For all other terms, I use a simplified version of the transliteration system used by the International Journal of Middle East Studies. I also omit all diacritical marks and only use the ayn (ʿ) and Hamza (ʾ).

The following is a list of recurrent terms in the dissertation:

ʿAshura
Al-Manar
Bekaa
Baalbeck
Dahiya
Hizbullah
Hussein
Muharram
Nasrullah
Qurʾan (ic)
Sayyed
Shiʿa
Taef
Umma
Zaynab

List of figures:

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Research Description

On January 3, 2018, Sayyed Hasan Nasrullah gave an interview on al-Mayadeen, a pro-resistance television channel, that lasted for over two and a half hours.[1] In it, the secretary general of Hizbullah stated that Trump's decision to move the American embassy to Jerusalem would be the end of Israel. Nasrullah also declared that resistance had been set in motion as a response: Hizbullah was in contact with different resistance factions, including the Palestinian Fatah that had long had a strained relationship with both Hizbullah and Hamas; the two Palestinian groups had united for a cause and along with them, a growing number of regional political parties.

Nasrullah's 2018 statement marks a difference from those given by the Party in its early days. Indeed, Hizbullah, born in 1985 to resist Israeli occupation, was initially focused on resistance activities within Lebanese territories and in framing itself as a resistance Party. And despite being viewed as loyal to Iran – a view that still persists - Hizbullah has managed to expand politically and socially and to carve a place for itself in the Lebanese political scene following its participation in the early 1990s parliamentary elections and through its growing web of institutions and organisations. The Party also managed to crown itself as a Lebanese national group following the withdrawal of Israel from the South in 2000. Still, it is

---

[1] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V99AjeBg2qY for full interview. Last accessed January 18, 2018.

Hizbullah's involvement in the Syrian war alongside Assad's forces that has marked the Party's transformations as it became a key player in changing the course of the Syrian war and Assad's fate. Indeed, while Hizbullah's resistance was initially limited to internal Lebanese territories and while its regional alliances were to uphold resistance against Israel, Hizbullah is today a regional power capable of redefining the regional political landscape, a key force in battling ISIS and a Party with strong links to regional resistance groups such as those in Iraq and Yemen among others.

Hizbullah's political growth and success was mirrored – even mobilised - in the Party's media. While Hizbullah's initial focus was on "populist media" – the print publications and murals through which the Party could distribute its messages (Harb 2011, p. 177), as well as the filming of its resistance battles to discredit the Israeli army who denied deaths among its ranks and to gain credibility for its battles, the Party's communicative channels gradually grew into a large centralised web that includes a wide range of print publications, radio, television and websites among others. These became significant in promoting, mobilising and maintaining support for the Party's resistance, religious and political ideologies and identity and in disseminating Hizbullah's rhetoric to a global audience.

This thesis adds to growing literature exploring Hizbullah's communication. It deploys the conceptual tools of media and communication studies to examine Hizbullah's media channels and does so through a particular emphasis on promotion and branding. The thesis uncovers the content of the Party's media channels and the manner in which Hizbullah produces and promotes its core

identity and changing dynamics. Central to the thesis's contribution are three main areas of focus: (1) a theoretical approach and empirical focus that draws on promotion and branding studies, thereby providing a different but vital lens through which to understand Hizbullah and its communication; (2) an examination of religious sites such as rituals and ʿAshura posters and an understanding of these as part and parcel of the Party's political communication strategies; (3) an examination of Hizbullah's media from the period following the 2006 war with Israel until the present day, a time which has instigated significant transformations in Hizbullah's resistance and nationalist discourses. To do this, the thesis adopts multiple methodological approaches that include interviews, participant observation and content analysis among others to investigate five different sites of study. These include spaces and places such as the landscape, buildings and leisure sites, ʿAshura rituals and their mediation on al-Manar television, ʿAshura posters and children's magazines and television channel.

In examining Hizbullah's media and communication, the thesis adopts James Carey's (2009) 'ritual view' of communication which acknowledges communication's role in maintaining society and culture and highlights the link between communication on the one hand and identity, collectivity and nationalism on the other. The thesis also adopts Andrew Wernick's (1991) definition of promotion which sees the extension of promotion beyond the advertising world to include the "propagation" of a broad range of concepts such as ideas, acts and events. This allows for the argument that Hizbullah promotes resistance, religion, nationalism and values that are necessary to understand the Party. By adopting Wernick's definition, the thesis demonstrates that Carey's 'ritual view' of

communication is applicable to sites beyond traditional media and is thus significant to examine Hizbullah because it links to channels such as 'Ashura rituals, space and place and children's media and which traditional definitions of promotion that focus on adverts do not. It also asserts the argument made in this thesis about the relationship between promotion, education and socialisation processes thereby acknowledging the wider impact of promotion. Indeed, Wernick explores how educational material is promotional thus asserting the relevance of exploring children's magazines and television within Hizbullah's overall communication.

In drawing on branding literature, the thesis highlights the research of Moor (2007, 2014) and Arvidsson (2006) who explore how branding functions and affirm the adoption of commercial branding techniques in politics, universities and charity organisations among others. Wernick's definition of promotion and branding literature agree about the extension of communication beyond the commercial realm and thus provide the basis through which to explore Hizbullah's political and religious promotion. It is on this basis that Mara Einstein (2008) for example draws on branding to explore cases of religious promotion in the Christian U.S. context, as does Noha Mellor (2017) who examines the case of the Muslim Brotherhood. It is also on this basis that this thesis examines Hizbullah's religious sites as it argues that religious communication maintains and emphasises religion within Hizbullah's religio-politico nation.

The most significant aspect of branding – and one which is central to the examination of Hizbullah - is its focus on values. Many branding professionals

argue that core to the activities, image and vision of brands are its values, which are disseminated through the multiple promotional outlets that a brand adopts. So while the thesis uncovers the widening resistance and nationalist discourses of Hizbullah, it adopts branding literature to demonstrate that the Party's values have remained unchanged from the very beginning. As later chapters will uncover, Hizbullah's values of religion and resistance are two aspects that the Party has throughout maintained, promoted and based its rhetoric upon. In addition, by adopting branding as a theoretical approach, the thesis demonstrates how channels such as the landscape, architecture and ritual gatherings emphasise the Party's values ultimately allowing for the Party's survival. Hence, one cannot understand Hizbullah without acknowledging the centrality and significance of its communication and promotional channels.

Here, it is pertinent to point out that this thesis does not explore Hizbullah's media as propaganda. This is because of the term's predominantly negative dimension (Ellul 1965, Jowett and O'Donnell 1992, Marlin 2002) as propaganda is understood to involve "lies, distortion, deceit, manipulation, psychological warfare, and brainwashing" and the furthering of "the desired intent of the propagandist" regardless of the outcome on the welfare of the audience (Jowett and O'Donnell 1992, pp. 2-6). Such a definition thus fails to acknowledge Hizbullah's significance within a sectarian nation (see below) and relative to the Shiʿa demographic that this thesis emphasises. Equally significant, the term is typically adopted to condemn the communication activities of others in comparison to one's own. This is noted by Zeina Maasri (2009) who criticises Liz McQuiston's (2004) categorisation of political posters as those that are produced by centralised

powers are considered propaganda while those produced by pro-democratic and anti-war groups are categorised as activism although both groups resort to similar techniques. Hence, the term is used to label what 'other' groups engage in and thus involves a level of subjectivity.

Hence, the position that this thesis adopts is that of Maasri (2009). Maasri (2009), who examines Lebanese civil war posters, understands them as "symbolic sites of hegemonic struggle" (p. 16) that transform what is traditionally seen as political propaganda into a means of manoeuvring and surviving a delicate political reality as each group attempts to provide its own narrative of events. However, this thesis extends such an understanding onto Hizbullah's total communicative practices – both internal and external. So, though its media, Hizbullah attempts to maintain its hegemonic position within the Lebanese system and in opposition to other hegemonic religio-politico groups. It is also in this pretext that communication with external enemies – both Israel, ISIS and a growing list of opponents – is seen as the media also acts as a symbolic sites of struggle in opposition and in response to enemy messages and activities.

The thesis's second main contribution is to study Hizbullah's religious sites such as the annual ʿAshura rituals that commemorate the martyrdom of Hussein and the posters that are created for the event, in addition to the religious content in children's magazines. Despite the significance of these channels, they have remained largely ignored and studies of the role of religion to Hizbullah have been limited to its impact on resistance. Research on the Party's religious communication has also remained focused on al-Manar, Hizbullah's official

television channel (Matar and Dakhlallah 2006, Dakhlallah 2012). Likewise, studies on the Party's political communication and nationalism is limited to political sites while religious channels such as those that this thesis explores are overlooked despite their centrality to the Party's political communication from the very beginning. As such, the thesis fills a major gap within the study of Hizbullah's communication. It demonstrates the intertwining of religion and politics within the Party's discourse as it adds to existing research that highlight how politics and resistance draw on religion but more importantly, how religious channels act to disseminate political messages and stances.

In exploring the content of Hizbullah's communication during the period between 2006 and 2018, the thesis provides a contemporary understanding of the regional political dynamics on the one hand and of Hizbullah's contemporary resistance and nationalist identity on the other. In exploring the Party's regional politics, the thesis questions views of the political tensions in the Middle East as that of Sunni/Shiʿa sectarianism (see for example, Kizilkaya 2017) and which are calling for territorial divisions based on religion and demonstrates that such views do not take into account changing local and regional alliances or power dynamics. Indeed, Hizbullah's battle against ISIS has been interpreted in sectarian terms and the notion of the 'Shiʿa crescent' has been adopted by Jordan's King Abdullah and former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (Haddadin 2017) to explain rising tensions and surmounting fear despite coalitions extending beyond sect to include

nationalist ones against common enemies.[2] Similarly, Lebanon, especially

Hizbullah has been framed in sectarian terms. Hizbullah's Shiʿa identity is brought

to the forefront and its involvement in Syria has been perceived as support for

Alawite[3] Assad as has its support for resistance in Iraq, Yemen and Bahrain. Absent

from much of these claims is Hizbullah's Lebanese, Muslim, Arab and regional

nationalist identities that seek to maintain the sovereignty of the Lebanese state

and which sees Hizbullah striking agreements with different Lebanese Christian

factions, provide ongoing support to Palestinians who are predominantly Sunni

and Christians and battle ISIS regionally in collaboration with Christian groups.[4] By

focusing on Hizbullah's communication practices and outlets, this thesis refutes

sectarian framings to demonstrate that although Shiʿa ideology is core to

Hizbullah, it cannot be viewed solely through that lens.

In examining Hizbullah's resistance and nationalist identity, the thesis traces the

expansion of Hizbullah's resistance activities beyond the confines of Lebanese

territories and against new enemies as the Party frames its expanding battles as

for the sake of Lebanon, Islam and the region as a whole and itself as anti-

oppression and anti-imperialism. It uncovers how Hizbullah, having traditionally

utilised Imam Hussein's martyrdom in the 680 AD Karbala battle to mobilise Shiʿas

to resist Israel, has in more recent times employed the figure of Hussein to garner

support for its involvement in Syria and beyond as Hussein becomes a universal

---

[2] See https://www.opendemocracy.net/ranj-alaaldin/shia-crescent-selffulfilling-prophecy and
https://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2017/01/31/shia-crescent-middle-east-geopolitics/ for an analysis of the
'Shia crescent.' Last accessed January 29, 2018.
[3] Alawites are considered a Shiʿa sect.
[4] See for example https://www.mintpressnews.com/they-accept-us-as-we-are-christians-join-forces-
with-muslim-group-hezbollah-to-fight-isis-in-lebanon/210088/. Last accessed January 29, 2018.

symbol for resistance and as the enemy becomes Yazid, be it Israel, ISIS or whatever enemy that is declared. Thus, while the thesis agrees with research that stresses Hizbullah's resistance aimed at Israel (Karagiannis 2009, Haddad 2013) and support for Palestinian factions (Saad-Ghorayeb 2002, Khalili 2007), it argues that the period between 2012 and 2018 has involved new battles and new resistance activities, which in turn have redefined the Party's nationalist identity, ultimately impacting how Hizbullah promotes itself and how it communicates with its various audiences.

Indeed, in examining this specific time period, the thesis exposes Hizbullah's evolving nationalist identity. It shows that there has been an increased focus on Hizbullah's framing of itself in Lebanese, Arab and regional nationalist terms – sometimes simultaneously - in what I argue is a preparation for a regional war yet to come with Israel. The thesis demonstrates that Hizbullah's contemporary nationalism needs to be understood as a complex web of interrelated identities that feed on and support one another, all of which seek to garner support for its resistance activities and to secure the Party's survival within an ever increasing tense political region. By addressing the Shiʿa population, the whole Lebanese population, the Muslim and Arab nation and the regional demographic, Hizbullah frames itself as the protector of these entities thereby moving beyond the confines of a sectarian identity through which it has been viewed and analysed. To explore these, the thesis draws on literature of nationalism, including the modernist, ethno-symbolist (religious) and cultural schools. The thesis acts contrary to literature (Kedourie 1960, Gellner 1983) that focuses on one understanding of nationalism as it demonstrates the relatedness of the above forms of nationalism

relative to Hizbullah. And if many existing studies of religion and nationalism have resulted in a binary approach, which either focuses on the utilisation of religion for political nationalist purposes or which sees religion as the basis for the nation state, the policio-religious nexus adopted here is not a question of 'either…or' but rather as 'both…and.' In the following chapters, I will demonstrate how Hizbullah's nationalism tacks back and forth between a more exclusive religious nationalism focused around Shiʿa identity – and which is itself political in nature as it does not gather all Shiʿas - and a more inclusive civil nationalism depending upon context and strategy.

The thesis' focus on nationalism adds to growing literature such as that which is put forth by Alagha (2006), Saad-Ghorayeb (2002) and Harb and Leenders (2005) among others. For example, Harb and Leenders (2005) focus on Hizbullah's religious collective identity and the way through which the Party's multiple institutions act to disseminate meanings through successful "holistic and integrated networks" on a daily basis in an attempt to create a resistance society (p. 174). By drawing attention to the Party's multiple social institutions, Harb and Leenders argue that it is not their material characteristics that create this society, but rather the dissemination of symbolic meanings of identity and values through these very institutions and which involves military and spiritual resistance (pp. 188-189). The focus is evidently on the internal audience who adopt these codes to become part of the society. Similarly, Alagha (2006) examines Hizbullah's focus on creating and maintaining Shiʿa identity within the Lebanese scene but also draws attention to the Party's political integration into Lebanese politics in the early

1990s.[5] Arguing that it reflects Hizbullah's opening up policy, or what he terms "Lebanonisation," that it adopted following its participation in the Lebanese government, Alagha contends that it echoes the Party's ideological transformations. Alagha's exploration of Hizbullah post-Taef contributes to a body of literature that highlights the Party's role within the Lebanese state, such as providing social services for all Lebanese irrespective of religion and sect (Haddad 2013, Qassem 2005, Saouli 2011) (although the majority of these services are in predominantly Shiʻa areas) and in defending Lebanese territory and appealing to the Lebanese nation more widely.

This thesis agrees with the above literature and of the centrality of the religious collective group and opening up that the Party has implemented. In fact, one of the thesis's key tasks is highlighting the creation and maintenance of religion to the Party's nation and agrees with work that claims that Shiʻa identity takes centre stage within Hizbullah's discourse (Harb and Lendeers 2005, Alagha 2006, Hage Ali 2015) as it reveals how this identity is manifested throughout the multiple examined channels. The thesis also adopts the "Lebanonisation" term (Alagha 2006, Saad-Ghorayeb 2002) but analyses it in the contemporary scene as a marker of Lebanese nationalist identity. As coming empirical chapters will demonstrate, Hizbullah has increasingly addressed a wider Lebanese public - evident in the Party's rhetoric, Nasrullah's speeches, posters and al-Manar segments – and can no longer be analysed as political accommodation but rather as of asserting a

---

[5] Harb and Leenders (2005) argue against the terrorist label assigned to Hizbullah but contend that the Lebanonisation approach overlooks more significant aspects of the Party such as the 'Resistance Society.'

Lebanese nationalist identity. Additionally, there remain a number of gaps in the existing literature which the thesis aims to supplement. First, besides the research of Deeb (2008) on Hizbullah's cultural sites such as exhibitions and museums, the literature seemingly focuses on one nationalist aspect at the expense of the other. And although existing literature highlights how religious ideologies are used to support resistance activities, the way in which the latter supports the former remains largely under-explored. Second, the above literature explores Hizbullah's nationalist identity prior to the Party's intervention in Syria and their support for Yemen and Bahrain and prior to their battles against ISIS in Arsal alongside the Lebanese army in 2016.[6] Hence, this thesis presents a more contemporary understanding of how Hizbullah frames and promotes itself and its nationalist identities as an anti-colonial one irrespective of religion and sect and how its communications strategies and practices have reflected these changing priorities and engagements.

2. Setting the Scene

2.1 Hizbullah, Key Events and Nationalist Dynamics

2.1.1 Birth

Hizbullah's birth was made official when the Party published its first manifesto in 1985. It came at a time of heightened tensions as a result of the civil war that had started in 1975 and which increased the sectarian tensions amongst the country's

---

[6] Arsal is a town in the Bekaa valley. Following the start of the Syrian war, it saw an influx of Syrian refugees and the control of ISIS supporters and factions.

eighteen official sects. The Party's birth was the result of a number of factors including the disappearance of Musa al-Sadr, Israel's presence on Lebanese territory and the Islamic revolution in Iran. Al-Sadr, who was of Iranian citizenship, arrived in Lebanon in 1958 and eventually became the leader of the Lebanese Shi'a community, both religiously and politically (el Houri 2012, p. 38). At a time when Shi'as were politically marginalised, al-Sadr's political work aimed at reform and called for the establishment of schools and clinics, appointments of Shi'as in civil services and a bigger share of the national budget for the downtrodden southern villages (Ajami 1986, p. 86). Lebanese Shi'as gradually attained better political, social and economic status through the exertion of force on the Lebanese state (Alagha 2006, p. 27) and as a result, al-Sadr succeeded in rivaling leftist movements which, until the late seventies, Shi'as had joined in reaction to their political alienation (AbuKhalil 1991, Daher 2016).

Al-Sadr's political work further increased in 1975 when he founded Amal,[7] an activist movement whose primary function was to liberate southern Lebanon from Israeli troops, thereby introducing armed struggle. Al-Sadr also worked domestically and regionally to put an end to the Lebanese civil war as he attempted to persuade some Arab states that were key players to help end the violence (Alagha 2006, Saouli 2011). Accordingly, al-Sadr visited Libya but disappeared in mysterious circumstances in 1978 leaving Lebanon's Shi'as without a leader and in a state of vacuum.

---

[7] Amal is an acronym for 'Afwaj al Muqawama al- Lubnaniyya' (the Lebanese Resistance Brigade) (Harik 1996, p. 42). It also literally means 'Hope.'

Al-Sadr's disappearance led to the eventual split within Amal into two parties: one adopted Nabih Berri's moderate stance[8] and the other adopted Iranian Ayatollah Khomeini's approach to dealing with the Israeli occupation (el Houri 2012, p. 39) which started mid 1982 when Israel invaded with the aim of destroying the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and securing a Lebanese government that would make peace with them (Norton 2007a, p. 476). It is the latter group which eventually led to the birth of Hizbullah. As former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak confirmed in 2006: "When we entered Lebanon . . . there was no Hizbullah. We were accepted with perfumed rice and flowers by the [Shiʿa] in the South.[9] It was our presence there that created [Hizbullah]" (Cited in Norton 2007a, p. 478).

Iran also played a major part in Hizbullah's formation: the Iranian revolution instilled a sense of pride in the oppressed Lebanese Shiʿas and in the summer of 1982, 1500 Iranian Revolutionary Guards arrived in the Bekaa region and secretly created Hizbullah under the guidance and sponsorship of Iran (Hamzeh 1993, p. 322). Such strong links with Iran are evident in the Party's early stages whereby the Islamic Republic's flag was used predominantly rather than the Lebanese one (Saouli 2011, Saade 2016).

Hizbullah gained considerable attention from the beginning, attributed mostly to its resistance activities, which were documented in films that the fighters

---

[8] Berri is currently the Speaker of the Parliament in Lebanon. His reaction to the invasion was the decision to participate in the National Salvation Committee that was aimed at dealing with the invasion (Alagha 2006, p. 39). Religious members of Amal rejected this as it was a confirmation of Israel's existence.
[9] Shiʿas in the south initially welcomed Israel's invasion as a result of the increasing resentment towards Palestinian presence and the problems that the PLO had caused (Karagiannis 2009, p. 367).

videotaped and distributed to existing stations at the time (Harb 2011). Its initial

stages were mainly concerned with combat activities against Israeli soldiers who

had occupied territories in the south of Lebanon and which Israel considered its

'security zone' (Harb 2011, p. 177), religious dissemination and as a social

organisation. In the former, although anti-Israeli resistance was undertaken by

different factions, Hizbullah was the Party carrying out the most attacks and since

1985, have been the only Lebanese Party to do so (Hamzeh 1993, p. 322). So

successful was Hizbullah as a resistance group that in 1990, the Taef agreement

that was negotiated in Saudi Arabia to end the civil war, which disarmed all

national and non-national militias, allowed the Party to maintain its weapons on

the basis that it's a resistance movement and not a militia (Alagha 2006, p.40). The

agreement also saw Hizbullah's integration into the political scene, marking the

second stage of its existence.

2.1.2 Political Integration

The Taef accord brought a dramatic change in the Party's attitude towards the

Lebanese government: Hizbullah, having previously criticised the government

arguing that it was "dominated by the Phalange and supported by Israel and the

United States" (Alagha 2006, p. 44),[10] employed a more self-conscious policy of

infitah (i.e. "opening-up") in what is explained as Hizbullah's attempts at

'Lebanonisation' (Karagiannis 2009, p. 967). This came about after Iran's "more

---

[10] The Phalange (Kataeb) is a right-wing political party with connections to Israel. In addition, it is generally believed that they were behind the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre which led to the slaughter of between 762 and 3,500 civilians, mostly Palestinians and Shiʿas.

pragmatic course in politics" following Khomeini's death and under the advice of

the Iranian president Hashimi Rafsanjani (Hamzeh 1993, p. 323). The Party

opened up channels of dialogues with Christians and with all Lebanese parties

except with those with "blatant connections with Israel" (i.e. Phalanges and

Lebanese Forces) (Alagha 2006, p. 44). It also decided to participate in the 1992

parliamentary elections where it achieved stunning victories and won eight seats

(Hamzeh 1993, p. 321) thereby transforming itself into an official political party

(Alagha 2006, pp. 42-43). This brought about Hizbullah's efforts to "conform to

civil and socio-political standards" and self-restraint to affirm its political

integration (Saouli 2011, pp. 933-934).[11] The Party also updated its open letters

that showed the changes within their political and religious discourse, the most

important of which was distancing itself from the goal of forming an Islamic state

in Lebanon (Alagha 2006)[12] although basic ideologies such as anti-Israeli

resistance and anti-American rhetoric remained unchanged (Norton 2007a, p.

475). These changes were translated into the Party's material aspects: 'the Islamic

Revolution in Lebanon' – initially written at the bottom of the Party's logo – was

modified to 'Islamic Resistance in Lebanon' (Maasari 2012, p. 174) thereby

mirroring its more Lebanese identity and were also echoed on Hizbullah's official

television station al-Manar, where, as Baylouny (2009) notes, the channel

attempted to appeal to a wider Lebanese audience through diverse programs.

---

[11] See Saouli (2011) for the limits of Hizbullah's self-constraint.

[12] Researchers such as Alagha (2006) explain that in its first open letter in 1985, Hizbullah announced its eventual intention of forming an Islamic State as a means to fix Lebanon's corrupt political system. Bashir Saade (2016) however, explains that it was never articulated as such but that the manifesto suggested the Islamic nation as a model to fight political corruption. The 2009 manifesto makes no mention of an Islamic state altogether (Alagha 2011, p. 33).

Hizbullah's 'Lebanonisation' was further asserted in 2000 following Israeli withdrawal from the South after 22 years (Alagha 2006, p. 50).[13] Celebrations ensued in Lebanon as Sayyed Hasan Nasrullah stood before the crowd and attributed the victory to all of Lebanon thereby emphasising their Lebanese identity and marking the Party's attempts at portraying itself as part of the Lebanese nation. This was evidence of Hizbullah's tactical attempts at widening its support base beyond the Shiʿa demographic.

The Party basked in their popularity after 2000 and enjoyed political success and relative calm in the South. However, the assassination of Rafic Hariri, head of the Sunni sect and former prime minister, in 2005 brought with it internal attacks at the Party and calls for their disarming.

2.1.3 Growing Political Unrest

Hariri's assassination unleashed massive anti-Syrian rallies calling for the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon.[14] Hizbullah became enmeshed in the whole indictment drama that unfolded thereafter and along with their political alliances, organised demonstrations to thank Syria (Saouli 2011, p. 934). As a result, Lebanon became deeply divided between March 14 and March 8 factions - with the names reflecting the date in which their demonstration took place - completely changing Lebanon's political dynamics. The first, headed by Hariri's

---

[13] Israel, though, has failed to withdraw from the Lebanese Shibaa Farms claiming that it is Syrian despite the latter's denial (Alagha 2006, p. 50).
[14] See Khatib (2007) for details of the anti-Syrian demonstrations and their mediation.

Sunni Future Movement in alliance with the Christian Lebanese Forces and Phalanges, among others, blamed Syria for Hariri's death while the second group, composed of Hizbullah and Amal and a number of Christian factions, believe Hariri's death is to be blamed on Israel and the United States. Hizbullah's Lebanese identity was put into question and the tension found its way into the 2005 parliamentary elections. What was previously a battle to gain seats based on one's religious identity soon escalated as the tension between Sunnis and Shiʿas intensified. This is because the majority of the Sunnis support March 14 while the majority of the Shiʿas support March 8. The Lebanese political scene thus transformed from one where the dividing line between different groups was one of sectarian division and a Christian/Muslim one to a more complex political dynamic where each March group is composed of multiple religio-politico parties with a shared political discourse. Hence, Lebanese individuals developed multiple collective identities, including one's sectarian belonging and political affiliation among others.

This is of course not new. As Anthony Smith (1991) argues, an individual can belong to multiple collective groups depending on one's gender, socio-economic status, territorial location, religion and ethnicity. To Alberto Melucci (1995) collective identity is

> an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals (or groups at a more complex level) and concerned with the orientations of action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place. By "interactive and shared" I mean a definition that must be conceived as a

process because it is constructed and negotiated through a repeated activation

of the relationships that link individuals (or groups). (p. 44).

Examining a more narrowed concept of collective identity is the 'political identity'

put forth by Nisbet and Myers (2010) who state

Political identities may be best understood as forms of collective social

identities situated in a political context—"the social categories, attributes,

or components of the self-concept that are shared with others and

therefore define individuals as being similar to others," resulting from the

"interplay between cognitive processes and social or cultural influences."

(p. 348)

The authors explain that "political identity schemas" involve defining not only

"who we are" but also "who we are not," therefore involving the self in comparison

to the other (Nisbet and Myers 2011, p. 687). Individuals within a 'we' group are

brought together through meaning, shared feelings, faith and fear (Melucci 1995, p.

45) – and where in the case of the March groups, was one based on an explanation

of Hariri's perpetrators and a vision for Lebanon. In this sense, collective identities

in the Lebanese scene are malleable depending on the banner under which they

fall: religious collectivity in religious circles and political collectivity in political

events.

But collective identity is not limited to a feeling or description but involves a

significant dynamic: individuals within a collective group interact, exchange views

and make decisions and exhibit the ability for "autonomous action." In times of conflict, this collective identity is reinforced in an attempt to justify actions and to resist threats of its existence. However, one of the main consequences of collective identity is the ability to mobilise the collective action of the different people within this group (Melucci 1995, pp. 43-49) and which is evident in March 14's united call for Hizbullah's disarming, with the latter arguing that arms were necessary to defend Lebanon (Norton 2007b, p. 483) thus once again framing its action in Lebanese nationalist terms.

March 8's political group further expanded in February of 2006 when Hizbullah and the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), a Maronite Christian group headed by General Michel Aoun, formed an alliance thus gravely changing the political environment as it widened Hizbullah's internal support group. With that, the FPM (originally aligned with March 14) joined forces with March 8 and became a key group player thus further transforming the political scene into one where inter-religious alliances based on political vision became woven into the Lebanese political system. The alliance also emphasised the new political reality: the primacy was one of politics rather than of religion. The March alliances and antagonisms were echoed in different media outlets and in the case of Hizbullah included first and foremost al-Manar and as chapter 6 will uncover, the Party's 'Ashura posters which became a vital political channel that responded to growing tension.

The Party faced continuous internal attacks, further heightening in 2006 with the intense 33-day war between Lebanon and Israel following Hizbullah's abduction of

three Israeli soldiers in exchange for Lebanese prisoners. The ultimate result was massive deaths and destruction with a "reconstruction bill estimated at \$4–5 billion" and a halted tourist season (Norton 2007a, pp. 485). Key Arab states expressed their disapproval of Hizbullah's actions - with Nasrullah claiming in a speech on November 10, 2017 that Saudi Arabia had supported Israel's attacks and had tried to persuade the latter to not halt the bombing.[15] Despite Arab state disapproval, people within these same Arab states mainly supported the Party (Karagiannis 2009, p. 368) thus demonstrating the divide's expansion into a more complex dynamic than an internal political one to include a regional political gap between Arab states and its demographic.

With Israel's failure to achieve its goals, Nasrullah declared the war a 'Divine Victory' and the triumph was again attributed to Lebanon and the Arabs, the latter of whom hailed Hizbullah as the first group to defeat Israel. Thus Hizbullah once again exhibited attempts at portraying itself beyond its Shiʿa identity and marking a core endeavor to emphasise an Arab one. Posters celebrating the victory were plastered in the South and other areas and addressed "a public beyond the confines of Hizbullah's assumed [Shiʿa] constituency" and used images and phrases that reflected togetherness and that avoided Shiʿa rhetoric (Maasari 2012, pp. 150, 171). However, credit was attributed to Hizbullah fighters who were applauded for defending Lebanon, its earth, its air, and its water through fire. A year later, a song entitled 'Nasr al Arab' (the Victory of Arabs) was released by the Party, again capitalising on Arab support to emphasise its Arab identity through dedicating the

---

[15] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dNujl1Q1DM for Nasrullah's full speech. Last accessed January 29, 2018.

2006 victory to them all.

Internally however, March 14 factions and supporters did not share the Party's claims that it was 'Divine' and some did not even consider it a victory in the first place given the number of deaths and the level of destruction. With the end of the war, March 14 questioned Hizbullah's claims of a Lebanese national identity. As Maasri (2012) explains, March 14 saw Hizbullah as a threat to the "Lebanese way of life" (p. 181) as is evident in posters that appeared a few days after the war ended and which had slogans such as: "This is not our war," the 'our' here representing 'The National Assembly of the Cedar Revolution' which excluded "Hizbullah's community" outside its "national imaginary" (p. 182). This exclusion further intensified when, three months after the war, a campaign entitled 'I Love Life' was launched by March 14 on billboards around Lebanon in a clear attack against Hizbullah and its way of life. One of the campaign's missions was to emphasise the following: "We understand the Culture of Life, as opposed to the Culture of Death, as a deep, well-developed sense capable of discerning true values and interpreting authentic needs in our communities and society" (Quoted in Khatib 2013, p. 32). Hizbullah's national belonging was questioned and its links to Iran were highlighted as is emphasised in an email I received in December 2006 from a March 14 supporter. The email, composed of 100 reasons why 'we' support March 14 - the 'we' here emphasising that the email sender and creator is a March 14 supporter - mocked Shi'as, especially those who belong to the Party's ranks and who follow their religious and political discourse. The 100 points affirmed stereotypical framings of Shi'as as a sect and revealed the group's historical marginalisation within the Lebanese scene as the email mocked Shi'as for their

clothing, appearance, smell and area of residence among others.[16]

Hizbullah responded with counter-campaigns, one of which is the annual ʿAshura poster and which addressed the Party's internal political enemies, Israel and its support base (see chapter 6) among others.[17] Concurrently, March 8, especially Hizbullah, continued to frame itself in Lebanese nationalist terms as media outlets, most important of which is television stations, promoted each group's rhetoric.

The period following the July war was a politically tense phase that saw intense actions and reactions from both March groups.[18] Hizbullah however, would expand its resistance activities beyond the Lebanese border following its participation in the neighbouring Syrian war. It is here that Hizbullah's framing of its identity deserves much more focus and analysis because it demonstrates the Party's clear attempts at moving beyond its Shiʿa, Muslim identity and even Lebanese one to emphasise an Arab, regional and anti-colonial one.

2.1.4 The Syrian War and Beyond

2011 marked the start of a Syrian revolutionary movement inspired by the Arab uprisings and transformed into a local, regional and even international war taking place on Syrian soil. Hizbullah, fighting alongside Assad forces, became crucial for the latter's survival and a key regional player in changing the course of the war.

---

[16] See appendix A for the full email.
[17] See Maasri (2012) and Khatib (2007, 2012) for the March 14 and 8 campaigns following the 2006 war.
[18] See Saouli (2011), Karagiannis (2009) and Khatib (2012) for a timeline and analysis of the post 2006 period.

After all, it was Hizbullah's intervention that allowed the Syrian army to recapture Qusair, a strategic town, from the Syrian opposition (Khatib and Matar 2014, p.185) as well as Aleppo in December 2016.

The Party explained its participation in the war as vital for a number of reasons. In the initial stages and addressing its Shiʿa support base, Hizbullah explained that its involvement is necessary to protect the shrine of Lady Zaynab, the granddaughter of Prophet Mohammad who occupies a core position in Shiʿa thought thus tapping into Shiʿa emotions. Hizbullah also attempted to convince a wider religious audience by arguing that it is protecting religious Christian sites thus again bringing religion into play, albeit one that moves beyond sectarian dynamics. Similarly, the Party argued that it is fighting ISIS whose extremist views are a threat to not only Shiʿas and Christians but to moderate Muslims everywhere and in doing that, appealed to a wide moderate audience. Moving beyond religion, the Party explained that it is preventing ISIS forces from spreading into Lebanon thereby framing its resistance as for the territorial protection of Lebanon and as a means to curb ISIS regional control thus portraying itself as a protector of regional unity. Each argument was reiterated at different points depending on the audience, political events and context and media reach, all of which required garnering support for Hizbullah's involvement in Syria. Indeed, while Hizbullah initially focused on the rhetoric of defending Lady Zaynab's shrine to gain Shiʿa support and to mobilise men to join its battles, it gradually focused on different arguments to appeal to wider audiences in what I argue are preemptive measures at garnering support for larger battles yet to come: one with Israel. Certainly, analysing the changing rhetoric, most evident in Nasrullah's more recent ʿAshura

speeches (chapter 5) and posters (chapter 6) uncover Hizbullah's framing of nationalist identity which is impacted by a medium's reach.

Still, despite Hizbullah's nationalist framings, the Party has throughout been criticised by March 14 for its participation: it blamed Hizbullah for the reprisal suicide attacks within Lebanese territory as the groups behind these vowed to continue their attacks until Hizbullah retreated from Syria thus stipulating Hizbullah's defiant reaction as will be explored in chapter 6; it emphasised and magnified the numbers of martyred fighters, an aspect which this thesis (chapters 5, 6 and 7) will demonstrate saw Hizbullah's focus on stressing the position of resistance fighters and their emulation of Imam Hussein; it portrayed Hizbullah as an accomplice in Assad's depriving, hunger and deaths of Syrians in Aleppo, an accusation that Hizbullah's al-Manar refuted following Assad's recapturing of Aleppo in December 2016.

Concurrent with internal criticism were also external ones. Major Arab countries, most important of which is Saudi Arabia, publicly attacked Hizbullah and the Party was subject to international sanctions. Hizbullah responded with a defiant stance and following Saudi Arabia's war on Yemen, Nasrullah began his public condemnation of the Kingdom in what I argue in chapter 5 is a key moment through which Hizbullah adopted Hussein's martyrdom as a universal lesson against oppression. Al-Manar and the Party highlighted the role of Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries in funding terrorism and ISIS atrocities were publicly linked to Wahhabi thought, the official religious school in Saudi Arabia and many Arab states. Simultaneously, Nasrullah alleged ISIS support from Israel amid

growing tensions between Hizbullah and Iran on the one side and different Arab countries on the other. These claims found their way into Hizbullah's media channels such as Nasrullah's ʿAshura speeches (chapter 5), posters (chapter 6) and children's magazines (chapter 7). Still, Hizbullah's involvement in Syria resulted in the loss of the Arab street's support, an aspect that the Party strove to counter by reframing its rhetoric as explored above.

So it is under these circumstances that Hizbullah's communication channels are analysed and through which its nationalist rhetoric is examined. Evident from the above timeline of events, Hizbullah's political and nationalist identity is not a static one but is malleable depending on political events and ranges between a focus on its resistance, Lebanese and/or Arab and regional identity. But to assume that politics is the only factor affecting Hizbullah's identity would be short sighted. For religion, especially Shiʿa thought and Imam Hussein's martyrdom, are key factors to how the Party operates and identifies itself.

2.1.5 Religion and Ideology

Religion is central to Hizbullah's identity. This is noted by AbuKhalil (1991) who explains that ulamas, Muslim scholars, play a fundamental role both within the Party structure and in the society that they head. In the latter, the expansion in the number of ulamas in society is a method through which "an Islamic atmosphere" is created, ultimately allowing Hizbullah to expand (p. 395). However, within the Party's discourse, the role of ulamas also extends into politics as Hizbullah's Majlis ash-Shura, the Party's highest ruling body, is, except for one member, composed of

ulamas - who are themselves headed by "the "ʿalim-qaʾid" (leader)" - and from which power extends down to the community (p. 394). Ulamas' leadership position is justified through citing Islamic texts that prescribe Muslims to abide by the teaching of religious leaders thereby ensuring obedience in political as well as religious matters (pp. 393-394).

On an equally significant level, Hizbullah's actions are guided by religious texts as the Party claims that the Qurʾan is the source through which all problems can be answered and from which "techniques of political [organisation] and [mobilisation]" can be found (AbuKhalil 1991, p. 398). A small example of the centrality of the Qurʾan is the name chosen for the Party: Hizbullah, which translates into 'Party of God', was chosen intentionally from a Qurʾanic verse that states: 'The party of Allah, they are victorious.' In the same manner, Hizbullah's choice of names for all of its institutions (such as al-Mahdi Scouts, named after the twelfth Shiʿa imam, and Taha channel whose name is that of a Qurʾanic verse) reflect a religious dimension as do the political terms that the Party adopts in its political literature (AbuKhalil 1991, pp. 392-393).

In terms of Hizbullah's religious ideologies, Alagha (2006) includes: "(1) belief in [Shiʿa] Islam; (2) *wilayat al-faqih* (guardianship of the jurisprudent or jurisconsult); (3) and *jihad* (struggle) *fi sabili Allah* (in the way of God)" (p. 69). Hizbullah's belief in Shiʿa Islam is one that is based on Twelver Shiʿa thought, which in turn is founded on the belief that God had selected Ali as the successor to Mohammad following the latter's death. After Ali, his sons - Hasan then Hussein - and the nine Imams following them would assume the role (pp. 69-72). However,

the twelfth in line, Imam al-Mahdi, did not die but rather went into occultation and Shi'as now await his return to restore religion and spread peace.

The second doctrine, *wilayat al-faqih*, stipulates that in the absence of the twelfth Imam who would rule religiously and politically, a representative who is an expert in "Islamic jurisprudence" would take on the tasks until al-Mahdi's reappearance (Saad-Ghorayyeb 2002, p. 59). With the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran, Khomeini assumed this role and Hizbullah adopted this ideology and Khomeini's status as *wali al-faqih* (Just Jurisconsult) (Saad-Ghorayyeb 2002, Hamzeh 2007).

According to Alagha (2006), jihad, the third religious ideology is classified into two types: greater and smaller jihad with the first involving "the struggle with the self" (p. 84). The smaller jihad is itself divided into offensive and defensive jihad with the former conducted by the Prophet Muhammad "to get rid of the infidels and build the foundations of the requisite social milieu for propagating Islam and disseminating its teachings" (p. 84). The defensive jihad, which is key in understanding Hizbullah, involves persuasive non-military jihad and military jihad. While the former is the "jihad by the tongue and heart," the latter "is jihad by the hand" and is a religious duty in nine contexts. These include jihad if "the enemies of Islam" attempt to colonise other Muslim countries, if Muslim "selves, possessions, and dignities" are harassed, and "in order to defend the oppressed (*mustad'afin*)" who are incapable of defending themselves against oppressors "(*mustakbirin*)" (p. 85). It is under this pretext that Hizbullah bases its resistance activities on and supports Palestinians in their strife as well as the reason for condemning Saudi

attacks on Yemen for example. Thus, the choice of name that is inspired by the Qur'an coupled with the definition of jihad frames Hizbullah's resistance activities as a jihad in the path of God (Khatib 2012, p. 13) and asserts the intertwining of religion and politics within the Party's dynamics but more importantly, validates their resistance, whether that against Israel, ISIS or any enemy declared.

But resistance jihad is further asserted and enhanced by drawing on Imam Hussein in the Karbala battle in an attempt to mobilise men to join Hizbullah's ranks and to secure public Shiʿa support of resistance. To briefly explain, following the Prophet's death, rather than Ali, Abu Bakr, the Prophet's companion who eventually became his father in law after the Prophet's marriage to Lady Aisha, was chosen to be the first Caliph. Ali would eventually become the fourth caliph but was assassinated and although his son Hasan was supposed to succeed, it was Muawiyah who came to power after he declared himself Caliph in Jerusalem. Too weak to battle, Hasan handed the leadership to Muawiyah with the agreement that leadership would be decided by consensus following the latter's death (Aslan 2011, pp. 137, 177). Muawiyah's leadership saw the death of Hasan by poison and the transfer of aspirations to his younger brother Hussein who refused to break his brother's treaty and revolt against Muawiyah despite pressure from supporters (Ayoub 1978, p. 94). Eventually, Muawiyah passed away and untrue to his words, appointed his son Yazid as successor whom Hussein refused to swear allegiance to because Yazid was "oppressive and corrupt" and was "continually distorting Islam and the teachings of the Prophet to suit his ambitions" (Hamdar 2009, p. 85). As a result, Hussein and his seventy-two companions were surrounded for ten days, cut off from water by Yazid's army and, except for the women and children, were

brutally murdered. Hussein himself was horrifically murdered, beheaded and

brought to Yazid on a spike for all to see (Aslan 2011, p. 178-180). The children

and women, such as Hussein's sister Zaynab, along with the only male who had

been too sick for battle, Zayn Al-Abidin,[19] were spared but held captive and

transported with the Imam's head (Hamdar 2009, p. 86).

Hizbullah, like Shiʻas around the world, commemorates the martyrdom of Hussein

on a yearly basis in what is known as the ʻAshura or Muharram period. In fact,

ʻAshura is key to how the Party defines and frames itself and through which it

promotes itself and its changing dynamics. But the Karbala battle holds a much

more significant position. For, Hizbullah adopted al-Sadr's religious

reinterpretation of the Karbala tragedy: rather than the previous interpretation of

defeat, Hussein's martyrdom was understood as "a model of courage,

assertiveness, and self-help" and "that people must not wallow in fatalism but must

act to help themselves" (Norton 2007b, p. 51).[20] Hussein's sacrifice became the

basis for the Party's resistance acts: the fighters emulate Hussein by following in

his footpath, resemble him in religiosity and actions and if they die, like Hussein

before them, they become martyrs occupying the highest levels in the afterlife. And

like Hussein, they go willingly to the battlefield aware of their death and hence,

their sacrifice is a protestation of their faith and their heavenly award (Deeb 2006,

pp. 159-162). This is certainly the rhetoric promoted in Hizbullah's

communication outlets, including al-Manar's documentaries and segments, posters

---

[19] The sparing of Zayn al-Abidin would eventually allow for the lineage of the remaining Imams.
[20] Such interpretations of Karbala are shared by Khomeini and other leading Shiʻa figures such as Sayyed Mohammad Hussein Fadlullah.

and children's magazines to name a few, and thus deserves much attention as it is the basis for understanding why Shiʿa men join Hizbullah's ranks. It is also of particular relevance to this thesis, which explores how this is articulated to different target audiences and in different media and at what political moments different aspects of the battle are emphasised.

But emulating Hussein is no longer limited to resisting Israel. Today, and to explain the role of Hizbullah fighters in Syria, the men are promoted as being the 'Husseins of our time' who are defending Zaynab and her shrine in Syria (chapters 5 and 6). Similarly, Hussein has become, as explored above, the basis for Hizbullah's support for Yemen and Bahrain, and as such, the means through which the Party explains its changing nationalist rhetoric to its Shiʿa base thereby requiring the thesis's particular focus.

2.1.6 Party Support

Hizbullah support is the result of a web of features and activities that it has initiated and maintained throughout and which include a combination of social work, political protection, Shiʿa ideology, successful resistance battles and tapping into collective sentiments among others. Some are targeted at the local Shiʿa demographic while others at a wider local and regional audience. These will be explored in detail below.

2.1.6.1 Internal Shiʿa Support

Hizbullah has, from its inception, instigated a number of social work projects that have aided the Lebanese population but which have mostly targeted Shiʿas. One needs to remember that when Hizbullah appeared, and in spite of al-Sadr's successful efforts, Shiʿa areas were still overlooked by the Lebanese government. Thus, Hizbullah's role within the Lebanese scene transcended resistance battles and saw the Party successfully filling the gap that the Lebanese government had created throughout. Their social work has included free public services such as the distribution of drinking water, educational services such as the building of schools, educational support, assisting with school fees and university scholarships and the founding of health and charitable institutions and hospitals that are available to the members and families of Hizbullah fighters first and foremost (Qassem 2005, p. 85). In a similar vein, political marginalisation and Hizbullah's role in supporting and protecting Shiʿas has led to growing support within a political system that practices confessionalism. As Haddad (2013) explains, it is Hizbullah that protects and represents Shiʿas in a country where they still feel politically targeted (pp. 74,76). In turn, both of the above have resulted in the improvement of Shiʿa status and access to amenities and recognition which were denied to them in earlier stages.

Another key element in instigating support is the adoption of the Karbala narrative. Pious Shiʿas predominantly support Hizbullah because the Party consciously utilises Shiʿa narratives and Imam Hussein's martyrdom and also because Hizbullah draws on the Qurʾan and other Islamic sacred texts (Karagiannis 2009, p. 370). One should not read this as merely the effect of the sectarian Lebanese environment which steers individuals into supporting a specific religious

group for their protection. Rather, one should acknowledge its ideological dimension and this is the approach this thesis adopts. The impact and profoundness of ideology has been highlighted in numerous texts regardless of whether ideology is positively, negatively (Althusser 1979, Gramsci 1971) or neutrally (Eagleton 1991) explored. To Althusser (1979) for example, ideology creates individuals, fashions them and guides their actions (p. 234). It affects their views of other groups, creates identities and becomes enmeshed with one's personal identity and the foundation for rational analysis (Eagleton 1991, pp. 12, 20). It moulds individuals' thoughts, beliefs and value systems so that they "fit together into the total mental structure" (Billig et al, 1988, p. 29) to the extent that it renders them natural, self-evident and common sense (Eagleton 1991, p. 58). Everyday thinking, opinion making and interactions that an individual categorises as common sense could in fact be process of ideology that reflect one's society, age and culture and provide the ground for one's arguments and rhetoric (Billig 1991, pp. 1,18,22). Indeed, Hizbullah focuses on the dissemination of Shiʻa ideology throughout its media outlets (the thesis will demonstrate the promotion of Shiʻa ideology throughout five of these) as religion becomes the basis for political activity thus deserving much focus and the reason why rituals (chapter 5) for example is a significant site of study.

Moving to another factor – and one which combines the above two - Szekely (2012) adds an interesting and particularly significant element: marketing. In his study of the methods that non-state actors adopt to survive and garner support, Szekely (2012) outlines three different tactics: coercion, which results in only short term survival (and which chapters 4 will demonstrate that Hizbullah does

practice), social services such as those explored above and which provide longer survival and finally, marketing tactics which if used correctly, guarantee durable relationships between the non-state actor and people (p. 114). These marketing tactics deliberately seek to influence how a non-state actor is viewed and tend to draw on ethnicity and ideology and even "a common political orientation" in order to legitimise a movement (p. 113). Indeed, Hizbullah owns and controls outlets such as newspapers, radio stations and television stations, which it uses to market itself (using Szekely's term) and has also adopted non-media outlets and forms of communication such as space (chapter 4), rituals (chapter 5) and religious institutions such as mosques among others. These spaces draw on religion, political beliefs and orientation of the group, thereby emphasising the above-mentioned role of religion in garnering Shiʿa support. So, in attracting Shiʿa popularity and appeal – necessary for the Party's survival as political strength depends on support from one's own community (Saouli 2011, p. 933), Hizbullah has adopted a mixture of "religious, communal and political marketing, as well as the provision of social services" (Szekely 2012, p. 119).

2.1.6.2 A Wider Support Base

In exploring support for Hizbullah, one cannot forget Lebanese and regional Arab support. Hizbullah has gained national appeal as a result of their resistance battles, which was crowned with Israel's withdrawal in 2000 (Haddad 2013, p. 74). This battle for territorial independence and freedom in addition to "national dignity, [honour], and pride," which emphasise the Party's Lebanese character, have proven – to an extent – successful (Karagiannis 2009, p. 377). In addition, the

Party's post-Taef Lebanonisation, its opening up to other Lebanese groups, focus on its Lebanese identity when needed and changes within the Party's manifesto as explored above have garnered the Party local backing (Szekely 2012, p. 120). That in addition to the social services that have also been targeted at non-Shiʿa groups and areas.

Regionally, Hizbullah's focus on the liberation of Jerusalem has harvested Muslim and Arab support and recruits as the Party "has framed its jihad against Israel as both a Lebanese and pan-Arab affair" (Karagiannis 2009, pp. 376-377). Indeed, Hizbullah has throughout assisted those residing in Lebanon. For example, in 1985, when Amal fuelled by its anger about Palestinian fighters' "brutish treatment of Lebanese civilians" and with Syrian support, launched an attack to curb Palestinian forces, Hizbullah, which from the start defined itself in contrast to Amal, fought alongside the Palestinians. Also, Hizbullah has throughout, despite widespread Lebanese opposition, called for the increase of Palestinian rights such as "allowing them access to the economy" (Norton 2007a, p. 477) - although the Party, much like other political parties, rejects naturalising Palestinians because, as Nasrullah has repeatedly explained, that would decrease the efforts of those in Lebanon in their fight to reclaim their land. The Party's health clinics also receive Palestinians – albeit for a small fee - and provides water tanks to the camps (Harik 1996, Khalili 2007). Additionally, al-Manar also dedicates a significant amount of its programs and news reporting to the Palestinian cause and the celebration of 'Jerusalem Day' annually (Saad-Ghorayeb 2002, p. 73).

On a more significant level, Hizbullah's support for Palestine transcends a moral

one: The Party has offered military, financial, weaponry and logistical support as well as training to different militant Palestinian organisations. In fact, Nasrullah himself has announced that "To supply arms to the Palestinians is a duty ... It is shameful to consider such an act as a crime" (Cited in Khalili 2007, pp. 289-290). Such a duty is clear in Hizbullah's attempts to free Palestinians in Israeli jails: in 2004, in return for a kidnapped Israeli citizen and the bodies of three Israeli soldiers held by Hizbullah, "Israel released twenty-nine Lebanese and other Arab prisoners, the remains of fifty-nine Lebanese citizens, and, astonishingly, 400 Palestinian prisoners" (Khalili 2007, p. 276).

But why does Palestine hold such a central position in Hizbullah's rhetoric? Khalili (2007) classifies it as one of solidarity but argues that there are limits to this solidarity as Hizbullah, has at times, resorted to coercion – sometimes physical - against Palestinian political actors and has restricted their activism to armed struggle thus curbing other forms of resistance such as boycotts (p. 297). In addition, Hizbullah's attempts at homogenising Palestinian factions to strengthen their struggle is argued by Khalili to be counterproductive as these differences are what result in a strong Palestinian identity (pp. 299-300).

Saad-Ghorayeb (2002) however argues that the relationship is deeper than that of solidarity. For, Hizbullah's understanding of the notion of an Islamic umma is borderless and to which Jerusalem is the "sacred religious symbol" (due to the presence of Muslim sanctities such as the al-Aqsa mosque). Thus, the liberation of Jerusalem is not only a Palestinian cause but "the 'responsibility of the entire umma.'" Consequently, the "only acceptable fate for Jerusalem in Hizbullah's

conception is its liberation from Israeli occupation by the pan-Islamic 'Jerusalem Army'" (p. 73). So in addition to attracting Arab support for the Palestinian cause, Hizbullah also garners Muslim backing through framing Palestine in Muslim terms, an aspect that the Party still practices today as will be uncovered in chapters 5 and 6. As such, Hizbullah highlights its own identity as an Islamic group, and which was stressed by former secretary-general Abbas Mussawi in his statement: "[Hizbullah] is not a 'party in the traditional sense of the term. Every Muslim is automatically a member of [Hizbullah], thus it is impossible to list our membership'" (Cited in Karagiannis 2009, p. 376).

On an equally significant level, media and communication channels have also been vital in garnering the Party a wider support base, both relative to the Shiʿa demographic, the internal Lebanese audience and the wider Arab, Muslim and regional audience. Relative to the Shiʿa demographic and as this thesis will demonstrate, Hizbullah's communication channels educate Shiʿas about the Party's religious and political discourses, hence socialising them into the Party's religio-politico nation. This starts at a young age through schools, textbooks, scouts, literature and television, the last two of which are examined in chapter 7. Similarly, Hizbullah's al-Manar (chapter 5) and ʿAshura posters (chapter 6) are among growing communication channels that have garnered the Party local and growing Arab and regional support. It is, after all, the Party's media that has allowed Hizbullah to emphasise Israel as the region's enemy and its support for the Palestinian cause and to articulate its Muslim and Arab identity.

2.2 Hizbullah and Power

Hizbullah's survival, growth and successful resistance activities among others reflect the Party's power dynamics. Indeed, the Party exercises power both religiously and politically, the second of which involves local and regional dynamics. To begin with, Hizbullah attempts to weaken the power of ulamas who do not promote their ideology to seek the sovereignty of the ideology of Iran's wilayat al-faqih. Politically, Hizbullah retains significant power to the extent that it is considered a state within a state (Sharara 1998, Geukjian 2008), which in addition to providing social services, reflects the Party's financial, military and ideological autonomy. The Party also controls vast territories in Beirut, Bekaa and the South where Hizbullah dictates spatial practices in an attempt to maintain Harb and Leenders' (2005) 'Resistance Society.' Hizbullah is also an official government party and shares power amongst other groups in decision-making processes and law passing and has formed alliances with other political groups to increase political power and to ensure its survival within an increasing sensitive landscape. In terms of resistance, Hizbullah has succeeded in defending and liberating Lebanese territories and in more recent times, has engaged in the Syrian war and demonstrated its ability to change the course of Assad's fate. The Party is also rumoured to have expanded to Yemen and Bahrain. Finally, Hizbullah's owning of media outlets has not only resulted in the manifestation of the Party's power but the multiplicity of these sites again reflects Hizbullah's financial and ideological power.

In all of these contexts, there is much to say about Hizbullah's power dynamics: while at specific moments, Hizbullah is adamant in practising and manifesting its

power (such as against Israel and ISIS generally), at other times, the Party negotiates internal political issues in an attempt to minimise internal conflicts. Still, this section is not about defining Hizbullah's power per se but is rather more concerned with the mediation of power through the multiple communication channels that the Party has adopted and which promote its power to a wider audience, especially enemies such as Israel and ISIS while not excluding internal rivals.

2.2.1 Mediated Power and Hizbullah

Studies of the mediation of power have explored the ways in which elites (whether from the state or the private sector) affect the content, framing, focus and production of media texts to their own advantage either through ownership or through indirect pressure of advertising (Curran 2002). Such studies also analyse the ways through which media is adopted by politicians and political actors in order to disseminate their political views and garner votes. As such, they focus on the role of media in maintaining power and power relations.

In addition to emphasising that media advances those in positions of power in that it promotes their rhetoric and agendas, Aeron Davis (2007) makes another addition to the model – which he terms "an inverted political economy of communication" (p. 2) – whereby he explores how media ultimately affects those in power. Davis explains this by drawing attention to documented cases that indicate elites' susceptibility to media in their decision making processes and concludes that media and promotional activity is not just aimed at citizens and

consumers but is also directed at other elites, be it in rival or influential organisations (p. 60). Accordingly, news media both reflects political differences and simultaneously acts as a "communication channel for the regular conflicts, negotiations and decision-making that take place between different elite groups" (Davis 2007, p. 60). As Davis adds

> Decisions, which involve such things as the development of institutional policies, corporate strategies, legislation, budgets, investment decisions, regulatory regimes and *power structures*, take place in communication networks in which the mass of consumer-citizens can be no more than ill-informed spectators. (p. 60) (emphasis my own).

Davis's angle is particularly relevant to analysing the media content of Hizbullah's communication and promotional outlets as they become channels for communicating with Israel and ISIS and through which they can articulate and assert power. Within internal politics, al-Manar for example becomes a key forum both for informing viewers of news events but also a channel through which the Party can exercise Mann's (1986) categories of power to a wider audience and which include ideological, economic, military and political power. To briefly explain, 'ideological power' refers to the ideologies that attempt to meet the human need to "operate in terms of meanings, norms and rituals." It can be that of the transcendence of religion or the immanence of "group cohesion and a sense of shared membership." This is evident on al-Manar's mediated ʿAshura rituals (chapter 5) for example whereby one of its aims is to assert the strength and cohesion of Hizbullah's Shiʿa demographic. 'Economic power' refers to the

"production, distribution, exchange and consumption," which is translated onto al-Manar through the very act of continuous broadcasting despite the minimal advertising that the channel broadcasts. 'Military power' refers to the "competition for physical survival," which results in control and is perhaps the most abundant on al-Manar as the channel continuously broadcasts news segments, music videos and talk shows that celebrate the Party's successful battles, both past and present. Finally, 'political power' is "the control of a physical territory and its population by a centrally administered regulation, concentrated in the state." This, on al-Manar, is translated into the broadcasting of news about Hizbullah's reclaiming of Arsal in Lebanon and Qusair in Syria as mentioned above (Quoted in McAuley 2003, p. 10).

But while Davis - and other scholars - focused on the role of traditional media channels of television, radio and print media within power structures, communicating, promoting and manifesting power is also extendable to other channels such as rituals, festivities, monuments and space. Indeed, Hizbullah's 'ideological power' is evident in the Party's ability to gather Shiʻas in Dahiya and other areas in Lebanon. Its 'economic power' is evident in the ability to offer social services, to open schools, hospitals and businesses and to launch cultural activities and the like. 'Military power' is manifested in the Party's weaponry stash and its ability to battle Israel and ISIS among others. Likewise, its 'political power' is reflected in Hizbullah's internal political activities, as being part of the state and of becoming a key political player in the region.

Extending the mediation of power beyond traditional media is not new of course as there is vast literature that emphasises power demonstrations in Nazi Germany

for example. In writing about Nuremberg rallies, Bell (1997) explores their displays of power and politicised aspects which are described as "painstakingly orchestrated to express power, adulation, German mythic motifs, and forceful symbols of national unity and purpose." She adds that

> [t]he sheer size of these spectacles, with hundreds of thousands marching, singing, and waving flags, guaranteed that the event overwhelmed and swept along the majority of those in attendance. Particular care was taken to choreograph an awesome spectacle that impressed people with the disciplined precision and near-spiritual unity of the marchers. It appears that Hitler was well aware of the effects of these rallies since he wrote that "The man who comes to such a meeting doubting and hesitating, leaves it confirmed in his mind: he has become a member of a community." Elsewhere he notes, "I personally could feel and understand how easily a man of the people succumbs to the suggestive charm of such a grand and impressive spectacle" (p. 162).

But targeting citizens was only one part of the power manifestation in Germany. As Welch (2007) explains, political rallies of the Third Reich were seen as "the physical manifestation of a nation's 'triumph of the will'" (p. 21). With a strong architectural background, people's unified participation in the spectacle – along with the staging of music and action - conveyed the intended power (Osborne 1998, p. 435). In a similar manner, architectural structures and monuments were another theatrical setting through which Hitler could express power (Osborne 1998, p. 435). In the case of Hizbullah, this is very much the case. For, as chapter 4

on the exploration of Dahiya explains, the rebuilding of Dahiya allowed Hizbullah to inscribe resistance and power onto architecture. And similar to the Third Reich's marches, Hizbullah's ʿAshura rallies (chapter 5) are a means through which Hizbullah can assert its ability to gather the crowd and which in turn reflects the Party's power.

In drawing on these examples, it is not intended to associate Hizbullah with totalitarian regimes but rather to showcase examples of where power has been manifested and communicated beyond the television channel. In fact, power displays through architecture and rallies and non-traditional media are practices that date back to Ancient Egypt whereby one of the aims of the building of the pyramids and sculptures was to communicate to the distant enemy the power of the pharaoh. Similarly, the celebratory arches of the Roman empire (Farthing and Cork 2010) and its public ceremonies were used by elites to display their political power and confirm their status (Sumi 2005, pp. 1-2). Drawing on examples that reflect his argument, Sumi (2005) showcases how festivities, including celebrations and funerals., were in their essence, performative spectacles of politics and power in response to the political events at the time of their performance (p. 11). In more recent times, the British used royal rituals and public ceremonies for the same reason (Osborne 1998, p. 435). In her analysis of spectacles, M. Christine Boyer notes how collective body movements acted, to the distant viewer, as a parody of the linear assembly line. Seen in conjunction with the "flags, anthems, national eidolons, monuments, and architecture," spectacles become a celebration and manifestation of national power at a time and place where ideologies are contested therefore requiring the assertion of power both

internally and externally (Osborne 1998, p. 436).

In examining Hizbullah's mediated power however, it is pertinent to point out that despite the multiple audiences targeted in power manifestation dynamics, the most significant power manifestation is that which is practiced against Israel and more recently ISIS. Indeed, as Harb (2006) notes, from the very early stages, the Party has taken to filming amateur video recordings of successful attacks on Israeli soldiers therefore undermining the latter's power against their own (p. 177). In addition, the realisation that Hizbullah's media is being monitored by the enemy (the public, mothers, government, and soldiers) has resulted in news segments and television shows which, although intended for the Lebanese, also seek to intimidate Israel and in Nasrullah directly addressing the Israeli population as chapter 5 will explain. Al-Manar has also succeeded in discrediting the Israeli government and has allowed Hizbullah to comment directly on the Israeli government's PR claims. For example, the latter has on many occasions denied the death of its soldiers at the hands of Hizbullah, but Hizbullah has proven otherwise by broadcasting its recordings of Israel's defeat (p. 182). In all this, Hizbullah's media becomes one of the main organs through which the Party can mark its power. In a similar manner, this manifestation of territorial power and battle against the enemy has recently grown to include Hizbullah's participation in the war on Syrian land and its fight against ISIS both on Lebanese and Syrian territories. Again, there is no doubt that the media is playing the vital role in reflecting the Party's power in this newest battle.

3. Conclusion

This chapter introduced the thesis and argued for the significance of examining Hizbullah's communication through the lens of branding and promotion. It demonstrated the expansion of Hizbullah's activities and power dynamics and in that highlights the importance of exploring Hizbullah's contemporary communication to uncover how the Party's transformations are promoted through the different sites the thesis examines. Indeed, while existing research explores Hizbullah's media prior to its participation in the Syrian war, the thesis argues that recent political events have necessitated different media content and practices that are worthy of focus. Equally significant, the thesis maintains that it is important to examine the Party's religious communication and sites as examples of political communication and uncovers the depth of political messages, aimed at both supporters and enemies, external and internal, that are inherent in ʿAshura rituals and posters.

To do so, this chapter has set the scene. It presented the Party's brand values, paving the way to uncovering how they are promoted through Hizbullah's media. The chapter highlighted the significance of Shiʿa ideology and the centrality of Hussein's martyrdom to the Party's religious and political discourse as it uncovered the significance of the Karbala battle to resistance and argued that religion and resistance cannot be divided when examining Hizbullah because they are very much intertwined.

The chapter also uncovered the Party's increasing focus on attracting a wider local and regional audience by adopting and tapping into issues and events that are of

concern to different religious and political demographics. It briefly outlined some of the ways that Hizbullah portrays itself in nationalist terms and equally, how it is perceived, and demonstrated that viewing Hizbullah's political activities through the prism of sectarianism is not accurate, given its support for the Palestinian cause and more recently its involvement in the Syrian war. The chapter summarised the support that Hizbullah has enjoyed in different stages and how the Party's media created and maintained this backing at specific political stages. Hence, the study of Hizbullah's media deserves much focus and is the task of this thesis to examine the Party's communication following the 2006 'Divine Victory' until the present day. It pays particular attention to the phases following the Party's involvement in the battles alongside Assad thus presenting a more contemporary understanding of Hizbullah's media tactics. It asserts that the Party is not fixed and rigid neither religiously nor politically. Indeed, the Party has negotiated religious doctrines, most evident of which is in the practices within Dahiya (chapter 4). Likewise, Hizbullah is politically affected by and is responsive to wider local and regional political events that shape its activities both internally and externally. Hence, the thesis understands the Party's ability to attend to various tasks and events and argues that despite its Shiʿa identity being core, Hizbullah has to work with other religious and political groups thereby highlighting the complexities and the contradictions that the mainstream account of the party usually tend to ignore. Equally significant, the chapter shows how thinking of Hizbullah as a brand is a useful perspective because the Party sees itself as a religio-politico group with core and non-negotiable values even though the local and regional political landscape has changed.

In examining the content of the next chapters, chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework of communication, promotion and branding that will be used to explore five of Hizbullah's communication sites. It highlights the significance of the literature in exploring the consistent brand meanings that are promoted and the significance of the Party's communication in educational and socialising processes and provides the ground for which to examine the Party's religious communication as sites that promote religion as well as resistance and political discourses. The second part of the chapter presents the theories of nationalism, particularly the modernist and ethno-symbolist schools, for which to examine Hizbullah's articulation of nationalist identity. The section argues for a synthesis of both schools, demonstrating how they complement each other as a way to understand Hizbullah's discourse as the Party attempts to appeal to a transnational audience.

Chapter 3 maps the thesis's research methodologies. The chapter starts with highlighting the problems with Eurocentrism that sees the world through a particular and narrow, yet dominant lens but also argues against calls for de-Westernisation and nativism by theorists of media studies beyond the European context. The second part of the chapter presents the research process including that prior to and during my fieldwork, relaying my experience of interacting with Hizbullah's media office. The third section then presents the analytical tools that were employed, highlighting the difficulties that were encountered and the adaptation that was required to conduct participant observation, interviews, visual analysis and content analysis. It also presents Henry Lefebvre's (1991) "spatial triad," which is adopted to highlight the elements that one should examine to analyse space.

The first of the empirical chapters, chapter 4 starts with exploring Dahiya, a Hizbullah territory in the Southern suburbs of Beirut. The chapter shows how Hizbullah uses the landscape, buildings and experiences as sites through which to promote its core values of religion and resistance spatially, socially and culturally. It does so by examining two major sites of study: the first involves the landscape of territorial marking, reform projects and the rebuilding of Dahiya following the 2006 war and which allowed Hizbullah to inscribe resistance onto the landscape. The second part of the chapter explores the area's leisure and cultural sites such as cafés and exhibitions and understands them as sites that promote the Party's values through lived experiences. In both explorations, the chapter uncovers the nationalist identities at play, which include promoting the religious dimension of Hizbullah's nation as well as the Party's Lebanese identity as Dahiya mimics – to a certain extent – the dynamics of the nation's capital.

Chapter 5 explores Hizbullah's annual 'Ashura rituals from 2014 until the present day to examine the Party's religious communication strategies and to demonstrate how a religious platform is part and parcel of the Party's political communication. Analysing the rituals as a brand event, the chapter demonstrates how Hizbullah's values are promoted and how the gatherings act as educational and socialising sites that maintain the Party's religio-politico nation. The second part of the chapter explores the mediated rituals and their significance in expanding Hizbullah's nation onto a transnational context and does so by adopting Dayan and Katz (1992) and Nick Couldry's (2003) theories of mediated events. It uncovers how Hizbullah utilises ritual mediation to assert its Lebanese, Muslim, Arab and

regional nationalist identities and how the Party promotes its power dynamics by analysing Nasrullah's 2017 'Ashura speeches.

Chapter 6 studies Hizbullah's annual 'Ashura posters to again examine the Party's religious communication and the significance of the posters to the Party's religio-politico nation. The chapter also asserts the posters' role in political and nationalist communication processes as its analyses the posters created following the 2006 war until the present day against a backdrop of political events. It uncovers the Party's attempts at asserting its Lebanese identity as well as the posters' significance in addressing a Muslim and regional audience, especially following Hizbullah's participation alongside Assad. The chapter also highlights the posters' role in promoting resistance fighters as the centre of the different nations that the posters promote.

Chapter 7 focuses on Hizbullah's media aimed at children: Mahdi magazines and Taha channel. The chapter highlights how they promote the Party's values to educate and socialise children thus asserting the connections between promotion, education and socialising processes. The first part of the chapter examines the content of Mahdi magazines, which mainly address the Party's support base, and uncovers their role in ultimately maintaining the future of Hizbullah's religio-politico nation. The chapter also uncovers the gender and family dynamics that the magazines promotes and that resistance is portrayed as that which is against any Yazid that is declared, thereby attempting to ensure the support in expanding future battles. The second part of the chapter examines Taha and uncovers the channel's focus on religion and pro-social behaviour and draws attention to the

lack of topics pertaining to resistance, arguing that its global reach has required

Hizbullah to consider the impact that promoting violence to children can have on

the Hizbullah brand.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This thesis is situated in the field of communication, promotion and branding studies and engages with theories of nationalism to examine Hizbullah's communication channels and their content. To examine five of these sites, the thesis draws upon several scholarly debates to provide the analytical tools and frameworks to base the research upon. However, the thesis also contributes to the debates by uncovering their applicability and limitations when examining a religio-politico group like Hizbullah.

This chapter presents an assessment of the appropriate theoretical framework for which to examine the five sites of study. The first part of the chapter presents existing research on Hizbullah's communication strategies and its significance but will also uncover the limitations and gaps in the literature, which this thesis seeks to address. Part 1 then explores theories of communication, promotion and branding. It presents James Carey's ritual view of communication and argues for its usefulness in understanding the role of Hizbullah's communication in socialisation processes and in maintaining society. It examines theories of promotion and branding to highlight the relationship between promotion, education and socialisation and the basis for which to examine Hizbullah's religious sites as political in nature. The section also demonstrates the significance of drawing on the literature on branding to explore whether Hizbullah's values can be thought about as 'brand' values and to examine how the Party's promotional strategies have presented those values in a changing political environment.

The second part of the chapter presents the theoretical ground for analysing

Hizbullah's nationalist discourses. It provides the lens through which to

understand the Party's expanding nationalist identity, demonstrating the

limitations of the modernist (Gellner 1983, Anderson 2006, Kedourie 1960) and

ethno-symbolist (Smith 1999, 2001) models of thought when applied to Hizbullah.

The chapter argues for a synthesis of both schools to provide a comprehensive

understanding of Hizbullah's nationalisms. Indeed, territorial defence and the

Party's expansion into Syria and beyond, which involve Muslim, Arab and regional

nationalism are mobilised through drawing on the martyrdom of Imam Hussein.

On another level, the Party's religious nation is very much political in nature, an

aspect that the ethno-symbolist model does not explore. In doing so, the section

will contribute to theories of nationalism generally.

1. Communication, Promotion and Branding Studies

1.1 Hizbullah and Communication: A Review

Hizbullah's local and regional growth is understood by Khatib (2014), Ajemian

(2008) and el Houri (2012) among others to be paralleled by - and even the result

of - the Party's sophisticated communication and media strategies so much so that

much of the literature about the Party has focused on the topic. What started as

communication through face-to-face interactions taking place in mosques and

sermons, in tandem with "*al-Mujtahid* (the struggler)" - a basic publication that

was mainly concerned with news about Iran and the Iranian Revolution (Khatib

2014, p. 40) - has developed to include a complex web of interrelated

communication channels. These have moved beyond the Party's loyalty to Iran to address a local Shiʿa audience and a Lebanese, Arab and regional one while simultaneously communicating with enemies.

The Party's growing range of communication strategies and channels has been paralleled by increasing research on each outlet. There is a vast amount of literature that offers a comprehensive trajectory of the Party's communication growth (Ajemian 2008, Lyme 2009, Lamloum 2010, Khatib, Matar and Alshaer 2014) as well as those that focus on particular forms such as the Party's television channel al-Manar (Baylouny 2009, Matar and Dakhlallah 2006), its literature (Saade 2016), music (Alagha 2012), music videos (Ajemian 2008), video games (Souri 2007, Saber and Webber 2016), posters (Maasri 2009, 2012) and Nasrullah's speeches (Matar 2014) among others. The research emphasises each medium's role in revealing the Party's core ideologies including religion, resistance and politics as well as the political and ideological transformations that Hizbullah has undergone. Below, I present a summary of the available literature and its significance but also highlight the gaps that this thesis ultimately fills.

Khatib, Matar and Alshaer (2014) trace the Party's communication strategies starting from its inception until its participation in the Syrian war and explore print, television, poetry and visual material among others as well as the role of Nasrullah's speeches in political communication processes. They uncover components of Hizbullah's political strategies which includes pragmatism, power dynamics and tactful responses to events that ensure local Shiʿa and Lebanese support as well as the Arab regional one through the use of Israel as a

"benchmark," since anyone who opposes Hizbullah or attempts to disarm it is framed as an Israeli collaborator (p. 28). They reveal much of Hizbullah's communicative strengths and weaknesses and provide an up-to-date and expansive exploration of the Party's communication forums. Two of the chapters examine Hizbullah's communicative channels through different stages of the Party. The first is the period from the 1982 invasion until the 2000 liberation of the South and the second is Hizbullah in the 21st century, which the researchers argue reflects the Party's attempts at surviving a sensitive internal political scene, which increased following their participation in Syria. In examining the first phase, Khatib, Matar and Alshaer emphasise the strong ties between Hizbullah and Iran, the significance of the Palestinian cause as a means to assert the Party's Muslim and Arab identity and the capitalising on resistance and Shiʿa ideology to build the Party's identity. Throughout, they show how these were manifested in media outlets, the most important of which is print publications but also through Hizbullah's adoption of new media channels. In exploring the second phase of the Party's existence (between 2000 and 2012), Khatib uncovers Hizbullah's expansion to a regional force following the 2000 liberation and 2006 war. However, particular focus is paid to the period following the assassination of Hariri and the growing internal tension that ensued following 2006. Khatib highlights the growing media channels that the Party adopted, as she argues that Hizbullah functions as a brand and which is exemplified in the increasing merchandise, games and products that it produces. Attention is also paid to the Party's reactions to different political events as Hizbullah attempted to maintain their Shiʿa support base. Khatib, Matar and Alshaer provide insightful research, uncovering much of Hizbullah's mediated responses.

However, except for Alshaer's (2014) research on the poetry of Hizbullah and few references to the role of religion in other chapters, the study remains concerned with political sites, meanings and messages and mainly focused on Hizbullah's reactions to political events. Alshaer uncovers the significance of poetry to the Party's political discourses and highlights the centrality of Hussein's martyrdom in the Karbala battle for political mobilisation as well as the importance of Palestine and Shiʿa and Iranian figures. Still, in other chapters, the role of Hussein, central to Hizbullah's resistance activities, occupies a fleeting position despite its significance to the Party's rhetoric where it is used as a key mobiliser for Shiʿa engagement in resistance activities and as a rallying force behind the Party from the very beginning. Hussein's role in explaining internal political tensions and more importantly, in allowing the Party the ability to expand its resistance beyond the confines of Lebanon, are overlooked. To a certain extent, the ultimate impression is that the Party's media is primarily a responsive one thus placing media's importance in creating and maintaining collective identities centred around the Party's multiple nationalisms including the religious Shiʿa, the Lebanese and the Arab nation to a secondary position.

These gaps cannot be generalised of the vast literature on Hizbullah's communication. Harb and Leenders (2005) for example, focus on Hizbullah's attempts to create a 'resistance society' through face-to-face communication such as that which occurs through educational institutions, family networks and religious commemorations, as well as of al-Manar and visual iconography. The scholars make no attempt at analysing the content of the above channels but their

research has proven significant to Hage Ali (2015) who draws on theories of nationalism to examine how Hizbullah produces and disseminates its Shiʿa identity. Hage Ali focuses on a number of different aspects but of significance here is his exploration of communication outlets such as the Party's publications and networks of institutions (for example, media and Scouts) which highlight that is the Shiʿa demographic and the Party's Shiʿa identity that are brought to the forefront.

The significance of addressing the Shiʿa audience is one that is reiterated by multiple researchers such as Saad Ghorayyeb (2002), Alagha (2006) and Ajemian (2008) among others. Pete Ajemian's analysis of Hizbullah's communication aimed at its Shiʿa demographic is important as he focuses on resistance and Hussein's martyrdom as "a timeless narrative" (p. 4). Ajemian examines the commemorative media that were produced following the 2008 assassination of "paramilitary mastermind" Imad Mughniyeh, which include visual materials, videos and songs. He acknowledges the centrality of the Karbala battle as he uncovers how the Party adopts Hussein's martyrdom as core to the framing of local and regional contemporary issues and to reinforce an image of defiance. Mughniyeh is hailed as a martyr, linked to the Karbala battle as a follower of Hussein, portrayed as rewarded with paradise alongside other martyrs before him and as "a departing knight of Hussein whose 'sword illuminated a revolution'" (p. 9). In a similar manner, Lyme (2009) who focuses on the political aspects of the Party's communication, explores Hizbullah's concern with religious matters in its media forums and adopts Harb and Leeders's (2009) notion of the 'resistance society.' Lyme also acknowledges the link between resistance activities and Hussein's

martyrdom and consequently argues that the above aspects reveal Hizbullah's "full

religious ideological package" (p. 27). Likewise, Lamloum (2010) asserts the

Party's focus on religion and resistance within its media outlets. She focuses much

of her research on highlighting the centralised apparatus of Hizbullah's media and

explores the Party's earliest communication stages such as print publications,

radio and television.

But while the above section explored the literature that highlights the significance

of the Karbala battle and Hizbullah's targeting of the Shiʿa demographic in its

communication forums, it should be noted that wider audience attraction has also

been examined. Indeed, while Saad Ghorayyeb (2002) and Alagha (2006)

emphasise the significance of Shiʿa ideology and the Shiʿa audience, they also

acknowledge the 'Lebanonisation' aspect of Hizbullah following their political

integration in the 1990s. To Baylouny (2009), this was manifested in al-Manar's

programs that sought to attract a wider Lebanese audience through entertainment,

politics and social issues. Maasri (2012), who traces the transformations in

Hizbullah's political posters since its inception until the 2006 'Divine Victory'

campaign, argues that the latter marked Hizbullah's adoption of Lebanese

aesthetics in place of Shiʿa iconography (such as red to signify Hussein's blood) in

an attempt to portray itself in Lebanese nationalist terms and to appeal to a

Lebanese audience. Maasri however asserts that this transformation was not a

sudden one but rather gradual as the Party has throughout stipulated poster

display rules to portray an image of modernity. Still, both Baylouny (2009) and

Maasri (2012) assert the centrality of resistance and Hussein to the channels that

they examine thus demonstrating Hizbullah's continuous attention to Shiʿas.

Likewise, research examining Hizbullah's widening of support has also explored that which addresses an Arab audience. Ajemian (2008), whose study also included an analysis of the music videos produced in celebration of the 2006 'Divine Victory' notes how the Party tapped into Arab sentiments by adopting "pan-Arab themes." This is exemplified in videos of "[Hizbullah] fighters in action [synchronised] to the original recordings of Nasserist anthems from the 1950s and 60s" (p. 10). It is also evident in the music video 'The Victory of the Arabs' that was produced to celebrate the 2006 victory a year later. The video featured actors from different Arab countries, was filmed in different Arab locations and included actors and children carrying the flags of different Arab states and images of Nasrullah in what Ajemian argues if Hizbullah capitalising on the support of the Arab street (pp. 12-13).

More specific research on Hizbullah's media, which targets both the Shiʿa and regional audience, examines the Party's video games. Souri (2007) and Saber and Webber (2016) examine 'Special Forces' in 2003 and 'Special Forces 2' in 2007 and agree that the games act as outlets to disseminate the Party's resistance ideologies, concepts and views in an attempt to teach history to the younger generations while also nurturing a resistance culture amongst them - much in the same way that Harb and Leenders (2005) theorise. The games are understood to counter the hegemonic Western representations of Arabs as terrorists, since it is Hizbullah's fighters that are the heroes. As Souri (2007) explains, the games give players the opportunity to take part in the attacks and to "resist[] the Israeli occupation through the media" (p. 549). However, in exploring audience reach, Saber and

Webber (2016), who compare Hizbullah's videogames to those of ISIS, demonstrate that Hizbullah targets a regional rather than a global audience through both the adopted aesthetics and through acknowledging ownership, or lack thereof in the case of ISIS games.

Common to most of the above literature is a project of uncovering Hizbullah's nationalist identities. By focusing on the Shiʿa audience, Harb and Leenders (2005), Hage Ali (2006) and Ajemian (2008) assert the Shiʿa nation that Hizbullah attempts to uphold, although the argument is not articulated in Ajemian's (2008) research as much as it is in the former two. Similarly, Maasri (2012) and Baylouny (2009) examine Hizbullah's Lebanese nationalist identity. But perhaps the most elaborate study of Hizbullah's nationalist discourses - and the role of religion within political discourses – is that of el Houri (2012). El Houri analyses Hizbullah's media strategies as central to their resistance efforts and embarks on examining how political and ideological transformations have been reflected in the Party's media in relation to Shiʿa Islam and Lebanese and Arab nationalism. He analyses Nasrullah's speeches, the filming of military operations, al-Manar's music videos and Hizbullah's use of space to highlight the different nationalist rhetoric embedded in each. More importantly, he acknowledges the centrality of Hussein's martyrdom in resistance activities and political and media discourses. His research also acknowledges the impact of Hizbullah's media on different target audiences – including Israelis – as resistance is the lens through which he examines Hizbullah's communication.

The thesis is, in many ways, similar to and influenced by much of the above research. It acknowledges the centrality of communication sites in promoting the Party's identity and nationalist discourses. It also asserts the significance of Hussein's martyrdom in framing its resistance operations and the way that this garners and maintains Shiʿa support for both the Party and its activities. In line with Harb and Leenders (2005) and Hage Ali (2013), it emphasises the significance of the Shiʿa nation and similar to a number of the above theorists, uncovers Hizbullah's Lebanese and Arab nationalist identities. Still, missing from the above literature is examining religious communication sites such as ʿAshura rituals and posters in political communication processes. In addition, the thesis provides a more contemporary examination of the Party's communication dealing with the period from 2006 to 2018. It pays particular attention to that following Hizbullah's participation in the Syrian war and thus uncovers recent nationalist transformations that sees the Party portraying itself as a defender of the region and with that, all the different religious groups and sects that reside within it.

1.2 Hizbullah's Communication: A Theoretical Lens

1.2.1 Communication

James Carey (2009) distinguishes between two conceptions of communication, the first of which is the 'transmission view' and the second, the 'ritual view.' These, he understood, were a method through which the objections of Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall about the term 'mass communication' could be resolved. As Carey explains, both Williams and Hall saw a profound problem with naming the study of

communication as 'mass communication' because it limits communication to specific forms such as television thus overlooking other significant channels such as speech, literature and art and because it conceives of the audience as a mass (p. 32).

To recap Carey's (2009) conceptions, the 'transmission view of communication' is usually synonymous with phrases such as "'imparting,' 'sending,' 'transmitting,' or 'giving information to others'" (p. 12) and involves "persuasion; attitude change; behavior modification; [socialisation] through the transmission of information, influence, or conditioning or, alternatively, as a case of individual choice over what to read or view" (p. 33). Here, communication is defined as "a process whereby messages are transmitted and distributed in space for the control of distance and people" (p. 13).

On the other hand, the 'ritual view of communication' is concerned with "the maintenance of society in time," and is an attempt to bring people who share "fellowship and commonality" together (p. 15). It is concerned with preserving order and culture rather than with changing attitudes or minds. In the 'ritual view of communication,' a news article is not necessarily only about disseminating information – although it does not exclude it - but is rather about confirming a particular view, about reflecting "dramatic forces" and culture at a given historical moment as it aims to structure and maintain the audience's life and community. It is concerned with the "construction and maintenance of an ordered, meaningful cultural world that can serve as a control and container for human action" (pp. 15-18).

To further demonstrate the difference between the two conceptions, Carey uses

the newspaper as an example. As he explains, examining a newspaper through the

transmission view of communication lens allows for the study of the medium as

"an instrument for disseminating news and knowledge" regardless of distance. Its

focus is on the effects of the newspaper on the audience such as whether news act

"as enlightening or obscuring reality, as changing or hardening attitudes, as

breeding credibility or doubt." In contrast, by adopting the ritual view, the analysis

is on how news confirms a group's view of the world and how it structures an

individual's life. Reading the newspaper is not only an act of gaining information

but rather the confirmation of particular views. News in this sense "performs few

functions yet is habitually consumed" (pp. 16-17).

Carey's classification is not an either-or dichotomy, as each model affirms

components of the other. As he explains, a ritual view acknowledges information

transmission and attitude change processes. Likewise, scholars of the transmission

view confirm the "place of ritual action in social life" (p. 17). And although Carey

stressed his loyalty to the ritual view, his definition of communication as "a

symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and

transformed" (p. 19) acknowledges both conceptions. Hence, the study of

communication involves examining "actual social process wherein significant

symbolic forms are created, apprehended, and used" (p. 24). In doing that, Carey

grounded communication in culture and cultural studies as he saw the act of

communicating as bringing people together thus creating society. He saw

communication, specifically language, not only as a vehicle to reflect reality or

"express assertions about the world" but rather as "a form of action—or, better, interaction—that [] actually molds or constitutes the world" (p. 64).

Carey's conceptions and his assertion that the two models of communication coexist provide the ground for examining Hizbullah's communication in this thesis. For one cannot understand Hizbullah's communication as merely transmitting information or even just persuasion. Rather, the Party also communicates for the purpose of affirming political and/or religious views and of collectively gathering audiences around these views. Hizbullah's communication assumes a hybrid nature and is involved in processes of education, socialisation and creation and maintenance of an identity centred around the multiple nationalisms along with spreading messages and responding to events. Hence, to classify a medium's role and impact involves understanding the context of target audience, age group, religious and political identity and knowledge and level of socialisation. Allow me to elaborate on this further by drawing on Hizbullah's 'Ashura rituals and which are explored in detail in chapter 5. Rituals are understood to generate religious beliefs (Durkheim 1995, Purzyckia and Sosis 2013) and are simultaneously understood to maintain belief systems (Durkheim 1995). In that respect, the literature on rituals generally asserts Carey's ritual view as the gatherings act to emphasise Shi'a history and to maintain the collective Shi'a nation. But for those who are new to ritual settings, especially children for whom Hizbullah organises 'Ashura rituals in the mornings, the gatherings also act to teach attendees about the Karbala battle and to socialise them.

Carey's conceptions focus primarily on media, but, within Hizbullah's circles, do not acknowledge others channels of communication such as space and rituals, which this thesis focuses on and examines. Indeed, in the case of Hizbullah, the issue of socialisation and of confirming group identity and beliefs occurs, as coming chapters will demonstrate, not only through media channels but also through providing a way of life, a social environment where the values are lived and produced. In addition, in adopting Carey's conceptions, chapter 4 on Dahiya demonstrates that one should also view the use of punishment for those who deviate from the stipulated religious and social standards in line with the ritual view. Indeed, society is maintained through maintenance and enforcing of order and values through visible force, policing and regulations, thus upholding the religious society that Hizbullah finds suitable.

1.2.2 Promotion

In exploring Hizbullah's communication, this thesis also draws on theories of promotion and "self-advantaging" messages (Wernick 1991, p. 180).[21] Perhaps the most significant theory of promotion applicable to Hizbullah's constellation of communications techniques comes from Andrew Wernick (1991). Writing more than thirty years ago, Wernick (1991) expanded the term promotion from advertisements to include a "broader range of signifying materials" and persuasive "communicative acts" beyond commercial and competitive fields (pp. 181- 182). Promotion came to be understood as "any kind of propagation (including that of

---

[21] Wernick's full definition of promotion is "the function of advancing some kind of self-advantaging *exchange*" (italics my own).

ideas, causes, and programmes)" (p. 182) as well as marketing, publicity and PR as both intentional and unintentional statements or actions become subject to promotional dynamics (p. 135). Wernick's research on promotion, specifically the extension of promotion beyond the commercial world, is key to my research on Hizbullah's communication as it acknowledges the applicability of promotional dynamics to spaces and buildings, children's media and 'Ashura rallies in a way that promotion's traditional emphasis on adverts doesn't. Indeed, Wernick exemplifies his statement by drawing on a number of case studies to demonstrate that political parties, universities, charities and individuals use promotion and in doing so, he emphasises the extension of promotion into the wider and everyday world.

To demonstrate how Wernick understood the functioning of promotion beyond the commercial, I here draw on his exploration of the promotional university and politics. In the first case, Wernick highlights the strong links between education and promotion as he examines universities' adoption of advertising and marketing strategies to attract both students and funds. Wernick however expands what counts as university promotion to include research publications, star academics and the curriculum as a means to recruit "good" students (p. 162) and which in turn promotes the university's level of excellence.

Likewise, Wernick explores promotion in politics, which is important to explain how Hizbullah's political communication operates and to demonstrate how it can be extended to their religious communication, in line with Mara Einsten's (2008) research. Wernick starts his chapter on political promotion by dissecting the

poster created for the Polish Solidarity party in 1989 and uncovers the meanings and codes invoked. His aim was to demonstrate how the political poster acts in much the same way as a commercial or entertaining one (p. 131). As Wernick explains, modern politics uses the same PR techniques and advertising agencies that commercial enterprises use in an attempt to garner votes in much the same way that movie studios compete for audiences (p. 132). The extent of this includes even the smallest of political acts which are orchestrated and controlled to function as part of a cohesive campaign (p. 135). With this, Wernick allows for the understanding that Hizbullah's promotional activities involve promoting politics and political agendas in much the same way that a simple Polish Solidarity poster did.

Wernick's research on political promotion has been reiterated by a number of scholars. Within political communication studies, the role of political marketing to attract voters has taken centre stage (Henneberg 2004, Henneberg and O' Shaughnessy 2007) along with the impact that promotional culture has had on politics and the way it operates (Davis 2013, Foster 2010, Blumler and Kavanagh 1999, Coleman and Blumler 2009). Still, in exploring political promotion, Wernick's research primarily focuses on marketing aimed at garnering votes, which is not the lens through which this thesis understands Hizbullah's political communication and promotion. Rather, it examines Hizbullah's promotional forms (political or religious) as purposeful: they promote specific ideas (as Wernick emphasises) such as religion, Lebanese nationalism and Arab nationalism among others. Likewise, the link between education and promotion that Wernick explores is rooted in educational institutions' adoption of promotional strategies within a

competitive field. What is of more significance to this thesis is how educational

channels and content and similarly, how socialisation processes and sites can

themselves be promotional and vice versa.

Wernick examined the relation between promotion and socialisation by drawing

on advertising. As he explains, advertising, one element within promotional

discourse, draws on a culture's social values and "delivers back to the people the

culture and values that are their own" (p. 42). In doing that, he asserts

advertising's role within "wider processes of social reproduction" (p. 24). Wernick

however, allocated socialisation a secondary position within promotional

processes (p. 25), although he goes on to explain that promotion is "ramified by

[socialisation] practices, psychological strategies and habits, and cultural/aesthetic

norms and values" (p. 184).

Wernick's exploration of promotion also involves uncovering the promotional

element of educational sites, albeit less directly. To begin with, he explains that

promotion refers to "a whole communicative function" (p. 181) and that self-

advancing "communicative acts" are, in a sense, promotional. To assert this,

Wernick draws on the act of promoting public health which is about informing and

raising awareness rather than about competition (p. 182). Indeed, Wernick asserts

the significance of information within promotional processes and more

importantly, acknowledges that promotion has "extended to all facets of social

communication" (p. 195). On an equally significant level, Wernick argues that the

mere act of communicating, "especially in public, and therefore in a medium which

is promotional through and through, there is no going outside promotional discourse" (p. 195).

In that sense, socialising sites as well as educational ones can sometimes act as promotional channels. For, while promotion emphasises cultural values and norms and in that, becomes a socialising site, socialising processes, which take place through social communication, promote a culture's values. And while promotion acts to inform and in that educate, educational sites again promote ideas or even belief systems as in exemplified in books which educate children about religion. Wernick's theories on promotion thus become significant to explore Hizbullah's channels in that they assert how Mahdi magazines, ritual gatherings and the like promote ideas to socialise but also how these gatherings, whose impact is to socialise an individual as chapter 5 will uncover, are promotional in nature.

1.2.3 Branding

Wernick's theory of promotion resonates in the contemporary world as one can see the extension of promotion beyond the commercial sphere. In fact, promotion's extensive hold is also assumed by branding theorists. Much like other forms of promotion and marketing, branding has been adopted by political parties, religious groups, charity organisations and applied to persons and space. But while Wernick focused on promotion's extension into specific fields, branding literature provides a way of analysing organisations, institutions and political groups such as Hizbullah. Indeed, perhaps the most important thing about branding is that it imagines organisations as having values, which are the driving force through

which an organisation functions and promotes itself and which it expresses in multiple ways and channels (Moor 2007). It is thus branding literature that draws our attention to the fact that Hizbullah is motivated by its values and identity, which have remained consistent despite the changes that the Party has witnessed and which have allowed Hizbullah to expand as a Party, particularly in terms of its resistance. It is also these core 'brand' values that Hizbullah articulates in multiple spaces and media.

Common to the understanding of brands is the view that they are "conceptual enterprises" (Moor 2007, p. 9), "mental representations" (Batey 2008, p. 111) whose significance lies in how they are perceived by consumers (Arvidsson 2006, p. 7). However, it is clear that ultimate power doesn't lie in the hands of consumers, as branding involves a set of detailed practices choreographed by a brand manager.

One of branding's key facets is promoting and communicating a brand's values and translating them into clear and visible form despite their abstractness (Moor 2007, p. 143). For example, resistance and honour in the case of Hizbullah is expressed in Dahiya's recreated buildings following the 2006 war as chapter 4 will explain. This translation occurs through any possible channel or "touchpoint" (p. 80) where a brand might appear and where audiences come into contact with the brand - which Moor terms branding's "expanded spatial scope" (p. 3) - to transform them into spaces of communication. These "touchpoints" may include traditional forums such as advertising as well as non-traditional ones such employee dress and manner (Lury 2004, Moor 2007), spaces and places (Moor 2007, Klingmann 2007)

and events (Arvidsson 2006). The last two have been the subject of intense research and are helpful for examining Hizbullah's Dahiya (chapter 4) and rituals (chapter 5). While the literature on branded spaces has focused on the application of commercial branding techniques to spaces and even nations (Anholt 2007), the significance of theories of space branding also lies in highlighting how architecture, the landscape, interior design and materials articulate and promote values. Likewise, brand events are understood to allow consumers experiences that emphasise a brand's identity and meanings and to allow the brand community to come together (Lury 2004, Moor 2003).

Equally significant, branding allows for a deep connection between brands and consumers - or in the case of Hizbullah, the Party and its religious and political community. As Moor (2007) and Arvidsson (2006) explain, brands are managed in such a way that they are viewed by their creators to have a "personality" in an attempt to create a relationship between brands and consumers. When successful, a sense of loyalty is created, thus allowing a brand to expand into new lines of products (Moor 2007, p. 34). This is however, made possible first and foremost through values that are typically flexible enough to allow for brand extension. And while these points are again applicable to commercial brands, Hizbullah's loyal community and its values allow Hizbullah to move beyond resisting Israel and become applicable to a range of other situations and events. It is the flexibility of Hussein's martyrdom – or in fact the ability to reinterpret an already made and historical ideology and shift focus on it – that explains Hizbullah's branching out from a small resistance group defending Lebanese territory from Israeli occupation to a significant regional Party that defends Lebanon from ISIS, protects

and promotes Shiʿa religious identity and which is today involved in regional wars in Syria and other countries – all while enjoying relative support from the Lebanese Shiʿa and wider regional demographic.

Brand management is evidently an intricate and significant aspect of how a brand functions. Indeed, Arvidsson (2006) describes "capitalist governance" as "immanently political," with brand management acting similar to "what Maurizio Lazzarato (1997) has called 'political entrepreneurship'" and which involves profit making through tapping into "community, affect and communicative flows" (p. 88). Arvidsson – much like the literature on promotion – highlights branding's role in status, image and identity making processes as brands allow consumers specific experiences and feelings, one of which is empowerment (pp. 7-8). Hence, a brand enters into the everyday social life of individuals and groups and becomes a key component in the relationships that people have, central to how they identify themselves and how they envision their future (p. 90). It is on this basis that Arvidsson claims that running a brand is similar to running a political organisation. He even states that "the goal of brand management becomes similar to that of everyday parliamentary politics: a good standing in the polls" (p. 90).

Arvidsson (2006) draws on the example of Silvio Berlusconi's 'Forza Italia' Party to exemplify his argument. He demonstrates how Berlusconi capitalised on his successful image - acquired through his development of commercial television channels – and his ability to "spread a new cultural ideology of entrepreneurial global consumerism" through these very channels. This ultimately allowed him to position his political party "as the political expression of the cultural ideology of

consumerism" (p. 91). 'Forza Italia' also created party clubs and merchandise as they adopted marketing research techniques to uncover attractive and selling messages for their audience (p. 92) and as they, similar to commercial brands, had much to offer emotionally: they portrayed the 'Forza Italia' world as "a better, happier and sweeter place" and as offering the ability for 'consumers' to fit in (p. 92). This ultimately proved significant in light of "'homeless' centre-right voters" following the end of the previous Italian party system (p. 90).

The similarity between Berlusconi's expansion into politics and that of Hizbullah is in that they capitalised on their success. Hizbullah started as a resistance, religious and populist movement that spoke on behalf and for the Shi'a and Lebanese population.[22] It was the success of the Party in these areas that garnered Hizbullah the success that it did in the early 1990s elections as they positioned the Party politically with respect to the above elements. In essence then, the practice of expanding into politics for both Hizbullah and Berlusconi involved capitalising on image and abstract and flexible values.

1.2.3.1 Religious Promotion and Branding

Similar to political promotion and branding, cases of religious promotion and "branding" can be traced back centuries, despite the promotion and branding literature having only surfaced in more recent times. For example, one cannot underestimate the role of architecture as a propaganda tool in Romanesque church

---

[22] See el-Hibri (2017) for an analysis of Hizbullah as a populist movement.

structures, the significance of paintings in the Baroque Counter-Reformation movement as a means to convince the masses to remain faithful to the Catholic church rather than join the Protestant faith, and the many paintings from the dawn of Christianity that have draped Jesus and Mary in purple and in jewellery as a means to grant them the significance they deserved. In Islam, despite Mohammad's calls for ignoring mosque architecture and a focus on prayers, the former became an important vehicle to garner converts to the faith and as a means to compete with church architecture (Farthing and Cork 2010).

However, recent research has uncovered that early church practices have in fact practiced what is today considered part of contemporary marketing, PR and even branding strategies. In his exploration of communication strategies in 10th century England, Tom Watson (2007) examines the successful attempts at creating the cult of Saint Swithun despite Swithun's position as a secular cleric and his death much earlier. Watson's research highlights early religious communication as involving promotional tactics that included pilgrimages, preaching, sermons, music, publications, word-of-mouth and personal contact among others (p. 19). However, his focus on Saint Swithun specifically highlights church leaders' use of an organised communication system, which involved what would now be termed 'spin', myth, fund-raising and publications in order to appease secular clerics who had previously been expelled (p. 21) and to increase pilgrimage to the church where Saint Swithun was buried thus resulting in financial income (p. 22). As Watson demonstrates, the Saint was chosen for specific promotional reasons rather than spiritual and religious ones, ultimately resulting in the extension of the 'cult of Saint Swithun' into the "saints' days in church calendars, the dedication of

churches to saints, the distribution of relics and the inclusion of prayers to saints within the liturgy" in much the same way that modern brand extension performs (p. 23).

A similar observation is put forth by Croft et al (2008) who take a later English period to examine the nature and practice of "public relations" and "spin" in early religious practices. Here however, Croft et al highlight the political aims behind early religious promotion. The researchers study the rise of the Abbey of Glastonbury and analyse three time periods of history to uncover how narrative content changes through time in response to events and that PR and communication sometimes involve a number of different groups working together – in this case the church and state in what they explain is early co-branding techniques. Croft et al's (2008) focus on the former point involved relaying that the narrative myths were in fact created by the "country's spiritual and temporal rulers" for specific aims: for the church, it was to increase pilgrimage and "destination tourism" to the site and for the state, it was to unify the smaller states against the enemy and to create "a strong new national identity based around notions of leadership and chivalry" (pp. 295-297). Similar to Watson (2006), Croft et al (2008) also emphasise the role of publications, visual arts and music. Still, the significance in Croft et al's research lays in acknowledging the centrality of myth to promotional and branding discourses and in providing an understanding of how place identities - or place branding in more contemporary terminology – is created and manipulated with particular focus paid to reputation, PR, propaganda and the like. Equally significant is confirming the adoption of religion and religious narratives to put forth a nationalist identity.

More contemporary research has equally focused on religious promotion and branding both within present Christian (Einstein 2008) and Muslim (Mellor 2018) contexts. In her research concerning faith brands or the branding of faith, Mara Einstein (2008) highlights much of the research conducted on early religious promotion, demonstrating the extension of marketing, promotional and branding techniques into the religious world. Indeed, Einstein uncovers how religious groups compete for congregations in much the same way that consumer brands adopt marketing techniques to attract and sustain consumers. To Einstein, religion is sold in much the same way that a product is, as billboards, films, television, print media, music, toys and entertainment channels are utilised to promote religion and as religious groups adopt marketing, PR and media relations. Much like Watson (2006) and Croft et al (2008), Einstein argues that such practices are not new. What is new however, is that the "religious marketplace" (p. 4) has become a much more complicated one. For one, it has transformed significantly (for example, people can now choose their own faith) thus requiring religious promotion to become much more intense and for the reconsideration of both how religion functions and more importantly, how religious promotion functions. Equally imperative is the extension and diffusion of promotion and promotional outlets thus impacting religious communication. Einstein does not find this transformation particularly strange since both religion and marketing are involved in identity creation and maintenance processes (p. 92) and because they both "sell stories" (p. 78). Indeed, Einstein draws on Finke and Iannaccone (1993) who argue that religious figures act as "religious producers who choose the characteristics of their product and the means of marketing it" (Quoted in Einstein 2008, p. 34). To

demonstrate the arguments that she makes, Einstein draws on a number of contemporary religious groups including churches, influential televangelists and the Kabbalah faith and analyses the techniques that they have adopted, paying particular attention to their marketing tools, their focus on religious personalities and on celebrity followers.

Einstein also explores the role of religion in politics and vice versa. Drawing on the relationship between the evangelical church and the Republican Party of the United States, Einstein demonstrates how churches direct those "who accept the Bible as God's word" (p. 179) to vote for the Republican candidate through using phrases such as "vote your values" and "vote Christian" (p. 174). In return, Republican presidents push forth the conservative policies of the evangelical church (such as rejecting abortion and homosexuality), exempting religious institutions from taxes and appointing conservative judges.

Einstein's research on religious promotion and branding is cited in Mellor's (2018) study of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). Mellor provides an analysis of how the MB's core mission, that of daʿwa (call) is articulated and communicated through media channels starting from 1928, the year of MB's inception, until 2013. She traces the six different phases that mark different branding approaches, identity focus and messages. These stages mark the MB's response to different political and social contexts and which required changes in branding tactics and messages. Mellor examines the MB's interpretation of past and present events and uncovers the MB's multiple nationalist identities, which include Egyptian, Arab and Muslim identities that – similar to Hizbullah – are intertwined. Mellor positions the MB as a

brand that adopted religion as the basis for political and social activities, thus emphasising the political dimension of religious communication, as MB attempted to set itself apart from other religious and political groups. Her analysis uncovers the MB's focus on logos, face-to-face communication and print publications and the significance of Hassan al-Banna, the founder, to the MB brand in the first two stages, with the second stage marking MB's focus on the Palestinian cause as a Muslim one rather than a political one.

Mellor also traces the MB's responses to growing threats during Nasser's reign as the group attempted to garner international support, mark itself against rival Islamist groups and as its religious ideologies inclined towards Salafism and finally, as it apprehended political and economic power, if only briefly, in 2012. Mellor examines the MB's increased adoption of media channels in the last two stages as the group resorted to television and the internet to propagate their messages and beliefs. Interestingly, she uncovers the MB's "intermittent voice" and "incoherent message whose tone is changeable and fluctuating and that cannot be claimed to truly represent the heterogeneity of the group" (p. 9). Still, her research stems from branding literature as she adopts Einstein's approach to faith branding. To begin with, Mellor highlights the MB's focus on "memories and memoirs, icons and narratives" and reiterates Einstein's arguments that myths and stories become a commodity to be consumed in the same manner that products are. It is through these myths, Mellor notes, that meaning is created around a narrative of Western threat, thus "trigger[ing] the brand's attributes" (p. 17). Equally important, Mellor uncovers MB's branding efforts to mark itself as different from other rival groups - both religious and political. Mellor demonstrates that while the MB was focused on

countering Christian missionary groups, the MB also worked at distinguishing itself from other civic and Islamist groups within Egypt such as YMMA (Young Muslim Men's Association) in an attempt to promote its own "faith brand" (Quoted in Mellor 2017, p. 70). Indeed, al-Banna branded the MB vis-a-vis other Islamist groups through calling for a "different type of healing and *jihad* […] which is *tarbiya* [cultivation]" among others thereby framing the MB as the mother of all movements (Quoted in Mellor 2017, p. 98).

Mellor also highlights the significance of al-Banna as an "undisputed leader" within branding processes as the MB became synonymous with his name. Mellor emphasises the impact of al-Banna's charisma, personality and his leadership in creating and maintaining the success of the MB brand. She also elaborates on how the MB capitalised on the success of al-Banna following his death with commemorative material such as memoirs and posters as his successors endeavoured to maintain his stature through maintaining his writings as core to the MB.

Also significant is Mellor's focus on the MB's adoption of diverse media such as face-to-face settings (clubs, mosques, gatherings) and traditional media such as print publications and electronic media. MB's multiple media outlets are understood by Mellor as related to hegemonic processes within branding practices. As Mellor explains, the MB strove to discredit outside attempts at narrating the history of the group in an attempt to affirm their own voice as the assertive one, and which was made possible not only through the proliferation of

their media outlets but also through ensuring consistency of messages throughout those same sites.

The research of Einstein and Mellor is particularly relevant to studying Hizbullah's religious promotion and branding. Their focus on myths and narratives become key to examining the significance of the narrative of Hussein's martyrdom that allows Hizbullah to create and maintain a religious identity and through which it can structure the brand. As coming chapters will show, Hussein becomes the centre that gathers the group and a value that Hizbullah promotes throughout its communication channels. It is also Hussein, the original and unchanged model for the Party's values of resistance, that is developed in a range of contexts and which helped Hizbullah expand its activities from resistance to Israel to a more recent battle with ISIS hence demonstrating the relation between religion and politics that both Einstein and Mellor explore. But while Einstein examines the utilisation of religion for voting for political parties, Hizbullah is closer to the MB in that religion, specifically Hussein, is the basis for political activities. To Hizbullah, not only is resistance (a political act) a religious duty but Hizbullah's resistance politics is driven by Hussein's martyrdom and the values that the battle exemplifies. Hence, religion and politics do not merely support each other but are the very fabric of each other. Likewise, Mellor's exploration of the MB's distinguishing of itself from other groups is an act that Hizbullah also exercises. As chapters 4 and 5 will demonstrate, Hizbullah's competition is not merely with other sectarian groups but also with other Shiʿa groups such as Sayyed Fadlullah and Amal. Hence, Hizbullah's aim is not simply to promote religion but rather to promote their particular form of religion. This is because adopting their form of religion results in

adopting their resistance and political ideologies. Similarly, Mellor's focus on the

significance of al-Banna within branding processes and as the face of the brand

sheds light on the significance of Nasrullah to Hizbullah thereby emphasising the

impact of his speeches and the necessity to analyse Nasrullah's 'Ashura speeches

as core to promoting the Party's identity and nationalist discourses (chapter 5).

Indeed, Nasrullah's 'Ashura speeches and the messages that are promoted are

broadcast on al-Manar and other Lebanese television channels and are analysed in

newspapers and television segments. It is also Nasrullah's position as the face of

the Hizbullah brand and people's loyalty to him that further encourages followers

to answer to his calls for participation in 'Ashura rallies (chapter 5). And in much

the same way that the MB capitalises on al-Banna, so too do Hizbullah through

posters, television segments and documentaries and word of mouth among others.

In addition, Mellor's exploration of the MB's multiple media sites as core to

branding practices sheds light on how Hizbullah's media functions – especially

within a sectarian Lebanese state. Viewing MB's media as proof of hegemonic

branding practices opens the gateway for understanding that Hizbullah and its

communication should not be viewed as an independent entity but as affected and

driven by competing groups. Hence, Hizbullah's multiple media sites, some of

which are explored in this thesis, become a method through which the Party can

promote its own narrative, history and view of events when other competing

groups simultaneously promote theirs. And by securing multiple sites, Hizbullah

asserts its power and hegemony within the media field and in that, their own voice.

1.2.3.2 The Commercialisation of Religion

Another different but equally significant aspect of religious promoting and branding is the commercialisation of religion. As Einstein explains, religion has become – or is being treated like – a "commodity product" (p. 13) to be marketed and sold (p. 78). This is exemplified in the selling of religious products and merchandise whereby consumers of religious products use them to express faith while merchandisers see products "as a means to spread the faith" (p. 75). Such practices have also found their way into Muslim contexts. For example, Timothy Mitchell (2002) uses the term "McJihad" to highlight the relationship between Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi thought and American oil companies as one between capitalism and "uncapitalist special forces" here in reference to religion. As Mitchell argues, it was Wahhabi Islam that curbed political dissent against foreign oil companies and their treatment of workers in early Saudi Arabia in turn for funding that would allow the means to promote Wahhabi Islam both in Saudi Arabia and beyond (pp. 10-11). Similarly, Faegheh Shirazi (2016) examines the marketing of Islamic products as a profit-making means. Shirazi explores the significance of the terms 'halal' and 'Islamic' among others as markers of food, cosmetics, beauty and fashion products through which a billion-dollar industry has risen. Shirazi goes into the specificities of what constitutes halal food for example, but her main argument rests in the commodification of piety and its use as a marketing technique that is in many instances, deceptive (i.e. halal meat is not necessarily always butchered according to halal standards. Halal requirements are also subject to differences between religious scholars and countries).

Interestingly, Hizbullah has also adopted products and merchandise. In her exploration of Hizbullah as a political brand, Khatib's (2014) emphasis is on the

Party as a political brand, manifested in political merchandise such as flags, war memorabilia such as "t-shirts, key rings and baseball caps," DVDs and games. The focus on memorabilia is reiterated by Hatem el-Hibri (2017) who examines those sold at Mleeta, a permanent museum in the South of Lebanon, which was created circa 2010. As el-Hibri notes, a "consumerist balm" of items such as snowglobes of battle scenes, keychains and DVDs of Nasrullah's speeches are amongst the items on sale (p. 4247). El-Hibri however, also acknowledges the presence of religious artefacts thus reconciling what are typically viewed as clashing elements: "war and tourism, religion (or just Islam) and capitalism, conflict and kitsch" (p. 4247). El-Hibri's acknowledgement of religious memorabilia is significant for two reasons. First, while Khatib (2014) emphasises Hizbullah as a political brand, I argue that the brand's 'values' are religiously grounded as well as politically grounded.[23] Indeed, to explore Hizbullah as a brand – or its communication and promotion techniques - entails not only focusing on the political merchandise that the Party produces and the political communication forms but also on the religious. For, it is religious promotion and communication that allows Hizbullah the ability to disseminate its religious rhetoric and in turn, permits the Party to maintain its political ground, to survive an ever changing political and religious regional scene and the ability to extend and expand its practices beyond Lebanese territories and re-shift its religious focus. Hence, in as much as that research on Hizbullah has focused on the Party's political communication and promotion, the religious is equally important. Second, focusing on the religious memorabilia opens a gateway to understand Hizbullah's religious products, be it the commercial and capitalist or

---

[23] El-Hibri makes no references to branding as his argument is rooted in populism.

even the gatherings, posters, children's magazines, etc. Here, the significance of such promotional items lie in Einstein's account of commercial material: 'Ashura rituals and posters are adopted by Hizbullah to promote religion and in turn explains why Shi'as participate in these rituals and upload the posters onto their social media sites: they affirm their religious identity. That is not to insinuate that posters are commercial but to draw attention to the levels of meaning that occur within promotional and branding activities.

To conclude this section then, I have presented the theories of communication, promotion and branding for which to analyse Hizbullah's media. I have also made a case for why the theories of promotion and branding are particularly significant for understanding the Party and its communication practices. Indeed, while Carey's categories of communication clarify how Hizbullah's media functions within a sectarian Lebanese scene and how they help in socialising individuals and in maintaining support, they still do not acknowledge non-traditional forms of communication as Carey focuses primarily on media. It is promotion and branding literature that highlights the adoption of branding techniques by political and religious groups thereby providing the basis for which to examine Hizbullah as a religio-politico Party. It is also promotion and branding literature that emphasises the extension of communication beyond traditional media sites thereby allowing for the exploration of Hizbullah's spaces and rituals among others as communicative. Indeed, the literature on branding has extensively explored how branded spaces communicate a company's values and which are articulated in all "touchpoints" (Moor 2007) that a brand comes into contact with, including events, employee manner, dress and the like. Hence, it is literature on branded spaces that

allows for the argument that architectural structures and facades are communicative, thus providing the basis for which to argue that Dahiya's rebuilt buildings following the 2006 war communicate the Party's value of resistance. It is also the literature on brand events that allow for the examination of Hizbullah's leisure and cultural sites (chapter 4) as well as 'Ashura rituals (chapter 5) as brand events that allow individuals to experience the Party's values of religion and resistance. Equally important, it is branding literature that draws attention to the competition that takes places amongst religious groups, hence drawing attention to the need to understand Hizbullah vis-à-vis other religious groups in Lebanon, including Shi'a ones such as Amal and Sayyed Fadlullah, which Hizbullah seeks to differentiate itself from (see chapter 5). Additionally, branding literature highlights the impact that figures have on branding processes and in conveying brand values, thereby emphasising the necessity to examine Nasrullah and his speeches (chapter 5). Finally, branding literature demonstrates hegemonic media practices involved in branding a religio-politico group such as Hizbullah and which are necessary to understand the reason why the Party adopts multiple communicative sites and how this impacts the narrative they put forth. Hence, while Carey's categories of communication are significant to this thesis, they are complemented with promotion and branding theories to allow for a better understanding of Hizbullah's communication sites and strategies.

2. Nationalism

Examining Hizbullah's communication channels uncovers much of the Party's religious and political discourses. But to view these meanings and messages as

merely religious or political fails to acknowledge Hizbullah's identity on the one hand and the Party's framing of itself on the other. Indeed, the Party's communication should be viewed in the context of maneuvering a delicate environment that requires not merely reactional responses but rather one that capitalises on local, regional and transnational audiences and which requires tapping into Shi'a, Muslim and Arab regional identities among others. To do so requires arousing nationalist sentiments and in framing itself in nationalist terms where the 'national' is understood in a range of different ways, depending on audience, message, context and aim. It is the task of this section to assess the theories of nationalism appropriate to the case of Hizbullah, which does not have a single and fixed national identity. This is to allow for the exploration of how the Party's nationalist identity is promoted through communication and to uncover that Hizbullah, as a religio-politico party, has expanded to gain the regional power and significance that it has in more recent times.

But how can one define Hizbullah's nationalist identity considering that attempting to give a single theory of nationalism is an impossible task? The concept has generated much debate and has resulted in a varied pool of definitions as a result of the definition originating from historical, anthropological, industrial and sociological fields among others. The result is a theoretical field containing vast differences between the different schools of thought; the modernist school (Gellner 1985, Anderson 1991, Kedourie 1960) for example sees nationalism as a secular and eventually diminishing aspect of contemporary life while the ethno-symbolist school (Smith 1999, 2001) understands nationalism as a result of enduring ethnic and religious belongings.

This is of course helpful for understanding Hizbullah's nationalist identities. For, how can one group Lebanese nationalism, religious nationalism and Arab nationalism – which address different audiences and aim at achieving different nations and national identities - under one umbrella? It is the modernist camp that provides the theoretical ground for understanding Hizbullah's Lebanese national identity, particularly its focus on territorial protection, and in that vein explains the Party's attempts at promoting its battle against ISIS in regional nationalist terms. It is also Smith's (2001) ethno-symbolist school that is necessary to understand Hizbullah's religious, Muslim and Arab nationalism.

2.1 Exploring Lebanese Nationalism

Housing eighteen different sect, the reality of the Lebanese political scene not only resulted in sectarian practices but the difference was also reflected in each sect's understanding of Lebanese identity. In his article exploring Lebanese nationalism versus Arabism, Firro (2006) traces Lebanese nationalism to Christian figures, specifically intellectuals and politicians, starting from the 1920s. Firro's study highlights the different understandings of nationalism where although Lebanese Christians were the first to articulate an Arabism - or Arab Syrianism - nationalist identity, a select group of Christians, specifically Maronites, saw this as a danger and formulated instead a Lebanese nationalist identity centred around non-Arab Lebanism – and which was inspired by intellectuals who had initiated non-Arab Syrianism. It is not in the capacity of this section to present the historical shift to Lebanese nationalism as separate from Syrianism, but suffice to say, the group

stressed Phoenician ancestry in opposition to an Arab one.[24] In contrast to the anti-Arab identity of the Maronites was the pan-Arab desires of the Muslims, especially Sunnis. Haddad (2002), notes however, that the National Pact of 1943 established a compromise for the Lebanese who, of different historical backgrounds, "values and allegiances," clearly had different views on the identity of the republic. Lebanese were divided between "pro-West versus pro-Arab orientations" and which increased in the 1960s following the revival of Arab nationalism and the Arab/Israeli conflict (p. 292). Haddad's study highlights the historical impact of sectarianism on nationalist discourses but the significance of his work lies in understanding its impact post-Taef. Although his work is not rooted in nationalism but rather in group consciousness and belonging, he highlights the impact of one's sect in defining individuals' Lebanese identity and does so through articulating the identity of a select number of sects such as the Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Sunnis, Shiʿas and Druze. Ultimately, Haddad confirms Khashan (1992) and Hudson's (1999) arguments that the inhabitants of Lebanon are "merely a plurality of peoples" who have little in common (Haddad 2002, p. 293).

Haddad's research is worthy of attention and unpacking particularly because it indirectly links to nationalist understandings of each group and affirms wider understandings of Islam in nationalist and modernity contexts. As Matin‑Asgari (2004) notes, Islam has been at the centre of research that seeks to explain the "clash between secular modernity and religious tradition" (p. 293) with Max

---

[24] See Kaufman (2004) for the publications of Charles Corm that sought to promote a non-Arab Lebanese Nationalist identity.

Weber (1961) claiming Islam's incompatibility with the superiority of Western modernity. To Weber, it is only the Occident that understands the modern state, the city, "rational laws," science and modern capitalism. Matin-Asgari (2004) uncovers the multiple scholars that found flaws in Weber's claims but explains that neo-Weberian theories were adopted by educated Iranians in the late twentieth century as a means to explain the "country's ills," which they saw as the result of the "historical and Islamic 'culture of despotism.'" The only solution would be through Western "modern rationality and market economy" (p. 300).

Evidently, neo-Weberian theories find a place in Lebanese discourses on nationalism. Hizbullah's focus on Islam and Arab nationalism, which itself has strong links to the former, is rejected by other groups in Lebanon who envision their identity as more Western, so much so that Christians are increasingly resorting to speaking French as a means to assert their Western belonging and history. And as Deeb (2008) explains, Hizbullah's narrative, centred around territorial liberation of Lebanese soil and on the Palestinian cause, is contrary to other nationalist narratives that trace their origins to Phoenician times, which in itself differs from "neo-liberal style economic policies" of the government majority (Deeb 2008, p. 376).

Pro-Western vs. pro-Arab and backward vs. modern stances are at the heart of how each Lebanese group frames or understands nationalism and is crucial in examining the success of Hizbullah's mediated nationalism. It is also in this scene that Hizbullah attempts to promote itself as a Lebanese nationalist group and in many cases such as ʿAshura posters, attempts to move beyond religious aesthetics

to appeal to and appease a wider local audience. Still, the Party's promotion of Lebanese nationalism is not rooted in the visual but rather in rhetoric and in framing of its resistance activities. To explain this, I resort to the modernist school of nationalism.

2.2 Modern Nationalism

Examined by different scholars with different explanations for the rise of nationalism, the modernist school is not a homogeneous one. For example, while Gellner (1983) attributed the rise of nationalism to industrialisation, Anderson (1991) argued that it is a result of print capitalism in that it is at least partly an outcome of mass mediated communication. Still, modernist scholars of nationalism agree that nations, national identity and nationalism are modern concepts (Gellner 1985, Anderson 1991, Giddens 1985, Kedourie 1960). In fact, to Kedourie (1960), nationalism is an invented secular ideology with roots in Europe that has no place for religion or the sacred (Smith 2003, pp. 9-10). This is because on the one hand, nationalism as a secular category opposes "human autonomy to divine control, and seek[s] salvation in human autoemancipation." On the other hand, modernists stress the diminishing significance of religion and its positioning – along with ethnicity - in a secondary position (Smith 2003, p. 10). In addition, modernist scholars emphasise a homogeneity brought about by a shared and standardised educational system that ultimately encourages nationalism of the socio-cultural version (Smith 2001, p. 47).

One clearly cannot view Hizbullah's Lebanese nationalist identity in terms of

secularism. In fact, Lebanon itself is not the secular, homogeneous and united entity that the modernist school assumes nor can one view the country's education as uniform. To give a small example, while Arabic is common to all schools, second languages vary between English and French and in many cases, the latter two are taught as first languages with Arabic occupying a secondary position (for example, in private schools, science, math and biology among others are taught in English or French with Arabic taking one period a day while a large number of public schools adopt Arabic for all subjects). And while religion might be taught in schools affiliated to religious organisations and churches, it is disregarded in many others. Such practices can be quite common on a global level but within the context of Lebanon, speak of the impact of colonialism and in turn, nationalist understandings and identities where each party claims to be the true Lebanese group. It also explains why each sect has resorted to its own media channels, schools, socialisation practices and sites among others and why Hizbullah has focused on communication channels from the very beginning. Consequently, the end result is a religio-politico scene that is far from the one that the modernist school claims.

Still, the modernist school is significant in helping to situate Hizbullah's defence of Lebanese territories (both from Israel and more recently from ISIS in Syria as it claims in the latter) and of protecting the Lebanese people from both groups (especially in the case of ISIS where Hizbullah promotes itself and is –to an extent - seen to be the protectors of Lebanese Christians). Giddens (1985) links nationalism to the notion of territory, the homeland, sovereignty, power and cultural uniformity (p. 216, 219). This is reiterated by Ronald Rogowski (1985)

who defines nationalism as "'the striving' by members of nations 'for territorial autonomy, unity and independence'" (Quoted in Billig 1995, p. 43). Then, the modernist approach is helpful to define Hizbullah's Lebanese nationalist identity – whether other rival political parties (such as the Phalanges who welcomed and cooperated with the Israeli army following the invasion) agree with that or not is another issue. Still, it is this angle that Hizbullah adopts to frame itself in Lebanese nationalist terms. Explored in chapter 1 and as the empirical chapters will demonstrate, Hizbullah is keen to highlight its role in defending Lebanon evident not only through the 2006 post-war posters that the Party designed but also through Nasrullah's speeches (chapter 5), 'Ashura posters (chapter 6) and children's magazines (chapter 7). Similarly, Hizbullah, following its infitah policy, has increasingly attempted to culturally conform and reach out to the wider Lebanese society through presenting an image of modernity of itself as witnessed in their spatial practices (chapter 4), visual material (chapter 6) and display (chapter 4) and religious rituals (chapter 5) among others. In addition, lest one forget the Party's role in the Lebanese government as an official Lebanese party nor the social work benefitting the Lebanese population which the Party initiates and which can also be understood in nationalist terms. It is thus clear that Hizbullah's modern nationalist identity, and as chapters 4 and 6 will uncover, involves attempts to be seen as part of the Lebanese nation rather than one that excludes other sects and groups that do not conform to Hizbullah's vision of the nation. In that, Hizbullah's nationalism is not about supremacy but rather of defensive nationalism that brings in different groups.

Interestingly however, modern theories of nationalism can also explain Hizbullah's

more recent framing of itself in Muslim, Arab and regional terms. By emphasising that their battles against ISIS is to protect Muslims and Arab nations as is the rhetoric put forth in Nasrullah's ʿAshura speeches (chapter 5) and by explaining that their battles are for the territorial protection of the region, we see Hizbullah transferring what is typically limited to one's state onto a wider geographic domain and with that expanding the practices of modern nationalism.

Still, despite the value of the modernist school in explaining Hizbullah's resistance within Lebanon and beyond, it is unable to understand the Party's multiple nationalisms beyond territorial control – or the religious rhetoric that it adopts to mobilise men to defend territory. Indeed, the modernist school is not without its weaknesses both generally and relative to Hizbullah. To begin with is the criticism that the modernist school presumes "a fundamental incompatibility and rivalry between nationalism and religion" (Mihelj 2007, p. 266) and in that, fails to comprehend Hizbullah's model of religious Shiʿa, Muslim and Arab identity. The modernist approach is also criticised by Smith (1999) on the basis that it ignores collective sentiments and "cultural identity" as well as the "pre-modern roots of modern nations" (p. 7) and because it focuses rather excessively on political institutions with little regard for "pre-existing cultures and ethnic ties to the nations that emerged in the modern epoch" (p. 9). To fix the limitations of the modernist paradigm, Smith provides an alternative theory which he terms ethno-symbolism and which acknowledges religion and religious nationalism.

2.3 Ethno-Symbolism

2.3.1 Ethno-Symbolism and Arab Nationalism

According to Smith, ethno-symbolism, contrary to modernism, focuses on the "subjective elements in the persistence of 'ethnies'" [which he defines as "*a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories and one or more common elements of culture, including an association with a homeland, and some degree of solidarity, at least among the elites*" (1999, p. 13)] in the formation of nations and the impact of nationalism (2001, p. 57). Thus, ethno-symbolism, while not overlooking "political, geopolitical and economic factors" in the making of nations of nationalism (2001, p. 60), acknowledges the significance of the "subjective elements of memory, value, sentiment, myth and symbol" (2001, p. 57) and more importantly, asserts the importance of "earlier collective cultural identities" – including ethnies (2001, p. 58), sentiments and traditions in the formation of nations (1999, p. 13).

It is perhaps the ethno-symbolist model that is most helpful in understanding Arab nationalism, defined as "the idea that Arabs are a people linked by special bonds of language and history (and, many would add, religion), and that their political organisation should in some way reflect this reality" (Khalidi 1991, p. vii). Lebanon is of course considered as "almost fully integrated into the Arab Muslim world," an aspect that was repeatedly emphasised in the Taef Agreement (Kaufman 2004, p. 22). Thus, Hizbullah's presence in the region (and in an Arab state), sharing a common Arabic language and more importantly, sharing an anti-Israeli sentiment (exemplified in 2000 and 2006) attests to its Arab identity; or one can argue that the Party asserts these to capitalise on an Arab identity in order to gain regional

support. This aspect of its nationalist identity is of course subject to challenge, especially in more recent times. Despite the celebration of the 2006 victory as that of Arabs (and the adoption by the majority of the Arab population of this rhetoric), the Party's Arab identity has been questioned, especially following its participation in the Syrian war. Arab states and internal rival parties have accused Hizbullah's loyalty of lying primarily with Iran, a non-Arab state. Still, as coming chapters will demonstrate, that has not hindered Hizbullah's attempts at portraying itself in Arab nationalist terms as it has throughout mobilised the Palestinian cause as a marker of its Arab identity and has, as Khatib (2014) argues, used Israel as a "benchmark" to frame the 'other' who oppose its resistance activities – including battling ISIS in Syria – as Israeli collaborators. This has in more recent times seen Nasrullah's claims that Saudi Arabia and its Wahhabi ideology as collaborating against Hizbullah - claims that have in more recent times been validated.

2.3.2 Ethno-Symbolism and Religious Nationalism

To study Hizbullah, religion and nationalism involves a complex set of interrelated components. The first involves examining the creation of a symbolic nation centred around religion – and which is very much political in nature - and the second involves the manner through which religion sustains the modern Lebanese nation and vice versa. In doing that, the thesis confirms that the relationship between religion and nationalism is not one of a specific form and that religious nationalism and modern secular nationalism are not at opposite ends as Mihelj (2007) argues.

To study Hizbullah and religious nationalism is also to follow in the footsteps of

previous scholars such as Harb and Leender (2005) and Hage Ali (2015). Harb and

Leender's (2005) contribution highlights the significance of Shiʿa Islam relative to

Hizbullah and more importantly, demonstrates the Party's attempts to "mobilise

the Shiʿa constituency into a 'society of resistance' in order to consolidate the

foundation of an Islamic sphere (al- hala al-islamiyya)" (p. 174). In a similar vein,

in his thesis dissertation, Mohanad Hage Ali (2015), through drawing on

nationalism studies and the ethno-symbolist model, embarks on understanding

Hizbullah's attempts at constructing and diffusing a Lebanese Shiʿa identity

through its various institutions. But while the scholars examined different aspects

of the Party's religious nationalisms, this thesis examines both religious and

political nationalism and their interrelatedness by again drawing on the ethno-

symbolist model. To recapitulate, the thesis highlights how Hizbullah adopts and

constantly adapts the Karbala battle (understood in religious terms) to validate its

resistance and how the Karbala battle is continuously reinterpreted and the focus

on meaning re-shifted to emphasise new political and nationalist occurrences and

meanings. Religion thus becomes an ally and support for nationalism: it is for a

religious cause, specially Imam Hussein, that fighters are moved to defend the

Lebanese nation-state. The thesis's focus on nationalism also asserts the symbolic

religious Shiʿa nation, the "al- hala al-islamiyya" of Harb and Leenders (2005),

which is diffused through Hizbullah's institutions. However, missing from the

above literature – and within nationalist studies generally - is how political

activities sustain the religious nation. For, the success of Hizbullah's resistance

activities validates the religious nation and in turn, confirms the validity of Shiʿa

history. This is evident in the Party's music videos which, from the very early

stages of their production, celebrated successful battles while hailing the

ideological strength that made them possible: Hussein. In the age of social media such as Twitter, one can observe the responses of Hizbullah supporters who use religious terminology such as 'Labbayka ya Hussein' to celebrate the Party's success in Syria. Also missing is an exploration of how the religious nation is, in practice, a political one that sees different groups of the same religion or sect differentiating themselves from each other. So then, how can one theorise all this?

2.3.2.1 Ethno-symbolism, Religion and Politics

While not previously overlooking religion, Smith's study of nationalism has, in more recent times (2003), focused on religion within the ethno-symbolist model. Starting with the question of why people are so powerfully committed to nationalism, Smith concedes that it is religion that is at the basis of the passion that nationalism evokes (p. 5). As he explains, understanding the strengths of national identity requires "exploring collective beliefs and sentiments about the 'sacred foundations' of the nation and by considering their relationship to the older beliefs, symbols, and rituals of traditional religions" (p. 4). In fact, Smith finds striking similarities between national identity and religious beliefs (p. 5) and argues that nationalists choose and interpret sections of symbolisms, mythologies and traditional religions to further their nationalist perspective (p. 6) thus explaining Hizbullah's constant reinterpretation of the Karbala battle. Smith acknowledges the input of earlier theorists who emphasised the significance of religion in nationalism but focuses on the works of Elie Kedourie. Although, Kedourie subscribes to the modernist school, Smith examines Kedourie's second book *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (1971) where the writer reveals the ways in which

nationalists in the two continents, affected by colonialism, both adopted and adapted Western doctrines of nationalism. Through mixing Western nationalism with religion and ethnicity, leaders succeeded in tapping into the "'atavistic emotions' of the masses" (p. 12). Kedourie adds that nationalists succeeded in arousing emotions "by treating traditional prophets like Moses or Muhammad as national heroes and turning religious feasts into national festivals." Hence, Smith concedes that Kedourie "brought religion back into the analysis of nationalism: nationalism often became an ally, albeit a false one, of religion" (p. 12).

Kedourie's theory is one that is flawed in many experiences of colonialism both in Lebanon and beyond. To start with the latter, Latin America contradicts Kedourie's research since liberation theology combined Christian scriptures with Marxist theories of poverty to promote socialism. Liberation theology saw the oppression and poverty of Latin Americans as a result of the international capitalist system and of class struggles and found the socialist revolution as the means of countering these elements (Gutiérrez 1988, Boff and Boff 1986). Within the Lebanese scene, Kedourie fails to explain the nationalist rhetoric of communist and secular groups that were historically the main factions fighting Israeli occupation and which has significantly survived amongst secular Shiʿas to this day.[25] These individuals support Hizbullah as a resistance Party - against Israel – with religion providing no motive for nationalist discourses. Equally significant, Kedourie assumes a homogenised territorial nation or group adopting religion for political purposes.

---

[25] I adopt the term secular Shiʿas because although they might be atheists or adopt secular positions in political issues, the Lebanese I.D. still includes one's religious background.

Still, Kedourie provides insightful literature and is significant to understand Hizbullah's articulation and mobilisation of nationalism. As Smith points out, Kedourie's purely secular modernist paradigm "has evolved into something more complex" and postulates that there are three main positions in Kedourie's modernist approach (p. 13), the last two of which are significant to examining Hizbullah.[26] To begin with, Kedourie's 'neotraditional' position predicts "a return to 'religion', albeit of a transformed and [radicalised] kind" which acts as a "possible ally and support for nationalism." Here, nationalism "plays on the atavistic sentiments of the masses" and adopts similar techniques used by religious movements such as "mass mobilisation, incitement, and terror." The second position understands nationalism as "a secular version of millennial political religion," as a "new ersatz and heterodox religion, opposed to conventional, traditional religions, yet inheriting many of their features – symbols, liturgies, rituals and messianic fervor – which now come to possess new and subversive political and national meanings" (p. 13). Within Hizbullah's discourse, both of the above presented theories are significant as the former emphasises Hizbullah's focus on religion and the adoption of Hussein's martyrdom to mobilise the masses to resist. And while the second feature's secular dimension is one that is not applicable to Hizbullah, the acknowledgement of symbols, rituals and the like explains Hizbullah's adoption of annual 'Ashura rituals among others.

Emphasising a similar relationship between religion and nationalism is the writing of van der Veer and Lehmann (1999) who postulate three important, related

---

[26] The first, the 'secular replacement' view assumes that secular nationalism gradually replaces religion – an aspect that is incompatible in Lebanon and relative to Hizbullah.

concepts concerning the relation between religion, nationalism and even "race or special racial qualities" in Christian Europe (pp. 6-7).[27] Of significance here is the notion of "chosenness by God" that was first introduced by the Israelites and the Old Testament and which has been adopted by modern nationalist movements. Combining "political and social, as well as religious, ingredients" the notion either involves justifying "imperialist political aims" or is used to provide the ground for "political emancipation and national liberation" (p. 6). Clearly, both Kedourie's perspective and the first of van der Veer and Lehmann concepts see the adoption of religion by nationalist movements to validate or further modern nation-state nationalism thus explaining Hizbullah's adoption of religion for territorial nationalism and beyond.

2.3.2.2 A Religious Nation

Smith's exploration of religion and nationalism involves Hizbullah's aforementioned religious nation by highlighting the rise in religious nationalisms - i.e. "nationalisms that are specifically religious in form and in content" and which go beyond the "alliance of religion with nationalism" to include the mass revival of religion – and not just in Islamic lands (p. 14). Such a view is explored by Juergensmeyer (1993) who examines the resurgence of religious nationalism (a term he prefers over fundamentalism) in non-Western countries that reject secular nationalism and which see religion as the basis for new forms of

---

[27] Although Kedourie's edited book focuses on religion and nationalism beyond the West, the relationship between the two has become the subject of interest in the West itself since religion has occupied a significant position in the "formation of many national identities" such as those in "Poland, Ireland, Greece, England, and others" (Assad 1999, p. 178).

nationalism. This form of religious nationalism is again reiterated by van der Veer and Lehmann (1999) who, in their second concept stress the revival/reawakening of a whole nation, a religious one. Such a move, they argue, was brought forth by "nineteenth-century Christian nationalists [who] then used the notion of revival in order to advance the idea of a Christian nation, 'a nation under God'" (p. 6). It is this nation that Hage Ali (2015) explores and also this nation that this thesis emphasises.

However, there are two sets of limitations in the notion of a religious nation. To begin with, Hizbullah's religious nation is not that of Muslims, but rather a specific Shiʿa one. Such an approach contrasts with that put forth by Ernest Gellner who developed the idea of Muslim nationalism. Although a modernist, Gellner developed strong counter-arguments for why Islam could operate as a functional equivalent of nationalism (Breuilly in Gellner 2006). To Gellner (1997), industrialised Europe proved to be the model of anti-backwardness that Eastern Europe and the Muslim world lacked (p. 81). And true to the modernist camp, it was industrialisation that resulted in the gradual demise of religion. However, as Gellner contends, that was not the case in the Muslim world. To counter the backwardness that the Muslim world was facing, Muslim intellectuals resorted back to the roots of Islam to provide the nationalist function of providing "a new self-image for people no longer able to identify with their position in village, lineage, clan or tribe" (Gellner 1994 p. 24). Transcending political order, Muslim nationalism is heavily based on the Qurʾanic laws and teachings and has, for various, scattered Arab tribes after Mohammad's calling and for Arab nationalists more recently, been the uniting force.

Gellner's work is limited in many ways as is highlighted by Sami Zubaida (2011) who explains that Gellner's research on Muslims as one society overgeneralises and overlooks elements that contradict his theory. Zubaida presents a detailed examination of Gellner's ideas and challenges them to assert that although there are common themes between different Muslim groups and societies such as culture and religion, one cannot claim a homogeneous, constant Muslim society but one should rather examine the different socio-political contexts that affect Muslim practices and beliefs. Islam, which is "distinguished by a holy law" that is considered "eternal and unchangeable by human volition" is, according to Zubaida, not enough to assume this homogeneity. To be sure, Zubaida critiques Gellner's account of the Islamic Republic and explains that Khomeini appealed to specific Shiʿa elements to formulate his doctrine, adding that Khomeini's formulated law is dependent "on the interpretation of the particular Faqih(s), who is/are endowed with gnostic enlightenment" and composed of "a mixture of laws depending on circumstances, politics and personal influence" (p. 72) rather than merely resorting to the Qurʾan.

In the context of Hizbullah, the flaws in Gellner's model are again highlighted. For, Hizbullah presents itself as a Muslim nationalist party and as Nasrullah has clarified, the Party believes in "a single Islamic world" thereby rendering "all the borders throughout the Muslim world" as "fake and colonialist" (Noe 2007 p. 32). But Hizbullah's religious nationalism is not clear cut and united as Gellner presents it. To Hizbullah, the Muslim nation is one that would be "governed by a central government" and who would be none other than the "Supreme Leader [Khomeini]

who draws general policy lines not only for Hizbullah but for the nation as a whole, of which Hizbullah is only a part" (Noe 2007 p. 135). Evidently then, it is Shiʿa Islam that is the ruling ideology within the religious nation Hizbullah calls for. Even then, Hizbullah's Shiʿa Islam is itself not homogeneous as the Party subscribes to Iran's wilayat al-faqih and as later chapters will reveal, has resulted in the Party's attempts at undermining other Shiʿa groups in Lebanon. Although I argue this is ultimately for political reasons, it should be noted that Shiʿa ideology, much like Islam itself, is situated, contested and subject to differences.

The second limitation of the notion of a religious nation is that, in the context of Hizbullah, it also involves politics. This is because, on the one hand, religion is utilised in politics but more importantly, because the Party's nation is very much political. Indeed, Hizbullah distinguishes itself from other Shiʿa groups in Lebanon as it attempts to undermine Fadlullah for example (chapter 4). Similarly, the Party highlights its religious and political power and emphasises the differences in ritual practices between itself and other Shiʿa groups such as Fadlullah and Amal (chapter 5). Hence, in as much that Hizbullah promotes religion to create and maintain a religious nation within a sectarian Lebanese state, the Party's religious nation is subject to power dynamics and attempts at distinguishing itself, which ultimately reflect its political nature and branding attempts. In that respect, Hizbullah's nation is a religio-politico one.

2.4 Communication, Promotion and Nationalism

The above sections explored the literature necessary to examine Hizbullah's

communication channels and to situate the Party's nationalist discourses. And while it examined both separately, it should be noted that multiple scholars have highlighted the relationship between the two as communication is intricately involved in the diffusion of nationalism. Gellner (1983) for example, emphasises the role of the educational system in the dissemination of culture and in the spread of nationalism. Zubaida (2011) also stresses the role of religious schools in relation to religion and religious identity and which he extends onto mosque gatherings.

Mass media is similarly understood to create, shape and maintain identities. Calhoun (1988) and Anderson (2006) for example theorise that print media create the nation with Anderson extending media's role to nation maintenance thus bringing in both of Carey's conceptions. To Anderson, print media allows for a sense of collective imagination whereby individuals become capable of experiencing similarities at the same time hence maintaining a sense of togetherness. By exploring print media such as newspapers and books, Anderson asserts the role of media in creating and maintaining the nation which he defines as an "imagined political community" (p. 6). As Anderson explains, [i]t is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of the, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 6).

Gellner (1983) also examines the role of media in nationalist discourses and argues that they are significant for what they are rather than what they disseminate. To Gellner (1983),

The media do not transmit an idea that happens to have been fed into them. […] it is the media themselves, the pervasiveness and importance of abstract, centralised one to many communication, which itself automatically engenders the core idea of nationalism quite irrespective of what in particular is being put into the specific messages transmitted. The most important and persistent message is generated by the medium itself, by the role which such media have acquired in modern life. The core message is that the language and style of the transmissions is important […] what is actually said matters little. (p. 127)

Billig (1995) emphasises the role of media in maintaining the nation through the daily flagging of the nation to remind us of our national identity (p. 92). As Billig explains, it is language - and through the media's everyday use of "banal words" – that the nation is asserted. The smallest of words such as 'we,' 'this,' 'here, 'us,' become embedded with crucial meanings related to nation and nationalism (p. 94). With a meaning far from fixed, the select group of people that are included within nations can only be understood within context (p. 106). It is not only in the repetition of a politician's words that the nation is asserted but also in the everyday media language. Billig even adds that the idea of nationhood is also flagged in the daily weather forecast and the broadcasting of sports events. Billig's research is particularly significant to examine Nasrullah's 'Ashura speeches and posters as the two sites rely heavily on words to reflect and promote nationalist and collective identities of an 'us' in comparison to a 'them' (chapters 5 and 6).

Billig and Anderson explored the general role of media in identity processes but also focused on print and/or broadcasting thus paving the way for contemporary research on the role of specific media in nationalist and identity processes. Hence, the general points about media effects are reiterated in studies that focus on specific forms. For example, diverse studies have highlighted the role of radio (Fry 1998; Mrazek 1997) and television (Boyle and Haynes 1996; Tsaliki 1995) in national identity processes although there is the general agreement that different sites have different impact. In exploring the role of television for example, Dayan and Katz (1992) and Couldry (2003) both examine the significance of live broadcasting in fostering a collective identity irrespective of space. In the Lebanese context - and specifically that of Hizbullah - Matar and Dakhlallah (2006) argue that al-Manar asserts a religious and political collectivity that has already been partially established through the family and face-to-face interactions.

Central to the above theorists and to both modernist and ethno-symbolist models of nationalism is what is termed cultural nationalism, which is the significance of culture in nationalist processes. According to Kymlicka (1999), "cultural nationalism defines the nation in terms of a common culture, and the aim of the nationalist movement is to protect the survival of that culture" (p. 132). In exploring cultural nationalism, both Nielsen (1999) and Kymlicka (1999) focus on a common language and knowledge of the nation's history as core to cultural nationalism and nationalist movements. Similarly, Craig Calhoun (1997), whose list of a nation's features includes a shared culture of language," beliefs and values, habitual practices" (p. 5), lists "nationalism as discourse" as the first of his three dimensions in the exploration of nationalism (p. 6). Calhoun emphasises the

significance of the production of "a cultural understanding and rhetoric" and of "particular versions of nationalist thought and language" (p. 6). It is on this basis, for example, that Aberbach (2008) explores the maintenance of Jewish cultural nationalism throughout different periods such as the Roman–Jewish wars and during medieval Islam. By focusing on Jewish poetry and literature, Aberbach asserts the importance of such channels for the survival of the Jewish nation in spite of the lack of a Jewish territorial nation and state. Interestingly however, Kymlicka (1999) is quick to explain that the definition of culture plays a part in defining cultural nationalism since it differs from one nation to the other: while "some nations define their culture in ethnic and religious terms, others do not" (p. 133). Thus, the diverse definitions of culture bring in the multiple nationalisms of Hizbullah: within the Lebanese nation, common language, territory, history and reality is what unites them; within the Shiʿa nation, it is religion, ideology and history; and within the Arab nation, it is again language, anti-colonial and anti-Israeli sentiment among others. As such, cultural commonality - be it history, myths and memories - is at the centre of how Hizbullah communicates, promotes and taps into the multiple nationalisms – sometimes simultaneously.

Interestingly, media effects have in more recent times expanded from a focus on local and national identity into transnational dynamics, no doubt as a result of satellite broadcasting and the internet. For example, Sumiala (2013) extends Anderson's 'imagined world' to include television and social media whereby the virtual world becomes a common space that is not restricted to physicality but one created in people's imagination, which "revolves around events, images, symbols, myths and stories constructed and mediated by the media" (pp. 3, 39). The virtual

world allows for legitimate cultural interactions to take place in spite of the distance between those interacting in it or experiencing it through mediated interactions (pp. 5, 44). Similarly, Lundby (2011) stresses that the Internet with its social media has facilitated "global religious imagined communities" where the common ground gathering those in it is the sense of belonging and collectivity (pp. 1225,1227). Within an Arab context, increasing research highlight the role of satellite broadcasting in promoting transnational identities, be it an Arab or Muslim one, with al-Jazeera occupying a prominent position in such studies. To el-Nawawy and Gher (2003), al-Jazeera has "broadened both pan-Arab and pan-Muslim political interaction and perceived connectedness due to its broadcasts of conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq" (Nisbet and Myers 2010, p. 352) with Cherribi (2006) asserting the channel's role in constructing "an imagined transnational Muslim community" (Quoted in Nisbet and Myers 2010, p. 352). Lest one forget here the abundant research (explored above) that have emphasised al-Manar's role in Arab nationalism through tapping into Arab sentiments of resistance and through focusing on the Palestinian cause. The ability to promote nationalism and to create and maintain collective identities on a transnational level is an opportunity that Hizbullah has utilised. Indeed, it is al-Manar satellite broadcasting and internet live streaming in addition to social media sites among others that has allowed Hizbullah to reach a transnational audience and to speak in Lebanese, Arab, Muslim and regional nationalist terms and to appease a global audience irrespective of space and time. Hence, in as much as Hizbullah's face-to-face interactions and gatherings are significant, the role media of global reach is just as important and why this thesis examines the different sites of different audience reach.

3. Conclusion

This chapter sets out the theoretical framework to be used in exploring Hizbullah's communication and presents the 'ritual view' of communication, promotion and branding literature. It also argues for the necessity of drawing on promotion and branding literature and demonstrates the significance of examining Hizbullah as a brand whereby brand values are core to how the Party situates its activities and adopts communication channels. The chapter also presents different theories of nationalism for which to study the Party's changing nationalist identity and to uncover how these are promoted through promotional sites.

However, the chapter contributes to scholarly debates on communication, religious promotion and nationalism. It highlights the gaps in the existing research on Hizbullah's communication, arguing that the Party's promotional sites following its participation in the Syrian war uncover Hizbullah's expanding resistance activities, nationalist framings and political discourse. The chapter also emphasises the significance of religious sites in Hizbullah's political communication processes thus bringing attention to aspects of the Party that have been overlooked in existing research.

The chapter also expands Carey's 'ritual view' of communication beyond traditional media sites to include different promotional channels and explores 'Ashura rituals and Hizbullah's spaces as socialising channels that maintain society. And while it emphasises the significance of literature on the promotion and

branding of religion, the chapter demonstrates that examining Hizbullah as a brand is not merely through highlighting the Party's merchandise and products but through a more comprehensive lens that sees values as core to the Party and its activities.

In examining the Party's nationalist discourses, the chapter argues that viewing Hizbullah in purely religious terms or merely as a Lebanese party today falls short of understanding Hizbullah's manoeuvring of a delicate political scene and as the Party prepares for an upcoming regional war. The chapter contributes to nationalist theories by highlighting the limitations of the modernist and ethno-symbolist schools. It demonstrates that the modernist school's secular and homogenising approach fails to understand the Lebanese nation and that the notion of territorial protection can be expanded beyond the Lebanese territories to be applied onto the region thus allowing Hizbullah to frame itself in Arab and regional nationalist terms. And while the chapter emphasises the significance of the ethno-symbolist school, which acknowledges the utilisation of religion for nationalist activities, it argues that scholarly research on the notion of a religious nation does not take into account the political identity of Hizbullah's nation.

Chapter 3: Research Framework

This chapter outlines the thesis's research methodology. Composed of three main sections, the chapter starts by addressing methodological assumptions when researching a group like Hizbullah in particular, and religion and politics in the Middle East more generally. It highlights the problems with Eurocentrism that see the world beyond Western Europe and North America through a narrow yet dominant lens but argues that calls for de-Westernisation as well as nativism by theorists of social sciences and media studies in particular beyond the European context are short-sighted because they overlook the significance and impact of theories originating from the West.

The second part of the chapter explores the research process itself. It highlights the concerns that I experienced prior to the fieldwork, one of which was about gaining access to material as a result of Hizbullah's restrictions. I also relay concerns about my position as a researcher researching one's own culture. The section also outlines my experiences in the field, how I attempted to manoeuvre through the Party's restrictions and my experiences with Hizbullah's media offices and the data collection process.

The third part of the chapter presents the multiple research methods that were adopted to examine the five sites of study. It starts with my experiences conducting participant observation and interviews and presents Lefebvre's "spatial triad", which, although a general approach rather than a research method per se, is adopted to highlight the multiple elements and perspectives that one

should explore when analysing space. The section also explores the methods

adopted for the visual analysis of Hizbullah's 'Ashura posters (a combination of the

iconological method with a semiotic approach) before presenting the content

analysis process used in analysing Mahdi magazines. Throughout the section, I

highlight the problems that were encountered and how that affected the research

process.

1. Situating the Research

Hizbullah's birth and position in the Middle East raises questions about the

possibility of bringing a set of predominantly European or North American critical

categories from the field of the social sciences to bear upon a Middle Eastern

example. It also raises the question of whether de-Westernisation or even nativism

is necessary to understand the Party.

To briefly explain Eurocentrism, it is viewing the world beyond Western Europe

and North America through a particular, narrow and dominant lens. Brought about

through the colonisation of countries in Asia and Africa, Eurocentric approaches

have persisted despite decolonisation and have manifested in a number of ways. Of

particular relevance to this thesis are "the parochiality of its universalism" and "its

assumptions about (Western) civilization" (Wallerstein 1997, p. 94). In the first,

scientific truths are viewed to be applicable across time and space but such truths

have found their way into the social sciences where it is assumed that human

behaviour is not only universal – thereby ignoring particular situations, histories

and places – but that it is the theories originating from a Western European

context – considered the epitome of achievement – that are universal (Wallerstein 1997, pp. 96-97). Consequently, it is the West that stipulates the definitions of civilisation (or civilised) and modernity (or modern) – in contrast to the barbaric and primitive other. As such, the West's definitions are used as a frame to measure a culture's modernity without acknowledging that countries and groups modernise "without accepting some or all of the values of European [civilisation]" and with that, it is Europe that is framed as the ideologically dominant (Wallerstein 1997, pp. 98-100).

The problems with Eurocentrism have resulted in attacks against it and consequently, calls for de-Westernisation, particularly within media studies. The attacks involve calls to consider media systems outside the West and to broaden media theories to take into account "the experience of countries outside the Anglo-American orbit" (Curran and Park 2000, p. 11). These requests have even gone further to call for "nativism," which involves going beyond adaptation of theories to involve the formulation of "autonomous" theories and knowledge "rooted in a non-Western context" (Khiabany and Sreberny 2013, p. 480). However, much like Eurocentrism, de-Westernisation and nativism calls are themselves problematic as is highlighted by Khiabany and Sreberny (2013). Although they acknowledge the different dynamics of "development, institutionalisation, practice and content" adopted in countries beyond the North Atlantic, Khiabany and Sreberny present six drawbacks to the project of de-westernisation. It is the last four in particular that are of concern to this thesis because they draw attention to wider epistemological problems when researching Hizbullah.

To begin with, Khiabany and Sreberny (2013) argue that the de-westernisation of media studies is "naïve" because it overlooks the histories of "interconnectedness that have mutually formed the West/Rest" (pp. 476-477). De-westernisation also implies that "Western media theories" are inapplicable beyond their place of origin thus overlooking the role of such media theories – and other Western theories for that matter – in influencing the Middle Eastern context (p. 477). For example, Khiabany and Sreberny explain that the works of Williams, Habermas and Bourdieu have opened up discussions of "the 'public sphere', the 'everyday' and 'taste cultures'" outside of the spheres for which they were written (p. 477). Indeed, within the thesis and as chapter 2 has demonstrated, theories of communication, promotion and branding originate from the West but are of significance to understand how Hizbullah operates.

Similarly, Khiabany and Sreberny (2013) highlight the "conceptual danger of nativism" whereby the pursuit of "authenticity" and uniqueness of culture and the formulation of "'native' conceptions of knowledge, all too often reduce forms of culture and identity into singular and all-inclusive constructs" (p. 478). Indeed, such processes ignore the impact that modernity has had beyond the West despite resistance to it (Khiabany 2010, p. 208) and native intellectuals' education in "colonial languages and institutions" whereby they adopt Eurocentric assumptions themselves (Khiabany 2010, p. 208). Hence, nativist calls for "knowledge, concepts and methodologies [that are] rooted in a non-Western context," overlook the impact that higher education has had on "natives" as a result of the dominance of Western theories and their impact on local thought (Khiabany and Sreberny 2013, p. 480). Within Hizbullah circles, this is best exemplified in the educational

background of high-position members who are graduates of American and European universities, both in Lebanon and beyond. And as chapter 7 will show, Hizbullah recruits outstanding Shiʿa students from American universities in Lebanon, whose curricula educate students in Western theories and literature.

This last critique focuses "on the problem of essentialising culture as a determinate object" (p. 480). Taking Islam as a case study, Khiabany and Sreberny make the seemingly obvious but necessary point that although not all Muslims think and act the same way, they are treated as such when only a small number of Muslim countries (such as Saudia Arabia or Iran) are permitted to speak for the whole region (p. 480). In this sense, Islam becomes a monolith of an "undifferentiated" and "homogeneous" community which ignores differences of "history, geography, politics, class, gender and ethnicity" as well as the conflicts that arise between "competing and conflicting camps, within the 'Islamic World'" (Khiabany 2010, p. 211). Indeed, Hizbullah and ISIS are grouped together and labelled as terrorists, seemingly forgetting the different histories, religious ideologies and definitions of jihad that the two groups adopt as well as the battles between them both in Lebanon and Syria.

In light of these discussion about the problems of Eurocentrism on the one hand and the problems with calls for de-Westernisation and nativism arguments on the other, this thesis adopts a hybrid position that will take the form of what the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1968) calls 'bricolage': a certain process of borrowing, adapting or making-do with existing concepts to solve new problems. The thesis treads a path between adopting theories originating from the West

while remaining sensitive to the specificity of Lebanon and Hizbullah through considering the deficiencies or limitations of models based on Western political communication systems when applied to the group under study. To claim that this thesis can do without Western input and can ignore the very real influence it has upon the Lebanese scene, or to posit a fake Lebanese "authenticity" would be futile and illogical. After all, the roots of promotion and branding lie in the West and studies of communication and promotion in the "Rest" – in Lebanon at least - heavily relies on them. The end result is a combination of the adoption of Western theories while acknowledging the particularities required.

2. Research Process

Researching a group such as Hizbullah is interesting and challenging, regardless of whether one is familiar with the Party and its members or a complete stranger to its circle. My own research process and interactions with Hizbullah members and media office was, to me, one of the most surprising aspects of my fieldwork, perhaps the result of the worrying I endured prior to starting the fieldwork and in the first stages of arriving to Beirut. Below, I present the experiences that were involved in the research process. I start with the stages prior to the fieldwork and those after, highlighting the assumptions that were refuted and the challenges that I faced.

2.1 Before the Field

2.1.1 Worries and Concerns: Access

The initial process of listing Hizbullah's communication sites involved an understanding of how I would gain access to material. While researching Dahiya (chapter 4) and attending 'Ashura rituals (chapter 5) were accessible as they are both public spaces, gathering the 'Ashura posters (chapter 6) as well as interviews with Hizbullah media members were a concern. This is because of news that the Party was refusing journalists and researchers, including those that are pro-resistance and who had already researched the Party, access to interviews as a result of the backlash the Party was facing following its participation in the Syrian war. To help gain access, I started by making a list of acquaintances who are close to Hizbullah members as well as a list of people from my own circle to interview. For a small time period, I was convinced my access was guaranteed. Still, the worry about researching my own culture persisted.

2.1.2. Researching One's Culture

The researcher's relationship to the research topic or group has become the subject of investigation, specifically with the rise of doing research 'at home,' or 'indigenous anthropology' (Hastrup 1995) or as "halfies" ("people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage") (Abu-Lughod (1991, p. 138). These literatures explore the positive aspects as well as methodological problems that arise and the insider/outsider, subjective/objective and the self/other dichotomies that a citizen anthropologist faces.

To begin with, a researcher's insider position and easy access and trust of a group are positive aspects of researching one's culture. And surprisingly, subjectivity can be a useful and active dimension especially when an anthropologist is aware of and understands how it affects research reflexivity (Cheater 1987, p. 168-171). Similarly, Hastrup (1995) demonstrates (by drawing on Ohnuki-Tiernay 1984) that an 'at-home' ethnographer is aware of 'tacit' aspects of the culture under study, specifically those relating to emotional and intimate dimensions (p. 157). Still, problems arise as a result of this positionality. As Abu-Lughod (1991) notes, the issue of the 'self' and the 'other,' - both of which are viewed as categories of thought rather than fundamentally distinct and fixed - and the researcher's positionality in between the two as an outcome of researching one's own culture results in an unsettling position (p. 466). The researcher cannot sit comfortably and is thus "split," "caught at the intersection of systems of difference" whereby the 'other' and the 'self' become one and the same (p. 468). 'At home' anthropologists move awkwardly from a "speaking 'for'" position to a "speaking 'from'" one (p. 470) and as such, navigate between being a researcher and being a research topic thereby facing a struggle between research objectivity and researcher subjectivity. As Cheater (1987) adds, researchers get caught between dual roles between "citizenship and profession" and the repercussions of ignoring one of these positions (p. 165). The 'at-home' researcher is thus expected to establish a distance in an attempt to avoid the danger of falling into subjective explanations. However, positioning oneself in itself reveals the dilemma that "every view is a view from somewhere and every act of speaking a speaking from somewhere" (Abu-Lughod 1991, p. 468).

Indeed, concerns like those presented by the above theorists were aspects that worried me, myself being a Lebanese Shiʻa researching a Lebanese Shiʻa group. Particularly concerning was my decision to attend both private and public ʻAshura majalis, the former of which I had accompanied my mother to a large number of times and was thus acquainted and quite friendly with other attendees. Hence, 'How can I observe and note findings objectively?' 'What if I cannot be objective?' 'What if I find certain aspects troubling but relevant to my research?' 'Will including such information affect my relationship with attendees?' 'How can I research a setting my own mother is part of?' 'How will the research affect my religious and political views?' 'Is my loyalty to my research or to the group?' are a small sample of questions that I thought of prior to my fieldwork and which I eventually noted down to remind myself to not fall into subjective interpretations.

Likewise was the aspect of looking versus seeing, one that indigenous anthropologists encounter as is noted by different theorists – especially those interested in visual research (Chalfen 2011, Rose 2001, Wagner 2011). Chalfen's (2011) definition of looking falls into the biological and physiological realm that identifies it as a "natural" and "shared human condition" of capturing whatever falls under the scope of an eye's vision (p. 27, 32). Juxtaposed to looking is 'seeing' which no longer functions as a natural experience but rather as a constructive one whereby individuals perceive and interpret selectively. Seeing is determined by a "historic, social, and cultural context, open to change and variation across time and space" (p. 27). What captures our sight and why are "culturally determined" (p. 32) and are interpreted in multiple ways as different individuals see and interpret images differently (p. 26).

The same definitions of 'looking' and 'seeing' are used by Rose (2001) and Wagner (2011). In her description of visuality, Rose adds the element of "how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein" (Foster 1988, Quoted in Rose 2001, p. 6). She also includes John Berger's (1972) input on seeing in that individuals look and interpret the visual world not just on the basis of the image alone, but also in relation to its context and the subjectivity of the viewer (p. 12).

Pertinent to the discussion of looking versus seeing is the research of Jonathan Crary (1999) on the notion of attention. Crary writes that modernisation, with its excessive stimuli of visuals and sounds, has driven individuals to master the art of excluding much of it and focusing on selected stimuli (p. 1). Yet, how do we screen out certain stimuli and not others? And what conditions cause us to do so? Questions like these were what Crary aimed at answering by presenting the theories of multiple scholars starting from the nineteenth century. Crary notes that most authors agree that individuals, through "some process of perceptual or mental organisation" isolate stimuli from a larger field of objects (p. 24). For example, John Dewey (1886) believed this isolation occurs when an element or group of elements stand out as a result of its distinctiveness (p. 24). Therefore, this attention actually involves the act of excluding objects within the field of vision or senses (p. 25). Charles Fere´ and Alfred Binet (1888) agree with the act of excluding and the focus on a single stimulus (p. 39) with Dewey explaining that focusing on something for too long leads to the deterioration and halting of attention (p. 47). So, to the 'at-home' anthropologist, the problem of 'seeing'

aspects of his/her culture and of paying attention to minute details that one takes for granted in everyday life comes to the forefront as it is those details that can add a depth to one's work.

Prior to my own fieldwork and aware of the issue of looking and not seeing, the latter of which is a result of my familiarity with the group, landscape, customs, practices and the like, I again resorted to writing down a series of questions that I was asking myself: 'What if I cannot see important aspects?' 'How can I see things I grew up looking at?' 'Will I have the opportunity to monitor sites a number of times?' 'If not, how will that impact upon the quality of my work?' are a small sample of the questions I listed. In parallel, I also resorted to reading research that tackled similar communicative sites that I was exploring and paid particular attention to their descriptions, their focus and their analysis. I again noted these down to resort to once my fieldwork began.

2.2. In the Field

I arrived to Beirut circa mid-June 2014 to conduct fieldwork for a whole year. Armed with a list of names of people I believed could secure my access to media personnel within Hizbullah's ranks, I contacted three of these to start the process. However, my contacts were not willing to help despite their close connections. I was warned that I would be shunned away for my "dangerous topic," questioned relentlessly and that I would be monitored with the assumption that I am a spy. One of my acquaintances advised me to change my research topic altogether because of the difficulty I would encounter.

Similar reactions were evident in the line of questioning that I received from non-Shiʿa friends – and in a number of cases, by Shiʿas: 'Does Hizbullah know about your research?' 'What did Hizbullah do when they found out?' 'Are they monitoring you?' 'Don't you worry they might kidnap you' (jokingly)? are only but a small sample of the reactions I received. In effect, such reactions increased my worry and about my ability to conduct my research and thus drove me to look for alternative sources for information (see below). Realising I was at a dead end, my only option was contacting Hizbullah's media offices directly.

Having called to take an appointment, I arrived at the destination and was greeted at the door by a middle aged man (whose big physique, quite frankly, increased my worry) and was directed to the waiting room, which contains comfortable couches much like those in any other living room in Beirut. Hajje Rana was the personnel that attended to me as I explained my topic and the material that I required access to. Contrary to what many of my acquaintances had warned, I was not shunned away for my topic nor was I questioned harshly. In fact, it was clear that the media office was accustomed to requests for material and interviews and all that was required of me was to fill out a form detailing what I had relayed to provide my personal identification card and proof of my student status. Following that, all I needed to do was wait for the response to my application. I was granted approval a mere few days later and supplied with the ʿAshura posters (see below), which were initially the only material that I requested of fear that too many requests would result in a rejection altogether. I applied for access for the remaining material, which were interviews with two key members, more than a year later

during one of my trips back home.

My research experience marks a stark difference from that of Eric Lob (2017). Lob, who was in Lebanon in 2011 to conduct research on Hizbullah, explains that the Party had become increasingly "suspicious of foreigners and outsiders, including academics, scholars, and researchers" (p. 521) and more so after 2011 following the Party's increased involvement in regional and international politics brought about by its participation in Syria (p. 522) as had been brought to my attention prior to my fieldwork. As a result, although Lob's application process was the same as mine, he was not granted approval for interview access and was left "in limbo" (p. 522) thus requiring a different methodological strategy.

However, while interacting with Hizbullah's media offices was an easy process, implementing the research methods necessary to examine the five sites of study was not always the case. As will be explored below, a number of the explored sites and methods of analysis brought with them a set of difficulties and restrictions.

3. Research Methods

The different sites that this thesis examines stipulated a mixed methods approach to allow for an in-depth examination of Hizbullah's promotional and branding activities and content. For example, the Dahiya chapter adopts participant observation and interviews and is guided by Lefebvre's "spatial triad," especially for experiencing the area; the ritual chapter adopts participant observation and interviews; the analysis of ʿAshura posters, a combination of semiotics and

iconological analysis; and the children's chapter, content analysis and interviews. The methods were chosen depending on the examined sites, the research questions, the aim behind analysing each channel, the available material and the type of information that they garnered. For example, while participant observation and interviews are adopted as a means to gather information, visual analysis and content analysis are necessary to analyse and interpret data. And as the below sections will reveal, to have adopted one method would have been insufficient to uncover the breadth and depth of information. One clear example is analysing Hizbullah's ʿAshura posters and which required a combination of semiotics and iconology. While the former is the most popular method for analysing posters, it was inept at uncovering visual transformations through time and which is made possible through the iconological method.

Ultimately, the adopted methods are a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches whereby the former deals with numbers and is capable of accurately examining large amounts of material (Vanderstoep and Johnston 2009, p. 8) while qualitative methods are used for in-depth material and results in "narrative or textual descriptions" (Vanderstoep and Johnston 2009, p. 7). Indeed, in my own work, qualitative research allow for the exploration of the social world, people's understandings, beliefs, values, experiences and ideas and thus to provide information of "richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity" (Mason 2002, p. 1). Below I explore the multiple research methods that I adopted. I start with participant observation and interviews, which are the two methods used for the first two empirical chapters and explore Lefebvre's spatial analysis, which is adopted to guide the exploration of Dahiya. I then present

the visual analysis approach and content analysis for the remaining two.

3.1 Participant Observation

There are a number of sites for which I adopted participant observation as a research method: ʿAshura rituals, both public and private (which take place in private residences), and Dahiya to experience multiple aspects of the area. The method, the "most classic qualitative research technique" (Corbetta 2003, p. 235) involved going out and immersing myself in the field (Bernard 2013, p. 310) and required my presence in Beirut to gain insightful material that would otherwise not have been possible. And while my participant observation in ʿAshura rituals took place in 2014/2015 during my yearlong fieldwork in Beirut, that of Dahiya also extended to my multiple visits during vacation periods and as such, the information presented in chapter 4 is a result of four years of intermittent research. However, each site differed in dynamics and approach as will be explored below.

3.1.1 ʿAshura Rituals

In Beirut, Hizbullah's ʿAshura rituals are conducted in the heart of Dahiya and consequently allowed me to experience the area during the period and the changes that it results in to the dynamics of the space. The rituals include public majalis in the 'Master of Martyr Complex' and the tenth day Muharram rally, both of which are broadcast on al-Manar and which are in turn live-streamed on the Internet to a global audience. However, in my study of Hizbullah's public gatherings, I did not

limit my observations either to the physical gatherings or the mediated rituals as that would have provided major setbacks. To begin with, in the mediated rituals, the women's section is briefly filmed and when they are captured, the camera shots are typically long. In contrast, within the complex, women and men are separated hence restricting my ability to study the men's section and requiring my analysis of the mediated rituals to complement my findings of the physical gatherings. Second, relying on observations from physical gatherings would have excluded vital information in how their mediation affects the practice, meanings and impact as will be explored in chapter 5. I therefore alternated between the two sites but was physically present for the ninth night and tenth day masira, both of which I watched on YouTube later to compare notes and observe the men's section.

Participant observation of ʿAshura majalis also involved attending private ones (seven in total), typically in the homes of my mother's friends and acquaintances. Each of the private and public sites required a slightly different approach and its own degree of openness as well as its own set of problems. These problems however do not include gaining access as Hizbullah's rituals are public, and the private ones that I attended, my mother and I were welcome to. I thus did not need to seek the help of a "cultural mediator" (Corbetta 2003, p. 244) nor did I need to gain "rapport" and which is "establishing lines of communication between the anthropologist and his informants in order for the former to collect data [sic]" (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, p. 40). So contrary to traditional overt fieldwork, my subjects in private settings were comfortable with me from the start since, having attended private majalis occasionally with my mother, my presence was

customary. In addition, I did not face problems such as one's own subjectivity whereby the researcher acts as the "*instrument* of research" who filters information and compares findings to the culture that he/she comes from (Corbetta 2003, p. 261). In addition, I did not require time to understand 'tacit' meanings and "nonverbal communication" and to "anticipate and understand responses" (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, pp. 9-10). Indeed, my fieldwork was conducted in my native country as someone who is familiar with Shi'a customs and rituals and I was therefore accustomed to the 'tacit' meanings since the culture studying the culture were none other than the same. Hence, my own position as a researcher researching one's culture became helpful in this case.

Also, to counter the issue of 'looking and not seeing' problem that comes with being an insider, I tried to pre-empt the problem by reading other accounts of native ethnography such as the Lara Deeb's (2006) research that allowed me to understand observation processes and the significance of narrative description. Deeb's detailed and rich description of 'Ashura rituals for example, highlights the importance of details that should be conveyed to an unfamiliar audience. Simultaneously, my observations, I believe, remained objective with regards to the public majalis since the 2014 rituals were the first time I had participated in public rituals and as such, I was very much an outsider to an already established Hizbullah practice. My participant observations of the public settings were new to me – and maybe even foreign - and not controlled by a camera that stipulated what I saw.

3.1.1.1 Public Rituals

Attending the public rituals took place in 2014 (the remaining years, I was not in Beirut and I therefore analysed their mediation). My experience of Hizbullah's rituals can be classified as both sociological and anthropological (Delamont 2004). While anthropological fieldwork involves moving to and living at a location in order to completely immerse oneself in the culture, sociological research involves the researcher studying the field on a daily basis and returning to their own homes at the end of the day. And although I studied the field on a daily basis only to go home later (thus falling under sociological research), my own home was a site of another site to study as both my mother and I would watch al-Manar: for her, as a form of commemoration and for myself to observe the mediated rituals – although I cannot deny my own commemorative involvement. As a result, exiting the field did not detach me from it but rather provided another field of study thus situating my fieldwork in the anthropological realm.

And while my presence in the 'Master of Martyr' complex was for research reasons, there was without doubt a high level of researcher participation. Indeed, my presence in the women's gatherings is what Spradley (1980) considers "complete participation" (when the researcher "is or becomes a member of a group that is being studied" thus allowing me to understand how participants feel in these spaces) and with regards to the men's gathering, "nonparticipation" (when the researcher acquires information from already existing material such as television, newspapers, diaries…) (Quoted in DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, pp. 19-22). However, it is worth pointing out that my degree of participation is not one that was made by choice (as is the case in the majority of researches) but was rather stipulated by

the field itself (in this case, the issue of segregation implemented by Hizbullah).

In describing the type of observation, my presence in the complex was covert whereby the researcher disguises his or her identity and pretends to be just another member. Although this typically involves a level of deceit and fear of getting caught, that was not in the case of my participation. For, as Corbetta (2003) clarifies, specific fields of study such as public and open environments to which a researcher belongs to (and under which Hizbullah's rituals fall) do not require the revealing of one's role (pp. 242- 243). In addition, I made no attempt at interacting with other attendees for the specific reason that it would have been deceitful and because explaining the reason for my questions would have raised the alarm, especially since 2014 was a period of intense security. This high level security resulted in an incident when I attended the public gathering the first time. Unfamiliar with the location of the 'Master of Martyr Complex' and after asking for directions, I was questioned by a Hizbullah member - who had clearly been alerted of my presence – of what I was doing in the area, where I live and why I had come all the way to Dahiya to attend the majlis. The questioning was however, as is typical of Hizbullah members, polite, brief and unthreatening. In retrospect, the questioning is not strange since Shi'as typically attend public gatherings around their surrounding areas and it is unusual for outsiders to attend distant public majalis.

Many similarities occurred between my experiences in the public and private rituals. To begin with, my participant observation experiences in private gatherings were again sociological and anthropological as the private home and

my own home were two sites to analyse. My role within them was also "complete participation" as I commemorated Hussein and in two of the private majalis, helped the women distribute food following the end of the majlis as is customary for close acquaintances. In this case however, and contrary to public gatherings, my true intentions were articulated thus characterising it as overt observation. Still, this did not provide any of the problems that come with overt observation[28] since those that I observed were close acquaintances and thus behaved comfortably from the start, provided me with interviews (see below) and excused me for any of the "naïve questions" that I asked.

3.1.2 Dahiya

Exploring Dahiya as space also involved participant observation, although not in the traditional sense as is the case with the rituals. Indeed, while my analysis of the area relies heavily on Lefebvre's "spatial triad" of attending to different spatial elements in addition to interviews (see below), participant observation proved helpful in experiencing Dahiya's leisure sites, the street dynamics and the area's facilities. This involved multiple visits to the area at different times, touring its streets, driving around and sitting in the area's cafés. I also resorted to exploring the area with two of my informants (in different occasions) to understand how they relate to the space and experience it but also so that they would bring to my attention certain aspects that I had overlooked. My presence in the area, especially in the leisure sites, much like in the public rituals, was covert and sociological, and

---

[28] See Corbetta (2003).

again was not deceitful as they were public. No interviews were conducted with the café owners or customers but rather with a number of my informants who live in Dahiya and who were aware of my topic.

3.2 Interviews and Conversations

A total of 23 interviews (the count excludes large group conversations [see below]) were conducted during my yearlong fieldwork in Beirut as well as during my multiple visits thereafter and acted as a means to gather information or to confirm and expand on observations and findings, particularly for three of the empirical chapters: Dahiya, 'Ashura rituals and the children's chapter. The majority of the interviews, except for those with two official Hizbullah members, were conducted with people from my close circle of friends and acquaintances as well as my mother's social circle. As such, access to interviewees was relatively easy - mostly with the Shi'a demographic (except in cases where I interviewed those who belong to a different religion or sect to compare their experiences of Hizbullah with that of Shi'as). The selection process involved getting in touch with individuals whom I could interview and who in turn, put me in touch with others. But since my own circle of friends provided detailed and elaborate information, interviews with their acquaintances seemed to repeat a lot of the information and was eventually discarded (I conducted four interviews with people my close circle put me in touch with). The selection process also involved choosing those who could provide me with insightful material on each explored medium. For example, for the 'Ashura chapter, the majority of my interviewees were my mother's friends as well as relatives of mine who grew up in Baalbeck and who remember Hizbullah's early

phase in the city as they participated in their activities and as such, their ages are

45 and above. I also resorted to interviews with the younger generation (ages 20-

33) to allow for a complete understanding of how different age groups view rituals.

The same is applicable to the Dahiya chapter, although a higher number of

interviewees are of the younger age group as they provided more insightful

information. Hence, interviews tended to be quite smooth flowing and closer to a

conversation than a formal meeting thus making it comfortable for both myself

and the interviewees. However, a large number of the interviews tended to drift to

how each individual understood specific Hizbullah activities. While the

conversations uncovered how the Party's practices are received, the thesis's focus

on Hizbullah's promotional and branding practices as emanating from the Party

itself rather than audience reception ultimately stipulated an emphasis on

interviews – and sections of interviews - that presented more objective

information on Hizbullah's communication. The interviews, while significant to the

research process, are highlighted when necessary (the thesis draws on the

information from 12 interviews [2 who wish to remain anonymous]), as the

majority confirm findings and observations that I had previously made through

other research methods or repeat what other interviewees had relayed.

Generally, all interviewee names, except for those conducted with Hizbullah's

members, were changed. I also classify the interviews I conducted into formal and

informal. Formal interviews include interviews with experts (2 Hizbullah

members) and with acquaintances, with the latter meaning that they were one on

one although the dynamics were in fact quite informal. Informal interviews include

group discussions following private majalis and friendly conversations whose

content found their way into different chapters.

3.2.1 Formal interviews

3.2.1.1 With Experts

Although all of my interviewees can be considered experts in the sense that they possess an advantage of information (Meuser and Nagel 2009) and "insider knowledge" (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2009, p. 2) that I did not, I apply the title of 'expert' to two Hizbullah members: Hajj Ali Daher, the general supervisor of Rissalat which is a Hizbullah organisation responsible for cultural, artistic and visual projects, and Hajj Abbas Charara, the general manager of Mahdi Publications, a children's magazine published by the Party. Hence, the term 'expert' here falls in line with Bogner and Menz's (2009) definition of a constructivist expert[29] and refers to an individual who has a considerable reputation in terms of publications, qualifications and position and who is considered a trained and specialised professional by society.

Access to the experts was again, surprisingly easy. Following the process of filling the form in Hizbullah's offices and the approval after which I received the 'Ashura posters in 2014, I got back in touch with Hajje Rana a year later to request interviews whereby approval was again granted a few days later. I was given the contact numbers of both members and a meeting was set up relatively quickly. The

---

[29] See Bogner and Menz (2009) for the three types of experts.

interviews lasted between 60 – 90 minutes, were semi-structured and proved to be a significant source of information about Hizbullah's practices (see chapters 4 and 8). Rather than a strict list of questions, I had prepared a series of flexible headers and key words (Rapley 2004, p. 17), which I deviated from as the interviewees' input directed the discussions into other more interesting and valuable directions. To briefly provide a description, the interview with Hajj Daher took place in Rissalat's offices in Dahiya. Hajj Daher also supplied me with a CD containing the Party's multiple cultural projects taking place around Lebanon. Similarly, the interview with Hajj Charara took place in a Hizbullah office, specifically in the Mahdi offices in Dahiya and in the same building of the al-Mahdi Scouts. Security personnel inquired about my presence and only allowed me in when they confirmed my appointment. Hajj Charara also presented me with publications other than the magazines as well as greeting cards that they had designed for different occasions such as Mother's Day.

I recorded the interview with Hajj Daher and also resorted to taking notes, the latter of which proved valuable because a technical error occurred with my recording device. With Hajj Charara, I relied solely on taking notes as the recording device again failed me despite having fixed it.

3.2.1.2 With Acquaintances

Formal interviews with acquaintances resulted in information that found their way into the first of the two empirical chapters. Such interviews resulted in new information, confirmed findings and observations that I had made and in many

cases, involved an understanding of how interviewees reacted to Hizbullah's

pratices, the last of which is not heavily featured in the thesis. The interviews were

conducted (4 of which I was introduced to by friends) in various locations that

were convenient for the interviewees. For example, with participants who are

inhabitants of Dahiya, the interviews took place in the area's cafés at close

proximity to their residence or work and as such, acted as a means through which I

could also experience Dahiya's leisure sites. I resorted to taking notes and the

meetings were quite casual (with phone calls being picked up mid conversation by

interviewees), unstructured and in many cases, jumped back and forth between

ideas when a participant remembered a specific point. In two cases, following the

interview, I received phone calls to provide me with more information that the

interviewees thought might be valuable. In addition, two conversations took place

via the telephone as either myself or the interviewees were not in Lebanon at the

time and I did not record any of the interviews at the request of the interviewees.

The interviews with the older generation took place during my year-long fieldwork

and with others, specifically those of the younger generation, at different periods

of my presence in Beirut. Below I present a description of the interviewees and

interviews. I include only those whose information found their way into the

chapters. Two of the interviewees are not included in the list as they wish to

remain anonymous.[30]

Fadi is a twenty-five-year-old male informant who lives in Dahiya with a

negative opinion about the area. Fadi is Syrian and despite having been born

---

[30] All the presented information is that which was recorded at the time of the interview (for example, age, occupation and whether the female interviewees wear a headscarf).

and raised in Lebanon, has not been granted citizenship. He is both a university student and a bartender and does not identify as religious. The interview took place in ABC Achrafieh, a mall in a Christian neighbourhood in Beirut and I also toured Dahiya with him by car where he pointed out the rebuilt buildings and took me around more secluded streets that I could not have reached alone.

Hani is a thirty-two old male informant. I was introduced to Hani by Mohammad (see below) as he is also a resident of Dahiya with experiences of dealing with the area's police station having lost his wallet once. The interview with Hani took place in a café in Dahiya.

Lina is a twenty-two-year-old female informant from the South of Lebanon. Lina is Shiʿa and has been attending majalis from a young age. However, she emulates Sayyed Fadlullah's school of thought and refuses to participate in Hizbullah's public masiras as a result of their political dimension. I approached Dina for an interview, having met her through an acquaintance, following a conversation where she explained how the rituals had impacted her decision to wear a head scarf.

Mohammad is thirty-three-year old male, close childhood friend. Mohammad is Shiʿa and grew up in Dahiya but rented his own place outside the area at the age of 26 because he finds the area's traffic and regulations difficult. He also identifies as secular and thus provides an interesting, young perspective. Multiple conversations were conducted with Mohammad,

including face-to-face and telephone conversations as well as a lengthy one that took place during a group visit to Amsterdam in April 2017 where his friends, who also grew up in Dahiya, participated in the conversation.

Rana is a thirty-year-old female Shiʿa informant who lives in Dahiya and identifies as secular. She has chosen not to wear the headscarf despite coming from a religious family where her siblings wear the abaya. I have known Rana since 2010 and reached out to her via message to request an interview. It took place in 2016 during one of my trips to Beirut in one of the coffee shops of Beirut Mall, a shopping centre in Dahiya. The interview was approximately two hours long and was quite informal, with an easy flow to the discussions. Rana also called me back following the interview to inform me of other aspects that she thought might be helpful.

3.2.2 Informal interviews

Informal interviews were conducted mostly with my mothers' acquaintances and often took place after the end of private majlis (in between the coffee, chatting and gossiping) or during a visit from or to acquaintances. They often started when my mother informed the attendees (who are of the older age group) about my research and were thus spontaneous and either myself or my mother had a personal relationship with participants. These settings were group ones with different women pitching in at different times and with someone adding something or intervening then distancing themselves to socialise. Many of these interviews can be characterised as being 'repeated' interviews because different women – and

groups of women – were interviewed on a number of occasions thus enabling me to ask questions that were not previously tackled. Evidently, such interviews were quite informal and rather unorganised and therefore made it difficult to calculate the number of participants, and as such are not included in the above-mentioned count. To note, I attended 7 majalis where there were almost 40 women (in the case of Imm Ali's majlis, she counted 65 attendees). However, my conversations took place with around a maximum of 15 attendees in each majlis, many of whom I conversed with a number of times.

My method of recording was through taking notes as it was the method the interviewees preferred. Ultimately however, I limited the number of such interviews because with the increasing number of participants, repetition of information occurred. Indeed, in line with a point put forth by Gaskell (2000), although the first batch of interviews led to surprising insights, common themes emerged thus signalling the time to stop.

However, slight problems occurred during these settings. To begin with, their older age group coupled with their status as close friends of my mother required sensitivity and delicateness in the framing of questions and the dynamics of the interviews. I thus could not interrupt and at certain points, directing the conversation to a more interesting and informative realm proved tricky and the women majorly focused on subjective interpretations of the Party's practices. In addition, in many cases, it seemed like the women were preaching, a habit that they are accustomed to doing with me as most believe that I should be more religious and even wear a headscarf. In that sense, I was not completely in control

of the interviews and as a result, these interviews occupy a minimal focus in the thesis.

The friendly conversations mark a stark contrast. These are conversations that took place at my parents' home or in those of close friends and family members who asked about my thesis topic and the conversation drifted to Hizbullah. Such settings revealed people's experiences with the Party and were quite transparent in the sense that they discussed Hizbullah practices that they normally would not thus providing valuable information so much so that I requested whether I could include certain parts of our conversations in my thesis. Although the majority granted me approval, a number of participants rejected this as the information they relayed was, although extremely valuable, quite sensitive. Material from 3 of these settings found their way into the thesis and below is their profile.

Hajje **Ghada** is a middle aged woman, originally from Baalbeck. Hajje Ghada is a family relative whom I asked to interview because of her knowledge of Hizbullah's early days in Baalbeck as she attended their gatherings, ultimately resulting in her decision to wear the headscarf. Hajje Ghada is a devout Shiʻa and the conversation with her took place in another family members' house when we were invited for breakfast.

Rasha is a thirty-five-year old close female friend. An official interview was not conducted with Rasha but she informed me of her experience in Dahiya, which she is not quite familiar with, following my briefing of my research

during one of our regular coffee catch-ups. Rasha granted me approval for including a section of our conversation in the thesis.

Zeina is a middle aged female family member from Baalbeck. The interview took place in her residence in Dahiya over breakfast and was thus more of a conversation. Zeina also has a depth of information about the Party's early stages and was vital for understanding the Party's activities in Dahiya.

3.3 Spatial Analysis

Examining Dahiya as a communicative and promotional space involved multiple research methods as explored above. However, both participant observation of the area and interviews with inhabitants and outsiders were guided by Lefebvre's spatial triad of conceived, perceived and lived spaces and which understands space as not a "purely material factor[]" but rather as "fundamentally bound up with social reality" (Schmid 2008, pp. 28-29). It also provides the basis for analysing spaces beyond traditional geographical understandings of borders and for studying "social, physical and mental spaces to provide an integrated view of organisational space" (Watkins 2005, pp. 210-211).

Examining the conceived spaces of Dahiya (also known as representations of space) required examining the space that is 'choreographed' by professionals such as "scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers." The conceived space involves "architecture and planning, but also the social sciences (and here of special importance is geography)" and includes "maps and

plans, information in pictures, and signs" (Schmid 2008, p. 37). To link this to the research task, the conceived space of Dahiya would be the intentionally created space of buildings, bridges and solid structures as well as the leisure and cultural sites that are created and the meanings that are inscribed in them.

To explore these, I combined participant observation and interviews (8 with inhabitants [who also provided information about 'Ashura rituals] and 2 with outsiders) whereby the former involved multiple visits and explorations of the area as explained above. In addition to experiencing leisure sites, I assessed the area's infrastructure, the layout of the space and the constructed buildings by driving around different parts of Dahiya and later noting down my observations. I visited Haret Hreik (the area targeted during the 2006 war) and walked around to experience the rebuilt space and to compare it with what it had been before it was rebuilt, an aspect that was slightly strange as my first visit to Dahiya for my research marked my first visit after it had been rebuilt. The same trip was made with two of my acquaintances who reminded me of what I had seemingly forgotten and also what I had overlooked in my previous explorations.

However, I also paid attention to aspects that Lefebvre overlooks in his theory of conceived space. To begin with, I paid attention to sounds, smells and other sensory aspects and which as chapter 4 will reveal, are also conceived by Hizbullah to a certain extent. I did not however, resort to photography or video or sound recordings as this would have been dangerous due to the high level of security (see chapter 4). I also examined the marking of territory and to which Malcolm Quinn's (1994) research proved significant. Indeed, Quinn's study of the role of the

swastika and Nazi flags in marking and making 'Nazi space' in Germany in the twentieth century became particularly helpful in understanding how spaces are territorially marked and visually produced. Here, it is pertinent to note that drawing on Quinn's work is again not to indicate any similarities between Hizbullah and Nazism but rather to explore the role of symbols in territoriality.[31] Quinn's exploration of symbols highlights the significance of observing how the territorial marking in Dahiya can act as a means of "self-representation" (p. 4) and the ways in which symbols elicit identification and convey a specific image as well as the ways in which, when placed in a specific space (such as a street, a landmark or at a rally), mark, organise and control a territory and social space (p. 10). Hence, my visits to Dahiya involved tracing – by car – the peripheries of the area and examining whether they are marked and controlled (for example, checkpoints and physical borders). I also explored multiple areas (including internal ones rather than focus on main roads) to examine the ways in which the area is visually marked as a Hizbullah one and surveyed the presence of posters, murals and other visual cues that would confirm Hizbullah's dominance. To complement these findings, an interview was conducted with Hajj Ali Daher to understand how the visual aspect of Dahiya is conceived.

However, while Quinn focused on the visual marking of territory, my fieldwork in Dahiya also involved examining social and cultural markings and which manifest themselves in the accepted modes of conduct and behavior stipulated by the Party.

---

[31] Quinn's exploration of the swastika is not one that is limited to Nazism and their use of it but also involves the historical use of the symbol prior to its adoption by Nazis. It also includes linking the swastika to contemporary logos and the ways that it communicates a company's identity and values. As such, his input becomes vital in understanding symbols that are loaded with meaning.

As these can be invisible – or not clearly distinguished markings - I resorted to interviews with inhabitants who are familiar with those restrictions as well as visiting multiple cafés and shops within the area to experience them myself.

To move to the "perceived" space (the representational space), this involves the manner in which people mentally map out and use urban spaces of routes (Lefebvre 1991, p. 38) and relates to how people use these networks in their daily lives. Such routes are subjective as each individual maps his/her own routes and perceives specific landscapes or monuments from a specific point of view (Schmid 2008, pp. 36-37). To examine these, I relied on both personal input as well as those of inhabitants and outsiders. In the former and as a first timer to Dahiya following its rebuilding, I retraced my old routes and visited places I had frequented (mostly relatives' homes that I had not visited since 2006). This however proved difficult as my memory failed me having been away for such a long period and I therefore could not reach specific destinations. Hence, the majority of the information that I gathered came from my informants through interviews and guided tours. In the interviews, I attempted to understand the space and the routes that my interviewees took. I also asked them to compare these routes to the ones they had taken before the 2006 war to understand how the rebuilding process had affected their sense of the area. I also requested that they guide me through their own personal navigation routines while comparing them to my own and to those of outsiders, the majority of whom either stuck to the places that they know or to the peripheries of Dahiya.

Finally, the "lived" space" (spatial practice) is the space that is experienced through "associated images and symbols" (Lefebvre 1991, p. 33). Lived space does not imply actual spaces but is rather concerned with people's perceptions and experiences – and in linking this to the research, it involves how people (both insiders and outsiders) receive the meanings put forth by Hizbullah within Dahiya as a communicative and promotional channel. In exploring the lived spaces and as mentioned above, I toured the area, sat in its restaurants and cafés, enjoyed its food and walked in its streets. I compared prices to sites in central Beirut, paid attention to the menu, the other café visitors and their dress, their manner and their behaviour. Unfortunately, the only thing I was not capable of doing was experiencing the cultural sites as the Rissalat theatre in Dahiya did not have any running exhibitions or plays at the time of my visits. I also relied on interviews – especially with inhabitants – to understand their experiences and perceptions of the area. This allowed me to examine whether they enjoy and understand Dahiya as it is intended to be understood and experienced as well as whether their experiences have been shaped by Hizbullah's efforts at conceiving the area. In parallel - and to understand inhabitants' experiences – the majority of the interviews took place in Dahiya's leisure sites to further my own experiences of it.

3.4 Visual Analysis

Hizbullah produces a plethora of posters to celebrate, commemorate and mark different occasions. However, ʿAshura posters and campaigns by far take center stage and have become an important forum for promoting and communicating both religious and political messages. As such, it is important to study these

posters as sites for promotion in junction with other communicative channels.

Analysing Hizbullah's 'Ashura posters involved first gathering them, an aspect I became worried about following the multiple warnings about the sensitivity of my topic as explored above. I thus resorted to other methods of collection such as Hizbullah's websites and social media accounts. I also contacted a number of archival institutions in Lebanon such as that of Zeina Maasri who launched an online archive of political posters in Lebanon, 'Arab Image Foundation' which archives photographs from the Middle East and the archive department of As-Safir, a prominent newspaper which has since shut down. However, all my attempts proved unfruitful thus highlighting the disregard for the Party's 'Ashura posters and the significance of studying them. My last resort was Hizbullah's media offices and which as the above sections explain, was a smooth process. Following the approval of my topic, I was given the email of Hajj Mohammad Kawtharani, Rissalat's general manager, whereby a simple explanation of my topic was requested. I was then advised to visit the Rissalat offices in the heart of Dahiya where I collected a CD with all the materials that had been produced starting from the 2007 campaign until 2014, including television and radio interviews. I also took to Facebook and YouTube to collect additional material and information. For example, uploaded videos on YouTube - which comprised interviews with designers on the team - proved extremely valuable as the interviewees fully elaborated on the meaning behind each aspect of the campaign and the process of their work.[32] Unfortunately, no posters prior to that were provided no doubt due

---

[32] Such interviews were conducted during the 2013 and 2014 campaigns. There is no evidence of such practices prior to that as I was neither supplied with the interviews nor could I find them online.

to Hizbullah's archival building being targeted during the 2006 war (Maasri 2012, p. 157). The end result was a collection of 10 interviews (3 radio and 7 on television), 4 animations, 49 posters including 14 main posters and 35 secondary posters. To briefly explain, main posters are those that are printed and displayed throughout Dahiya and which carry the main message of each years' campaign. Secondary posters typically emphasise the meanings of the main ones and are mostly exhibited on social media sites such as Facebook and Youtube, although a small number find their way into Dahiya, especially the complex.

To begin the process, I sampled the material and organised the posters according to their sequence of production. Specific themes became evident and following readings of available literature, decided on the mode of analysis: a combination of Roland Barthes' semiotic study and the iconological method. Although the semiotic approach is a more popular method for analysing posters, the method fails to uncover the historical meanings of visuals, which is vital in understanding traditional Shiʿa iconography, and instead studies "media images of the present" (Van Leeuwen 2001, p. 117). Semiotic analysis also does not provide a means to trace the changes that have occurred to the visual motifs and which is required for understanding Hizbullah's aesthetic transformations. And as Don Slater (1983) states, semiology does not emphasise the "social practices, institutions and relations within which visual images are produced and interpreted" (Rose 2001, p. 98) and which is in the case of Hizbullah's ʿAshura posters, necessary for analysing the posters' political dimension. These problems however, are tackled in the iconological method, which although a system originally devised in the sixteenth century for categorising visual motifs of paintings, has since developed into a

method of studying visual materials and has been adopted for political posters and

moving images following its modernisation at the turn of the twentieth century

and further refinement during the 1950s and 1960s (Muller 2011, p. 283). As

Muller (2011) explains, the method uncovers how images "transfer, migrate and

mobilise," specifically with contemporary visuals that have a historical belonging.

Thus, the method has become highly attractive to researchers investigating the

social and political reality under which certain historical visuals were produced (p.

284).

To analyse the posters, I started with noting the implemented changes against a

backdrop of critical political moments. Once the analysis and chapter arguments

became clear, I selected key posters necessary for presenting the analysis: not all

main posters are presented in the chapter but rather key ones that exemplify my

arguments and only a handful of secondary posters are included. As such 10 main

posters are examined and 8 secondary posters are included in the chapter.

Analysing the posters uncovered two dimensions: the political meanings and the

aim behind the aesthetic transformations, the former of which requires an

additional process. Presenting the arguments of the posters' political dimensions

includes the three stages of the iconological method in combination with a

semiotic analysis. I started with the first stage of the iconological method, the pre-

iconographical description, which involves a description of the poster and the

identification of visual forms (Panofsky 2009). However, since the posters are

incorporated in the chapter, I deemed a detailed description as unnecessary. The

second phase involved applying the iconographical analysis, which requires

connecting "artistic motifs and combinations of artistic motifs (compositions) with themes and concepts" (Panofsky 2009, pp. 222-223) and the attribution of particular meanings to visual motifs (Muller 2011, p. 288). However, this stage was, in the case of the posters' political meanings, very much linked to the third stage, the iconological interpretation, which involves "interpretation which arises from synthesis rather than analysis" as well as the "intrinsic meaning or content, consisting the world of 'symbolical' values" (Panofsky 2009, pp. 224, 228). As Panofsky (2009) adds, this phase requires looking closely at a work or groups of works and comparing them to other related documents such as "political, poetical, religious, philosophical, and social tendencies of the personality, period or country under investigation," thereby allowing the researcher to discover "something else." This something else, which the artist might not have been aware of, provides a sense of the religious, social and political attitudes at the time they were created (pp. 223- 227). To do so, I reviewed archives of newspaper articles and YouTube videos of news segments during the time of the posters' creation to understand the context in which the yearly posters were produced and to understand what the motif combinations of the iconographical analysis meant in that specific context. Here, I also drew on Barthes' (1977) elements of "denoted" (the "analogon" of reality) and "connoted" messages, the "second meaning" within a visual entity (pp. 17, 20) and which, I argue, is the political message.

Uncovering the meaning behind the aesthetic transformations required the same approach, albeit with more focus placed on the first two stages. In the chapter, I present a more detailed description of the posters' components and the meanings of each as someone unfamiliar with Shiʿa iconography might not comprehend who

certain figures are or what certain motifs symbolise. Hence, for the iconographic

analysis stage, I resorted to literary sources to recognise the depicted figures

because difficulty typically arises in distinguishing between the portrayed male

participants in the Karbala battle since depictions of different figures tend to draw,

more or less, on the same visual cues and their representation often becomes fixed

(Marzolph 2012, pp. 94, 97). Following that, I once again applied iconological

interpretation in combination with Barthes' connoted level of meaning to uncover

the reason behind these transformations. Indeed, and as chapter 6 will reveal, the

transformations are a result of wider political and social events taking place.

3.5 Content Analysis

Content analysis is the only quantitative method that this thesis adopts. It does so

to examine the content of Mahdi magazines, which are composed of three

publications (Magazines A, B and C) targeting three different age groups, and Taha

television channel. Mahdi publications were collected through a yearly

subscription, delivered monthly to my address in Beirut via Lebanon's postal

service. I subscribed in 2014 at the time of my arrival to Beirut to conduct my

fieldwork and renewed my subscription for another year before returning to

London. These issues were collected whenever I visited home and as such, the

collected magazines are those produced between July 2014 and May 2016.

The initial stage of examining the magazines involved reading them and getting

over my surprise at the aesthetic transformations. At a younger age, I was familiar

with the magazines as my mother had purchased them. At the time, Mahdi

magazine was targeted at only one age group (7-15 years) and a Hizbullah member

would knock on doors to sell it. Once successful, this would confirm the Shiʿa

identity of the household, thus signalling for the man to return on a monthly basis.

However, the magazines went unread – for myself because the graphics at the time

were quite dark and gloomy. I personally got rid of the old versions well before I

started my thesis in one of my cleaning sprees (my own mother had never

discarded of them as they contain Qur'anic versus so I resorted to giving them to

an acquaintance whom I knew would be interested in her grandchildren reading

them), an act I deeply regret as they would have provided valuable analysis.

Following my close reading of the magazines, I started with noting the dominant

themes, which differed between the different addressed groups. For example, and

as chapter 7 will uncover, magazine A, targeted at the ages of 4-7, contains fleeting

presence of the theme of resistance, compared to Magazine C, targeted at ages 13-

17, where resistance makes a strong presence. Hence, analysing the content of the

publications required an examination of each magazine independently to provide

the ground for comparing the issues in an objective manner and to produce

systematic results. This is because comparison involves using the same procedure

in documenting content (Gray et al 2007, pp. 284-285).

Clearly, the objective behind the adoption of content analysis was to count the

magazines' content and detail frequency and assess intensity of themes (Gray et al

2007, pp. 283-285). I also aimed at understanding "the motives, goals, intentions,

or values of [the] author or source" (Gray et al 2007, pp. 286) to allow for an

understanding of how Hizbullah promotes its brand values to a younger audience

and whether the magazines acted as educational and socialising channels in line with the understanding of promotion that the thesis adopts. My aim was to therefore determine "how content sheds light on larger social phenomena" (Gray et al 2007, p. 288) and to understand the ways that the magazines' texts, images and content reflect the wider culture in which they operate in (Rose 2001, p. 55).

Measuring and assessing the magazines' content was not an easy task as is noted by multiple researchers (Gray et al 2007, Kenney 2009, Potter 2009). Indeed, there were multiple elements that I needed to consider such as the research question, choosing the sample, choosing the unit of analysis, category construction and coding rules among others. I initially started with a strict categorisation of information based on religion, resistance, education, etc. but it became clear that the distinctions between themes and topics is not a well-defined and direct one as an entertainment piece also promotes religion, morals, family and/or gender dynamics among others. There was also the issue of deciding whether political information should be considered politics or education, with the decision eventually landing on the latter as the information is relayed in an educational manner (i.e. history and definitions).

Hence, following readings of content analysis, I became aware that I needed a system of coding rules and to specify which elements, messages or texts fit into each category (Potter 2009, p. 35). This system was also one that needed to take into consideration latent messages, the deeper meanings within a text and not just manifest meanings, or explicit meanings (Potter 2009, Gray et al 2007, Kenney 2009), the former of which is a more difficult task that requires trained

researchers and pretesting to ensure its accuracy (Gray et al 2007, p. 286). Indeed, latent meanings are abundant in Mahdi magazines as an article that explores bees defending their hives is understood as a reference to resistance for example. Illustrations also reflect gender expectations as women and girls are illustrated with a headscarf.

As such, the process of deciding on thematic categorisation and coding was the result of relying on "logic and reasoning," reviewing initial category lists and adding others, creating categories after the coding process whereby trial and error and multiple attempts eventually revealed gaps and resorting to available literature and studies that explore the same themes (Kenney 2009, p. 231). This required more than 8 attempts in order to reach a suitable system to which to uncover the breadth and depth of information.

The end result is five main categories of information (entertainment, education, religion, resistance, moral and values and character traits) and a series of sub categories which itself is divided into two categories: the first is format to clarify whether a certain theme is in a story or game format and the second is content to highlight smaller and latent themes in each. These include education, politics, religion, resistance, morals and values, family and gender dynamics and art. To give an overview of the coding, what was examined was whole articles: for example, one whole page and another quarter page piece can both tackle resistance: each was marked as one instance of resistance. Although that does not acknowledge the percentage of resistance that the magazine tackles, attempting to calculate percentages proved to be quite difficult as a result of one article

promoting more than one theme and was thus discarded. As such, even minute

aspects were coded such as the title of the magazine which is marked as religious.

Within sub categories, aspects such as a husband-wife conversation is marked as

family dynamics as it uncovers the traditional relationships that the magazines

promote. A daughter engaging with her mother is also considered as family and

gender dynamics specifically because daughters are with their mothers while boys

are with their fathers.

Still, there was the issue of uncovering content changes as the magazines routinely

experience redesign and content modification. For example, starting from issue

120 (in magazines B and C [see chapter 8]), focus on specific themes increased

while others were discarded. Uncovering these changes was significant to place

these changes within a wider political and religious context. As such, for every

target age, two magazines were chosen prior to the changes and two after these

changes. Thus, the examined issues total 12. The magazines, although chosen

haphazardly, still avoided special issues that covered religious topics (for example,

'Ashura) or political events. This is to ensure that the magazine's regular content

would be the subject of analysis and to provide a consistent topic and method of

analysis.

Examining Taha channel was a less complicated process. I started researching

Taha during my year-long fieldwork in Beirut via television and through internet

live streaming after that. I again examined the channel between 2014 and 2016 –

but extended it slightly further into 2017 - to compare its content with that of

Mahdi magazines during the same time frame. During the initial phase of

observation, I started with noting down – in detail - the different programs and themes, including those during specific religious periods such as Ramadan and 'Ashura among others. However, much like Mahdi magazines, observations on religious periods were discarded as I was interested in regular, daily content that children are subjected to. My study of Taha was intermittent. This is because, on the one hand, the multiple trials of conducting content analysis on Mahdi magazines in turn affected the larger titles and categories when studying Taha to allow for better comparison. On the other hand, uninterrupted examination of the channel proved difficult as the non-stop music, short and fast segments, although effective for children (see chapter 8), was exhausting and made note taking and content analysis a challenging task. However, intermittent analysis ultimately proved effective as it allowed for a closer inspection of content change within the channel's programs.

To conduct content analysis on Taha, rather than elaborate experimentation to reach a suitable thematic categorisation as in the case of Mahdi magazines, I implemented the categories adopted for Mahdi magazines, adding and subtracting titles where necessary as not all the content within the magazines are promoted on Taha (for example, the theme of resistance). This made it a slightly simpler task, although the speed of the segments did not. However, because segments are repeated numerous times a day and on a daily basis, following up on missed sections was made possible.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research methodology. It started with addressing methodological assumptions when researching a group like Hizbullah and argued for a position that takes into account the impact of Eurocentric theories and the specificity of Hizbullah as a Party within the Middle East thereby drawing attention to the problems of calls for de-Westernisation and nativism. To approach the thesis from one end fails to acknowledge the impact of higher education knowledge on the members and cadres of Hizbullah on the one hand and the identity of the Party on the other.

The chapter also presented the research process, drawing attention to the relative ease of interacting with Hizbullah's media offices. My experiences as a female researcher – who interacted with a female member in the media office who deals with all requests regardless of whether the researcher is a male or female - paves the way for the empirical chapters' arguments about the significance of women within Hizbullah circles and which is highlighted in the exploration of 'Ashura rituals (chapter 5).

The final part of the chapter presented the methods that are adopted to examine the different sites that this thesis explores. The section demonstrated the significance of adopting a mixed methods approach to allow for a deeper exploration of each channel, ultimately resulting in a more comprehensive study. The chapter also draws attention to the complexity of applying different methods and the need for adapting them depending on the information, access and aim. For example, the semiotic approach, which is perhaps the most popular method of analysing contemporary advertisements, if used alone, would have presented a

number of gaps in the study of the posters and thus required adaptation and its

adoption alongside the iconological approach. In the end, what stipulated the

methodological approaches were the aims of the research and the available

material and information that were gathered.

However, it is also worth pointing out that while different methods were adopted

for different explorations, applying one method ultimately affected the process of

another. For example, the visual analysis process drew attention to the details that

one should inspect within visual material ultimately impacting the observations

that were noted in the content analysis method of Mahdi magazines. Indeed,

following the visual analysis, uncovering subtle meanings within the magazines

became an easier process.

In conclusion, the chapter has highlighted the adopted methods and their

significance, thus paving the way for presenting the findings in the empirical

chapters. The coming chapters open with the study of Hizbullah's spaces,

specifically Dahiya, which is where the remaining sites that this thesis explores are

situated in or take place within.

Chapter 4:

Hizbullah and Space: *Dahiya as a Communicative Channel*

1. Introduction

On November 14, 2015, Burj al-Barajina, a neighbourhood in Dahiya of the southern suburbs of Beirut, was targeted by ISIS in what was understood to be a reprisal attack on Hizbullah in light of the Party's participation in the Syrian war. Indeed, the mention of Dahiya automatically conjures phrases such as "'Hizbullah-land' or Dahiyat al- [Khomeini]'" (Deeb and Harb 2013, p. 48) as the area is home to Hizbullah's offices, centres and religious institutions and is the place where the Party practices political and territorial hegemony. As such, the area is an interesting and significant site to analyse and understand Hizbullah and the aim of this chapter as it explores Dahiya's communicative role from the period starting from the 2006 rebuilding of the area until the present day.

This chapter explores the Dahiya area in the south of Beirut and analyses it as a communicative and promotional channel and asks about the extent to which it can be considered a branded space. In line with the tasks of the thesis and adopting the notion of communication's expanded scope as put forth by branding literature, the chapter examines how Hizbullah's identity is promoted through both place and space.[33] It adopts Lefebvre's spatial triad of perceived, conceived and lived spaces

---

[33] This thesis adopts Michael De Certeau's (1984), definitions of place and space whereby the former is the physical landscape, the building or the structure. In contrast, space involves meaning, activities and practices. While no two places can exist in the same location, multiple spaces can exist in one place depending on the activity within that place (pp. 117-118). To translate De Certeau's definitions onto Dahiya, the 'Master of Martyr Complex' is a place: a landmark, with walls and a roof. However, during

to uncover the multiple elements involved in identity and meaning making processes and does so by analysing two major sites of study: one involving place as landscape and territory and the other involving space as perceived and lived. In the former, the chapter uncovers how Dahiya is marked as a Hizbullah territory both visually and aurally before focusing on how this is further emphasised by the Party's intense security measures.

The section then moves to examine the significance of the rebuilding of Dahiya following the 2006 war. Following the literature on branded space, the section argues that the rebuilding process has allowed the Party to inscribe resistance onto architecture thereby imprinting a core Party value onto the landscape. The section also uncovers the reform projects that the Party has instigated in Dahiya, including infrastructure, public spaces and visual display guidelines and uncovers their wider communicative impact and function.

The second empirical section explores Dahiya's communicative spaces of leisure and cultural sites. It examines how the Party's values are promoted through lived experiences that are tailored and directed by Hizbullah whereby cultural activities such as plays and music concerts tackle topics related to religion and resistance. And while the area has seen a recent upsurge in cafés and restaurants, these are monitored and emphasise the Party's Muslim identity. This, I argue, shows that while Hizbullah has instigated cultural projects as part of the Party's transformations, it has remained loyal to its core religious value.

'Ashura, it is transformed into a religious space for rituals and mourning and when exhibitions take place, it is transformed into a cultural space.

The study of both sites aims to uncover a larger narrative at play: that of promoting Hizbullah's nationalist discourses, specifically Shiʿa and Lebanese nationalism. I argue that Hizbullah's territorial marking and more importantly, the religious restrictions and cultural projects transform Dahiya into the physical manifestation of the Shiʿa nation, the symbolic utopia, that brings together a large Shiʿa demographic who are steered towards experiences that emphasise Hizbullah's values and meanings. In that, it asserts Harb and Leender's (2005) notion of the 'hala al-islamiyya' not only as a conceptual project but as a physically lived one as Dahiya becomes a physical entity that brings together Shiʿas into collective gathering thus affecting identity on an individual and collective level.

However, I argue that focusing on Dahiya as a Shiʿa territory is limiting as the Party, has in more recent times, utilised the area to emphasise Hizbullah's Lebanese nationalist identity. Reform projects, public spaces and leisure and cultural sites are understood as attempts to modernise the area (and with that improve the reputation of Shiʿas and of Hizbullah). I further argue that such projects aim to link the suburbs to the centre of the city, thereby acting as an extension of it rather than an isolated and "foreign" entity. Similarly, leisure and cultural sites serve to emphasise Dahiya's Lebanese identity through mimicking – to a certain extent – those that are abundant in central Beirut. And while the topics covered in cultural spaces act to promote and disseminate the Party's resistance and religious ideologies, they promote resistance as one necessary to defend the soil, honour and future of Lebanon hence framing resistance battles in Lebanese nationalist terms.

2. Hizbullah and Space

The study of Hizbullah's use of space has garnered significant interest, in part as a result of the spatial dynamics in Lebanon whereby the civil war saw the practice of territorial separation of places based on religio-politico dynamics as well as Hizbullah's adoption of space for religious and resistance aims from the very beginning. These spaces include a range of spatial categories such as large regions within the country such as the South and Bekaa, smaller but equally significant neighbourhood entities such as Dahiya in the southern suburbs of Beirut and even smaller spaces such as exhibitions, museums and other cultural sites and which are held in the larger spaces of Hizbullah regions and neighbourhoods. Based on the literature that is put forth by different theorists and despite the difference in spatial size and the number of people affected by spatial practices in these different units, to a certain extent, they are seemingly adopted by the Party to function in the same manner. Hence, rather than presenting the literature according to spatial category, I present them according to thematic exploration. These include territorial marking, identity formation and conflict preparation.

To begin with, Hizbullah's territorial marking of space has been the subject of study by different scholars (Fawaz 2007, 2014, Fregonese 2009, Deeb and Harb 2013) who trace the Party's hegemonic control, especially in Dahiya to the early stages of its birth. The scholars note Hizbullah's expelling of other Shiʿa groups from Dahiya, specifically Amal, the enforcement of religious restrictions and the policing of the area. These will be explored in detail below but suffice to say that such practices are read as the cultural and social demonstration of both the Party's

political and religious identity as well as its supporting community. Hence, territory is linked to power dynamics as well as identity manifestation of both the Party and its community. As Daniel Meier (2015) explains, Hizbullah's use of the South of Lebanon in its early phases of existence was in an attempt to assert itself as a major political group as Hizbullah juxtaposed itself with Israel.

An exploration of Hizbullah's more recent territorial dynamics is put forth by Fawaz (2014) who examines Hizbullah's reconstruction of Dahiya following the 2006 war with Israel and argues that Hizbullah replicated pre-war Dahiya, along with the problems that had existed in an attempt to mark the area as its own territory with its political aims (Fawaz 2014, p. 923). Similarly, Hiba Bou Akar (2012) explores how Hizbullah facilitated the spread of Shiʿas into Sahra Choueifet, an area in the peripheries of Beirut and which was originally a Druze area. Here, rather than Meier's Israeli 'other,' it is an internal one as Hizbullah's presence in Choueifet is seen as a threat to the identity of the place. For example, Hizbullah's erection of arches that displayed "pictures of martyrs and slogans of resistance" in 2003 were understood by Druze residents as "an intimidating announcement that Sahra Choueifat was a '[Hizbullah] area'" (p. 157). In that, the above scholars view space as reflecting the tensions that exist between groups, be it external ones such as Israel or internal ones of a different religio-politico identity.

The impact of territoriality and Shiʿa grouping within them has also been explored. To Meier (2015), this led to Hizbullah gaining support from the Southern Shiʿa demographic who backed the Party's anti-Israeli resistance activities. On another level, Meier argues that Shiʿa collective gathering allowed Hizbullah to create a

community that shared "common perceptions of a reality, culturally, religiously and politically" (p. 101). The South accordingly becomes a space for the creation of a collective Shi'a identity, which saw resistance as part of this identity, eventually allowing for its transformation into the Party's sanctuary (defined as "a secure base where a group of insurgents is able to organise the political and military infrastructure required for its objectives" [p. 102]). The notion of a sanctuary is further emphasised by Bou Akar who explains the reason and impact of Shi'a spread into Choueifet. With its close proximity to Dahiya and as a natural extension, Bou Akar explains that Choueifet allowed for the collective grouping of Shi'as into what she terms an "enclave" (p. 161) thereby eventually allowing the Party's base to survive. Similarly, Deeb and Harb (2013) explore Hizbullah's role in conceiving of Dahiya and argue that territoriality and Shi'a grouping allows Hizbullah to create and maintain an "Islamic milieu" and which is similar to the 'Resistance society' of Harb and Leenders (2005). Hence, space is understood as a factor for creating and maintaining a collective identity within a sectarian Lebanese state.

While the above scholars explored the impact of regions and neighbourhoods on the Shi'a society and the Party identity, Deeb (2008) extends such arguments onto smaller spatial configurations such as exhibitions and museums. Focusing on cultural sites following the 2000 liberation, Deeb explains that they act as sites that contain "narratives and memories" and which articulate the Party's religious and resistance identity and cultural understandings. Deeb argues that the exhibitions articulate Hizbullah's "particular narrative of Lebanese nationalism and the position of Lebanon in the Middle East vis-a-vis Israel (and by proxy, the United

States)" (p. 370) but also explains that they particularly assert the collective identity of its Shiʿa supporters and community as the Party adopts them as a method to write history. This argument is echoed by Deeb and Harb (2009) who understand cultural sites as places that "inscribe [Hizbullah's] understandings of history and culture in landscape" (p. 204) and as sites that "narrate" history and the ideals of the "resistance society" to which Hizbullah is head of (p. 199). In a similar vein, albeit exploring a different angle, Maasri (2012) unveils how poster displays within spaces and the visual aesthetics that have been more recently adopted have allowed Hizbullah to assert its modernity and organisation and to assert its Lebanese identity. As Maasari notes, since the mid 1990s Hizbullah has stipulated that posters and graphic materials are to be presented in an orderly conduct on "officially designated landscapes and objects such as traffic intersections and lamp poles" on the major streets of the area (p. 176). Such rules are analysed by Maasri as the Party's attempts at countering Dahiya's negative stigma and in presenting the Party in more favourable terms.

Interestingly however, and in light of the focus on the significance of Shiʿa grouping by the above researchers, Deeb and Harb (2013) demonstrate that Hizbullah's spatial practices are not always positively received thus highlighting how they can be problematic. They draw attention to the tensions that exist as inhabitants balance, navigate and experience leisure within the limitations of a religious identity.

Still, despite the rejection of some inhabitants to Hizbullah's territorial control, a number of researchers argue that it is significant to ensure Hizbullah's survival in

upcoming conflicts, both internal and external. This conflict preparation is a key

argument that Fawaz (2009, 2014) makes in her analysis of the rebuilding of

Dahiya following the 2006 war on Lebanon. As the author notes, Hizbullah

replicated pre-war Dahiya, along with the problems that had existed in an attempt

to not disrupt its demographic. In this, the Party secures the gathering of its

supporters in one main area and thus attempts to guarantee their support in

upcoming wars with both Israel and the Lebanese government. Bou Akar

reiterates Fawaz's argument and sees Hizbullah's facilitation of Shiʿa gathering in

Choueifat as a method through which Hizbullah – even during times of peace – was

preparing for a local and regional wars "yet to come" (p. 151).

The existing research on Hizbullah's use of space has clearly focused on

territoriality and identity formation and articulation. And despite the significance

of the above research and the indebtedness of the chapter to their findings and

arguments, there is still much to explore about Hizbullah's spaces, specifically

Dahiya, in terms of how it articulates and promotes the Party's values especially at

a specific time period when Hizbullah's Lebanese identity was brought into

question and which saw Hizbullah's attempts to respond. Prior to that however,

the below section presents the history of the area in an attempt to highlight the

changes that the empirical sections uncover.

3. Dahiya as History

Dahiya's composition of a mainly Shiʿa demographic is a recent one as the area was

historically inhabited mainly by Maronites. This changed with the rapid influx of

Shiʿa inhabitants to the area from the 1950s onwards (Deeb 2006, p. 47) as a result of their deprivation in the South and Bekaa regions (Saad-Ghorayeb 2002, p. 7) and the Israeli attacks aimed at the PLO in the South (Alagha 2006, p. 25). And in 1976, with the start of the Lebanese civil war, the Phalangists drove 100,000 Shiʿas from the Nabaa area, another area in the suburbs, in what Alagha (2006) terms "ethnic cleansing" where they ultimately fled to Dahiya (p. 25). In tandem, Christians emigrated to South America (Deeb 2006, p. 48) or left Dahiya following the division of Beirut into "two antagonistic and religiously homogenous units" (Fawwaz 2007, p. 22). By the late 1990s, Shiʿas composed 70-80 percent of Dahiya's population thereby altering its sectarian makeup (Deeb 2006, p. 48).

Added to religious territorial separation was one based on political differences within the same sect. For example, during the first wave of Shiʿa migration, Dahiya was an Amal protected area. With the birth of Hizbullah and its gradual increase in power, it managed in 1988 to expel Amal fighters (Alagha 2011, p. 155) and dismantled their flags (Deeb and Harb 2013, p. 48). Such practices were common during the civil war as Beirut's territory was redefined by militias who blocked streets, divided neighbourhoods, bordered territories and set up checkpoints and sniper positions. Divisions were sometimes brought about by opposing discourses such as the hostility developed by those around the "Arab/Israeli conflict or the tension between Lebanese or Pan-Arab nationalism" (Fregonese 2009, pp. 311, 314). Hizbullah's hegemonic presence in the late 1980s also saw the closure of "liquor stores, night restaurants, bars, movie houses, and other entertainment considered immoral" in what Fawaz (2007) explains was the cultural and social

"display [of] the political and religious orientation of the community supporting Hizbullah" (p. 22).

With the end of the civil war and the Taef agreement, the blurring and breaking down of territories was not introduced and Beirut remains a "deeply divided city" where categories of "with" and "against" reflect that both physical lines as well as "social, political, and psychological ones" still exist (Bou Akar 2012, p. 153). According to Haddad (2002), the lines mirror the "different values and allegiances" of different spaces and the inhabitants that occupy them (p. 292). In all this, Dahiya becomes Hizbullah's territorial space in a city that is home to other political and religious territories whereby multiple political parties attempt to craft a place that asserts political, religious, cultural and social identity. These "territorial arrangements," along with political ones, have been a method through which modern Lebanon has achieved sectarian co-existence (p. 291). With each group dominating a specific territory, members of the group or sect could gather together and for the Shiʿas at least, this allowed for the development of a collective consciousness and national Shiʿa identity (Saad-Ghorayeb 2002, Alagha 2006). Yet, with the sense of safety for the 'us' amongst one's own comes the notion of "domination and marginalisation" for the 'other' that occurs in spaces of political activity (Chowdhury 2011, p. 671) and which is evident in Hizbullah expelling Amal fighters – but not supporters - from Dahiya.

Still, it is incorrect to frame Dahiya as today composed of a single Shiʿa demographic. Instead, Dahiya should be understood in line with Massey's (1993) understanding of the 'progressive sense of place' that brings together multiple

ethnicities and characters and which render the area "absolutely *not* a seamless, coherent identity, a single sense of place which everyone shares" (emphasis my own) (p. 66). Massey's understanding of place also acknowledges the links of a place to "places beyond" (Rembold and Carrier 2011, p. 365) as she argues that spaces are not static, do not have to have divisional boundaries and do not contain within them single identities (Massey 1993, pp. 68-69).

Indeed, the majority of Dahiya's Shiʿa inhabitants are originally from the South and Bekaa, thereby resulting in strong links between Dahiya and both regions and which are emphasised by the constant trips to the villages. Furthermore, Dahiya maintains links to Iran as the area is – on specific occasions - filled with images of Khomeini and Khamenei. The link is also evident in cultural activities that take place in Dahiya and which include Iranian films and exhibitions about Iranian figures such as Khomeini.

And although Dahiya is inhabited by a hegemonic religious and political religious group, it is wrong to frame the area as composed of a *single* religious and political one or to assume that everyone feels the same way about it. For example, although Dahiya has a high percentage of Shiʿas, it still is home to Maronites, Sunnis and refugees such as Palestinians, Iraqis and Syrians. It is composed of multiple neighbourhoods of "different social, economic and urban histories" (Harb 2009, p. 71) and Shiʿas in the area are themselves of different classes, social and educational levels and do not necessarily adopt Iran's wilayat al fakih. Also, not all of Dahiya's Shiʿas are religiously practicing or accept the cultural practices within it. More importantly, Dahiya houses a large number of Amal supporters and

members who have gained increasing power and presence following the

agreement between the two parties in more recent times.

Still, Hizbullah's presence and the large Shi'a demographic in Dahiya has resulted

in a negative stigma of the area as "inhabited by poor squatters and refugees who

did not appreciate urbanity." In contrast, central Beirut has throughout been

promoted as the "[centre] of urban modernity, high culture, and cosmopolitanism"

(Deeb and Harb 2013, p. 47). This view is, according to Maasri (2012), part of a

wider "derogatory discourse" on all Shi'as as being "'poor', 'backward' and 'dirty'"

and which is a result of their historical economic and political status and

marginalisation. And although Shi'as have risen socially, economically and

politically, Maasri notes that this stigma still persists, "particularly when linked to

Hizbullah's constituency" (p. 177). As such, Dahiya, similar to Shi'as' reputation,

has not escaped such stigmas. In fact, until Hizbullah's popularity in 2000, "the

[Shi'a] ghetto" was described as chaotic, overcrowded, poor and illegal in terms of

construction (Deeb 2006, Deeb and Harb 2013). Following the 2005 assassination

of Hariri and the increased Sunni/Shi'a sectarian conflicts, such perceptions again

escalated and more so following the 2006 war as is clear in a number of points

within the '100 reasons' email. These include: 'We Love Verdun (Not Harit Hrek),'

'We Do Not Decorate Our Streets And Roads With Pictures Of Dead Scary Foreign

Religious Leaders (Khomeini),' 'Our Regions Didn't Get Bombed In The July War

That Hassan Brought Upon Us,' 'Biel Not 'Al Mourabba' Al Amni,'[34] 'Ouzai Smells

---

[34] Biel is in posh, upscale area in Downtown Beirut and 'Al Mourabba['] Al Amni is the security zone in Dahiya.

Like Shit.'[35] Hence, Dahiya is separated and differentiated from the city on a number of levels. I argue that this stigma has however, provided one of the guiding forces for much of Hizbullah's activities within Dahiya and which involves both the physical landscape and the leisure and cultural sites.

Dahiya is thus an interesting and complex entity with multiple layers to examine. As the coming empirical sections will uncover, it acts as a site through which to understand Hizbullah's values, how the Party functions within space and how Dahiya acts as a promotional entity. It is the task of the coming sections to present the findings that were recorded during an intermittent period of four years and which involved visiting the area and immersing myself in the lived experiences as well as multiple interviews with inhabitants, outsiders and with Hajj Ali Daher, an official Hizbullah member responsible for the Party's cultural projects and poster display. The next sections start with Dahiya as a conceived space and the manner through which Hizbullah creates it physically, visually and aurally. It examines Dahiya's communicative landscape and the manner through which it is territorially marked, the rebuilding of the area following the 2006 war and the improvements that have been instigated before exploring the area's leisure and cultural sites. Throughout, it draws on Lefebvre's spatial triad to uncover Hizbullah's management of the multiple spaces and highlights the applicability and limits of the term 'branded space.'

4. The Communicative Landscape

---

[35] Ouzai, is of a mostly Shiʿa demographic and is known for being less privileged.

4.1 Territorial Marking

Hizbullah's presence and territorial control of Dahiya was, from the very beginning, reflected through the landscape. In addition to the establishment of Hizbullah's official offices and headquarters as noted above, religious landmarks such as mosques and husseiniyyas are abundant – and which sound the adan, the call for prayers, daily. Simultaneously, streets and landmarks were named or renamed to reflect Hizbullah's presence. For example, streets such as 'Sayyed Hadi Nasrullah,' 'Abbas al-Musawi,' and 'Ragheb Harb' along with 'Rawdat al Chahidayn' cemetery ('the Garden of the Two Martyrs') and the 'Master of Martyr Complex' are a small sample of the Party affiliated place names[36] and which manage to promote the area as a religious and resistance one affiliated to Hizbullah.

This territorial marking is further increased by displayed flags, posters and murals and which were adopted early on by Hizbullah to assert its control - most evident in the dismantling of Amal flags. In fact, Hizbullah flags, posters of Nasrullah, Khomeini, Khamenei, a number of significant Hizbullah members such as Abbas al-Musawi and Ragheb Harb and the many Party martyrs typically fill the streets. In addition, decorations during Ramadan and the birth of the Prophet and of Imams, commemorative 'Ashura posters and those to celebrate or commemorate the lives and deaths of Imams are displayed during specific occasions. Such visual materials

---

[36] Hadi Nasrullah is Sayyed Nasrullah's martyred son, Abbas al-Musawi is the former secretary general of Hizbullah, Ragheb Harb was Muslim cleric known for leading regional resistance against Israel, Rawdat al Chahidayn is in reference of Imam Hasan and Hussein and the 'Master of Martyr' complex is in reference to Imam Hussein.

and architectural places then, based on Quinn (1994) mark, organise and reflect Hizbullah's territorial control (p. 10) and the Muslim and Shiʿa identity of Dahiya.

But the marking of territory is not just about asserting control over a landscape but also involves communicating values, identity and a mission and act as a means of "self-representation" in much the same way that a company logo does (Quinn 1994, pp. 4, 127). It is also under this understanding that elements in a branded space function whereby "designed materials and environments [] convey values and [] construct 'experiences'" (Moor 2007, p. 65). But although the literature on branded space focuses on visual aspects within space such as architecture (see below), interiors and spatial arrangement (van Marrewijk and Broos 2012), the findings of this chapter suggest that one should move beyond the visual landscape to include the aural one within territorial markings and promotional processes. For example, posters along with husseiniyyas, which are Shiʿa spaces, articulate the Party's Shiʿa identity visually while place names, mosques and husseiniyyas verbally articulate. In the last, this is because the Shiʿa adan differs from the Sunni one as a result of an added phrase in reference to Imam Ali. The images of Iranian figures reflect the links to Iran both religiously and politically thus emphasising Massey's understanding of space. On the other hand, posters and murals of martyrs imprint the resistance identity onto the landscape as does the Hizbullah flag whose logo[37] echoes the intertwining of religion and politics. Similarly, one

---

[37] The name Hizbullah was chosen intentionally from a verse in the Qurʾan that states: 'The party of Allah, they are victorious'. This choice of name in itself promotes the party as a Muslim one, appealing mostly to the Shiʿas of Lebanon and promoting its anti-Israeli operations as a jihad in the path of God (Khatib 2012, p. 13). The same strategy is repeated in the logo itself whereby 'Hizbullah' is written with an arm carrying a rifle extending from the text. Initially, 'the Islamic Revolution in Lebanon' was written at the bottom and 'the party of Allah, they are victorious' on top, both serving as a reminder of the religious affiliation of the Party to Iran. Yet, with the changes in Hizbullah's political orientations in the

cannot overlook the significance of ʿAshura rituals (chapter 5) which gather thousands of Shiʿas who on the tenth day, fill the streets while chanting their allegiance to Hussein, Nasrullah and Hizbullah (chapter 5). There are also other aspects at play such as shop names, women in scarfs and chadors and images of Nasrullah and of Shiʿa Imams inside homes and shops. Additionally, many of the restaurants and cafés name dishes that reflect resistance, mostly names of new weaponry that the Party has acquired such as Raad - the name of rockets that Hizbullah fired at Israel during the 2006 war - for a traditional bean dish. This practice started following the end of the war where inhabitants were still ecstatic with the Party's 'Divine Victory' and has survived until today, albeit to a much lesser extent. Although these are not instigated by the Party but rather by inhabitants, they emphasise inhabitants' adoption of the Party's religious and resistance ideologies. Hence, each element, according to Quinn's rhetoric as well as branded space literature, acts as a symbol that communicates an aspect of the Party's character – if not more. When combined together, they create a space loaded with meaning and religio-politico identity.

Interestingly, in an interview conducted in April 2016 with Hajj Ali Daher, he seemingly does not view the display of flags, posters or other visual materials as territorial marking. Needless to say, they are read as such by individuals and group who oppose the Party. This is evident when Hajj Daher recalls a specific incident that happened with regards to a large poster of Nasrullah:

1990s, its decision to enter the Lebanese political scene, and with the attempts to produce a Lebanese image, Hizbullah changed the bottom phrase to 'Islamic Resistance in Lebanon', although other aspects of the logo were retained (Maasari 2012, p. 174). As such, the logo not only promotes the Party's religious and resistance ideologies but also marks the changes within its discourse.

... We displayed a really big image of Sayyed Nasrullah on the new airport

road -[38] that building when you're coming from the airport... it's the biggest

building there which usually displays commercial ads. After the 2006 war...

the poster is the one with his signature and his armed raised high... a big

image... one politician... I don't want to name him at the time started causing

problems over it... asking why, how and I don't know what...

But analysing the manifestation of identity in Dahiya as a place involves

understanding what is not exhibited as much as what is. For example, pubs and

clubs, which are abundant in central Beirut, are non-existent in Dahiya. Also,

nowhere are there advertisements for what is considered offensive, controversial

or taboo products such as gender hygiene or sex related ads.[39] The Party then pays

close attention to the sensibility of displayed graphics thereby affirming

Hizbullah's attempts to visually create a space in line with their own religious

identity – and one that pays attention to the religious sensitivities of Dahiya's

inhabitants.[40] Simultaneously, such practices differentiate Dahiya from other areas

of Beirut, particularly those that do not abide by religious doctrines and which

allow for alcohol and "taboo" ads. In effect, Hizbullah then differentiates itself from

---

[38] The new airport road is a highway that links the airport to central Beirut and thus, the billboards exhibited there are viewed by the vast majority of the Lebanese population and visitors. It's in close proximity to Dahiya and of a Shiʿa demographic.
[39] See Farah and Samad (2014) for an analysis of taboo advertisements in Lebanon and the different reception to ads in Christian and Muslim areas.
[40] It is unclear how Hizbullah controls the display of advertisements in Dahiya but it is safe to assume that they require approval from the municipality and which in Dahiya is controlled by a Hizbullah member.

other religio-politico parties that control different areas in Beirut, hence demonstrating a core branding practice.

4.2 Security Measures

Hizbullah's territorial marking is less obvious but still evident in aspects which relate to security and control. To begin with, cameras are perched on the majority of intersections. Following ISIS attacks on Dahiya, check points were instigated both by the Lebanese army and Hizbullah and around key Hizbullah offices such as al-Manar, large stone and metal structures were added in case of an attack. I also regularly noticed young men on motorcycles peeping into cars to check its contents. In fact, Hizbullah members are known to roam the streets of Dahiya at all times of the day and night and keep a close look on activities. They approach anyone taking photographs in the area, skim through their photos and delete anything suspicious or even arrest them if they are suspected of any spy activities. The prohibition on photography (outdoors and of landmarks only rather than, for example, of friends taking pictures when together in a café) is a rule that both inhabitants and outsiders are aware of and thus refrain from doing. For example, Mohammad, an informant and a Dahiya resident who was kind enough to take a photograph that he thought might be helpful for my research, was with his mother who panicked and exclaimed 'halla' byehibsouna ya Mohammad' (they will arrest us now Mohammad).

Hizbullah members also follow around any 'outsider' who behaves somewhat suspiciously. Rasha, an informant, albeit one who is a stranger to Dahiya, once got

lost in Hayy il Sillom, a run-down area and one of the poorer neighbourhoods with a famously unsafe reputation. After circling the same streets for almost an hour and noticing that she was being followed by a man on a motorcycle, Rasha narrates that she broke down in tears as she became frustrated. It was then that she was approached by the same man who identified himself as a Hizbullah member and who led her to a familiar area when she explained that she was lost.

Security measures sometimes go by unnoticed since Hizbullah members are increasingly hard to identify. While some are instantly recognisable (for example, traffic wardens and those carrying walkie talkies), the majority wear regular day-to-day attire. As Rana, another informant, explains, in recent times Hizbullah's members are known to wear hip youngster clothing with spiky hair to fit in with the younger Dahiya generation. In fact, the young men that I noticed peering into cars were in casual jeans and T-shirts. Interestingly, Rana states that Hizbullah members "know everything" and are "everywhere" in Dahiya and come out "from under the ground" when there is a security alert or problem.

Such a reputation is further enhanced through Hizbullah's updating of inhabitant profiles. As Rana and Fadi, a male informant, confirm, Hizbullah members have knocked on their doors on a yearly basis. Rana jokes that

> They've come to our house a couple of times now. The first time, my mother
> opened the door and invited them in. They stayed around ten minutes, asking
> what my father does, his car number, family member names… stuff like that.
> One had all the information in front of him and was just ticking boxes. I mean,

I found it weird. If they have all the info, why do they ask us for them? The second time, I was the one to open the door. I joked when he started to ask the questions. I told him the answers and asked him if it matches the answers that he has.

Hizbullah also has a say in official police procedures in Dahiya. For example, Hani explains that there is a high degree of coordination that takes place between the government police and Hizbullah. As he narrates, after losing his wallet, he visited his area's police station and communicated with a government officer. Next to him was a civilian in regular clothing, whom he clarifies that knowledgeable to all, is a Hizbullah member who is also involved in whatever cases that come forward. The same coordination takes place in all security matters such as thefts and burglaries. Rana slightly contradicts this narrative and explains that although those who have experienced theft do go to police stations to file reports, it is Hizbullah members that actually follow up on cases, especially if the inhabitant is a supporter.[41] Hence, while above sections explored how Dahiya is visually and aurally marked as a Hizbullah territory, this section further emphasises Hizbullah's territorial control through the security measures that it instigates and which affect inhabitants more than outsiders. These acts are of course related to Hizbullah's power dynamics within Dahiya and to Hizbullah's ability to monitor and secure the area from external threat. However, at specific times, the Party's activities intentionally act as a means to affirm and promote Hizbullah's power to inhabitants. Or else, why

---

[41] This was said as an example of how government institutions are corrupt and how Hizbullah is the one making positive changes within the area.

would party members knock on inhabitant houses when they already have the information?

4.3 Rebuilding Dahiya

As mentioned in chapter 1, the 2006 war on Lebanon resulted in massive destruction. In Dahiya, public infrastructure such as roads and bridges were severely damaged (Fawaz 2014, p. 924) and 1,232 buildings which housed approximately 30,000 residential units as well as 1,600 commercial ones were destroyed (Alamuddin 2010, p. 46).

The first day of the ceasefire saw Sayyed Nasrullah's promise to rebuild the destroyed homes in the multiple targeted areas and to Dahiya's inhabitants, he pledged that the Party would rebuild it "more beautiful than it was" (Cited in Fawaz 2014, p. 922). To do so, Hizbullah, having blocked reconstruction propositions from the government that included upgrading plans, established Waad, a private agency which literally means 'promise' in refection of Nasrullah's promise to rebuild. Hizbullah was quick to appoint architects to develop a reconstruction plan under strict rules to "not [] change the fabric, density, and general [organisation] of the neighbourhood" and to reproduce the destroyed Dahiya in an attempt to avoid "dedensification of the area" (Fawaz 2007, p. 23). The plan also included the observation of the pre-war Dahiya in terms of building location, dimensions, height and spatial distribution (Fawaz 2007, Harb and Fawaz 2010) as well as the swift return of residents to their homes (Alamuddin 2010, p. 53). So insistent was Hizbullah on replicating pre-war Dahiya that the proposal of

relocating building entrances from the main street to another façade was rejected as that would change "the typology of the buildings" (Alamuddin 2010, p. 60). As such, the multiple problems that existed prior to the war were not solved and which include traffic congestion, the lack of pedestrian mobility and public spaces, poor living conditions such as lack of sunlight and public spaces, density of buildings and dark alleys (Fawaz 2014, p. 924). The agency did however tackle "vehicular accessibility and street alignments, in line with the local professional practice of planning" (Fawaz 2009, p. 328-329) and rebuilt apartments with better construction materials, finishes and services (Fawaz 2014, p. 933).

The act of reconstruction and the swift return of inhabitants has been analysed as an act of defiance and victory by Harb and Fawaz (2010) and Alamuddin (2010). In addition, Hizbullah's exact replication is understood as necessary for the Party in its attempts to mark Haret Hreik as its own territory with its political aims (Fawaz 2014, p. 923). The Waad project and its refusal of de-densification allowed Hizbullah to maintain the Shiʿa base that it has throughout enjoyed and which resettlement would have shaken up (Fawaz 2009, p. 329). It also allowed the Party to control the practices in the area, to "connect them with a supra-national Islamic political project" and to maintain its role as a service provider (Fawaz 2009, p. 331). In this, Hizbullah would seal its future within the area and the support of the Shiʿa inhabitants in future battles with both Israel and the Lebanese government - hence asserting Bou Akar's (2012) analysis of Sahra Choueifat's role. Thus, rather than seeking "financial capital", the Party sought "a different (political) capital" (Fawaz 2009, p. 329).

Fawaz's analysis is valuable but I argue that there is another prism through which to understand Hizbullah's rebuilding process: communication and space branding. It is this prism that explains why Hizbullah would choose to create an exact replica of pre-war Dahiya when minor changes such as relocating building entrances would have improved certain aspects of the area while maintaining the political demographic capital. But to understand this requires a review of why Israel attacked Dahiya with such force, which relates back to the symbolic significance of Dahiya as place.

With the start of the war on Lebanon, Israel stated that its aim was to wipe away Hizbullah's presence. As Leach (2002) explains, following the fall of the Nazi regime, eradication of "traces of the Iron Curtain around Berlin," in what is known as the 'Berlin Wall syndrome,' were implemented in an attempt to de-Nazify the spaces and erase any previous associations to Nazism, both physically and in the memories of people (pp. 81-83). As the author adds

> To attack a monument associated with a particular regime is to attack – symbolically – the regime itself. To eradicate the traces of a certain existence somehow helps to erase the memory of that existence. (p. 84)

Thus, the physicality of architecture serves to confirm the political identity of place. And while Hizbullah's offices are not the grand architectural landmarks of the Nazi propaganda regime but are rather tucked away in buildings, in line with Leach (2002), they become identified as a 'Hizbullah building' because Hizbullah activities take place in them. Thus, it seems that Israel's targeting of Hizbullah

territories is not only to inflict human casualties within Hizbullah lines, to destroy the Party's weaponry stashes and to punish those who support the Party but also to erase Hizbullah's presence, both physically and mentally from them. Thus, at the "conceiving" level of Lefebvre's triad (described in the methodology chapter), through conceiving Dahiya and recreating it exactly as it was, Hizbullah was rebuilding and recreating its presence and memory within these places since "monuments have an important potential role in keeping alive the memories – the lessons – of the past" (Leach 2002, p. 84). And through the exact replication of the area, Hizbullah was allowing for the previous experiences of perceived spaces as the mapping of Dahiya remained unchanged. Such an analysis is evident in the words of the chief architect of the project who is said to have insisted that the population's "'memory of place'" is the top priority in the rebuilding process (Cited in Fawaz 2014, p. 923). In replicating Dahiya then, it is as if the area was never destroyed and the Party's presence within it never wavered. Indeed, within my own fieldwork in Dahiya, and having been quite familiar with the area prior to its destruction, I needed to tour the area with an acquaintance who pointed out the buildings that had been rebuilt as it is difficult to do so today: the buildings are so much part of the landscape, already slightly discolored after more than ten years and existing within a landscape of dense electricity wires and a bubbly and lively lived space.

The rebuilding of Dahiya also becomes a form of symbolic victory over the enemy not only through the swift return of dwellers to their homes as Fawaz (2009, 2014) argues but also through inscribing resistance, a core Party value, onto architecture. Such an argument finds a place in the literature on branded space

which focuses on the "intimate relationship" that has developed between branding and architecture whereby architects utilise branding to express identity, communicate cultural values and "create affirmative spaces that prompt memories, discoveries, and desires" (Klingmann 2007, pp. 3-4). Similarly, Crilley (1993) argues that architecture has evolved into a communicative text, a readable "gigantic outdoor advertisement[]" which, in line with William's understanding of advertisements, "are culturally encoded with popular meanings" (p. 236) that display "already resonant architectural symbolism" (p. 237) such as existing motifs onto building surfaces to – in the words of Venturi, "a leading theorist-practitioner of postmodernism" – transform "the built environment into a 'billboard' displaying the images and meanings selected by the architects" (p. 236). But while branded space literature focuses on motifs, materials and design, resistance is communicated through another method, one which involves the symbolic significance of architecture.

Savitch (2008) who explores the effects that terrorist attacks reaped on cities such as New York during 9/11, studies the ways in which a city recovers and the extent to which it does so. These include the rebuilding of infrastructure, the resurge of the economy and tourism, strength of the social fabric and citizenry optimism (pp. 153-160). Hence, the recovering of a city acts as a form of resistance and which in Dahiya, is further emphasised not only through the rebuilding but also in Hizbullah's continued presence in the area and amongst the people and in the Party's ability to guarantee that previous neighbourly relations - and which heighten attachments to the neighbourhoods and spaces that they inhabit (Hipp 2009, p. 416) - were maintained. By recreating Dahiya, Hizbullah confirmed that

resistance is not only through martyrdom but also through space and memory. The buildings are therefore not just architectural places but are also defiant structures, standing erect where they always were as if they were never destroyed as resistance – core to Hizbullah's identity - becomes inscribed in buildings, not through visual elements but through the city operating in the manner it always had prior to the war and my inability to specify which buildings had been destroyed. In that, Dahiya itself becomes an element of resistance through the very act of replication of places as its buildings become the symbolic form of resistance.

This analysis of course does not occur in vacuum. For as Peter Rummel, president of the Disney Design and Development Company, explains, understanding the narrative of architecture "goes beyond architecture" to include the context, the story (Klingmann 2007, p. 71). In other words, without understanding Hizbullah's identity and hegemonic presence in Dahiya, the rebuilding process is merely the recreation of a place in such a way that would guarantee the return of residents within the shortest period and with the least amount of trouble and architectural design process. Understanding both however allows for the buildings to act as communicative structures in terms of the resistance identity of the Party. Dahiya's buildings then are not communicative in the same way that buildings that focus on facades, materials and marginaliss are (See Gottdiener [2001] and Riewoldt [2002]). Rather, the communicative aspect of the rebuilt Dahiya is in the connotative level and which requires understanding the social context (Gottdiener 2001, p. 9).

4.4 Attending to the Landscape

Chapter 1 presented some of the reform projects that Hizbullah has initiated in Dahiya and beyond and explained their role in garnering Party support. Such projects, which increased following the Party's decision to participate in the Lebanese parliamentary elections in 1992, along with the building of schools, dispensaries, hospitals, roads and highways are understood by Harb (2009) as attempts to modernise the peripheries of the city (p. 73). This section extends Harb's point to argue that they could also be understood as Hizbullah's attempts to create a place that, contrary to what many stigmatise it, is not a closed territory but rather one with open links to multiple areas. With that, Dahiya becomes an extension of the city rather than separated from it, both physically and more significantly, in terms of reputation especially at a time when Hizbullah needed to emphasise that it is not separate from the state following its participation in the Syrian war.

Hizbullah's place building projects are today still a common practice: in 2015, road works were taking place in what a number of residents explained is a project for instating electricity from Iran 24/7;[42] and following the garbage collection crisis during the summer of 2015, Hizbullah took up the task of dispensing Dahiya's waste. In fact, when central Beirut, including the posh areas such as Verdun, was reeking, Dahiya was garbage free for a number of months before the problem became manifest. As Zeina, an informant and a Dahiya resident, gloated in an interview during the first stages of the crisis, there was not a single trash site in

---

[42] Dahiya has one of the worst electricity connections. In many areas, electricity is only available for three hours a day.

Dahiya as Hizbullah were doing an even better job than Sukleen, Lebanon's official

garbage collection company. Hence, we see a quintessential example of how

Lefevre's notion of the conceiving of space should take into consideration aspects

beyond the physical structures and mapping of areas. Equally significant, it

demonstrates Hizbullah's attempts at countering the negative stereotypes of

Dahiya that frame the area as stinking (see point 97 of Appendix A) and with that,

improve the area's reputation and in turn, that of Shi'as (who are framed in the

100 reasons email as lacking personal hygiene [see numbers 5 and 28 of Appendix

A) and of Hizbullah.

Other public projects also include that which relates to public spaces such as parks

and green spaces in spite of the lack of empty land slots.[43] The 'parks' thus tend to

be converted small lots in between buildings. Yet, they are similar to those in

central Beirut whereby many are relatively of the same spatial surface with the

Bashoura Square in the heart of Beirut comprising a mere 200(m2). Central Beirut

parks are also in high-density areas and are tucked between buildings.[44] Thus,

Dahiya's public spaces are identical to those in modern and upscale central Beirut

and mimic their spatial configuration. Interestingly however, a number of Dahiya's

public spaces, such as al-Sayyeda al-Hawra' garden in Rweis, are open to women

and children only[45] thereby revealing Hizbullah's attempts at creating places that

link the suburbs to the city in terms of modernity and the landscape while again

---

[43] Fawaz (2009) notes that these projects have a long history as since different projects including landscaping, parking management and providing public spaces have throughout been provided in Dahiya by the Party (pp. 324-325).

[44] See http://beirutgreenguide.com for a list of the 'parks' in central Beirut along with their size and location. Last accessed March 19, 2017.

[45] http://www.media.alahednews.com.lb/galldetails.php?items=12&cid=559. Last accessed December 19, 2015.

attending to the specificity of Dahiya's religious inhabitants and their own religious values.

Among other reform projects are those involving the construction of more high end buildings in the area, the instating of Hizbullah wardens on multiple intersections within Dahiya, the introduction of traffic lights in 2009 by the city's municipality (funded by the government and headed by a Hizbullah member) and the maintenance of clean streets among others. While such practices can be understood as attempts to maintain the approval of Dahiya's demographic and perhaps residents of other religious backgrounds who also vote in Dahiya's municipality, one should perhaps also examine them through the lens of branded space literature. Indeed, within space branding research, there has been much focus on the significance of place such as creating a livable environment (Ooi 2011), improving a place's facilities, infrastructure (Moor 2011), architecture and buildings (Moor 2007, Julier 2011) and the "material facets" (Julier 2011, p. 218) of streets, public art and visual and cultural material (Moor 2007), all of which are seen as impacting a city's narrative and of playing a major part in affecting inhabitants' feelings and perceptions as well as outsiders' views (Moor 2007, pp. 75-76). Hence, in engaging in the above activities and despite any strong indication that Hizbullah draws on or utilises branding generally, one can argue that the Party attempts to brand Dahiya as a Hizbullah space whereby the Party not only manifests its identity within the landscape but also takes into consideration practicality and livability and the element of attachment and positive feeling to the space, both of which are emphasised in space branding projects.

Still, despite the significance of these aspects, the last point, relating to the cleanliness of the streets, deserves much attention.

4.4.1 Modernising the Visual Landscape

Perhaps one of the most significant and earliest reform projects that Hizbullah has instigated is that which relates to visual material display and which Maasri (2012) explores in detail as noted above. However, display reform initiatives have further increased in more recent times and understood in the context of other projects, emphasise the new methods that Hizbullah has adopted to appeal to a wider Lebanese audience. Indeed, during my yearlong fieldwork and multiple visits to Dahiya thereafter, not a single poster or flag was displayed except at the boundary of the entrance to the Hadi Nasrullah road and of course, during religious occasions such as Ramadan and ʿAshura among others.[46] In an interview, Hajj Daher explains that this is an aspect that he has been attempting to maintain. As he elaborates:

> We deal with municipalities in what we believe is beautifying the area. I am
> against haphazard images. With time, Sarah, these turn into visual garbage.
> Our work at Rissalat, in collaboration with the municipality and those
> working on the ground, is to clean… the environment we live in has to be
> clean and organised… you put up a piece of metal with an image on it, after 1-
> 2 years, it rusts and turns into garbage. That is why, a couple of years ago, I

---

[46] The only exception was an image of a martyr that was displayed in one of the small and dark alleys of the area.

launched an initiatve called 'taʿcheeb il basari'- process of cleaning. What is 'taʿcheeb il basari'? It means anything related to billboards, flex, metal, visual displays that have become old... go remove them or else it becomes garbage... even if it's an image or symbol. I am with the idea of locating an area for these campaigns. That is why, 90% of our campaigns on billboards, bridges, etc., we are dealing with companies. Why? One, it gets better coverage over areas. Two, after the end of the campaign, they remove them. I don't display in a haphazard way. Even the cleaning process, we are dedicated to it. If there is a religious occasion, a political occasion, I display visuals for that celebration. If there isn't, why would I want to cause visual chaos for people with constant posters and visuals.

Hajj Daher's words are, without doubt, noted by the general public - at least by Dahiya's residents. Following the 2016 ʿAshura commemorations, all the posters that were created for the occasion were taken down in a mere two days despite their abundance - an act that was hailed on Twitter by those who witnessed the cleaning process from their balconies. Indeed, Dahiya's streets were cleared not just of the displayed graphics but also of all the empty bottles and garbage left behind by the rally participants.

In such practices, while visual materials' content reflects Hizbullah's religio-politico identity and mark Dahiya as a Hizbullah territory when displayed, the act of dismantling them promotes an image of cleanliness of the area and in doing that, counters Dahiya's negative stigma and symbolically links the area to central Beirut which is of a better reputation in terms of hygiene. Interestingly, it should be noted

that Hajj Daher's efforts came in conjunction with the agreement in 2015 between political parties to dismantle all political posters within central Beirut in an attempt to minimise the growing sectarian and political tensions among the public. While Dahiya was exempt from the agreement, we see Hizbullah implementing it except in specific occasions. In that, and combined with the above mentioned activities, Dahiya is further linked to Beirut, not just physically but also through abiding by the same practices that the nation's capital abides by. On a more significant level, one should view the dismantling of the posters at a time when Hizbullah's Lebanese identity was questioned as a result of their participation in the Syrian war. By dismantling the flags, posters and billboards, I argue that Hizbullah was attempting to utilise Dahiya to emphasise its Lebanese nationalist identity rather than being a foreign entity that is loyal to Iran first and foremost and whose own interest came first. In that, Dahiya is not the physical manifestation of a "state within a state" but part and parcel of the Lebanese state in the many ways through which it operates. To highlight another example, a number of years ago, Hizbullah purchased St. George Hospital in Dahiya and the hospital is now run by Hizbullah employees - including those in chadors - without having changed the name of the institution. While this might be analysed as part of the Hizbullah's infitah, it can also be understood as asserting Hizbullah's Lebanese identity and Dahiya's openness to all faiths rather than an exclusive Shiʿa identity.

But there is another worthy aspect to the dismantling of posters. One can argue that such a practice indeed identifies Dahiya as a Hizbullah stronghold so much so that there is no longer the need for graphic material to constantly assert that. Thus, there is no need – to borrow from Quinn (1994) – for the flags or posters to act as

"a landmark or orientation device" (p. 9) for the landscape already functions as such. In fact, with the display of graphic materials on special occasions only, they gain more significance: rather than for the flags to go by unnoticed and wave "unflaggingly" (Billig 1995, p. 41), their display when needed adds fever to the cause and in turn, flaggingly assert and imprint the Party's identity – especially when analysed within the context of the occasion that is celebrated or commemorated and which typically relates to religious and/or resistance events. This is very much the case during ʿAshura of 2016 when Saudi jets attacked a mourning gathering in Yemen, killing a large number of people. In the masira that took place a few days later, posters condemned the atrocities and called for solidarity with the oppressed people of Yemen (see chapter 5). With that, Dahiya was transformed into a space that promoted Hizbullah and the area as an anti-oppressive one as the inscription of such meanings were evident onto the space.

So far, I have explored multiple aspects of how Hizbullah conceives of Dahiya and demonstrated that this occurs not merely through places and architecture but also through the aural landscape and other sensory elements such as smell as is evident in the case of the garbage crisis. I have also examined how the conceiving of Dahiya following the 2006 war allowed for the same perceived routes that inhabitants had previously enjoyed. The above sections also drew on the literature on branded space to examine how Dahiya fits into space branding literature and practices. It extended such practices to include other factors and in doing that, demonstrated that there is much in Dahiya's landscape that promotes Hizbullah's identity: from the marking of territory to the architectural buildings, each place element within Dahiya acts to intentionally promote the religious, political and resistance values

and to present the Party and its space as organised and modern. When experienced together, they "form a chain of experiences" where each component "integrate[s] into a greater whole" (Riewoldt 2002, pp. 32-33) and "represents part of [the] story" (Klingmann 2007, p. 70) in much the same way that branded environments function. But as demonstrated, there is a much deeper dynamic taking place. Through marking territory with images of Hizbullah and Iranian figures and of martyrs, Dahiya becomes the physical and visual embodiment of the religious Shi'a nation. Simultaneously, the reform projects explored above are attempts by the Party to assert itself and the area under its control as a Lebanese one thus countering its reputation as "Dahiyat al-[Khomeini]" (Deeb and Harb 2013, p. 48). Hence, we see clear examples of how Hizbullah, at one moment, differentiates Dahiya from other areas in Beirut – and simultaneously itself from other Lebanese parties and groups – while at the other, Hizbullah seeks to portray Dahiya as an extension of the nation's capital. The latter, as explored above, involves countering the negative stigmas that are attached to Dahiya, Shi'as and the Party and which are exemplified in the '100 reasons' email. By improving Dahiya's facilities, infrastructure and aural dynamics and by stipulating cleanliness regulations to improve the visual landscape, Hizbullah elevates itself and Shi'as to a higher position, thus increasing the Party's cultural capital in the eyes of those who view it negatively.

Still, the argument that Dahiya emphasises Hizbullah's religious and Lebanese nationalisms is further asserted in the area's communicative spaces of leisure and cultural sites. In the next section, I explore how these are conceived by Hizbullah, demonstrating that creating a space involves not only places, landmarks and

architectural structures but also experiences and values. I also uncover how they are experienced – or "lived" in Lefebvre's terms – paying particular attention as to how this falls under and deviates from space branding practices and how they promote Hizbullah's value system.

5. Dahiya's Communicative Spaces

5.1 Leisure Sites

Contemporary Dahiya is quite different from the late 1980s Dahiya that Fawaz (2007) presents, as the streets of Dahiya are filled with coffee shops, restaurants, juice shops, Internet cafés and amusement parks among others. Relatively cheaper than those in central Beirut, these leisure sites are lively and some, such as 'Bridge' and al-Saha restaurants, have become quite popular and are visited by affluent religious Shiʿa families residing outside of Dahiya thus again asserting Massey's understanding of space and its openness. Many remain open quite late and are mostly filled by the younger generation who smoke, laugh and enjoy their time as they listen to the soft music that is played in the background. The facilities allow for male/female public intermingling along with women smoking hookah in public, which was traditionally not common among religious circles. Indeed, my experiences in Dahiya's leisure sites for my research work were in many ways quite similar to those in central Beirut's leisure sites.

Hizbullah has also facilitated other projects and which specifically attend to the religious inhabitants. For example, two cafés in Dahiya opened their doors to

women only, one of which has since closed.[47] Amal Alloush, the owner of the

second café is not a Dahiya inhabitant but initiated the project to provide women

with a leisure space whereby they could frequent the café without refusal from

their religious parents or husbands (Fahs 2013). However, Fahs (2013) adds,

drawing on a woman named Hiba, that Alloush's facility is a preferred option for

non-restricted women since they can freely smoke hookah, laugh and move about

without having to worry about what people think. Alloush's café is one of the long

list of female only facilities that includes gyms, swimming pools and jacuzzis as

well as schools. Indeed, many of my religious acquaintances, both inhabitants and

outsiders, frequent many of Dahiya's all-female facilities.

In addition, more politically oriented facilities do exist in Dahiya. For example,

'Special Forces,' a paintball facility was once a major attraction not only for

inhabitants of the area but also for outsiders who aren't necessarily Shiʿa.[48] The

facility was a replica of a battlefield, "complete with barbed wire, military uniforms

and guns" (Elder 2001, p. 57). As Fordham and Fitzsimons (2009) explain, the

paintball project was part of Hizbullah's attempts at producing a generation that is

capable of defending itself - eventually against Israeli attacks. As Mr. Biab, one of

the owners explained, although the facility is a leisure and entertainment one, "the

hidden idea behind this is political" (Cited in Fordham and Fitzsimons 2009).[49]

---

[47] It is also not clear if the second café has survived.
[48] This paintball facility has since closed with another one opening in Muʿawwad, a middle class area in Dahiya.
[49] http://tfitzsimons.com/lebanese-paintball-craze-springs-from-harsh-reality/ Last accessed Feb 20, 2013.

Within branded space literature and practices, such sites are given much focus whereby the role of "'soft' factors such as shopping, leisure and entertainment facilities" (Moor 2007, p. 74) are emphasised. Along with the cultural activities explored below, they are argued to result in emotional attachments to places and spaces and which is an important factor in place and space branding. As Arvidsson (2005) argues, "'[b]uilding brand equity is about fostering a number of possible attachments around the brand... experiences, emotions, attitudes, lifestyles or, most importantly perhaps, loyalty'" (p. 239).

But despite the abundance of leisure sites that exist in Dahiya, aimed at the general public or more religious ones, it is inaccurate to assume that Dahiya's leisure sites rival those in central Beirut for there is a list of requirements stipulated by Hizbullah and which assert Hizbullah's religio-politico identity. To begin with, alcohol and gambling are non-existent[50] and excessive physical contact between sexes is prohibited as is music that might arouse the sexual senses or which might lead to dancing.

To maintain these standards, Hizbullah members monitor activities and use force when necessary. As Fadi, a twenty-five-year-old male bartender explained

> I know a place which used to sell alcohol under the table in Dahiya. Hizbullah
> figured it out with time and smashed his place during the night when it was

---

[50] Deeb and Hard (2013) assert the same findings and add non-halal meat to the list.

closed. But the next morning, Hizbullah members visited his facility to

inquire about what had happened as if they knew nothing about it.[51]

Fadi goes on to add that in spite of the Party implementing restrictions in public

places only and ignoring what happens behind closed doors, he has been abused

for drinking alcohol by Amal members in Dahiya and which he argues was not

interrupted by Hizbullah members.[52] As he explains

I was coming back in a taxi at three o'clock in the morning- after I had closed

the pub. I won't lie to you, I was drunk so I left my motorcycle at the pub and

took a taxi because I wasn't in a state to drive. We got to Dahiya and they

[Amal] stopped the cab and asked me where I'm from. I told them I'm

Syrian.[53] And just my luck, I had forgotten my papers at home that night, so

they told me to get out of the car. I got out and one of the members

exclaimed: you forgot your papers and you're drunk as well – and slapped me

on the face. So I apologised and said "astaghfirullah."[54] He then proceeded to

slap me again for saying God's name when I was drunk. He then asked me if I

was drunk and slapped me again when I said yes. This proceeded for five

minutes before they let me go. The next morning Hizbullah members came to

---

[51] Similar findings are also discussed by Deeb and Harb (2013) who explain that the Party has launched "a network of neighbourhood committees" who report on any unacceptable activities. In the case of 'immoral' activities within these cafés, Hizbullah will attempt to destroy the reputation of the establishment to run the business down and will, in many cases, convince the owner's relatives to pressure the owner to interfere and close the business (pp. 73- 74).
[52] Amal's activities in Dahiya reflect the political treaties between them and Hizbullah.
[53] Fadi is a Shiʿa of Syrian nationality. Although he has lived in Lebanon all his life and his family owns a number of apartments in Dahiya, they have yet to be rewarded with citizen papers.
[54] This translates to 'I ask for God's forgiveness.'

inquire if I was okay as if they disapproved of what had happened. I doubt they didn't see the abuse against me when it was happening.

In comparison, Hizbullah facilitates leisure sites that fit the required criteria. As Mohammad recalls about an acquaintance who had decided to open a pub in Dahiya following the 2006 war

> He used to be an alcohol drinker, but for some reason became religious after the war and decided to not frequent alcohol-serving places. But he missed the nightlife, the dancing and the music. So, he decided to open a non-alcohol serving pub in Dahiya… the regular pub atmosphere, just without the alcohol. When Hizbullah members found out that he was opening a pub, they sent members of the Party to question him and probably even to hassle him. But when he explained the concept of the pub and that it was alcohol free, they started helping him. Imagine, even with the building process and carrying things around.

Hence, the leisure sites that Hizbullah facilitates yet controls and conceives clearly abide by the Party's religious identity and in that sense, communicate and promote them through lived experiences. But how can one explain Hizbullah's enforced restrictions, and which in many cases can include physical violence? While Anholt (2007) explains that powerful commercial brands can be quite undemocratic in the sense that they are run by "a very single-minded, even mildly deranged, 'visionary' Chief Executive Officer who simply eliminates anybody who dares to deviate from the company line" in what he terms "despotic management style" (p.

82), literature on branded space makes no mention of undemocratic practices. Indeed, literature on branded space focuses on *directing* consumers towards experiences and values. For example, Arvidsson (2006), whose exploration of branded spaces saw him focus on "themed" retail spaces, explains that the aim of such spaces is to allow consumers to experience the physical features of a space as well as to socially interact with each other in controlled ways that promote and enhance the specific brand image that is intended and in the process, become co-creators (p. 80). As such, consumers experience and "live" the brand in a way that makes it feel like it is an important and ordinary part of their lives (p. 79).

Hence, Hizbullah's activities in Dahiya deviate from one of the core methods through which space branding operates and the term is thus not entirely applicable to Dahiya. Certainly, many of my informants, including Fadi, Mohammad and Rana find Hizbullah's activities in Dahiya problematic, with Fadi emphasising that he would move away were he able to afford it. Perhaps then, one should look at Dahiya not through the lens of a branded space but through the notion of nation branding, particularly the practices of nation brands that function more in line with corporate ones (for example, Dubai and Singapore) and which has "the same single-minded sense of purpose and control that the crazy brand visionary achieves within a privately owned company" (p. 83). It is such practices that Anholt (2007) explains allows a nation to powerfully brand itself in a short duration. But while Dubai and Singapore adopted nation branding to transform themselves into global brands, Hizbullah's practices are aimed at the branding of Dahiya as one that abides by religious restrictions. Perhaps then, the term 'a brand space' [whereby I define it as a space adopted by a brand to communicate and

promote its values - even by force if necessary] along with the view that Dahiya is a social, cultural and territorial place is more befitting in the case of Hizbullah's Dahiya.

5.2 Cultural Sites

The practices and restrictions in Dahiya's leisure activities are again implemented in Dahiya's cultural sites. But rather than facilitate or prohibit, Hajj Daher explains that Hizbullah initiates the production of cultural activities and which include a wide array of materials such as video clips, video games and media programs as well as cultural spaces of exhibitions, plays, theatre and the like. Cultural spaces also exist in the South where the Party has created a number of permanent exhibitions,[55] but this section will pay particular attention to those within Dahiya.

The entirety of Hizbullah's cultural activities are organised by Rissalat, a design agency that was launched in 2004 under the name 'the Lebanese Association for the Arts.' According to Hajj Daher, Rissalat is as an "artistic family" and is responsible for activities relating to theatre, music concerts, art, exhibitions, clips, short films, songs and visuals and has also launched a number of film, graphic design, literature, photography and theatre clubs among others. As Hajj Daher adds, the choice of name reflects the agency's mission. Rissalat, meaning messages, was chosen because "art without a message is no longer art." These messages can be related to "morals and ethics, religion, resistance and awareness" among others

---

[55] See Deeb (2008) and Deeb and Harb (2009) for details of these cultural sites.

and are not limited to the Shiʿa audience but are rather targeted at the whole Lebanese population who are interested in this genre of topics. As such, Rissalat's theatre, where the majority of the activities take place, was built in the Ghobeiri area because of its easy access for audiences coming from the mountains, Beirut, the South and other areas hence affirming Dahiya's link to other places and demographics. Interestingly, some activities are also held in non-Shiʿa areas. For example, for Christmas of 2015 and in celebration of the birth of Jesus, a music concert took place in a Byblos church. However, as Hajj Daher explains, exhibitions pertaining to Shiʿa thought and figures are mostly held in Dahiya as that is the audience that it targets.

Rissalat's activities are abundant and contrary to what outsiders imagine, include music concerts to celebrate the birth of religious figures or commemorate resistance events. Rissalat also screens films pertaining to both religion (for example, the Iranian production about Prophet Mohammad) and resistance. And while the majority of the films are Iranian, Hajj Daher argues that this is because of their strength and quality and adds that screenings also include Egyptian, Lebanese and Syrian productions as long as they contain "meaning and aims."[56] Further activities include exhibitions, plays, poetry nights, theatre and comedy shows among others and admission is either free or trivial.

Still, cultural activates adhere to religious standards. For example, the topics and choice of words are carefully studied within the activities. Hajj Daher explains that

---

[56] Rissalat is also in talks to possibly show Russian movies.

as a conservative group, Rissalat's productions steer away from any material that might be stimulating and indecent and refrain from using curse words. This is especially the case in stand-up comedy shows where sex and taboo topics are heavily relied on in the Lebanese stand-up comedy sphere. And although criticism of politics and politicians among others are adopted on as a form of awareness, sensitive material pertaining to and criticising religion and religious sects is steered away from.

On a similar level, although women can attend music concerts held at Rissalat's theatre, they cannot participate as artists, both in terms of singing and playing an instrument.[57] Although this is accepted practice in Iran, Hajj Daher explains that activities should abide by what befits "jaw wa bi'at al mukawama" (atmosphere and environment of the resistance). Similarly, ushers are trained to sit groups of single men and women separately to avoid any "mishappenings" that may occur. Here, Hajj Daher elaborates that it would have been preferable to have had segregated seating inside the theatre altogether but that is not possible since families regularly attend.

There is much to say about Hizbullah's leisure and cultural sites. To Deeb and Harb (2013) the sites are part of Hizbullah's efforts at translating its opening up policy while simultaneously presenting Dahiya as "a casually lived urban space as opposed to its all-too-common sensationalised image as a 'Hizbullah stronghold'"

---

[57] The only exception to this rule occurred when an Iranian orchestra with two female musicians played at Rissalat theatre.

(p. 27).[58] In analysing Hizbullah's cultural sites, they argue that they reflect

Hizbullah's efforts at organising "history, memory, nature and culture" (p. 68).

Deeb and Harb's research involved an interview with Hajj Daher who explains that

cultural sites are a means to provide more beneficial activities for Dahiya's youths

and in the process, shape their "minds, thoughts, and artistic talents" (p. 68). With

regards to the leisure sites, the scholars demonstrate that despite the opening up

policy, Hizbullah is still driven by its religious doctrines as those that are facilitated

are those that can be "described as shar'i ("religiously legitimate"), muhafiz

("conservative"), or simply munasib ("appropriate")" (p. 8).

The thesis agrees with Harb and Deeb's research. However, in line with the

arguments presented above, I argue that leisure and cultural sites also act on a

promotional level, not only in the sense that they diffuse and communicate

religion, resistance and politics, but also that these values are lived and

experienced by those participants. So while these activities do not appear directly

'promotional,' in the sense that people engage in them voluntarily and they are

activities rather than 'signs', they might be considered promotional to the extent

that they embody and 'promote' particular values, ways of life, forms of belief

(about what is good and Islamic and about the necessity of resistance). More

importantly, these sites have deeper nationalist elements at play.

Let's start with Lebanese nationalism. In much the same way that bridges, reform

projects and the like link Dahiya physically and visually to the nation's capital, so

---

[58] See Deeb and Harb (2013) for the complete list of the reasons behind the leisure sites.

do Dahiya's leisure and cultural sites. After all, not only is Beirut the nightlife hub but also the cultural hub. So by facilitating and initiating such sites, Hizbullah is again portraying Dahiya and itself as part and parcel of the Lebanese nation by functioning in the same way that the nation's capital does. In that, it is not foreign, not scary and not backward but in many ways, the same. This can also explain the location of the Rissalat theatre which, at the periphery of Dahiya, is indeed a 15-minute car drive from the centre.[59] In addition, cultural activities pertaining to resistance, similar to Hizbullah's children's magazines (chapter 8) and the 'Divine Victory' campaign (chapter 1) portray resistance as defending Lebanese land, soil and people. And by organising activities that bring together Muslims and Christians, Hizbullah – much in the same way that not renaming St. George Hospital is read – can be understood as bridging relationships with other Lebanese groups and moving beyond the stereotype of Shi'a exclusivity.

Still, the leisure and cultural activities are clearly mainly concerned with the religious nation. They promote the religious nation's Shi'a and resistance values and steer demographics towards experiences that do not deviate from these standards, sometimes resorting to force to maintain the symbolic religious utopia. Thus, Dahiya not only visually and aurally creates and maintains the religious nation but more importantly, allows for living the religious nation. Hence, although Hizbullah has conceived of Dahiya and implemented considerable changes in such a way that it is portrayed as part of the nation's capital, the restrictions that the Party has instigated in terms of leisure and cultural sites reveal that Hizbullah has

---

[59] This is in the case of easy traffic.

not deviated from its core religious value. Hence, much like the argument presented above on the visual landscape, Dahiya's leisure and cultural sites at one moment seek to differentiate the area from other parts of Beirut by stipulating specific lived experiences while at others, seeks to elevate the reputation of Dahiya, Shiʿas and the Party. The latter is achieved through mimicking – to an extent – the activities and dynamics that take place in the nation's capital thereby countering the stigma that the Party is backwards, closed and rigid.

6. Conclusion:

The chapter drew on literature on branding and branded spaces to analyse Dahiya as a communicative and promotional space and did so by focusing on the period between 2006 until the present day. It explored the area following Lefebvre's spatial triad of conceived, perceived and lived spaces and demonstrated that space is conceived through scent and the aural landscape as well as the visual one. The chapter started with exploring the territorial markings in Dahiya and examined the rebuilding of the area following the 2006 war and in that demonstrated the applicability of Klingmann's (2007) theories of the role architecture in expressing identity and in encouraging memory and desire and in narrating stories. The chapter also explored the reform projects that have been instigated in Dahiya and argues that these act as efforts by the Party to link Dahiya to the nation's capital thus allowing the Party to emphasise its Lebanese identity and to counter negative stigmas of Hizbullah and its audience. This practice is further extended onto leisure and cultural sites and which, according to place branding literature, are of significance with Moor (2007) emphasising the role of "'soft' factors such as

shopping, leisure and entertainment facilities" (p. 74) in place branding as do Anholt (2011) and Arvidsson (2011) who focus on the role of creative projects such as music, theatre, shows, outdoor events and festivals.

However, the chapter also demonstrated that there are many differences that separate Dahiya from central Beirut as a result of the restrictions that are implemented with regards to leisure and cultural sites. Hence, Dahiya acts as a physical manifestation of the Party's values and more importantly, the physical entity of the symbolic religious Shiʿa nation. And while this reveals the values of Hizbullah and their articulation through lived experiences, it can also be analysed as efforts by the Party to differentiate Dahiya from central Beirut thus once again bringing place branding techniques into play. For, as Anholt (2011) emphasises, place branding involves improving a place's reputation and which can be achieved through differentiating a place from other places (Julier 2011). This can be accomplished through organising leisure and cultural projects that present a place as fostering particular ideals, lifestyles, practices and subjectivities (Arvidsson 2011), and which is applicable to Hizbullah's Dahiya.

Clearly then, there is much tension that exists within Dahiya whereby Hizbullah attempts to link it to the city in one case but also separate it. In that, and along with the use of force when necessary, it becomes evident that what is of significance to the Party is its core values of religion and resistance and which are articulated and promoted in all levels of Lefebvre's spatial triad. It is the Shiʿa nation that is at the heart of how Hizbullah operates within Dahiya, which is further asserted through Hizbullah's organising of ʿAshura rituals within it. Hence, the Party's

commemorative gatherings deserve much focus and is the subject of the next

chapter.

Chapter 5:

Hizbullah's 'Ashura Rituals: *Religious and Political Nationalisms*

This chapter examines Hizbullah's public mourning commemorations, specifically those that are held in Dahiya. This is because it is the rituals taking place in Dahiya that are mediated on al-Manar and because it is the location from where Nasrullah's speeches are given. Presenting observational research undertaken over a period of four years (2014-2017), the chapter answers a number of significant questions addressed by the thesis and outlined in chapter 1. It examines the rituals and their meaning during a specific time frame that saw the Party's increased involvement in Syria. The chapter thus explores the rituals within the wider context of the Party's identity as well as local, regional and international events and reveals Hizbullah's nationalist discourses, including Shi'a, Lebanese and Arab identity. It analyses the rituals as part and parcel of Hizbullah's political communication, an aspect that has been overlooked, and demonstrates the promotional aspect of the rituals as they act as sites through which individuals learn religious values generally and Hizbullah's religio-politico discourse specifically. It demonstrates how the rituals, in line with Durkheim's (1995) theories, act as socialising channels that inform and promote, and in line with Carey's ritual view of communication, maintain society and its views. This chapter also examines the rituals as brand events through which participants interact with the brand, experience its values and develop an attachment and loyalty to it.

To do so, the chapter studies two aspects of Hizbullah's 'Ashura rituals – the physical settings and the mediated ones – and is thus composed of two sections.

The first examines the significance of 'Ashura rituals in spreading Shi'a religiosity and knowledge and as a means of socialisation and collective identity formation and maintenance centred around the act of assembling, mourning, remembering and declaring love for Imam Hussein. And while Hizbullah's cultural activities are targeted at a specific niche of the Party's base and wider demographic, it is the rituals that attract the widest audience attention and in that, the chapter argues that 'Ashura rituals are a core method to both promote Shi'a thought and induce/uphold the religious Shi'a nation. However, I demonstrate that through organising public rituals, Hizbullah aims to be seen as (and to promote itself as) the centre that holds the group together, both religiously and politically eventually allowing the Party to maintain their political grip and survival.

The second section examines Hizbullah's mediated rituals. Itself composed of two sections, the first draws on the theories of Dayan and Katz (1992) and Couldry (2003) to analyse the significance of live broadcasting and internet livestreaming for expanding the Shi'a nation beyond the territorial confines of Dahiya to a wider local, regional and global Shi'a audience. In doing that, the nation extends to a transnational level and through social media, allows members of the 'symbolic' nation to interact. The second part of this section uncovers how what is apparently a religious ritual has become part and parcel of Hizbullah's *political* communication and has, from the Party's inception, been used to mobilise its core Shi'a constituency politically and to communicate political information, demonstrate power dynamics and assert the importance of resistance and resistance fighters. To do so, this analysis starts from the premise presented by Geertz (1973) who understands rituals as sites that act to unite "the dispositional

and conceptual aspects of religious life" for the believer while simultaneously communicating these to observers (p. 113). This section also highlights how the rituals act to emphasise nationalism centred around territorial protection thereby appealing to a broader Lebanese audience, Muslim nationalism through asserting the support for the Palestinian cause and the oppressed in Yemen, Bahrain and Myanmar and a regional nationalist identity through portraying itself as striving to protect the region. It focuses specifically on Nasrullah's last two speeches in the 2017 'Ashura rituals – and which are significant as Nasrullah is the face of the Hizbullah brand - and uncovers the multiple nationalist, political and power dynamics inherent in them.

1. Understanding Rituals

Perhaps the most classic text on religion and rituals - and one which is highly significant for understanding the promotional role of Hizbullah's 'Ashura rituals since it highlights both Carey's ritual view of communication and the argument that socialising sites are promotional in that they inform, teach and spread cultural values - is that of Emile Durkheim (1995). Although Durkheim's theories date back to 1912, they are still applicable and resonate in multiple contemporary research. Core to Durkheim's (1995) theory is establishing religion as an "eminently collective thing" (p. 44) thereby prioritising its social function. Religion unites those who believe and practice similarly "into one single moral community called a Church" (p. 44) thereby unifying the group under the banner of "common faith" (p. 41). Collectivity and the formation and maintenance of social institutions is at the heart of how Durkheim theorised religion: it is religion and religious beliefs that

are shared by the group and the elements that bind them together. It is also with the "people of his clan" that an individual feels most connected to and most influenced by (p. 216).

Durkheim also draws on another important aspect of religion: its active dimension. His definition of religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things" (p. 44) highlights the significance of rituals. It is through active participation in rituals that beliefs are expressed and reinforced and through which beliefs survive (p. 379). Gatherings "evoke, maintain, or recreate certain mental states" (p. 9) and in turn, uphold the collective group through emphasising what they share collectively (p. 382) (p. 379). And in the midst of collective gatherings - and which need to be repeated regularly to strengthen, reaffirm and revitalise group ties (pp. 390, 420) - loyalty is created/maintained as a member does little to question beliefs and rites (p. 41).

Although Durkheim (1995) prioritised the social over the psychological and emotional in his definition of religion, the latter still occupies a key role as is evident in his argument that gatherings allow for the arising of feelings that one is incapable of experiencing when alone (p. 212). It is in the simple act of assembling and closeness and which "is an exceptionally powerful stimulant" that "a sort of electricity" is created thereby launching members into "an extraordinary height of exaltation" (p. 217). A small gesture or feeling gradually amplifies resulting in passionate moments that fall into rhythmic, harmonious and united movements and sound (218). It is this state that Durkheim terms effervescence (p. 424).

But rites also serve other causes beyond the social, collective grouping. To Durkheim, ritual precedes belief and is in fact a factor for "its making" (p. 232). Through homogeneous movements, individuals develop "collective representations" – beliefs. As Durkheim writes

> [i]t is the homogeneity of these movements that makes the group aware of itself and that, in consequence, makes it be. Once this homogeneity has been established and these movements have taken a definite form and been stereotyped, they serve to [symbolise] the corresponding representations. But these movements [symbolise] those representations only because they have helped to form them. (p. 232)

Such a position is echoed by Purzycki and Sosis (2013) who draw attention to the importance of rituals in generating religious beliefs. They argue that belief in specific gods is a result of the environment in which they are raised although that does not imply that they are committed to them. It is only through the practice of rituals and through experiencing "what religious persons would call the 'sacred'" that one becomes committed (pp. 102-103).

On an equally significant level, Durkheim (1995) sees rituals as a medium through which traditional authority is preserved (p. 375), through which the young are taught the traditions of the group (p. 330) and through which the past is remembered and made present, thereby joining or linking them together (pp. 376, 382). The first two points are repeated in multiple research, most relevant of which are those conducted on ʿAshura rituals. For example, Moazzen (2015)

argues that Shiʿa rituals were a means through which Shiʿa history has survived as they stored and transmitted religious knowledge whereby participants became the vessel for the narratives' transmission (pp. 1-2). Similarly, in her study of religious rituals among Iraqi Shiʿa women in Ireland, Shanneik (2015) asserts that rituals act as a form of remembering since both the narrative recalling of the battle in explicit details and the emotions it produces engrain the event in participants' memories (p. 91). Hence, although Durkheim's theories predate Carey's ritual view of communication and Wernick's theories of promotion, the communicative and promotional aspect of Durkheim's research is evident as he highlights rituals' role in maintaining the group and society on the one hand and of teaching, informing and socialising on the other. Interestingly however, Durkheim (1995) directly explored rituals' role in communication, albeit one focused on communicating with an external audience, as he understood rituals as "akin to dramatic performances" that help in understanding the nature of the cult and their religious systems (p. 383).

The communicative aspect of rituals is reiterated by symbolist/culturalist theorists who place more emphasis on the – "meaning, values and attitudes" - of ritual action over the social function (Bell 1997, p. 61). Roy Rappaport (1999), for example, argues that "[u]nless there is a performance there is no ritual" (p. 37), especially for those performed in public, which involve exaggerated and exuberant movements and gestures (p. 50). Ritual performances transmit information "concerning [] current physical, psychic or social states" of both the individual and the group as a whole (p. 52).

More explicit research on rituals' treatments as "cultural performances" are put forth by theorists concerned with semantics and syntax and who understand rituals as "a text to be decoded." Extending their arguments onto a wide array of activities beyond the religious such as onto public spectacles, sports and theatre, culturalists stress the role of rituals in reflecting cultural and social changes and acknowledge that culture is "a changing, processual, dramatic, and indeterminate entity" (Bell 1997, pp. 73-75). It is under this understanding of rituals that Lara Deeb's (2006) research can be categorised. Deeb, who studies Shiʿa gatherings in Lebanon, analyses their historical transformations, distinguishes between two types of majalis in Lebanese circles: "traditional" majlis, the older form, and "authenticated" majalis, a newer, more reformed approach. As Deeb explains, traditional majalis focus on eliciting audience's emotions as reciters spend a longer time lamenting and include a more vivid description of the dramatic and bloody battle (Deeb 2006, pp. 145-148). In contrast, "authenticated" majalis focus more on sermons, with restricted lamentation, thereby aiming at teaching the attendees lessons from the Karbala tragedy. Reciters strive for accuracy of events rather than exaggeration as they aim to mobilise Karbala for positive changes in one's daily interactions.

Similarly, within masiras, traditional ones include the self-injuring latm, which is the drawing of blood to personally experience the pain of Hussein and his companions, and women play the role of the spectator from sidewalks and the balconies of their homes (Deeb 2006, pp. 135-138). In contrast, authentic masiras reject blood shedding and opt instead for light chest beating and witness the strong participation of women whereby they become active participants rather

than marginal ones.

Deeb's analysis of rituals in the Lebanese scene focuses on the religious and performative aspects whereby she understands 'authentic' rituals as attempts at modern-ness. Interestingly, culturalists go beyond the religious to emphasise the political aspects inherent in ritual practices, especially that which relates to "authority, ideology, and power" (Bell 1997, p. 79). For example, Jean Comaroff's (1985) research on rituals practices in Zionist churches of the Tshidi of South Africa demonstrates how the incorporation of Tshidi tradition and Christian rites of healing attempt to "control key symbols and defy the hegemonic order of colonialism" whereby ritual becomes "'a struggle for the possession of the sign'" (Bell 1997, p. 79).

Clearly, the study of rituals is a vast area of sociological exploration and the field is rich with theoretical approaches thus providing a number of methods to analyse Hizbullah's 'Ashura rituals. But rather than adopt one approach over another (for example, rituals' socialising and group maintenance role rather than its performative dimension), the chapter treats each as two sides of the same coin and in doing that, provides a comprehensive understanding of Hizbullah's 'Ashura rituals.

2. Hizbullah's 'Ashura Rituals

'Ashura 2014; third night: I walked into the 'Master of Martyr Complex' in the heart of Dahiya as part of my participant observation and would do so on alternate

nights for the duration of the period. The complex was fairly full, in spite of having arrived early, and I was let in without a headscarf after being searched twice by female members at different entrance points. As is customary with Hizbullah members, I was politely addressed, supplied with nylon bags to place my shoes in[60] and guided by female members into the complex which had been set up for the occasion: carpets with the qibla[61] direction shown were specifically laid out to allow the attendees to pray and sit on and visual material created to commemorate the occasion filled the complex. Attendees slowly poured in, many with their children and infants and sometimes in groups, as we awaited the start of the rituals and which involved, on that night, a religious speech by Nasrullah. Chatting and giggling could be heard but were slightly halted when the Qur'anic recitation began and when Nasrullah appeared on screen as attendees stood up to chant 'Labbayka ya Nasrullah' (We are at your call O' Nasrullah) and 'Labbyka ya Hussein' only for the chatting to resume once his speech started. Groups of young female attendees were seen doing their homework as Hizbullah members approached the girls and helped them solve their questions but later advised the young girls to listen in a friendly manner. It was only when Ali Sleem, Hizbullah's official majlis reader, started the mourning recitation – and which led to the distribution of tissues to the young as well as old - that silence assumed and attendees bowed their heads with elders lowering children's gazes. Attendees cried and even sobbed when the recitation recalled the moment of death of one of Hussein's companions as Ali Sleem assumed the voice of the dying or the mourners

---

[60] All attendees had to take their shoes off to enter the complex, as it had been set up for prayer. Keeping one's shoes on would have led to the carpet's najas (uncleanliness), therefore making it unsuitable to pray on.

[61] The qibla is the direction of the Kaʿba that Muslims face when praying.

left behind. Taking a deep breath, Hajj Sleem composed himself and with eyes still shut, called for the attendees to pledge their loyalty to Khamenei, pray for the victory of Islam and of resistance fighters and for the recovery of the ill and needy. Following the end of the lamentation, the young men lined up in organised lines to start the latmiyyats (chest beating). In a rhythmic, unified manner, the men raised their arms and dropped them to hit their chests for the next twenty minutes. This same sequence of events was repeated for the next nine days although Sayyed Nasrallah appeared every other day.[62] Ali Sleem and the latm were a daily occurrence.

It was only on November 4, 2014, the tenth day, that the rituals witnessed a change. For it is on the tenth day that the masira takes place whereby Shiʿas gather in the early morning hours in various areas around Lebanon to mourn the martyrdom of Hussein himself. In Dahiya, following the calls of Sayyed Nasrullah the day before and radio and television advertisements, thousands attended and many had been there as early as 6 a.m. to guarantee a place in the complex. Anticipating the high number of attendees, Hizbullah had placed chairs, nylon strips and newspapers on the area surrounding the complex for attendees to sit on. Women and children, clad in black, some of whom had green scarves - representing Hussein's lineage - over their head, listened to Sleem's two-hour narration and mourned Hussein. However, the moment of heightened and intense emotion occurred when Sleem narrated the slaughtering of Hussein, a moment which led a number of women to become hysterical and to beat themselves,

---

[62] During other nights, multiple religious figures took the task of speech giving.

ripping the headscarf that they had on in the process. Again, Sleem ended his lamentation with a few prayers as the women stood to walk, chant, perform light chest beating, proclaim their love for Hussein, Zaynab and Nasrullah, assert Imam Khomeini's divine status and call for the death of America and Israel. Many carried flags with 'Ya Hussein', 'Ya Zaynab', 'Ya Abbas' and 'Ya Ali' written on them and which Hizbullah members had distributed and others were seen carrying the photographs of their martyred husbands, brothers and sons. Children as young as two were dressed in black and a large number of attendees walked barefoot in spite of the rain either to fulfill a vow or to reenact the female captive's walk to Yazid's court. The women were met with different reciters perched on metal towers at different points of their walk and who managed to maintain participants' enthusiasm. The walk itself lasted for almost an hour and a half until we reached the end as we heard Nasrullah's speech which had well begun farther away. Drained of energy, I walked a long distance to find a cab to take me home and along the way, encountered the stands that were set up for the distribution of water, juice and harisah[63] that had been cooking from the night before (Fieldnotes, November 2014).

The above description is of the public Hizbullah mourning ritual and, except for the procession part, describes the typical structure that takes place in any Muharram gathering - be it a public or a private one. Majalis mourn the events of Karbala and include a Qura'nic recital followed by the recitation of an "embellished version" of

---

[63] Harisah is wheat cooked with lamb or beef chunks and has become a popular ʿAshura dish in Lebanon and the region due to its difficulty and length of time required for preparation. The chunks of meat serve as a reminder to the cruel death of Ali Al-Akbar, Imam Hussein's son, who was cut into pieces (Ayoub 1978, p. 157).

the tragic accounts of Karbala[64] in a "dramatic and deeply emotional style" to induce the tears of those present (Hussain 2005, p. 79).[65] The recitation varies between the calm storytelling of the incidents and niyahah at moments of heightened emotions and which is usually the death of Hussein or one of his companions. The niyahah, a rhythmic lamentation poetry "during which classical stanzas are recited or even wailed," is followed by the sobbing of attendees. The stanzas also allow for latm and which "has a rhythmic [hypnotising] effect" whereby attendees strike their chest at the same time. The reciter then resumes lecturing and storytelling and the remainder of the majlis varies again between the two (Hussain 2005, p. 79).

Such majalis are held to commemorate the Karbala battle, one which is believed to be a "battle of righteousness against corruption and evil" (Deeb 2006, p. 130). And although the battle is more than a thousand years old, it is an event that takes centre stage in Shi'a thought, narrative, rituals and devotional practices. Through ritual gatherings, the Karbala battle and its figures are brought to life, the death of Hussein and his companions is mourned and allegiance to Hussein is sworn. So important is the historical battle that from the very beginning, various strategies have provided the means to preserve its memory, specifically through religious rituals. Although these rituals now vary between different Shi'a geographical areas, the "principal elements remain the same" (Hamdar 2009, p. 84).[66] And while many

---

[64] With Hizbullah's public rituals, a speech is given in between the Qur'anic recitation and majlis.

[65] The act of shedding tears over Hussein is and his companion's sufferings is believed to be rewarded by God (Ayoub 1978, p. 92). Therefore, practices that have heightened emotions have been practiced from an early stage. Sayyed Fadlullah however, insisted on teaching Hussein's morals and constantly reminded his followers that crying is a worthless act that would not please Hussein (Deeb 2006).

[66] An exception is the 'Hosay' festival in Trinidad which as Guatav Thaiss (1994) notes, have gradually metamorphosed into a carnival-like festival whereby participants also include Sunnis and non-Muslims.

practices are performed in the region,[67] in Lebanon, they are mostly limited to

majalis and masiras taking place on the tenth day to mark Hussein's martyrdom

with Hizbullah, Amal and a number of Shiʿa scholars taking up the task of

organising public commemorations on a yearly basis. These public majalis are

televised (each onto its own station) and include a large number of attendees

thereby reflecting that ʿAshura commemorations are not a unified Shiʿa practice in

Lebanon but rather involve political and power dynamics.

Indeed, politics and power dynamics are core to ʿAshura rituals as multiple Muslim

groups and dynasties, starting from the Umayyad period, adopted mourning rituals

for political purposes and as a means of protest so much so that Hamid Dabashi

(2011) has described the Shiʿa sect as a "religion of protest."[68] To Hizbullah and

following al-Sadr, ʿAshura rituals were mobilised to unite Shiʿas as a sect and to

resist oppression. The Party adopted rituals and early on started the practice of

assembling Shiʿas. Then a political minority, the gatherings spread Shiʿa thought

and served to unite Shiʿas – to a certain extent - under the banner of collective

remembering, understanding and interpretation of Karbala as well as political

discourse. Equally significant, Hizbullah adopted al-Sadr's view of mourning rituals

and portrayed the Karbala battle as a revolutionary model to look up to rather

than lament over. Thus, Hussein's sacrifice was used to drive Shiʿas to defend

---

Using bright colours and lights, flowers and vibrant cloths to build the tombs of Hasan and Hussein for the street parade, the event becomes a festival that includes music, dancing, alcohol, flirting and fun despite Trinidadians' rejection of such practices (pp. 39- 48).

[67] Other practices include ziyarat al Arbaʿin (visiting Imam Hussein's tomb in Iraq), zangeel (repeatedly striking of the back with a chain), and tutbir (the act of cutting one's head and repeatedly striking it) among others.

[68] See Hussain (2005), Ayoub (1978), Nakash (1993) and Moazzen (2015) for details on the adoption of ʿAshura rituals by Muslim dynasties for political purposes.

themselves as the Party adopted ʿAshura commemorations for a number of religious, political and resistance goals. And following Deeb's spectrum of traditional/authentic rituals, and based on the above description of the Party's commemorations, the masiras' position at the far end of the 'authentic' spectrum is proof of the Party's modernity. This is a result of high level of female participation and the banning of blood shedding in the mid-1990s following Ayatollah Khamenei order, and its substitution with blood donation in centres that the Party provides. Such practices no doubt seeks to counter the negative stereotypes surrounding Hizbullah's ʿAshura rituals and which are wrongly believed to practice the drawing of blood. Understood against a backdrop of a local sectarian context, by adopting more modernised ʿAshura rituals, the Party moves beyond the "backwardness" Shiʿas are accused of, ultimately impacting its own image positively as a result of being the Party that brings about such changes. And with their high level of mediation (see below), such modernised practices reach a transnational audience thereby refuting negative stigmas of Shiʿas and of the Party on a global scale.

The same however cannot be said of Hizbullah's majalis which include both lectures and lamentation to elicit emotions and as such, belong to neither end - especially when compared to Sayyed Fadlullah's vision of an authentic majlis. Fadlullah's views, which Deeb (2005b) described as "toward the far end of the authentication spectrum" (p. 130) has repeatedly rejected crying during ʿAshura majalis and has instead called for learning lessons from the Karbala tragedy. However, Fadlullah's views have been repeatedly criticised by Hizbullah followers who believe that Fadlullah has "over [intellectualised] [ʿAshura] and placed too much emphasis on knowledge, understanding, and application" and that emotion

is an integral part of commemorating and remembering Hussein (pp. 130-131).
These dissimilarities ultimately differentiate Hizbullah's brand of religious thought
from that of Fadlullah – and of Amal - thus demonstrating that the Party's religious
and political practices should be understood vis-à-vis other Shiʿa groups in
Lebanon and not just Sunni and Christian ones among others. Thus, while
Fadlullah focused on the learning experience, Hizbullah's majalis include both and
as such, act as a core medium through which Shiʿas learn the values of the group
and through which they foster a sense of attachment (made possible through the
eliciting of emotion) to the Shiʿa nation generally and the Party specifically. The
below section explores how this occurs by examining the practice of religion.

3. Practicing Religion

On the first night of the 2014 Muharram rituals and from a large screen displayed
at the front of the complex, Nasrullah started the first annual public majlis in
Dahiya. He congratulated all Muslims on the Islamic New Year, paid his
condolences to Shiʿas[69] and moved on to explain majalis and their importance and
stressed the significance of physically attending. He then discussed the importance
of crying over Hussein and what to engage in and avoid during this period. The
same teachings were repeated in the first speech of the 2015 public rituals where
Nasrullah stressed that people should attend gatherings that bring together men,
women and children, old and young to "cry together" and "beat their chests
together."

---

[69] The Muslim mark of the New Year and ʿAshura start on the same day.

Nasrullah's insistence on attending ʿAshura rituals in person, when analysed from a Durkheimian perspective, highlights the importance of rituals in acting as channels for spreading religious beliefs and even creating those beliefs. It is these settings that a number of my informants credited with gaining knowledge of the Karbala battle. As Hajje Ghada, a middle-aged informant from Baalbeck, explains, Hizbullah mobilised religious gatherings to spread Shiʿa history from the very beginning. Herself the daughter of a Shiʿa father and a Sunni mother, Hajje Ghada notes that through attending religious gatherings organised by Amal at the age of fourteen, she gained insight into Muslim and Shiʿa history. She also credits these widespread gatherings that were later held by Hizbullah in her eventual decision to wear a headscarf at the age of seventeen. Zeina, another informant of the same age and also from Baalbeck, acknowledges that large numbers of people were religiously informed but that Hizbullah managed to further spread religiosity generally and Shiʿa identity specifically in an organised and more effective manner. With the help of Iran's Pasdarans, who arranged a number of rallies in the city following Hizbullah's birth, Shiʿa practice became a more present phenomenon. Similarly, Lina, a twenty-two-year-old female informant from South Lebanon clarifies that she accompanied her mother to majalis from a very young age. And although it wasn't until the age of twelve that she started to understand the narratives that were relayed, she had already worn the scarf at age ten although there was no pressure from her family to do so. It was also in these settings that she gained increased knowledge of religion and which explains why a number of my informants insisted they bring their grandchildren to the private majalis that I attended. For example, following Hajje Imm Ali's private majlis, when only a

handful of her close friends remained to socialise, the remaining women stressed the importance of their grandchildren's attendance and how their own children had previously accompanied them. The majority asserted that it is a method through which their grandchildren would acquire Shiʿa religiosity and a method through which they would "yitʿawwado ʿal ʾajwe,'" a term which roughly translates into 'to get used to such settings' and which implies ingraining religion in a child. So, it is in such gatherings that one learns the required mourning etiquette and develops the act of attendance. It is no surprise then that children composed a significant number of the attendees at Hizbullah's ʿAshura rituals and teenagers were the predominant age group. The act of instructing the child to lower his/her head and the distribution of tissues to the young can also be understood in the same manner. Although one can argue that the parent has no one to look after the child – as is the case for the grandmothers I encountered in the private majalis as they were the child carer while their parents worked - that is not the rhetoric that was reiterated to me during interviews. In fact, Hizbullah organises majalis for children that attend their schools during the morning and which simplify the battle in a manner that befits their intellect (see chapter 7).

Thus there is some evidence that Hizbullah's rituals help spread or promote a certain religiosity among those who attend them as they teach, inform and spread knowledge about the Karbala battle thus affirming the approach articulated in chapter 2 that Hizbullah's socialising and educational sites are promotional in nature. It also reflects Hizbullah's – and the general public's – awareness of the significance of social communication sites in educational and socialising processes. Hizbullah's ʿAshura gatherings educate to socialise on one level and socialise to

educate on the other thus demonstrating that education, socialisation and promotion are very much intertwined within Hizbullah's social communication activities in its effort to create/maintain the Shiʿa nation.

But to assume that the Shiʿa nation that Hizbullah focuses on is limited to religiosity and Shiʿa practice is short sighted. For, if rituals aim at spreading Shiʿa religiosity, why does Hizbullah organise its own gatherings independent of Amal and Fadlullah rather than commemorate together? In fact, Hizbullah has repeatedly attempted to undermine Sayyed Fadlullah, as can be seen in an article in al-Akhbar, a newspaper heavily funded by Hizbullah, where Fadlullah's organisations have been accused of swindling millions of dollars in properties.[70] In a similar manner, the Party limits the social services that other Shiʿa figures provide. For example, as articulated in an interview in December 2014 with a prominent Shiʿa figure who wishes to remain anonymous, the Party has restricted his abilities in providing services except when conducted through them in an attempt to remain hegemonic and remain "in control." In addition, why do Hizbullah's rituals belong somewhere in between Deeb's (2006) traditional and authentic spectrum - or to put this more directly, why does Hizbullah insist on eliciting emotions when all other aspects of ʿAshura rituals have been "authenticated"?

To answer the former question, it is necessary to answer the latter first and to draw on branding literature, which highlights emotions' role in fostering a sense of

---

[70] http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/214185. Last accessed April 22, 2016.

attachment and loyalty to the brand and its values. By insisting on lamenting

Hussein's martyrdom rather than completely authenticating and "intellectualising"

majalis, Hizbullah seemingly attempts to garner the loyalty of the Shiʻa

demographic to itself as a Party. In that, Hizbullah's practices reflect the tensions

that exist not only within Islam - evidenced in the Sunni/Shiʻa divide - but also

within the Shiʻa nation itself thus adding to Zubaida's (2011) critique of Gellner's

(1994) study of the Muslim nation.

On another level, Hizbullah's practices assert the argument put forth in the

literature review that Hizbullah's religious nation is not only affected by and

affects politics but is very much political in nature. For, the tears Hizbullah's rituals

elicit act as an "expression of loyalty" (Thurfjell 2012, p. 13). In his study of Iranian

rituals," Thurfjell (2012) notes that the act of attending one mosque or husseiniyya

rather than the other serves to confirm one's loyalty to a specific prayer leader. As

such, "the bodies of the individuals who participate in these rituals have become

display places for political authority" (p. 13). To apply that in the Lebanese scene,

when people choose to attend Hizbullah's majalis rather than that of Amal or

Fadlullah's, they confirm their loyalty to Hizbullah's understanding of the Karbala

battle and version of Shiʻa thought hence lending weight that Hizbullah might

function like a brand in the sense that people express a prevalence for its values

and way of doing things. The rituals also act much in the same way that brand

events function whereby 'consumers' come into contact with, and more

importantly, experience the brand (Lury 2004, p. 42). As Moor (2003) explains,

experience is an effective means through which brands can "'get[] up close and

personal'" with consumers and achieve memorability by engaging with "sensory,

affective, and cognitive" senses (p. 43-44) thus once again asserting the role of emotions in promotional activity.

So by attending Hizbullah's ʿAshura rituals, participants, having experienced intense emotional arousal, leave the gathering loyal to Hizbullah's brand of religious school of thought and political discourse. They thus take with them their declaration of 'Labbayka ya Nasrullah,' the political rhetoric and reverence for resistance fighters and the collective battle against whatever enemy that is declared. With Hizbullah as the organiser of such gatherings, they become the political force that unites the group as they attempt to guarantee their position within the Shiʿa population ultimately securing their political survival and ability to branch into Syria and beyond. Thus, through religious gatherings, Hizbullah's political power and, more importantly, its centrality to the Shiʿa group are sealed.

Hence, Hizbullah's ʿAshura rituals are a core method to promote Hizbullah's religious nation. Much like Hizbullah's cultural sites, ʿAshura rituals are promotional in that they allow Shiʿas to experience the values of religiosity. And much like Dahiya, the rituals gather Shiʿas in one place (but on a much larger scale) whereby they become one unified, collective body, which is another aspect that deserves much exploration in terms of its promotional significance.

3.1 Rituals and Shiʿa Collectivity

As mentioned above, Durkheim's theories stress the social aspect of rituals whereby the community - created by rituals - is at the heart of his definition of

religion (Bellah 2005, p. 184). And although culturalist theorists saw the social aspect of religion as secondary to its communicative function, there is no question about the role of religion in collective, social and community dynamics.

Durkheim's analysis of rituals echo the history and function of rituals within the general Shiʿa history and the specific Lebanese Shiʿa context. For, as Moazzen (2015) relays, ʿAshura rituals of remembering became the basis through which Shiʿas historically unified as a community (p. 1). The past, specifically the act of collective remembering, is a unifying bond, especially "for religiously-grounded communities where the myth of origin is a central component of religious representations" (Gephart 1998, pp. 129-130). To Assmann (2006) what unites the group is "collective memory" where individuals "remember[] in order to belong" (pp. 6-7) for it is when groups remember that they affirm and strengthen what combines them (p. 11). And although Gephart (1998) highlights that "[socialising] agencies, such as schools, religious communities and 'ethnically-grounded' communities" are forums that transmit collective memories, he goes on to argue that it is rituals that "periodically enliven" the "welding of history, identity, and memory as a central part of the conscience collective" (Gephart 1998, p.131).

Equally significant with regards to rituals and collectivity is the body. Durkheim (1995) stressed the role of body and bodily movements – specifically the "homogeneity of [] movements" that results in effervescence - in making the group aware of itself (p. 232), thereby highlighting the role of senses, emotions and cognition in the construction of collective communities (Shilling 2005, p. 212). Added to the physical gathering is also the role of the body in acting as a reminder

of what the clan collectively shares and which occurs through imprinting one's body by cutting, painting, tattooing or any other form of physical manifestation (Durkheim 1995, p. 233). But Durkheim's effervescence in the mere act of assembly is not itself a trivial matter for as a "powerful stimulant" (Durkheim 1995, p. 217), it sparks contagious and unified emotions within people thereby allowing "individuals to be incorporated into the collective moral life" of the group (Shilling 2005, p. 215). Ultimately, the combination of body imprints and the bodies themselves, according to Randall Collins (1998) and in line with Durkheim, results in what he terms "ritual interaction" whereby individuals feel a "sense of membership," emphasised with the boundary of all those within the group in comparison to those outside of it (Bellah 2005, p. 185).

The collective aspect of Hizbullah's gatherings are evident in the empirical description presented above. The unity of the movements, chest beating and chanting in addition to the black attire and green head bands (and which can be considered a form of visually communicating one's religion through dress), attest to the communal emotions and social constructions. In fact, so noticeable was the energy and effervescence during the latmiyyat section of the 2014 majalis rituals that the men, who chanted along with the latm reciter, had to be reminded to beat their chests "ala mahel' (slowly) as many got overly excited. The same passion was obvious in the 2015 public majalis as the male attendees again joined in with the latm reciter.[71] With the latmiyya script written on a large screen, the new attendees could join in the chanting thereby feeling part of the collective group.

---

[71] I observed the 2015 rituals on al-Manar's Internet live streaming as I was not present in Beirut at the time.

Also, Hizbullah's repetition of the gatherings succeeds in constantly revitalising attendees' collectivity since it provides the setting for which these gatherings can take place. And while ʿAshura rituals are performed on a yearly basis, the Party also celebrates and commemorates other religious - and political - occasions thereby repeatedly renewing collectivity. In such gatherings, not only is the group effervescence generated by the mere gathering of the group but is also orchestrated by the Party. The war-inspired music, poetic introductions, meticulous organisation and other aspects of assembly preparations point to the importance that Hizbullah places on generating group effervescence and, in line with Durkheim's (1995) emphasis on the role of boomerangs and other elements within primitive cultures, act as "artificial reinforcement" (p. 218). In addition, Nasrullah's emotionally laden speeches, his own pledges of loyalty to Imam Hussein and his passion and fever when addressing the public also serve to heighten emotions. Nasrullah is himself caught up in effervescence, exemplified by his "high-flown" language, gestures and tone of voice in what Durkheim terms "the demon of oratorical inspiration" (p. 212). The effervescence he arouses "return to him enlarged and amplified, reinforcing his own to the same degree" and thus transforms him from an "individual who speaks" into one united with the group (p. 212).

Clearly, the collective aspect of the gathering is significant as a result of the impact that it has on attendees and it is no surprise that Nasrullah advises one to physically attend. The physical gathering acts as socialising sites and in that become a core method through which Hizbullah can promote and ingrain Shiʿa

practice and devotion and loyalty to the wider Shiʿa demographic within a sectarian state.

But the collective belonging to the group cannot be seen as separate from Hizbullah's *own* Shiʿa nation (in the religio-politico sense) but rather at the heart of it as the gathered individuals do so because of Hizbullah as explored above. Hence, the loyalty is not only to Shiʿas generally and the individuals within the rituals but also to the entity responsible for the grouping: Hizbullah. To put this in branding language, when the brand "community" gathers, they do so to share their common ground, which is the usage or adoption of a brand and its values and to assert their preference for that specific brand. And while Durkheim argued that the group gathers to create and/or emphasise a religious identity and group belonging, I again argue that the collective group asserts the adoption of the political values of Hizbullah. And while Durkheim argued that the loyalty is to the gathered bodies, I further assert that the loyalty is to Hizbullah as well.

To conclude this section, I have demonstrated the promotional aspect of Hizbullah's ʿAshura rituals as they educate, inform, socialise and gather the collective group. I have demonstrated the significance of the Party's rituals in creating and maintaining the Shiʿa nation but have demonstrated that the religious nation cannot be separated from the political one as Hizbullah's conception of the Shiʿa nation is very much political in identity and in practice.

However, despite the significance of the rituals to the Shiʿa nation and its apparent success as is evident in the number of collectively participating bodies, it is

pertinent to point out that Hizbullah's religious nation is not collectively received neither by the general Shiʿa demographic nor by Hizbullah supporters. For example, in interviewing informants from the younger generation, although the majority generally participate in public and/or private rituals, a number pointed out that they disapprove of these religious gatherings. Rana, who identifies as secular, explained in an interview in March 2015 that she doesn't believe that the rituals should take place to begin with because they have an element of separation rather than unity as Shiʿa gatherings exclude other Lebanese groups. The same rejection of rituals is repeated by Fadi who does not identify as a Shiʿa and wants to be left out of any sectarian practices.

Similarly, the above argument that ʿAshura rituals are educational cannot be taken at face value. Indeed, I myself attended private majalis with my mother from a young age and although I beat my chest and cried at the right moment, it was never tears over the recital but rather tears over my mother's crying. The same point was stressed by Rana who also accompanied her mother to majalis from a young age. One can thus say that attending ritual gatherings does not guarantee knowledge of the Karbala events nor does it guarantee belief, but is rather one of the multiple methods to do so and as such, should be analysed in conjunction with other elements such as family, books, and even children's literature and television (explored in chapter 7) that provide audiences with narratives in a simplified and more easily grasped manner.

4. The Religion and Politics of Mediation

To study and analyse Hizbullah's rituals based on physical presence irrespective of mediated rituals would be incomplete since it falls short of exploring their broad impact. After all, Hizbullah's rituals are broadcast live on al-Manar and through Internet live streaming (both on al-Manar's website and YouTube) and are also uploaded onto various social media sites thereby allowing people to watch irrespective of time and place thus allowing Hizbullah transnational reach. This section is interested in the role of media in Hizbullah's rituals and seeks to understand the effects of their broadcasting both in terms of promotion and its impact on the Party's nationalist identity. It starts by analysing their importance on a religious level and relative to the Shi'a nation before moving to examine their inherent political dimension.

To explore the impact that Hizbullah's mediated rituals have on Shi'as, I draw on Dayan and Katz's (1992) exploration of "media events" through which a common space - brought about by live broadcasting - is created to foster collectivity. Despite the criticism of Dayan and Katz's work,[72] their theories prove particularly helpful in analysing Hizbullah's mediated 'Ashura rituals. To briefly define media events, they are the broadcasting of live public events, which can be viewed by a large audience: "a nation, several nations, or the world" (p. 8). They are preplanned, interrupt regular broadcasting, electrify audiences and aim at "integrat[ing] societies in a collective heartbeat and evok[ing] a renewal of loyalty to the society and its legitimate authority" (p. 9) hence emphasising the arguments presented above. Media events unite the audience under shared social values and thus unite

---

[72] See for example Couldry (2003).

them to their society (pp. 5-13). Through television, the home is transformed into a semi-public space for the duration of the "live" event through the gathering of people in front of the television (pp. 95,128). The home – or the distant location - allows viewers to "attend the whole of the event" and become active participants (p. 133). The knowledge that the event is simultaneously viewed by others creates a sense of "collective participation" (p. 131). Dayan and Katz however, argue that as much as television tries, it does not succeed in transporting viewers "there," an aspect that this chapter will challenge.

Couldry (2003) similarly emphasises the strength of live television in its ability to allow audiences to simultaneously enact the rituals irrespective of geographical restrictions. As he argues, the viewer is connected "with real events" rather than "portrayals" of them thereby tying audiences into the exact moment the ritual is practiced hence "guarantee[ing] a potential connection to our shared social realities as they are happening" (pp. 96-97). Couldry further explains that viewers who tune in to watch a live broadcast are a specific "representative social group" who see the media as significant to obtain access to something that is worthy for the social group. With that, media acts as a "social frame, the myth of the mediated centre" (pp. 98-99).

In line with Dayan and Katz (1992) and Couldry (2003), I argue that the live broadcasting of 'Ashura rituals is significant in allowing those who are not physically present - those part of the "representative social group" Couldry highlights and who tune in to participate rather than ridicule or criticise - to become part of the collective group. Mediation allows the rituals to be "performed

in synchrony in multiple locations via different media" (Sumiala 2013, p. 86-87).[73] The willing and receptive viewer - and I recall my own mother's tears as she viewed al-Manar every night during 'Ashura - is capable of sharing in the grief of those present in the complex as those at home lower their head and slowly perform latm. Through remote television and Internet attendance, solidarity is achieved over simultaneous grief thus reaffirming one's values and belonging to the mourning group (Dayan and Katz, 1992, p. 42) irrespective of place.

Hence, the broadcasting of Hizbullah's rituals, in much the same way that physical participation socialises attendees into the group headed by Hizbullah as an authoritative entity, so too do their mediation. This is however, not only facilitated through simultaneous experience but also because the mediation allows viewers experiences that those physically present also encounter. To begin with, distant viewers see what those in the complex view. For example, within the complex are images of specific battle moments that allow attendees a visualisation of Karbala and thus aid in remembering and mourning processes. Interestingly, for those watching from their TV screens, visual remembering is also experienced since at specific moments in the lamentation, the camera focuses on the illustration that captures the narrative, thus transporting those at home to the scene (image 5.1). On another level, Hizbullah manages to elevate collective participation in mediated rituals through eliciting the emotions of those at home and in doing that, again allows for attachment and loyalty to Hizbullah. While Nasrullah stressed the importance of physically attending rituals as they are more successful in eliciting

---

[73] Here, Sumiala is referring to one's ability to view the live broadcasts through their telephone, television, computer and other electronics (2013, p. 87).

Image 5.1. Screenshot of mediated internet livestreaming of ʿAshura rituals. Oct 15, 2015.

emotions, I believe that those "attending" at home are also involved in the emotional processes. Through camera techniques, al-Manar is capable of allowing those at home to experience the collective mourning as cameras translate the complex's dynamics to distant viewers. Although viewers cannot hear the crying or sobbing of attendees (however al-Manar does at times unmute the sounds of attendees at moments of high intensity), the camera captures their visual grief and the reciters' tempo. For example, during the mourning recitation, the camera moves slowly among the attendees to mimic the grief-stricken voice of Ali Sleem and zooms onto the faces of those in intense mourning. In moving between shots, the camera blurs in and out, again in slow motion. However, during the latm

period, which is energetic and effervescent, the camera moves with a slightly faster speed and tends to capture movement of people in groups rather than focus on individuals. Thus the collectivity of the physical act is caught and those at home who lightly beat their chests feel part of the group that is televised. The mediated rituals are thus significant in that they allow for collective belonging to Hizbullah's wider political Shiʿa nation and more importantly, the cameras' focus on individual grief and group activities educate viewers about the proper responses to ʿAshura recitation and in that socialise them into the wider group.

Such acts should however be analysed with the findings presented above about children's participation. Indeed, one needs to remember that viewers are familiar with ʿAshura rituals from an early age. Hence, the narratives, events, crying and latm at the right moments are ingrained in audiences and all that is needed is merely the reciter's narration to transport viewers into the collective space. So, contrary to Dayan and Katz (1992), I argue that viewers of the mediated rituals go 'there' – the 'there' not necessarily the complex but a 'there' of collective mourning with a collective group that is experiencing the rituals together. Viewers do not necessarily need to see the rituals on screen but the mere act of hearing the latmiyyats and mourning recitation allows the them to transport to a mourning place - one that they are accustomed to experiencing - as they lower their heads and listen in the same manner that they do when they physically gather. Observing my mother as she watched al-Manar (or more precisely, heard al-Manar as she predominantly lowers her head), I was awed not only by her tears but also by her state of intense focus so much so that I once had to call her three times to grab her attention.

On another level, one might argue that those attending via television experience an elevated ritual participation. As Dayan and Katz argue, while attending the rituals physically can often be chaotic and messy, the same ritual on television tends to be characterised "by an almost pedantic concern with unity: unity of time… and of course, unity of action" (1992, p. 90). This strikes me as remarkably true within the context of Hizbullah's rituals. Observing their mediation, I was struck by the fact that there was no trace of the attendees' chatting while Nasrullah or the religious figure gave their speech. This is because in the mediated rituals, the noise of the attendees is muted with only Nasrullah's voice broadcast thus giving further significance to his words. There was no trace of the young students finishing their homework or the bickering amongst the women during the daily majalis. There was also no trace of the shoving and pushing that I personally experienced during the 2014 masira. What was captured was the collective act of lowering one's head, the unified latm of the men, the unified voices chanting allegiance to Hussein and Nasrullah and the unified arms stretching into the air. In addition, one should note that, contrary to the broadcasting of Diana's funeral for example, there is no narrator explaining things or interrupting one's thought or mourning process. Instead, it is the images of participants and a focus on tone and recital – and which viewers are familiar with – that television viewers experience. Through all this, the Shi'a nation is presented and promoted to the distant viewer as a cohesive and united one and with distant viewers beating their chests at the same time, they become part of the unified Shi'a entity.

Image 5.2. Screenshot of Internet mediated rituals. October 1, 2017.

Additionally, those participating through the media, unlike those physically attending, experience the event in its totality in the sense that they view the whole event (Dayan and Katz 1992, p. 95). In the case of Hizbullah's mediated rituals, this totality does not mean that the cameras capture every single raw activity as this is far from the case. By totality, I mean the ability of distant viewers to observe the masira for example, in more than one location and from more than one angle and section of the rally. Hizbullah's cameras capture the tenth day rallies taking place in multiple areas in Lebanon as well as the different sections in the Dahiya masira: for example, the women's section, the Scouts' section, the religious figures section, etc. (image 5.2). As such, viewers experience multiple locations and are given the opportunity to hear Nasrullah's full speech which had already begun well before I had reached the end. Additionally, while my participation in the 2014 masira only allowed me to walk a distance with other participants, others at home were

capable of viewing the events taking place both inside and outside the complex and in multiple places within Dahiya. To viewers then, the home becomes another location – albeit one not caught on camera – of participation and as such, viewers become part of the collective nation in spite of their distance.

This Shiʿa collectivity is evident on social media channels whereby logging onto Facebook during ʿAshura, especially on the tenth day, one can observe people's shared clips - some from previous years – which are not restricted to Lebanon and their own participation, but also include gatherings from Iran, Iraq and even Australia and Russia. Collectivity and solidarity are achieved, asserted and maintained through the interactions that take place with many commenting 'ma'joureen'[74] to acquaintances' uploads.

To conclude this section then, I have demonstrated that Hizbullah's mediated rituals, much like physical participation, are socialising, educational and promotional in nature. In line with Dayan and Katz (1992) I have also argued that mediation allows Shiʿas in distant locations the ability to become part of the collective group as they listen together, cry together and perform latm together. Hence, the Shiʿa nation is not only limited to the territorial entity of Dahiya and to the bodies physically participating but also to those tuning in from other locations to experience the rituals simultaneously. And similar to the physical gatherings, they assert the adoption of Hizbullah as the centre of the group as a religio-politico entity. However, it is pertinent to point out that it does not exclude those who do

---

[74] The phrase roughly translates into: 'may God reward you.'

not adopt Hizbullah's religious discourse for many of my acquaintances who emulate Fadlullah also tune in to watch. In that respect, al-Manar becomes a core promotional site that allows Hizbullah to spread its values, political stances and rhetoric and to educate and socialise. The channel also allows for emotional attachment, hence creating and maintaining a sense of loyalty to the Party through the very act of mediation. This should come as no surprise since to those within the complex, much of what they experience is very much mediated as they too observe Nasrullah though a screen and hear him through speakers.

Still, to assume unquestioned observance of the mediated rituals is again inaccurate. Although Couldry reiterates a number of key points put forth by Dayan and Katz, he provides a number of critiques, which are helpful to fully understand Hizbullah's televised rituals. One of these is the assumption that media events "always have positive, hegemonic effects" thus overlooking that there are always "dissenters or apathetic bystanders." Taking the example of Princess Diana's funeral, which Dayan and Katz drew on, Couldry reasons that not only did a number of people not watch, but also, many did not experience the grief that was projected in the televising of such an event thus falling short of the act of "integrating society" that Dayan and Katz claim (p. 64).[75] And as explored in chapter 2, Lundby (2011) explains that online interactions are secondary to offline, face-to-face, ones, with the former acting as extensions to offline interactions. As such, those who are religiously active on the Internet are typically religiously active offline as well (p. 1224). And with a Shiʿa demographic far from being

---

[75] Couldry (2003) presents a list of critiques but I focus on those which are significant to analysing the notion of the Shiʿa nation.

unanimously religious as was explored in chapter 4, Hizbullah's ʿAshura rituals are not collectively received both nationally (to those who see the rituals as power displays) and amongst Shiʿas as not all approve, perform and attend these ritual gatherings. In fact, a number of younger Shiʿas disapprove of them as explored above. This rejection is extended onto the mediated rituals as not all Shiʿas – locally and no doubt on a wider scale – observe the rituals on television, again for the same reasons. As Rana asserts, although her parents do watch al-Manar's rituals, she is typically in her room when they do.

4.1 The Politics of Religion

Hizbullah's ʿAshura rituals can be categorised as both calendrical and commemorative rites with the former involving the act of remembering a historical event which "express[es] the most basic beliefs of the community" whereby a "historical narrative" is transformed into "a type of cyclical sacred myth, repeated annually, generating powerful images and activities of corporate identity." The latter involves invoking "the original events" to affirm their values, to produce their meanings and to release "something of their original transformative power" (Bell 1997, pp. 104-108). However, the rituals simultaneously act as political rites and it is the task of this section to demonstrate this thereby asserting the role of religious sites in political communication processes, the intertwining of religion and politics within the Party's discourse and the political identity of Hizbullah's religious nation.

According to Bell (1997), political rituals are those that "specifically construct, display and promote the power, "wealth, material resources, mass approval, or record-high productivity" of political institutions or groups (pp. 128-129). That in addition to the unity and coherence of the group and its "shared values and goals" and the willingness of individuals to act as a political force (p. 134). That is very much the case with Hizbullah's ʿAshura rituals. For, similar to political rallies, Hizbullah's ʿAshura rallies act as spectacles of power and dominance and promote specific images tailored by the Party (Wedeen 1999, p. 13) and which are disseminated to the wider public as a result of mediation. To begin with power demonstrations, the Party's religious rallies emphasise the solidarity of participants to outsiders (Purzycki and Sosis 2013, p. 102) and ultimately their group loyalty to Hizbullah as explored above. As Moazzen (2015) confirms, Shiʿa rituals have historically acted as a confirmation of community cohesion to "critics and detractors." He adds that yearly processions and through the high number of participants "must have had a sheer physical strength that was itself a challenge to Sunni attitudes" and which conveyed the strength of the community in face of the marginalised status they occupied (p. 6). Within a Hizbullah context, one need only monitor the tenth day procession to observe the sheer number of participants which no doubt reflects both the cohesion and power of the group. And because participants partake in Hizbullah's rituals rather than for example, those of Amal, the rituals ultimately reflect the power of Hizbullah. For example, on a phone conversation almost ten years ago that took place on the tenth day rally of that year with Abdo, a Christian Maronite, he commented that the number of participants was Hizbullah's intention at displaying its political strength to their

March 14 rivals.[76] In the 2014 procession, Nasrullah had the previous night called on Shi'as to participate in the rally to convey to their enemies - in this case a reference to ISIS - that Shi'as were not scared of the threats against them and which were rumoured to include bombings during that year's procession. The roads in Dahiya were packed the next morning.

Also, in the same way that political rites reflect the power of the leader, so too do Hizbullah's 'Ashura rituals. Not only do participants chant 'Labbayka ya Nasrullah' – thus confirming Nasrullah's position relative to the Hizbullah brand - but his physical presence becomes an ecstatic moment whereby participants unknowingly reveal the stature that he holds. More importantly, their participation confirms the extent to which his followers are willing to answer to his calls. Additionally, Nasrullah's regular presence in light of the security threats against him is also a clear display of power. In the 2015 ritual commemorations, not only did Nasrullah appear once, but twice, thus confirming his own defiance to security threats. In that way, Hizbullah's 'Ashura rituals are communicative and promotional not just for the internal audience that the Party aims to socialise and educate but are also communicative to an external one which it seeks to intimidate. And in 2015, with ISIS as the main enemy that Hizbullah sought to address (see chapter 6), communication and power dynamics are aimed at other Muslims hence once again demonstrating the problems with Gellner's notion of the singular Muslim nation.

---

[76] This phone conversation took place at a time when March 14 and March 8 were at the height of their political animosity.

But there are also other power dynamics at play that Bell (1997) overlooks. For, the rallies' high level of organisation and Hizbullah's ability to control the streets in spite of the presence of thousands of people also reflects the Party's power. Men, women and children Party members,[77] are meticulously choreographed by Hizbullah to reflect careful discipline as they beat their chests and chant their loyalty to Hussein and the Party. Additionally, the display of security measures has become a recent factor in visually asserting power. Following the 2014 tenth day procession, media outlets were filled with images of Hizbullah's swat team members, or "ninja" in reference to their full black clad attire and masked faces.[78] Various media outlets reported on the ninjas' role in security measures with many reporting that they were proof of the new Russian weapons that the Party had acquired. The same security display was again practiced during the 2015 rally where Hizbullah swat officers roamed the streets with charcoal on their faces, leading security dogs and driving sand covered four-wheels. The demeanour of the officers reflected, without doubt, the spectacle and performative dimension of their presence.

Finally, in observing al-Manar's mediated rituals, one can notice that the masira locations are in multiple Hizbullah controlled spaces: Beirut's Dahiya, Tyre in the South and Baalbeck. I argue that the commemorations' location also reflect power - in this case, the power of control that Hizbullah exerts in such spaces. While security measures and restrictions in Dahiya assert this to a mostly internal

---

[77] The choreographed children in the procession are members of al-Mahdi Scout organisation, Hizbullah's scouts.
[78] See https://news.vice.com/article/hezbollah-shows-off-new-ninja-like-uniforms-in-lebanon and https://news.vice.com/article/hezbollah-shows-off-new-ninja-like-uniforms-in-lebanon for articles on the 'ninja' attire. Last accessed January 30, 2018.

audience, the ritual mediation communicate that to a wider audience. Rituals also seek to promote these specific areas as Shiʿa dominant ones within a population composed of Sunnis, Shiʿas and Christians and thus, along with ʿAshura posters, mark the spaces as Hizbullah territory. Thus, a 'public space' becomes one that is orchestrated by the Party and where the 'public' assumes a new definition where power is a factor. In that, Dahiya is branded as a Hizbullah territory to those viewing from home and which is further asserted through the displayed Hizbullah flags throughout the complex and masira, the posters created for the occasion and the images of past leaders, Iranian figures and martyrs. In addition, the rituals include the presence of diverse flags such as the Palestinian one and in the 2015 and 2016 masiras, the Bahraini and Yemeni flags were waved by participants thus consolidating Hizbullah's support for each country's battle. In fact, the 2016 masira which took place a mere days following the Saudi attack on a mourning gathering in Yemen, was dedicated to the oppressed Yemenis and called for people to march in solidarity. In that sense, the rituals not only communicate the Party's power but also their values. By waving the Hizbullah flag and through carrying the images of martyrs, the Party asserts its resistance identity. Similarly, through waving the Lebanese flag, Hizbullah confirms its Lebanese identity and through waving flags of other Arab countries which are enduring oppression, the Party confirms its solidarity with them and as such visually promotes its Arab and anti-oppressive stances and likewise, their interpretation of the Karbala battle as a revolutionary model.

Evidently, Hizbullah's rallies are loaded with political meanings and dimensions so much so that one informant, Lina, explained in an interview in November 2014

that she refuses to participate in them as she views it as a political rally rather than a religious one. So while the mediation is of significance to the transnational Shiʿa nation, it is equally important as a political communication channel through which Hizbullah can promote its power dynamics and nationalist identity.

But there is something equally profound within the rituals and which assert their role as political rituals: the speeches given by Nasrullah. Thus, the next section tackles the role of political speeches within religious rituals, thereby sealing the character of Hizbullah's religious rituals as political in essence as well as in practice. I first start with analysing Nasrullah's religious speeches to uncover that in more recent times, Nasrullah has directly linked the religious to the political before moving on to analyse his 2017 political speeches on the ninth night and tenth day of Hizbullah's ʿAshura commemorations.

4.2 Nasrullah's speeches:

4.2.1 Beyond the religious

During the Muharram period, Nasrullah starts the first day by giving a speech that typically congratulates Muslims on the New Year and offers condolences to all Shiʿas for the death of their Imam. Loyalty is sworn to Hussein and Shiʿas are advised about the particularities of the occasion such as what to increase in religious practice and what to refrain from. He then gives a religious speech every other night, only to break this pattern on the ninth night and tenth day where his speech addresses political issues.

Nasrullah's religious speeches during Muharram tackle a specific topic that forms a complete narrative when put together. Although each one can act alone, they also form a series-like collection that builds up on the previous speech to teach, preach and respond to religious concerns. However, the religious and the political are very much intertwined as a result of Hizbullah utilising Hussein's martyrdom to explain present day situations. This occurs on both an individual and group level as 'Ashura rituals are not passively performed and transmitted through generations but are a means of collective remembering that rationalises the present (Shanneik 2015, pp. 96, 98). In Hizbullah's case, the link between past and present is rooted in politics whereby Hussein's martyrdom assumes a political dimension and is understood in political terms. The Karbala battle also becomes the roots to explain the injustices and oppression of modern times: be it those caused by the Israeli oppressor, ISIS or internal political enemies. The enemy is portrayed as Yazid and the Islamic Resistance and its fighters as Hussein. To allow for this, Hizbullah, and in line with Shi'a practices throughout as Moazzen (2015) explains, constantly reinterprets the Karbala battle to suit the political interests of the Party.

Let me demonstrate this by drawing on the 2017 religious speeches which, on the third night, involved a historical trajectory starting from Mohammad's period moving successively to Hussein's battle, focusing on specific instances to elaborate on and directly relating these to present political conditions. Nasrullah relayed the rewards that were bestowed on the people of Medina after they received Mohammad for protection and in comparison, emphasised their punishment after they refused to aid Hussein: two years after Hussein's martyrdom, Yazid sent an

army of 22,000 with permission to do whatever they pleased with its inhabitants after they imprisoned its wali. The result was 10,000 deaths and the birth of a thousand babies to unmarried women nine months later. Throughout, Nasrullah made constant links to ISIS thus framing them as Yazids of our time. However, Nasrullah's moral of the story was in utilising the narrative to highlight one's duties and responsibilities (here in reference to resistance) in battling the oppressor for the sake of one's group, family, umma, etc. This is then linked to Palestine where Nasrullah asserted that had the Arabs fulfilled their duties and directly aided Palestinians, Israel would not have grown to garner the power it does today. In comparison, had resistance groups not fought Israel, Lebanese territories would have been lost;[79] had ISIS not have been fought, the region would have been altered and destroyed. With this, Nasrullah drew on Hussein to explain ISIS's atrocities, mobilise Shiʿas to emulate Hussein's sacrifices and explain the reasoning behind Hizbullah's participation in the Syrian war and beyond. Religion thus becomes the basis for political activities as Nasrullah again promotes resistance in religious, moral terms for the benefit of the umma and the region. More importantly, religion becomes the basis for future battles.

For, on September 25, 2017, marking the fifth gathering night, Hussein's sacrifices and his position as a role model were drawn on as Nasrullah explained that to emulate Hussein is to be responsible, fulfill one's duties, give one's money, self and children and to be ready to migrate when needed. Understood in the context of previous threats to Israel about the participation of different resistance factions in

---

[79] Here, resistance is not limited to Hizbullah but all the previous group that fought before and alongside them.

any upcoming war - including armies from Palestine, Iran, Yemen, Pakistan and Afghanistan - Nasrullah's calls are a clear indication of the Party's attempts at mobilising audiences to participate in future battles, be it ideologically, financially or physically. Indeed, in the interview conducted with Nasrullah on January 3 as explored in chapter 1, he asserted their preparation for an inevitable upcoming war. Hence, Nasrullah's rhetoric in this speech is quite significant. Not only does he clearly demonstrate Hizbullah's preparation for an upcoming war thereby reflecting that the Party's political acts and media content are very much preemptive as argued in chapter 2 but more importantly, he clearly articulates what it means to be part of the religious nation: it is not separate from resistance and politics but the act of resistance is at the heart of it. On an equally significant level, Nasrullah articulates that to be a true follower of Hizbullah and part of the Party, one cannot adopt Hussein as a figure without emulating his political action. So while this might not seem directly promotional, it is in the sense that it promotes the Party's values in terms of religion (the centrality of Hussein) and resistance as linked to the Imam. This is of course, addressed to a Shiʿa supporting demographic whom Hizbullah targets in its religious speeches. The political speeches on the ninth and tenth day however, address a wider audience, both supporters and enemies, and articulate the Party's wider nationalist discourses.

4.2.2 ʿAshura's Political Speeches as Nationalist Channels

Nasrullah's political ʿAshura speeches address local and regional issues and are broadcast on al-Manar and on multiple other channels such as NTV for the significant political content that they communicate. Indeed, ʿAshura's political

speeches, as with any other of Nasrullah's political speeches, act as a channel

through which Nasrullah can respond to issues, explain events and communicate

with the enemy. However, a closer analysis reveals that Lebanese, Arab, Muslim

and regional nationalism are very much ingrained in the speeches.

In what follows I draw on the speeches of the 2017 commemorations, starting with

the ninth night speech, which lasted an hour and 12 minutes.[80] As can be observed

in figure 5.3, the bulk of the speech was reserved for "local" issues where Nasrullah

addressed the Lebanese public with matters that were of particular concern on a

national level. Throughout, Nasrullah remained calm and his rhetoric portrayed

Hizbullah as concerned with national stability and progress. His use of 'we' and 'us'

included at certain instances the whole Lebanese nation and at others the 'we' as

Hizbullah, although the two were never at odds with each other. And although

Nasrullah mentioned rumours that were circulating about the elections, he made

no mention of specific names thus avoiding the escalation of tensions. The general

impact of the first section of the speech was one of a strong Lebanese identity and

belonging: Lebanon's general problems were those that Hizbullah was aware of,

concerned with and aiming to solve. But perhaps the most significant aspect

promoting Hizbullah's Lebanese national identity is the last part of this section

where Nasrullah raised concerns about Israel's repeated violations of Lebanon's

sovereignty through spy devices and cameras, the latter of which contains

exploding devices. Fearing for the safety of inhabitants, Nasrullah stressed the

Lebanese state's role in addressing the issue politically or else "we will look into

---

[80] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGa4Xu24PvE for the full speech. Last accessed January 2, 2018.

Speech Clock	Topics covered	Duration
Min 2:45 start of speech	salutions and thanking	4.86 min
Min 7:31 Addressing internal Lebanese issues	- Maintaining stability + calmness and dialogue - Local problems such as elections - Lebanon's security - Palestinians in refugee camps - Illegal firing of weapons - Syrian refugees - Government responses to Israeli violations	38.17 min
Min 45:48 Regional issues	- Daesh - Daesh and Israel - Threat of regional divisions - Arab countries and Palestine - KSA in regional wars	28 min
Min 1:12	Renewing loyalty to Hussein	11 min
Min 1:23	End	

Figure 5.3. Categories of information in Nasrullah's ninth night political speech of the 2017 ʿAshura commemorations.

it," because "we will not allow for our people to be in danger and stay silent about it", the 'we' and 'our' here in reference to Hizbullah. Nasrullah then resumes a united Lebanese rhetoric using phrases such as 'our country, our people, our land.' With this, Nasrullah confirmed Hizbullah's Lebanese identity and exhibited the Party's role as the protector of both Lebanese territories and the sovereignty of its land and people thus acting within the understanding of modernist nationalism as explored in chapter 2.

The move to the second section of the speech saw Nasrullah confirm Hizbullah's Arab and Muslim identity. In addition to drawing on Palestine, Nasrullah addressed issues of significance to the region. To begin with, ISIS was the opening topic, with Nasrullah condemning their atrocities in the name of Islam and

confirming that had ISIS been victorious, Jordan, Kuwait and even Saudi Arabia would have suffered. Although he makes no reference to their role in battling ISIS, the underlying message can be understood as such, thus asserting the Party's role in both protecting the name of Islam and the region. With that, Hizbullah and other resistance parties become the forces who have the Arab and Muslim nation at heart through the very protection of these nations. This is further emphasised with al-Manar's cameras capturing Sunni religious figures and African Arabs in the complex as a means to assert that Hussein's martyrdom is one of anti-oppression and anti-colonialism rather than of a sectarian discourse. Hence, anyone who takes Hussein's stance becomes part of the political – and to an extent – the religious nation.

But perhaps the most important aspect of Nasrullah's speech was that which pertained to Kurdistan. Explaining that the attempts at separating Kurdistan from Iraq was the new dangerous project by the U.S.A. and Israel to weaken Arab and regional states, Nasrullah again portrayed the Party as aiming at protecting the whole region. More importantly, it reflected his view of the region as one which brings together people of different religions, sects and races rather than one that is composed of homogeneous entities in different territorial spaces. And by drawing on Israel as a collaborator, Nasrullah was once again emphasising the element that the Arab streets united against and which brings them together.

The same nationalist rhetoric was reiterated in the tenth day speech. Although much shorter, Nasrullah again emphasised Hizbullah's Arab and Muslim identity. For, Nasrullah focused on ISIS and the destruction they had inflicted on the region

and Islam paying particular emphasis to the support the group had found in U.S.A. and Israel and the rootedness of the group's ideology in Wahhabi thought. Emphasising a Muslim and anti-oppressive identity, Nasrullah also asserted support for Yemen and the "oppressed" people of Bahrain and interestingly, the Muslims of Myanmar. And although Nasrullah mentions Issa Kassem, a Shi'a scholar that is imprisoned in Bahrain, he makes no mention of sectarian differences but rather focuses on the destruction inflicted on the "homes, markets, cities and villages" of Yemen and on the silencing of the people of Bahrain. In doing that, Nasrullah portrays the Party as one that is willing to stand up to the oppressed, rather than one concerned with Shi'a groups as is exemplified in his condemnation of the horrors committed against the Muslims of Myanmar.

Still, as with all of Nasrullah's political speeches, Israel is extensively covered as Nasrullah reiterated Israel's support for ISIS and Kurdistan thereby again emphasising Israel's role in destroying the region. But perhaps the most interesting aspect of Nasrullah's tenth day speech is in addressing the Jews of Palestine – which he differentiated from Zionists. Although it is quite common for Hizbullah to communicate with Israeli citizens (see Harb 2011), Nasrullah here *advises* them to "divide their fate from that of Zionism" calling on all those who had "occupied Palestine" to return to the countries they migrated from. In that, Nasrullah asserted Hizbullah's view of Israel's existence as one of colonialism and the Palestinian cause as a righteous one (hence portraying themselves as an anti-colonial resistance party) and that Hizbullah's battle is not with Judaism but rather with Zionism therefore moving beyond an anti-Semitic rhetoric.

To conclude this section then, Nasrullah's 'Ashura speeches promote both religious and political discourses. And while the initial nights were typically focused on religion, the last few years, especially following Hizbullah's participation in the Syrian war, growing regional tension and the intense preparation for a regional war with Israel, the speeches have become increasingly political as is evident in the above sections. Indeed, Nasrullah's speeches are a quintessential example of Hizbullah's understanding of the religious nation's political identity on the one hand and of the Party's growing nationalist identities of Lebanese, Arab and regional ones, all of which are articulated through the same channel. And with the high anticipation and viewing of Nasrullah's speeches as is evident by their broadcasting by channels other than al-Manar and their analysis in newspapers the next day, they become a core method through which the Party can promote and articulate its values and religio-politico identity at a time when the Party's political activities and nationalist identities were changing and expanding. However, core to the 'Ashura commemorations is the celebration of resistance fighters and who uphold the multiple nations that Hizbullah subscribes to.

4.2.3 Celebrating Resistance fighters

The stature of resistance fighters is of extreme significance to Hizbullah: the Party has produced numerous documentaries and segments on al-Manar as well as articles and publications dedicated to commemorating resistance fighters and confirming their importance, mission and devotion. This should come as no surprise since it is Hizbullah's fighters who are the men who follow in the footsteps of Hussein and in that are the ideal members of the religio-politico Shi'a

nation. They are also the individuals who fight Israel and ISIS and in that are the reason for the territorial survival of Lebanon and of the region.

The high status that the fighters hold finds its way into Hizbullah's 'Ashura commemorations. Every night of the gathering in the complex, Hizbullah's fighters are mentioned in the closing prayers whereby Ali Sleem prays for the victory of resistance and its fighters. And during the tenth day masira, images of martyrs are carried by the participants who chant their support for the cause.

In addition, Nasrullah has repeatedly stressed the importance of resistance as a religious and divine mission. And in many cases, rather than speak *of* them, Nasrullah speaks *to* them. For example, in a speech during the 2006 war, when the Party's fighters were involved in serious combat, Nasrullah dedicated the following words to his men:

> I kiss your heads that make all heads high
>
> I kiss your hands that get the grip of the firelock
>
> shooting with God's help these spreading mischief on the land
>
> I kiss your feet that are sinking in the earth without trembling
>
> or swaying from their positions even if the mountains had to sway.[81]

As a resistance fighter at the time relayed to me, Nasrullah's words fuelled the fighters' determination, specifically because they came from none other than the

---

[81] To watch the full message, visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RM25C3aubw. Translation has been taken from the video. Last accessed January 2015.

secretary general, thereby emphasising Nasrullah's position within Hizbullah and people's view of him as core to the Party. The words themselves were repeated through every household, both by supporters and enemies with exclamations. What was common in both is the understanding of how much Nasrullah valued his fighters as more than one person commented on the phrase 'I kiss your feet.'[82] For Nasrullah himself to have uttered those words was unimaginable. The man who had shown no public emotions – verbal or physical - when his son was martyred had done so for resistance fighters.

This reverence was again exhibited during the 2015 majalis in Dahiya. In the final night, Hizbullah's fighters occupied the first rows of seating, a section that is usually reserved for religious figures and which can be read in two manners. First, the arrangement serves to confirm the importance of the fighters to the Party and without doubt to Nasrullah himself who appeared in person to deliver his speech. Second, this can be read as a method through which Hizbullah attempted to counter the recent attacks by rival groups and their spreading of rumours that Shiʿas are angered by the high number of martyrs as a result of the intervention in Syria. The rumour itself is not far from the truth since hushed and reserved conversations within Shiʿa circles had been questioning Hizbullah's involvement following the rise in martyr numbers. This simple seating arrangement acts, in line with Nasrullah's speech directed at resistance fighters during the 2006 war, as another confirmation of the Party's and Nasrullah's own reverence for fighters. Although the enemy is no longer limited to Israel, the position and stature of the

---

[82] In Lebanese spheres, phrases about kissing one's hands or feet, depending on the context, is a sign of humiliation or intense love.

fighters has not wavered: resistance as a cause is solid; so too is the position of resistance fighters.

On another level, it should also be pointed out that Party's gatherings are also a channel that resistance fighters have mobilised to confirm their loyalty to resistance, Imam Hussein and to stress the stature that Nasrullah holds to them. For example, during the 2015 commemorations when the fighters occupied the first rows and after Nasrullah appeared in person, the fighters stood up, raised their arms and pledged their allegiance to Khomeini and Khamenei in Iran in what is seemingly a prepared and practiced chant. As such, it is obvious that not only are 'Ashura commemorations, as have been argued so far, forums through which Hizbullah communicates politics to a wider audience but also a channel through which internal communication occurs. This communication however ultimately serves to promote and assert these internal dynamics to the wider audience: resistance and dedication are not only asserted between the fighters and Nasrullah but also to anyone who questions it.

5. Conclusion

This chapter explores Hizbullah's annual 'Ashura rituals as a core communication and promotional site. It examines both the physical settings and the mediated ones during a specific time period and is hence contextualised within wider local and regional political events. In exploring the physical gatherings, the chapter demonstrates the rituals' significance in promoting the vision of the religious nation: it brings Shi'as together, acts as a channel through which Shi'as are

educated on the Karbala battle and are hence socialised into the wider group and through which they can maintain and renew their religiosity and declare their allegiance to Hussein. However, the chapter also argues that while Hussein is at the centre of the rituals, the Shi'a nation that is brought together is also very much political: attending Hizbullah's rituals rather than those of Amal is proof of adopting the Party as the centre that holds the political group together on one level and adopting Hizbullah's Shi'a rhetoric involves the political act or support of resistance. The chapter also examines the mediated rituals and the manner through which they extend the religio-politico Shi'a nation beyond the confines of Dahiya onto a transnational level, irrespective of time and place. It explores the political aspects of the rituals, drawing on power dynamics and nationalist discourses, both of which I argue are intentional and calculated. As Nasrullah himself stated on the ninth night of the 2014 'Ashura speech: 'we are publicly viewed by the world and we are publicly heard by the world.' This statement reflects the Party's awareness of the impact of mediation not only to spread 'Ashura rituals across space and time but also in the political messages that it allows. It reflects the Party's awareness of being monitored by both supporters and adherents to the faith and by enemies thereby demonstrating the significance of media within branding processes. Hence, Nasrullah's 'Ashura political speeches are not only addressed to the Shi'a demographic but to a wider audience. While this has traditionally allowed Hizbullah the ability to condemn and attack its enemies, in more recent times, it has allowed the Party to assert its nationalist identity beyond the Shi'a nation to include a Lebanese, Arab and regional one irrespective of religion and sect and united against common enemies such as Israel and ISIS who attempt to destroy the security of the region and those within it.

But in studying the content of 'Ashura sites, the chapter also asserts a number of key arguments that this thesis makes. To begin with, it demonstrates how a religious site is part and parcel of Hizbullah's political communication. On another level, it uncoveres how a promotional site is involved in educational and socialising processes thus demonstrating the strong links between promotion, education and socialisation within the Party's discourse. Equally significant, the theoretical approach that the thesis adopts allows for the analysis of the rituals as brand events that bring together members of the brand community to create and assert the "feeling of community around the brand" and its "ethos" thereby consolidating the brand identity (Arvidsson 2006, pp. 81-82). Indeed, while attending Hizbullah's rituals is a political statement, the chapter argues that from a branding perspective, this act reflects the attendees' and viewer's adoption of Hizbullah's values. It is worth pointing out that while the practices within Dahiya as place and space include force, the participation within Hizbullah's rituals are not obligatory nor do they contain any form of violence. Hence they act in much in the same way that brands and brand events do: participation is voluntary and reflects acceptance and approval of the Party's values and the loyalty of attendees to Hizbullah's religio-politico rhetoric.

Chapter 6:

Hizbullah's 'Ashura Posters: The *Visualisation of Political Nationalism*

Hizbullah's poster production can be traced back to as early as 1984 as the Party has throughout marked different religious and political occasions with posters including those which celebrate the birth and death of various religious figures such as the Prophet, Lady Fatima and Shi'a Imams. Political posters are also created to celebrate events such as the liberation of the South on May 25, the 2006 'Divine Victory' campaign and the commemoration of different martyrs among others.

But perhaps the most significant posters that the Party produces are those that are created to mark the annual 'Ashura occasion. These are displayed in the territories under the Party's control, especially Dahiya, and therefore help to brand the area as a Hizbullah one through manifesting the religio-politico identity of the Party in the landscape once again. Although the date of the first commemorative poster is not clear, one can safely assume that they were introduced early enough as 'Ashura sites have been core to the Party's communication from the very beginning (chapter 5). Indeed, much like rituals, Hizbullah has utilised the posters as a major site of communication to promote the Party's religious and political discourses and in recent years, Hizbullah's 'Ashura materials have expanded from posters to whole campaigns that include main and secondary posters,[83] animations and videos among others. Their message has also been implemented on al-Manar and

---

[83] See chapter 3 for the meaning of secondary posters in this thesis.

radio programs and reiterated in Nasrallah's religious and political speeches. These products have in the last few years been uploaded onto Facebook, YouTube and on diverse Internet forums thereby allowing wider public reach. Hence, Hizbullah's ʿAshura posters are another medium through which the Party can promote and communicate its religio-politico brand values to a wide audience.

It is thus surprising that Hizbullah's ʿAshura posters have been overlooked within research examining the Party's media and communication generally and political communication specifically and is thus a gap that this chapter aims to fill. In line with the tasks of the thesis outlined in chapter 1 and similar to the exploration of rituals, the chapter analyses posters that are created to mark a core religious occasion as part and parcel of Hizbullah's political communication processes. It explores the specific time period starting from the 2007 ʿAshura poster created following the 2006 war until the present day and examines them as communicative sites that promote the Party's values and changing nationalist discourses. The chapter explores them as channels through which Hizbullah can address its Shiʿa audience hence appealing to the Shiʿa nation and through which the Party can communicate political responses and promote its Lebanese, Arab and regional identity thus appealing to a wider, transnational audience.

In examining the messages aimed specifically at Shiʿas, the chapter demonstrates that Hizbullah's annual ʿAshura visual materials are another medium through which the Party commemorates the martyrdom of Hussein and through which it can assert its Shiʿa identity. The chapter also argues that the posters act as an educational channel through which Shiʿas can learn quotes uttered by Hussein

during the Karbala battle and a means through which Shiʿas can understand how to interpret Hussein's martyrdom. However, much like the rituals, the chapter argues that the posters reveal the tension that exists with other Shiʿa parties, especially Amal, as the posters become a site of competition. Hence, although the posters have in more recent years allowed the Shiʿa nation to interact as a result of their diffusion through social media sites, the chapter again demonstrates that the Shiʿa nation is very much political.

In examining the political dimension of the posters, the chapter uncovers the context at the times of the posters' creation and draws on key political moments to analyse their political messages. The chapter demonstrates that within the time frame that it studies are three different key political stages that stipulate promoting a different rhetoric. The first stage is the period from 2007-2011, which required addressing an internal enemy at a time of growing internal attacks against the Party. This however also involved a continuing political message aimed at the Israeli enemy. The second stage is the 2012 poster that came in light of the anti-Muslim international sentiments, which the chapter argues was a sign of the Party's involvement in the Syrian war as it attempted to garner Muslim support for its defence of Mohammad. The third stage examines the campaigns created after the Party's involvement in the Syrian war had become public as it attempted to navigate a tense political scene. This required carving a message of defiance while asserting the significance of its resistance fighters and appealing to a Lebanese, Arab and regional public through utilising ISIS as an enemy of Islam and the region. The final part of the chapter involves an examination of the aesthetic transformations within the posters and argues that the transformations

271

(epitomised through the discarding of Shiʿa iconography) reflect the Party's attempts at appealing to a wider audience Lebanese, Arab and Muslim audience that it would need in future battles with Israel, ISIS or whatever enemy that is declared. In all this however, the chapter demonstrates that once again, what remains unchanged and core to the posters is Hizbullah's values of religion and resistance.

1. Hizbullah and Posters

The thesis's exploration of Hizbullah's ʿAshura posters follows a modern trend that understands posters as significant sites of study, be it that which fall under commercial advertising (Williamson 1978) or political posters (Maasri 2009, 2012), although as Susan Tschabrun (2003) explains, the latter is classified as "'declaratory and advertising artifacts'" for the aim of "communicating instantly, effectively, and powerfully" (p. 303). To Tschabrun (2003), political posters reveal the attitudes and ideas of political actors (p. 303) and act as "written documents, visual documents, and tools of persuasion" (p. 306).

Tschabrun's points are emphasised in the research of Chelkowski and Dabashi (2000) on visual material produced during the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The scholars highlight the significance of the visuals as a product of a nation that ultimately revealed itself as it "rema[de] itself in images and forms, shapes and colours, frames of anger and anxieties" (pp. 9-10). Chelkowski and Dabashi uncover the utilisation of myths and collective symbols - especially those that are rooted in Shiʿa culture - as one factor to bring down the Shah's power and

following that, to mobilise Iranians for the war between Iran and Iraq (p. 6). They examine the adoption of traditional symbolism to mobilise Iranians into action for "radical and revolutionary purposes" (pp. 9) as Shiʿa figures such as Hussein and Fatima are adopted to emphasise the validity of the cause and to link the present to a religious past that is understood in revolutionary terms.

Outside the Middle Eastern context, Bonnell (1997) examines the visual communication of the Bolsheviks spanning three and a half decades. As she explains, these were produced to affect and shape people's attitudes and beliefs (p. 1) and in that way, create "new social identities, ways of thinking and action" (p. 13). Bonnell explains that by 1931, the Central Committee resolution on political art had already understood the "powerful" impact of visual propaganda for reconstructing "the individual, his ideology, his way of life, his economic activity" (Quoted in Bonnell 1997, p. 37). It was also through visuals that the Bolsheviks could promote their own "master narrative" and ideas as well as their "interpretation of the past, present, and future" (p. 65) as the posters also reflected Bolshevik ideological transformations and change (p. 15).

The study of political posters has found its way into the Lebanese context, be it that which focuses on posters of the civil war (Maasri 2009) or those that are specific to Hizbullah (Maasri 2012, Khatib 2014, el Houri 2012). Perhaps the most significant research on Hizbullah's posters – and wider Lebanese political posters - is that of Zeina Maasri (2009, 2012). In her 2009 publication, Maasri examines the political posters of multiple parties during the Lebanese civil war and which acted as an extended site of war whereby parties "strove to legitimise and sustain their

political struggle while battling for power and territorial control" (p. 3). As explained in chapter 1, Maasri understands the posters as "symbolic sites of hegemonic struggle" (p. 16) that asserted leadership, commemorated the dead, celebrated the living, reflected antagonisms, stressed political and religious ideologies and drove people into action. This hegemony, she explains, is not "of *a* single dominant discourse" but rather "a multiplicity of hegemonic formations, each constituting its own 'regime of truth'" (p. 16). So, what is traditionally seen as political propaganda is transformed within the Lebanese context to reflect a means of surviving a sectarian political reality as each group attempts to assert its own narrative and understanding of history.

Maasri's (2009) research explores key aspects of Hizbullah's political posters - most important of which is their content - and highlights their focus on Jerusalem "as a pan-Islamic symbol" symbolised by the Dome of the Rock. As Massri explains, contrary to leftist parties who saw Jerusalem as the heart of Palestine, Hizbullah's support for the Palestinian cause and liberation is rooted in religious struggle that sees Jerusalem as the centre of the Muslim umma (p. 83). Massri also focuses on Hizbullah's early martyr posters which she explains contained Qur'anic verses and again adopted the Dome of the Rock to emphasise the "'Islamic' character of resistance" and to portray the Party's resistance as part of a "larger pan-Islamic struggle" (p. 97). Maasri uncovers the posters' creation of a parallel between Hussein and resistance fighters through adopting ʿAshura signs and icons. Indeed, blood was overwhelming used to symbolise "self-sacrifice" as was the headband that was inscribed with political and religious statements (p. 99).

In a more recent publication, Maasri (2012) focuses on Hizbullah's political posters as she examines those created at critical political moments such as the first phases of the Party's birth, its infitah in the 1990s and the 2006 war. Maasri's research provides groundbreaking analysis, tracing the Party's visual transformations and aesthetics against a backdrop of political events, arguing that Hizbullah's posters reflect the Party's attempts at appeasing a wider Lebanese audience that excludes it from nationalist discourses as well as appealing to a transnational audience. In analysing the first phase of Hizbullah's poster production, Maasri again emphasises the points she puts forth in her previous publication, highlighting that Hizbullah's early posters were characterised by an unnamed art critic as "vulgar religious indoctrination" (p. 168). However, Hizbullah adapted its visual rhetoric following the end of the civil war whereby it departed from the "earlier radical Islamic model" and addressed issues of national interests such as the reconstruction of Lebanon and liberation (presented as a desire for national sovereignty) to appeal to a wider Lebanese audience and stress its inclusion to the Lebanese entity (pp. 171, 174). This widening of audience was further implemented in the 2006 'Divine Victory' campaign whereby the posters "purposely omitted any direct reference to itself, such as its flag, or [Shiʿa] and Islamic symbolism" (p. 180) and adopted instead "the dominant aesthetic norms and cultural affinities" (p. 182) of the Lebanese media. In doing that, Maasri argues that Hizbullah was presenting itself in modern and nationalist terms to "claim a nationwide public for itself" (p. 182) while countering efforts at excluding it from Lebanese nationalist discourses (p. 186).

In much the same line of analysis, Khatib (2014) examines the 2006 'Divine Victory' campaign and attests to its sophisticated and "less dense, both visually and verbally" aesthetics that marked a departure from earlier works (p. 91). Khatib explores the campaign's Lebanese nationalist rhetoric, achieved through the use of the colours of the Lebanese flag and adds that the campaign simultaneously elevated Nasrullah to a "quasi-divine status, as Lebanon's only savior" though the choice of tagline that referenced Nasrullah's name which "literally means 'victory from God'" (p. 92).

Maasri and Khatib's research is highly relevant to the thesis generally and the chapter specifically. Still, both scholars overlook what I believe are a major site of political study: 'Ashura posters. This is despite their significance both on a production level (in that they are produced annually, enjoy intense preparation and design processes and are widely diffused) and I argue, a political level as Muharram visual campaigns are utilised to respond to local and regional religious and political events and to communicate power. They also act as a medium through which to uncover the Party's transformations and which sees them attempt to appeal to a wider Lebanese and Muslim public much in the same way that Maasri argues about the Party's political posters. Indeed, except for el Houri, Muharram campaigns remain marginalised and overlooked. And in spite of the significance of el Houri's analysis, his input remains limited to internal politics and the decreasing use of the colour black and the adoption of the yellow colour following 2000. This, el Houri argues, is in an attempt by Hizbullah to rid itself of the stereotype of "mourning and severity," to enter "the Lebanese political scene of 'colour politics'" (as each political party is known for a specific colour) and to

present the lessons of ʿAshura "as a model of liberation, struggle, and martyrdom regardless of religious belief." In the latter, this places Hizbullah's "struggle within a long history of liberation movements all around the world" (p. 179).

2. Exploring Hizbullah's ʿAshura Posters

2.1 The Religious

Hizbullah's ʿAshura visual materials commemorate the martyrdom of Hussein on a yearly basis and act as a channel through which the Party can confirm its loyalty to him, his path and his memory. In many cases, much like the posters displayed in the Master of Martyr Complex (chapter 5), they visualise the battle scene either through the Shiʿa iconography that they adopt or through the animations that are produced such as those in 2013. The posters also adopt slogans that were either uttered in Karbala (for example, 'Hayhat Minna-l-Zilla' [Disgrace, How Remote], a phrase believed to have been said by Hussein) or that which is written by the Party to reflect the "authentic" - to borrow a term from Deeb (2006) – understanding and interpretation that despite his death, Hussein was victorious and that he is a courageous, righteous and selfless figure (for example, the 2011 slogan "Izza wa Iba" [Honour and Glory] reflects the interpretation of Hizbullah's martyrdom as a source of honour). Hence, the posters act as an educational medium that teaches Shiʿas about Karbala history through illustration and minimal text and as such, are powerful because individuals are more receptive to visuals than they are to words (Chelkowski and Dabashi 2000, p. 34). Similarly, the posters act as a socialising site in that they reveal to individuals the manner in which the group interprets the

Karbala battle and how the group utilises Hizbullah's martyrdom to explain the present.

Hence, the posters, while not instantly recognisable as such, have much to do with the Shiʿa nation as it is through them that the nation is maintained and asserted. This is further emphasised in more recent times, especially following 2013 when Hizbullah started the act of uploading the campaigns created for the occasion onto different social media sites. This brought about the interaction of Shiʿas as the posters become the profile picture on different social media outlets, subject to liking, sharing and the commenting of the same phrase 'ma'joureen' that is written for the sharing of videos as a sign of approval and collective mourning. And much in the same way that uploading videos and images of one's participation in rituals allows for Shiʿas to interact with each other, so too do the uploaded images.

But like Hizbullah's ʿAshura rituals, the Party's Muharram posters reveal the tensions that exist amongst Lebanese Shiʿas, especially between Amal and Hizbullah thus again adding to arguments highlighting the problems with Gellner's notion of a Muslim society on the one hand and demonstrating the Party's attempts at differentiating itself. Indeed, Amal produces its own posters for the occasion and in 2016, after Hizbullah had produced and uploaded its annual poster onto social media,[84] the Party uploaded new posters a day or two later as it had been brought to their attention that Amal had used the same slogan a year before. This resulted in some Amal members and supporters' ridicule and criticism and

---

[84] It is not clear whether the posters had already been printed and displayed as I was not in Lebanon at the time.

Hizbullah's decision to choose another slogan, although the aesthetic direction remained the same. Thus, the posters reveal that despite the political alliances, the historical tensions between the two groups runs deep and demonstrate how each group attempts to brand itself through the very act of differentiating itself.

2.2 The Political

At the first level meaning, Hizbullah's 'Ashura posters address a Shi'a audience reminding them of Hussein's sacrifices and the martyrs who fought alongside him. However, similar to ritual gatherings and Nasrullah's 'Ashura speeches, the posters are heavily laden with political messages and address a political audience, both supporters and enemies. As Mohammad Kawtharani, Rissalat's general manager, explains, the yearly slogan, which is the element that responds to political and social events is decided by the highest-ranking officials to reflect the conditions at the time of their production (Habbet Misk 2016) thus acting as an *official* site for political communication. It is the task of this section to uncover the political meanings inherent in the posters, paying attention to the changing nationalist rhetoric and the political events that instigated the transformations. It examines 10 main posters and 8 secondary posters, chosen out of a much larger pool of visual material (see chapter 3 for selection processes) because they are the quintessential proof of the arguments put forth in this chapter.

2.2.1 'Ashura Posters: 2006-2011

The internal attacks aimed at Hizbullah following the 2006 war resulted in the

Image 6.1. Hizbullah's 2017 ʿAshura poster.

Party's responses through different media sites as is exemplified in the counter campaign produced following March 14's 'I Love Life' campaign (see chapter 1) as well as through al-Manar.[85] Hizbullah's political responses also found their way into the annual ʿAshura poster (image 6.1) and in the slogan that was adopted: 'Hayhat Minna-l-Zilla,' which at the denoted level reflects the Shiʿa understanding that the slaughtering of Imam Hussein is not to be viewed as disgraceful but rather as a source of pride.

At the connoted level, however, the poster addresses multiple audiences simultaneously: supporters, foreign enemies such as Israel and its Western accomplices (emphasised through the use of English in addition to Arabic) and Hizbullah's internal political rivals. To Israel and its accomplices, the poster's message functions as a continuation of the Israeli war and the 'Divine Victory' campaign to again assert power and victory. To supporters, the message is that of defiance and a strong united front in light of the 'I Love Life' campaign and ongoing open ridicule and which intended to disgrace Shiʿas, especially those who support

---

[85] See and Khatib (2012) and Khatib, Matar and Alshaer (2014) for al-Manar's content following the 2006 war.

Hizbullah and adopt their religious school of thought. 'Hayhat Minna-l-Zilla' thus acts as a clear response to the opposing parties' campaign: by adopting the phrase Hussein is believed to have uttered during the Karbala battle, which reinforces Hussein's honour and strength despite the rallying forces against him, Hizbullah's Shiʿa demographic become a defiant entity against such offensive labels by remembering Hussein. Hence, they collectively unite not merely because they belong to the same sect and are Hizbullah supporters but also because they are collectively discriminated against as they solidly stand together and emulate Hussein in their strength and resilience. Here however, the Party does not exclude other Shiʿa groups and parties as Hizbullah utilises what has throughout united the Shiʿas of Lebanon: their religion and history of oppression. With that, Hizbullah promotes the values of its Shiʿa nation thus educating members of the relgiio-politico nation about how to understand Hussein's martyrdom in the present context, ultimately socialising them into the group that collectively interprets it in a specific manner in that specific context.

The internal political rivals however are the main antagonists that the poster addresses. For 'Hayhat Minna-l-Zilla' acts as a political warning to March 14 groups as it emphasises the Party's strength and ability to withstand the ongoing internal campaign against it especially following the United Nations' approval of a Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) among others, the former of which was to investigate the death of Rafic Hariri. This was an act strongly supported by March 14 in the belief that Hizbullah would become the prime suspect of the crime. As a result, Hizbullah's ministers and allies resigned from the cabinet in November 2006 in an attempt to stop the government's approval of the STL.

In this charged political climate, the slogan comes to stand for the lengths to which Hizbullah is willing to go to in order to remain, like Hussein, defiant and to avoid what they saw as trumped-up charges against them. By placing the ʿAshura slogan against the larger historical backdrop of the Karbala tragedy, the campaign added theological legitimacy to the modern political struggle against Israel and retrospectively turned Karbala itself into a political act of resistance - albeit for internal aims. Hence, the poster emphasises the political nature of the Karbala battle in the modern context and promotes Hussein's sacrifices as of defiance thereby demonstrating the political essence of Hizbullah's religious nation and the utilisation of religion for political purposes.

Likewise, the March 14 support base is also addressed. For, it is March 14 supporters who were at the forefront in terms of the ridicule that ensued following the war and who forwarded the "100 reasons' email. The posters thus reflect Hizbullah's willingness to defend its religio-politico nation through drawing on Hussein as an exemplary figure in much the same way that the Party adopts Hussein to protect the Lebanese nation. In that respect, nationalism involves the act of defence not only of a territorial or physical entity, but also of a symbolic one. The modernist view that nationalism involves protecting those within the nation transforms here to the protection of a symbolic characteristic (honour) within a symbolic nation (Hizbullah's Shiʿa nation).

The period following the 2007 campaign until 2011 similarly saw Hizbullah adopt the same approach. In 2008, the chosen slogan was 'Kunu Ahraran' (Be Free); in

2009, 'Ihya' al Hakk' (Reviving Righteouness); in 2010, 'Hussein, Musbah al Huda' (Hussein, the Lantern of Guidance); and in 2011; "Izza wa Iba" (Honour and Glory). The slogans, when placed in the context at the time of their creation, reveal Hizbullah's attempts at responding to internal pressure and the posters' significance in acting as sites of power struggles and antagonistic dynamics. They also act as sites that promote the Party's religio-politico identity and values as they reflect Hizbullah's utilisation of Karbala not only for resistance causes against the Israeli enemy but as a means to explain and counter internal political injustices thus emphasising Karbala as a school to learn from and a means to rationalise political marginalisation and group discrimination.

2.2.2 2012: Uniting the Muslim Umma

Image 6.2. Hizbullah's poster for the 2012 ʿAshura commemorations.

Hizbullah's 2012 ʿAshura poster (Image 6.2) saw the Party change its focus and approach as it came in response to a different event and time period. For, the poster was produced following a series of anti-Muslim activities in Europe and USA

such as the infamous Danish cartoons, the long-running battle over hijab in France and Holland and the uproar following rumours over building a mosque on Ground Zero. However, it was the 'Innocence of Muslims,' a film created by Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, an Egyptian Copt, that brought about the strongest reactions. This is because the movie depicted Prophet Muhammad as "a bloodthirsty, philandering thug" (Kovaleski and Barnes 2012) as well as a bisexual who approved of child sexual abuse and which also implied that the Qur'an is not divinely inspired but rather plagiarised from the New Testament and Torah (Davies 2012). In Lebanon, thousands in Tripoli[86] took to the streets to object to the movie and ended up burning down a KFC shop as it is an American franchise. On September 17, 2012, Hizbullah organised a rally under the title 'Labbayk ya Rasoul Allah' (We are at you service O' Messenger of God) to condemn the anti-Islam film although no attempts at property destruction were made.

The 'Ashura poster of that year carried the same title 'Labbayk ya Rasoul Allah' and confirmed the Party's continuous rejection of the movie. The poster refrained from the use of a traditional Karbala slogan and Shi'a iconographic references to Hussein and opted instead for traditional Islamic calligraphy from a shared visual pool of Islamic codes and symbols. Hence, the poster's aesthetics - in much the same way that the 'Divine Victory' campaign allowed Hizbullah to move beyond the Shi'a demographic to appeal to a wider Lebanese one and to emphasise its Lebanese identity - provided Hizbullah with a space to address and appeal to a wider Arab and Muslim umma irrespective of sect. By uniting with other groups –

---

[86] Tripoli is a city in Northern Lebanon with a Sunni Muslim majority.

on a local, regional and transnational level - that were condemning the movie, Hizbullah promotes its Muslim nationalist identity by defending the image of the Prophet who binds them all rather than being a group that speaks solely for Shiʿas and which addresses their concerns.

Still, despite Mohammad being the subject of the poster, Hussein is not ignored. For, in the final segment of Nasrullah's speech on September 17, 2012, Nasrullah addressed the crowds and emphasised that when they gather on the tenth day of Muharram, they do so "in defense of the grandson" of the very "Messenger" they have come to rally for. While the march was to fight for the Prophet's image and thus of Islam, the world is reminded that it was Hussein who had first ventured out for that very cause. Within the 2012 poster, this is visually emphasised as the traditional red representing Hussein's blood is used. In line with the speech then, the slogan represents the cause of Hussein's martyrdom as it becomes the words that Hussein utters to his grandfather before his final battle: he is at the service of his calls for the sake of Islam. With that, Hizbullah addresses its Shiʿa constituents to assert the significance of the religio-politico nation as their resistance acts are, much like those of Hussein, ultimately for the sake of Mohammad and Islam. In addition, Hizbullah promotes a rhetoric that would affirm the divine status of the men within their resistance ranks. On an equally significant level, by asserting that Hussein responded to his grandfather's calls, Hizbullah places the religio-politico Shiʿa nation, which emulates Hussein through the very act of resistance, at the heart of the Muslim nation that it addresses in the poster in much the same way that Khomeini and after him Khamenei are at the heart of the Muslim umma as explored in chapter 1. Thus, while not instantly recognisable as promoting the

Party's brand values, the posters, without doubt, promote Hizbullah's religious and resistance discourses.

Still, there is another aspect that should be raised, one that takes into consideration the context of the Syrian uprising that had started in 2011 and Hizbullah's participation - and which at the time of the production of the 2012 poster was still not publicly declared. Chapter 1 explained the rhetoric that Hizbullah adopted when its participation alongside Assad became public as one of their arguments was that their battles were necessary to destroy ISIS who were a threat to Islam and to Muslims everywhere. The slogan in Hizbullah's 2012 poster thus gains a new meaning: by emphasising their aim to defend Mohammad's image, Hizbullah was perhaps starting a pre-emptive rhetoric that they would adopt once their involvement became public and which would ensue in the following year. So by framing itself in Muslim nationalist terms when other Muslim groups were condemning the film, the Party's justification of their involvement alongside Assad as for the sake of Islam and Mohammad becomes an easier and more credible statement as it does not stand alone but is rather a consistent practice that the Party had previously taken. In that, the adopted rhetoric to explain their involvement in Syria gains historical legitimacy. Similarly, by framing Hussein's sacrifices as for the sake of Mohammad and of Islam, Hizbullah would also be starting a rhetoric that it would adopt to guarantee Shiʿa support and more importantly, to mobilise men to join the ranks of fighters; if not for the sake of Zaynab whom they have a personal relationship with (see chapter 7), then for the sake of Mohammad. That is not to insinuate that Hizbullah would not have condemned the movie were it not for its participation in the Syrian war. However,

one cannot ignore the implications that their uproar holds for the Party's future political activities.

Hence, the 2012 poster is an example of Hizbullah's increasing attempts at promoting a nationalist identity beyond a religious and Lebanese one and proof of the Party's preemptive political measures and activities. It is also the visual proof of Hizbullah's brand values and how it is these very values that allow Hizbullah the ability to expand its resistance activities from one based on Israeli resistance to one involving resistance against ISIS and other regional key players.

2.2.3 The Syrian War

By the time that Hizbullah's 2013 'Ashura campaign (image 6.3) was created to commemorate Hussein's martyrdom, the Party's involvement in Syria had become public and March 14 and Arab rejection – including the street - had been articulated. The period following that saw Hizbullah focus their political messages on ISIS as the main antagonist. The period also saw Hizbullah adopt a different rhetoric at different stages to explain their involvement and which were translated onto the adopted 'Ashura slogan and the visual aesthetics. For example, while the 2013 poster promoted an image of defiance, those starting from 2014 were to celebrate the accomplishments and sacrifices of resistance fighters among others. Interestingly, the 2013 and 2014 posters adopted slogans that had been used in previous years, albeit within the context at the time of their production, gained new meanings.

Image 6.3. Hizbullah's 2013 main ʿAshura poster.

To begin with, the 2013 campaign's slogan was 'Hayhat', part of the traditional
'Ashura slogan 'Hayhat Minnal Zilla' which was used in the 2007 ʿAshura poster.
Here however, rather than a defiant image against Israel and internal political
enemies, 'Hayhat' was a confirmation of the Party's strength against ISIS who had
responded to Hizbullah's involvement in Syria with reprisal attacks in Dahiya and
Choueifat as previously explored. Thus, ʿAshura once again becomes a historical
narrative to explain present day injustices and battles but more importantly, a
means through which Hizbullah could expand its resistance activities through

utilising a core brand value, one that has throughout garnered the Shiʿa Party the support, loyalty and trust they needed. This is articulated by Mohammad Kawtharani during an interview on al-Manar. As Hajj Kawtharani explains, the slogan 'Hayhat' captured the "new battle" and the "new Karbala" that was taking place in present day albeit with new forces at war: Yazid and his army are ISIS and the foreign forces and Imam Hussein is in the resistance entity of Hizbullah. The slogan also reflected Hizbullah's changing rhetoric of 'us' versus 'them' whereby the 'us' is a constant Hizbullah – and in some cases, political allies - while the 'them' is an expanding list of rivals that includes Israel, internal Lebanese opponents, ISIS or even Saudi Arabia in more recent times as the below sections will uncover.

Similarly, the 2014 campaign adopted a previous slogan: 'Labbayk.' At the time of the production of the 2014 commemorative materials, the atrocities that ISIS was committing in the name of Islam had been highlighted by multiple media outlets[87] and the annual slogan was again a response to the smearing of the Prophet's image thus affirming Hizbullah's tactful response to the 'Innocence of Muslims' film. Using the term 'Labbayk,' a shorter version of the 2012 campaign, the slogan was an affirmation of Hizbullah's continuous readiness to rise up and protect Mohammad's image – albeit from a different enemy: ISIS. By adopting the 2012 slogan, Hizbullah was creating a textual link to the 2012 campaign thus reminding audiences of the historical roots of defending Mohammad to give credibility to the rhetoric put forth in the 2014 campaign and their involvement in Syria. With that,

---

[87] These include reports of abuse such as being flogged for crimes such as smoking and alcohol consumption.

Image 6.4. Hizbullah's 2014 main ʿAshura poster.

Hizbullah aims to garner not only Shiʿa support for their involvement in the Syrian

war but also a wider Muslim one which it had been losing and which it needs for

future wars by Israel. Indeed, while some might question why 'Labbayk' had not been adopted for the previous years' campaign, it should be noted that Arab and regional *street* backlash – which is the demographic that Hizbullah had succeeded in appeasing following 2006, which was the reason behind Arab states' eventual support of Hizbullah during the 2006 war and whose support it would perhaps need in future wars – had increased in the period between the 2013 and 2014 campaigns thus requiring Hizbullah to visually respond. So by framing their involvement in wider Muslim terms, Hizbullah reminds the region – in an attempt to persuade them to support their involvement - of Hizbullah's Muslim identity through the very act of defending Mohammad's image. Consequently, Hizbullah moves the battle beyond sectarian discourses that the Party is accused of. And much like the 2012 campaign, that of 2014 (Image 6.4) again adopts traditional Islamic calligraphy (Kufic) with even the colour red to symbolise Hussein being sacrificed. So, Hizbullah once again attempts to appeal to a wider Muslim audience and to frame itself in Muslim nationalist terms, albeit here with the political reasons much more evident.

Indeed, this Muslim inclusivity is further emphasised in the interviews conducted by the campaign designers whereby the use of 'us' and 'them' reflect the nationalist discourses at play: the 'us' signified the Muslim world - both Sunnis and Shi'as rather than Hizbullah as a religio-politico entity - united against the atrocities committed by ISIS thereby defending the reputation of Islam from Western perceptions that might view it as a religion of terror. As such, Hizbullah again moves from addressing an audience typically limited to Shi'as to addressing a trans-regional audience and to address trans-regional interests and dignity in a

more explicit fashion. This is made possible through crosscutting religious boundaries and through drawing upon "overlapping ethical ideals and behavioral first principles common across doctrinal traditions"- in this case, the Prophet Mohammad (Corstange 2012, p. 117) - and through discarding of traditional Shiʿa iconography and explicit references to Hussein.

To conclude this section then, the 2013 and 2014 posters mark a change in rhetoric, political message and addressed enemy. This is reflected in the Party's use of slogans that were adopted in previous years thus highlighting that the posters' promoted meanings cannot be viewed in isolation but rather within context and as part of wider media and communication discourses that verbally articulate the campaign's meaning as is evident in the interview with Hajj Kawtharani. As such, the visual materials become part of a wider promotional campaign, all of which reiterate the same messages.

On an equally significant level, the posters, much like those of the previous years, act as a communicative channel that promote the Party's brand values. To the Party's Shiʿa nation, the posters educate and socialise, and to the enemy, they act to promote an image of defiance and strength centred around the historical stances of Hussein. It is this very value that is utilised to allow for Hizbullah's expanding nationalist rhetoric from one limited to asserting a Shiʿa identity to one that promotes a Muslim, Arab and regional one.

Likewise, what remains constant is promoting Hussein's resistance as a brand value, which, starting from 2013, was through celebrating the Party's resistance

fighters, an act that became a main focus to Hizbullah especially following the anger at the high number of martyrs coming back from Syria.

2.2.4 Celebrating Hussein's Fighters

Hussein as a revolutionary model for anti-Israeli political resistance has been an approach that Hizbullah adopted from al-Sadr to mobilise men to join its ranks from the very beginning. Indeed, and as chapter 5 has revealed, resistance fighters are portrayed as emulating their Imam, a rhetoric that is further emphasised within 'Ashura posters especially those following Hizbullah's participation in the Syrian war and growing Shi'a discontent with the number of martyrs.

Such an approach is evident in the 2013 poster explored above. While the slogan is a message of defiance against ISIS, Hizbullah's religio-political nation and the wider region are reminded that Hizbullah's strength stems from its fighters who, through the very act of resistance, are Hussein. This is further affirmed in the secondary posters (composed of ten digital illustrations and ten photo manipulations, the latter of which means that they were created through a combination of photography and Photoshop effects) that were created for the campaign. These were limited to distribution within social media sites, although a small number were printed and exhibited in Dahiya, and were mainly shared and liked by those who adopt Hizbullah's discourse. The illustrations, similar to the ten days of Muharram, were created to visualise figures using traditional Shi'a iconography. In image 6.5 for example, Imam Hussein is depicted on his horse Zoljanah charging for the battlefield. In image 6.6, 'Allahumma takabbal minna

hazal Kurban' ('God, please accept from us this sacrifice') is placed next to the illustration of Lady Zaynab holding the headless lifeless body of her brother.

Interestingly, in the series of photo-manipulations, the image of the defiant Imam is transformed into a Hizbullah member charging towards the battlefield in spite of the bullets fired at him (image 6.7). The illustration of Zaynab holding her dead brother is transformed into a female figure, dressed in a chador, splattering red roses on a coffin (Image 6.8). The photo manipulations thus visually establish a link between the events of Karbala and the realities of resistance fighters in Syria as 'Ashura is once again utilised to explain present day events and to mobilise fighters for present day battles.

Simultaneously, by visualising the links, Hizbullah celebrates its fighters: the martyred, the wounded or those still in the battlefield or about to join. Indeed, through the photo-manipulations, Hizbullah asserts the position of its fighters much in the same way that the 2015 complex seating does and more importantly, visually confirms a core Party value, articulating to the supporting demographic that to emulate Hussein is to battle whatever Yazid that is declared. Indeed, contrary to Bolshevik posters which typically represent the enemy as "serpents [which symbolises evil in Christianity], eagles, crows, spiders, dogs and birds" to "[dehumanise] the enemy, to transform people into nonhuman and often repulsive creatures" (Bonnell 1997, p. 197), the enemy in Hizbullah's 'Ashura posters is visually absent. With that, posters are capable of including multiple enemies as

Image 6.5. First secondary illustration poster for Hizbullah's 2013 ʿAshura commemorations.

Image 6.6. Second secondary illustration poster for Hizbullah's 2013 ʿAshura commemorations.

Image 6.7. First secondary photomanipulation poster for Hizbullah's 2013 ʿAshura commemorations.

Image 6.8. Second secondary photomanipulation poster for Hizbullah's 2013 ʿAshura commemorations.

internal rivals, Israel or ISIS assume Yazid's traits: cowardly, weak, murderous, evil, blood thirsty, uncompassionate, defeatable and going against God's teachings. Such an act no doubt acts to silence disapproving voices from within Hizbullah's religio-politico nation about the number of martyrs. By emphasising the links and with it the belief that martyrs reside in heaven and by affirming Zaynab's celebratory stance following the martyrdom of her brother (and in that educate the women left behind the proper way to react to the martyrdom of the Husseins of our time), the ideology is asserted to a wider illiterate audience since the photo manipulations seem very real. And with the diffusion of the visual campaigns via social media outlets, the message is reiterated and confirmed globally thus consolidating resistance's religious dimension, albeit in a more visually direct manner.

Such links however, have an equally profound aspect to them: by visualising the links, legitimacy is given to Hizbullah's religio-politico nation and its activities. For, it is through the very act of resistance that Hussein – and his legacy - survives and consequently, Mohammad and Islam. By replacing Hussein with a fighter and Zaynab with a sister/mother/wife, Hizbullah visually affirms that the battle with ISIS is the "new Karbala." To abandon the new battle is to abandon, like the people of Kufa, Hussein himself.

Hence, the 2013 campaign visually promotes the Party's religio-politico values that it has throughout articulated verbally and textually: to be religious is to emulate Hussein and to emulate Hussein requires resistance. The posters also celebrate Hizbullah's fighters, affirm their position and highlight their sacrifices like Hussein

before them. And by portraying ISIS as the Yazids of our time, Hussein's

martyrdom becomes a malleable event against whatever Yazids Hizbullah declares

and opposes as religion, a Party value, is once again the basis for participating in

territorial protection beyond Lebanese territories. And while the section

uncovered the visual linking of Karbala figures to Hizbullah's contemporary

society and to Hizbullah's religio-politico nation, the next section will demonstrate

how Hizbullah promotes its fighters as core to the region thus addressing a nation

beyond that of Hizbullah's.

2.2.5 Hussein in a Transnational context

As the battles in Syria intensified, the reverence for resistance fighters further

increased as is evidenced in the 2015, 2016 and 2017 campaigns through both the

chosen slogans and the secondary posters. For example, in the 2015 campaign, the

slogan 'Hussein, the Secret to Our Victories' is a promise of a victorious end as

fighters follow Hussein's footsteps; in the 2016 campaign, the slogan 'Sabrun was

Nasr' (Patience and Victory) is a promise to the fighters that their perseverance

will result in victory; in 2017, 'Wafa' wa Iba'' (Loyalty and Pride) is the celebration

of their accomplishments which had weakened ISIS's hold. The slogans no doubt

promote the significance of the fighters within the religio-politico nation,

reminding the Party's demographic of the significance of emulating Hussein.

Still, there is a deeper dynamic at play within the posters, one which involves

Hussein – through Hizbullah's fighters – within a regional and transnational

context. Let me elaborate on this by drawing on the three secondary posters within

the 2015 campaign and which talk about a past, present and future that relies on resistance fighters. In the first (image 6.9), a war tank with men carrying Lebanese and Hizbullah flags are a reminder of the victorious Israeli withdrawal from the South because of resistance thus allowing Hizbullah to assert its Lebanese nationalist identity. Articulating a past and present, a fighter plants the Party flag in reference to the liberated Syrian lands and the Lebanese ones before that (image 6.10) thus affirming the significance of Hizbullah on a local and regional level. Consequently, the Party promotes its Lebanese identity and a regional nationalist one through the very act of defending the territorial region and those within it - including Christians - ultimately allowing Hizbullah to once again to move beyond sectarian framings. Envisioning a future, a fighter salutes the al-Aqsa mosque as a confirmation of the next battle that they will undertake (image 6.11), which will result in the liberation of Jerusalem thus promoting their preparation and power dynamics to the enemy. By adopting the al-Aqsa mosque, Hizbullah, much like the political posters that Maasri (2009, 2012) explores, confirms Palestine as the centre of the Muslim umma and with that, the Party promotes it Muslim and Arab nationalist identity as well as its anti-colonial and anti-imperialist one.

In all these different nationalist confirmations, what once again remains consistent is Hussein, resistance and Hizbullah's fighters. By placing fighters in the different contexts and in the different battles, Hizbullah promotes its men at the heart of each and every nation, allowing the Party to articulate its wider religio-politico impact as well as the significance of the religio-politico nation itself. By placing its men at the centre, Hizbullah is promoted as the key force maintaining the sovereignty of the multiple nations that it protects. Accordingly, Hussein, as the

Image 6.9. First secondary poster for Hizbullah's 2015 ʿAshura commemorations.

driving and guiding force, is at the heart of the region and the hope for present and future battles, thus giving legitimacy to the Imam, his acts and his legacy and of Hizbullah's theological beliefs. The dynamic of Hussein to a transnational context and a transnational audience is also evident in the 2016 campaign. Indeed, as Twitter feeds during the 2016 Muharram commemorations revealed, ritual

Image 6.10. Second secondary poster for Hizbullah's 2015 ʿAshura commemorations.

gatherings were organised in Foua and Kefrayya in Syria, both of which were besieged by ISIS, where those attending could hear Nasrullah's speech and where the setting included the same slogan exhibited in Beirut: 'Sabrun wa Nasr.' While this is proof of the Party's power dynamics beyond Lebanese territories, it also acts to promote Hussein beyond resistance against Israel and beyond his centrality to Lebanese Shiʿas. To pro-Assad Syrians, Hussein, through the slogan, promises

Image 6.11. Third secondary poster for Hizbullah's 2015 ʿAshura commemorations.

victory to those who follow in his footsteps thus once again demonstrating

Hizbullah's attempts at transforming the Karbala battle to a model of resistance

and victory regardless of place or one's religion.

Hussein in a transnational context within the 2016 campaign should also

acknowledge Hussein as a model for anti-oppression. Indeed, while the campaign

initially addressed Hizbullah's loyal fighters to emphasise their position to the religio-politico nation and beyond, the 2016 campaign garnered a new political dimension when the posters had already been printed and the connoted message already delivered and understood. For, on October 8, 2016, a number of days before the tenth day masira, Saudi missiles bombed a funeral in Sanaa, the capital of Yemen, killing more than 140 people (The Guardian, 2016). No more than two days later, posters commemorating the dead Yemenis had already been designed, printed and displayed in the streets of Dahiya alongside the annual ʿAshura posters. As can be seen in image 6.12, the poster is composed of an image of the bombed scene with the phrase 'The children of Yemen are more valuable than your thrones' written above it – the 'your' in reference to Saudi Arabia. Interestingly, the colours of the poster (red, white and black) are those of the Yemeni flag but also belong to the colour palette of traditional ʿAshura iconography thus linking the blood of the oppressed Yemeni victims to that of Hussein and the mourning of the Yemeni victims to the mourning of Hussein. Consequently, the perpetrators (the Saudi government) become the new Yazids. So in aiding the people of Yemen, Hizbullah and those whose support it are rising to answer to Hussein's calls and consequently, those who abandon it, abandon Hussein. This is further asserted in the placement of the poster between slogans commemorating Hussein as the billboard on top of the poster states 'Labbayka ya Hussein' and that on the side is a series of salutations to the Imam, his children and his companions. In that context, Hizbullah's promise to answer to Hussein's calls extends to the very act of defending the oppressed ultimately promoting Hussein's battle as one of anti-oppression and consequently translating this onto the Party itself. Hence, both Hussein and Hizbullah are promoted as a model for rebellion against oppression

Image 6.12. Hizbullah poster to mark the bombing of Yemen in 2016.

and as a model of righteousness everywhere thus affirming the significance of

Hussein in a transnational and global level irrespective of place, religion or belief

system.

2.2.6 Visual Transformations: Nationalism at Play

Contrary to Sunnis, Shiʿas produce images, especially of the Karbala battle, the latter of which typically abide by traditional iconography and colours. Portrayals of Hussein leaving for the battle usually include his sister Zaynab saying her farewells while Hussein is serious – as is Zoljanah, Imam Hussein's white horse. Other portrayals depict Hussein in such a manner that his head is centre stage in the image thereby anticipating his decapitated head and indicating his determination and willingness to die. His horse is often bowed with a contemplative look to represent its awareness of the Imam's death (Frembgen 2012, p. 181). Similarly, traditional iconography of the aftermath of the battle depict Hussein's chest ridden with arrows, bloodied and leaning on his sword (Flaskerud 2010, pp. 140-145). Women are typically dressed in black chadors, caught in despair as they either bow their head in grief or kneel on the ground with their faces hidden in lamentation of Hussein's martyrdom (Flaskerud 2010, pp. 151-152). Zoljanah here usually bows its head in mourning and is pierced with arrows and bloodied to indicate the wounds it has endured (Frembgen 2012, p. 181).

In the 2009 campaign, comprised of three different posters, we see this traditional dimension at play. For example, the first poster in the campaign (image 6.13) is a quintessential example of the use of traditional iconography. Although Hussein is absent from the scene, Zoljanah, taking centre stage, is captured bowed in mourning to touch Hussein's helmet. A red cape, symbolising Hussein's blood which has flowed onto Karbala's ground, covers Zoljanah's back. The sword, inherited from Hussein's father, is - as is customary - depicted as a traditional sword rather than the two bladed, separate tipped Zulfiqar which is restricted to Imam Ali (Marzolph 2012, p. 94). On Zoljana's side, a green cape representing

Image 6.13. Hizbullah's 2009 ʿAshura poster.

Hussein's lineage stands erect and in the near distance, two of Karbala's women are present at the scene, mourning, dressed in chadors and with no facial features. Instead, a white light covers their face. In the far distance, the minaret of the al-Aqsa mosque is evident.

Such iconography is departed from in the 2011 poster (image 6.14). Here, rather than capturing a serious Imam and an already defeated Zoljanah, the image is of Hussein charging for the battlefield and thus appears to break from traditional representations of Hussein prior to his death. They are both depicted as strong, determined and undefeatable and rather than Zoljanah's sad and bowed head, the

Image 6.14. Hizbullah's 2011 'Ashura poster.

horse shares Hussein's dignified stance and readiness to charge.[88]

This break is further increased starting from 2013 as the main posters adopt a

calligraphic approach devoid of Shi'a iconography including that of colour (Image

6.3). Indeed, in the 2013 poster, red is absent and substituted with yellow. As Hadi

Chatila, a designer on the campaign, explained, yellow signifies speed, the colour of

---

[88] The postures here are reminiscent of Napoleon's in the series of paintings by Jacques-Louis David that aimed at glorifying the French leader.

light and the colour of the sun with Ali Barakat, another campaign member, adding that yellow is the colour of strength, revolution, rebellion, intuition and the colour of warning (Sabah al-Kawthar 2013). In a radio interview on Awrak Thakafiyya (2013), another designer adds that the Prophet Mohammad ordered his army to carry yellow flags, thus showing its importance as the colour of revolution. Similarly, the 2014 campaign and those that came after also refrained from adopting Shiʻa iconography and using red in what Sarah Ashour, a campaign designer, explained is because "ʻAshura is a revolution of life and renewal rather than a revolution of death and blood" (al-Manar 2014).

The transformations within the aesthetics of ʻAshura posters are of significance on two levels: to counter stereotypes and on a nationalist level. In the former, the transformations, much like those of ʻAshura rituals, seek to counter the negative stigmas surrounding the Party and in turn, of Shiʻas thereby elevating their social class. This is achieved through breaking away from traditional Shiʻa iconography and aesthetics. On a nationalist level, in the same way that Maasri (2012) argues that the aesthetics of Hizbullah's political posters reflect the Party's attempts at appealing to a wider Lebanese nation, so too do the ʻAshura campaigns. Indeed, the posters are simple and sophisticated and fall within Lebanese aesthetics and when understood in the context of their organised display and quick removal in Dahiya (chapter 4), assert the Party's attempts at promoting a Lebanese nationalist identity.

But the colour yellow in the 2013 poster and the explanation of its meaning is also of importance. For within the Lebanese scene, each political Party is denoted with

a specific colour and with Hizbullah, it is yellow. So while the 2013 campaign reveals Hizbullah's authentic interpretation of the Karbala battle through the use of yellow, these meanings are transferred onto Hizbullah hence promoting the Party as a revolutionary, strong and dynamic entity, ultimately allowing Hizbullah to become part of the Lebanese nation through the practices that it adopts and through the meanings that it connotes.

On a more significant level however and as mentioned above, the posters allow the Party to promote its Arab and Muslim identity. For, similar to the 2012 ʿAshura poster that saw Hizbullah appeal to a wider Muslim nation through the discarding of traditional Shiʿa iconography, so too does the 2013 campaign. And by interpreting the Karbala battle through the meanings that were articulated in interviews, the Party once again promotes Hussein's martyrdom as a universal lesson to learn from and heed.

Still, one aspect remains unclear: why would Hizbullah implement changes to ʿAshura posters seven years after they were implemented in political posters? The answer lies in resorting back to the 'I Love Life' campaign.

The marking of the applied aesthetic changes was implemented at a time when ISIS was uploading blood filled images and atrocities onto social media sites and which mainstream media was reporting on. It also marked Hizbullah's intensified distribution of the posters in social media sites as the posters were no longer limited to physical display in the territories under Hizbullah's control such as Dahiya but had become part of the global social media scene, which are shared,

liked and commented on, thus allowing it wide distribution. Hence, the campaigns starting from 2013 onwards presented Hizbullah with the perfect opportunity to visually respond to the 'I Love Life' campaign and the "100 reasons' email which ridiculed Hizbullah's celebration of death and Shi'as' focus on Hussein's blood. By interpreting 'Ashura in revolutionary and positive terms - manifested in colour transformations - Hizbullah distances itself from what it has always been ridiculed for. And with ISIS's bloodied images, Hizbullah was capable of further distancing itself from the acts of ISIS and of differentiating itself from the new 'backward' group in the field as ISIS becomes the group that 'loves death.' Hizbullah's gradual transformations were then visually finalised, again strategically, when presented with the perfect opportunity to do so and as a result, promoted both the Shi'a demographic and itself as modern. The gradual break from traditional iconography, in parallel with the continuous progressive understanding of Hussein's martyrdom, becomes proof of Hizbullah's constant attempts to redefine its image within the Lebanese landscape and beyond. Simultaneously however, the wider regional and transnational audience is not exempt from this. Indeed, I argue that Hizbullah utilised social media sites to differentiate itself from ISIS to a global audience including the West who have, as a result of Hizbullah's regional growth, increasingly turned their attention to the Party. So by utilising aesthetic transformations, Hizbullah promotes to the global community an image counter to the terrorist label that it has throughout been framed in, as it is ISIS that the term is applicable to, evident in the images they upload in social media accounts.

3. Conclusion

This chapter analyses Hizbullah's annual 'Ashura posters as a medium for promoting and confirming the Party's religious beliefs, attitudes, values and norms. In doing that, it confirms that what is typically a medium through which the Party commemorates a religious occasion is also part and parcel of the Party's political communication. The chapter demonstrates how the posters, similar to other Hizbullah media such as its rituals (chapter 5), confirm the centrality of the Karbala battle as a religious and resistance entity, and uncovers their significance to the Party's discourse as a medium through which Hizbullah can promote its religio-politico values. The posters commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein and with that seek to bring the Shi'as together for a common cause, which is further asserted through the uploading and sharing of the posters on social media forums thereby allowing Shi'as to interact irrespective of time and space. However, in line with the arguments put forth in previous chapters, the chapter demonstrates that the religious nation is political in nature in that it reveals the tensions with other Shi'a groups such as Amal and more importantly because Hussein's martyrdom, to the Party at least, is understood in political terms and is used to mobilise Shi'as for political causes.

Indeed, the chapter uncovers the political and resistance aspects of the posters. It examines the campaigns at significant political moments and demonstrated how Hizbullah manoeuvres a delicate political environment that, in more recent times, and specifically following their involvement in the Syrian war, has required that the Party attempt to gain the support of an Arab and regional audience as well as a Shi'a and Lebanese one. The posters address multiple audiences simultaneously and when the message is targeted at the Party's Shi'a demographic, the posters

reveal how Hizbullah's brand values allow the Party to branch out beyond resistance within Lebanon. Hence, what is originally a battle used to explain resistance against Israel becomes a battle that allows for Hizbullah's participation in Syria and beyond as Karbala becomes a model for anti-terrorism and anti-oppression.

Framing the battle in these terms however ultimately allows Hizbullah to promote its expanding nationalist identities and to address a regional audience at different historical points. While in 2012, it was to promote a Muslim identity and which I argue is a preemptive measure to garner Muslim support for its involvement in Syria, this further expanded following the publics' knowledge and which saw the Party address a regional audience irrespective of religion. Seen in the context of Nasrullah's hinting at a future war in his 'Ashura speeches, this can only be understood as a means through which to garner a strong backing, either physical or financial.

Evidently, 'Ashura posters explored in this chapter are not so different from the political ones produced by the Party: they are laden with religious, political and resistance messages, address a Shi'a public, a Muslim umma, political friends and enemies, allow the Party to present itself as modern and confirm the importance of its resistance fighters while framing a constantly changing 'us' and 'them.' They also assert the Party's power dynamics and nationalist rhetoric as the posters frame Hizbullah fighters as those protecting land - even those beyond the confines of Lebanese territory. Thus, the Karbala battle presents a basic set of meanings which have simultaneously become flexible as the Party constantly shifts focus to

respond to contemporary political circumstances. Hence, the significance of Hizbullah's 'Ashura posters cannot be ignored within wider political communication. They also need to be understood in relation to other Hizbullah media: when displayed in Hizbullah areas such as Dahiya, they brand the space as a Hizbullah one and in more recent years, when the Party has taken to uploading the campaigns onto social media sites, the visual material uncovers the focus of Nasrullah's speeches.

Chapter 7:

Hizbullah's Children: *The Future of Resistance*

Previous empirical chapters explored three of Hizbullah's communication and promotional outlets and their content. And while children are part of the audience that is targeted in sites such as Dahiya's cultural centres and rituals among others, the focus was mainly concerned with the older demographic, with children occupying a secondary position within the analysis. Hence, this chapter focuses on children specifically as it studies two of Hizbullah's media forms that are specifically targeted at the young: Mahdi magazines (monthly publications aimed at children between the ages of 4-17), and Taha television channel. The chapter examines the two media forms as communicative sites which promote Hizbullah's values and discourses to educate and socialise children, alongside other outlets including the family and schools, into Hizbullah's religio-politico nation thus again highlighting the connections between promotion, education and socialising processes.

In exploring Mahdi magazines, and in line with the themes that this thesis addresses, the chapter demonstrates that the magazines are another site through which Hizbullah can promote its brand values and educate children about religion, specifically Shiʿa history, as well as the concept of resistance. Hence they act in line with Carey's 'ritual view' of communication as something that maintains society and affirm its beliefs. This is to ultimately ensure the survival of the Party's vision of the nation as the child reader is the future fighter, general and leader. The chapter also uncovers how Hizbullah understands and envisions the internal

functioning of its nation, which includes education and gender and family dynamics, and in turn how it promotes these through the magazines. And much like previous explorations, this chapter is again a study of the transformation of Hizbullah's resistance activities as it shows that the magazines educate the young that resistance is not limited to the Lebanese territory but also includes battles with ISIS beyond the confines of the state. Such a transformation is again placed within wider political events taking place. However, the chapter argues that the magazines are focused on children *themselves* and in socialisation processes and that promoting an Arab, Muslim and regional nationalist identity to a wider demographic, while not ignored, occupies a secondary position. This is because the magazines enjoy a more localised distribution and as such, do not primarily communicate with or address a wider regional audience.

The second part of the chapter examines a children's medium of global reach: Taha television channel, which broadcasts by satellite and internet livestreaming. The section uncovers the content of the channel and analyses it in relation to the Party's values and identity. However, examining Taha draws attention to the minimal – and perhaps even non-existent – position that resistance occupies within the channel and argues that Taha's global diffusion has stipulated a more restricted focus in an attempt to counter accusations of brainwashing and indoctrination. In doing that, Taha frames resistance as a moral, ethical and natural response to Israeli's regional threat.

1. Children's Media, Hizbullah and the Region

Children's literature is generally understood to act as a channel through which the young can learn social, cultural, ethical and moral values (Stephens 1992) as well as "social customs, institutions and hierarchies" (Knowles and Malmkjær 1996, p. 44). Literature also acts as a site through which children are informed about the requirements of personality, behaviour and social organisations that would allow them to socially succeed as a member of a group (McCallum and Stephens 2011, pp. 360- 361). Hence, children's literature consciously and deliberately socialises children (Stephens 1992, p. 9) since writers understand that children are the future of the group that they address and thus, literature becomes a method through which writers can instil the child with the values that are expected of its future members (Stephens 1992, p. 3). Such views are asserted by O'Dell (1978) whose study of children's Soviet literature uncovers their content to assert their role in socialising the young as it was through books that Soviet authorities could promote the ideal citizen that they wished to shape and who adopted Soviet morals, a strong collective belonging to the group, discipline, love of work, patriotism and atheism.

Acknowledging the significance of children's literature, scholarship examining children's media in the Arab world has often focused on religious literature and the promotion of Islam and Muslim values. As Mdallel (2003) explains, religion has throughout been a major theme in children's literature with Prophet Mohammad occupying centre stage as well as books on ideal Muslim behaviour, historical Islamic figures and historical fiction, "linked to religious and national themes" (p. 300).

More focused research on specific magazines has been conducted by Avi Santo (2014) in the study of *The 99*, a series of comic books created in 2006 by Dr. Naif al-Mutawaʿs Kuwaiti-based Teshkeel Media Group. As Santo (2014) notes, *The 99* heroes aim at teaching Islamic values as the figures, reminiscent of Superman and Spiderman, are each "imbued with one of the ninety-nine attributes of Allah" (p. 682). The comics, which adopt secular narratives, came in an attempt to repair Islam's reputation following 9/11 and to give "an alternate set of heroes for Muslim children to identify with" and to restore Islam's reputation (Santo 2014, p. 682). As such, the comics are utilised to create a global brand aimed at both Muslims and a global audience rather than being limited to Muslim readers.

And while Santo's research explored comics of wide reach, Edith Szanto (2012) focuses on sect based children's literature, specifically Shiʿa children's books sold around the shrine of Lady Zaynab in Syria, the majority of which are published in Lebanon but also include those from Iran, Iraq and Syria. Szanto analyses a number of these publications demonstrating the similar religious topics that aim at "cultivating pious subjects" through addressing ritual activities, dogmas and the lives of Shiʿa figures (pp. 361-362) and which reflect the dominant religious narratives in each country (Iranian books for example stress "guidance and authority, whether fallible or infallible" while Iraqi ones emphasise the influence of elders) (p. 362). Szanto explores how the magazines drive children into emotionally identifying as Shiʿas and how they act as instruments through which children learn ethical standards, achieved by "situating them metaphorically and pictorially in the realm of the familial by invoking close personal relationships" such as those between parents and children or grandparents and children (p. 363).

These fictional characters, much different from the superheroes in *The 99* in that they don't adopt non-human superpowers, introduce the moral values of Mohammad and the Imams thus portraying "ahl al-bayt as intimately knowable." In doing that, Szanto, following Butler, argues that the magazines create pious individuals and place piety within the "social sphere" whereby ahl al-bayt become the centre and source of religious behaviour (p. 363). The books also teach children about historical events, including how to respond to them – and which Butler identifies as social norms – thereby allowing the child to be recognised as pious through "learning and acting" (p. 364).

The interest in children's media in the Arab world has – not surprisingly – extended onto exploring Hizbullah's media aimed at children. But while Santo (2014) and Szanto (2012) explored religious media, studies exploring that of Hizbullah's have highlighted the themes of resistance as is evident in Tawil-Souri (2007) and Saber and Webber's (2016) analysis of the Party's videogames as well as Tagliabue's (2015) examination of the Party's al-Mahdi Scouts.

As mentioned in chapter 2, researchers of Hizbullah's video games synonymously agree that 'Special Forces' in 2003 and 'Special Forces 2' in 2007 spread Hizbullah's ideologies, specifically those which relate to resistance. The games have become a common leisure activity for Dahiya's youths as they hang in the area's Internet cafés. Similar to the paintball facility, they are of a battlefield setting. However, the videogames "recreate actual battles between [Hizbullah] fighters and the Israeli Defence Forces" (Lyme 2009, p.14). As Souri (2007) explains, the games were produced by the Party's Central Intelligence Office in an

attempt to teach the younger generations who do not listen to "modern history" (p. 539). They also provide a channel where players resist Israel and where the Arabs are not the terrorists but rather battle "Western influence and hegemony" (p. 549) thereby changing the good/evil representations that have for so long dominated the gaming industry. Accordingly, these games are another medium whereby Hizbullah can spread "the group's values, concepts, and ideas" while also allowing the players to relive the war as if they were part of it (p. 549). Players are transported and allowed to relive real battles with the actual geographical and weather conditions at the time of the battle, thus acting as a complimentary product for the paintball facility (chapter 4) and vice versa.

Saber and Webber (2016) reiterate much of the above observations such as the games' countering of Western hegemonic portrayals. The researchers examine the "resistance videogames" created by Hizbullah and the Islamic state (IS) as mediums that expose ideology and political messages thereby acting as "militarised entertainment" (p. 2). Saber and Webber (2016) compare the approaches adopted by both Hizbullah and IS and highlight how both groups' videogames differ in aesthetics (IS adopts "Western aesthetics" while Hizbullah adopts "a guerrilla-like aesthetic") and authorship (IS games do not proclaim an author while Hizbullah acknowledges the games are produced by the Party's Central Internet Bureau thus asserting Hizbullah's local, Arab reach versus IS's global one) (pp. 9-10). But perhaps the most significant observations put forth by Saber and Webber is that which pertains to the recollection of history. As they explain, although both Hizbullah and IS's videogames recreate a past and in Hizbullah's SF, replicate the exact battlefield, they are not historical in that they are

accurate recollections (p. 11) but rather adopt "selective authenticity," a term put

forth by Salvati and Bullinger (2013) whereby a blending of the past with audience

expectations - of how the audiences think a given period or event unfolded - is the

narrative put forth (p. 12). Hence, the videogames do not present the 'objective'

truth but are rather what Saber and Webber call "referential experience: history

brought to mind in a number of different ways, more or less directly depending on

the artefact under analysis" (p. 11). The reasons for this, Saber and Webber argue

is not educational, although they do no deny it, but rather ideological whereby

recollecting the past is done in order to assert a particular ideology (p. 13).

Also examining Hizbullah's attempts at promoting resistance is the research of

Sofia Maria Tagliabue (2015) who studies the Party's al-Mahdi Scouts. Tagliabue

presents an overview of the Scouts' group, tracing its history, identity, activities,

focus on religion, universal values and resistance, relationship with other Lebanese

Scouts Associations and role in the Lebanese society. Tagliabue argues that

Hizbullah's Scout acts as part of the Party's resistance as their goal is to develop

individuals that are willing to join the ranks of its fighters in order to defend their

land (p. 79). Equally significant, it nurtures individuals and their development,

promotes religiosity, attempts to garner support from an early age and encourages

education to secure a better future for Lebanon and those within its ranks (pp. 86-

87). Tagliabue also attempts to answer whether al-Mahdi Scouts is an educational

medium or one of indoctrination, a question that she finds difficult due to

Hizbullah's secrecy with regards to its Scouts. In addition, the question requires

defining education and indoctrination, both of which lack a universal definition (p.

85). Still, based on the gathered information pertaining to the above points,

Tagliabue's argument stands somewhere in between: the Scout's educational components, similar to Christian schools, are far from neutral and thus "education dissolves into indoctrination" while indoctrination is a method to improve children's future (p. 87). Indeed, Tagliabue points out that not all Scout members become fighters and if they do, one needs to understand that they come from religious families that have infused resistance within them. Additionally, members relayed that they were taught that resistance occurs through "knowledge and education" (p. 88) thus not necessarily stipulating armed resistance as a discourse.

Tagliabue's highlighting of the Scout's position as one of many other communication channels is worthy of reiteration as it is a point that this chapter – and the thesis as a whole – adopts. Indeed, the Party produces a plethora of media and communication sites aimed at children and include, in addition to the family, schools, the scouts and other face-to-face communication sites such as mosques and 'Ashura rituals, traditional media outlets such as video games, physical games such as jigsaw puzzles of al-Aqsa mosque and other significant landmarks, Mahdi magazines and other pubications such as books, Taha television, children segments on al-Manar, exhibitions, plays and cultural sites. The list is quite long and diverse and much like Tagliabue's argument, each does not stand alone but rather should be seen in conjunction with each other. But while Tagliabue (2015) explores a face-to-face communication site that promotes resistance and religion and while Saber and Webber (2016) explore a media site that focuses on promoting resistance, the chapter here is a combination of both as it explores media channels that promote the religio-politico nation thus providing a different angle to view

Hizbullah's children's media. Its starts with an analysis of Mahdi magazines before presenting the findings on Taha channel.

2. Mahdi Magazines

As mentioned above, Mahdi magazines enjoy local distribution, especially in recent times as a result of the Syrian war and growing tensions with Saudi Arabia. Indeed, while the magazines were previously distributed to subscribers in Syria and other Arab countries, contemporary political events have affected the magazines' reach as is articulated by Hajj Abbas Charara, the general manager of Mahdi Publications.[89]

Still, analysing the magazines is important to understand Hizbullah, its discourses and how it promotes the religio-politico nation to children. This is because, while of limited reach, the magazines are quite widespread within Lebanon: they are available through schools and in multiple bookshops, especially those in Dahiya, and can be attained through subscription where the yearly cost for the three magazines is thirty dollars. The publication also participates in the yearly book fair that takes in Beirut where, as I witnessed during my visits in 2015, their section is the most successful in terms of turnout, size and display. In addition, some content is available on the Internet and recently, a free mobile application was launched in which readers can listen to articles being narrated after they scan each article's QR

---

[89] Mahdi publications include the magazines and books. In 2015, Hajj Charara also overlooked the production of 'The Princess of Rome,' and animation about the mother of Imam Mahdi and which was shown in local, regional and even international theatres such as the U.K. and Australia.

code, the latter of which means that the magazines should be physically attained to use the application.

To examine Mahdi magazines, the next section starts by providing an overview before presenting the findings that were noted on the issues that were produced between July 2014 and May 2016 and focuses on 12 issues (for each magazine, 2 were selected prior to changes that were implemented in 2015 and 2 after).[90] The section explores the educational content within the magazines as well as the religious, resistance and gender and family themes that they promote. It situates these findings within the wider political context but more importantly, analyses the significance of the content to the Party's religio-politico nation.

2.1 An Overview

Launched in 2003, Mahdi magazine is a monthly Hizbullah publication (there are nine issues a year that are produced on a monthly basis with three summer issues that come out together) aimed at children that initially targeted one age group (7-15 years). Today, with the expansion of the organisation's activities, the publication targets three different age groups with Magazine A addressing ages 4-7, Magazine B ages 8-12 and Magazine C ages 13-17 (when magazines B and C were at issue number 104, magazine A was at issue number 7 thus reflecting that the last is a new addition) and the language is fusha Arabic thus highlighting the magazines' Arab speaking target audience since it is the form that is common to all

---

[90] See chapter 3 for selection process.

Arabic speakers as explained by Hajj Charara.[91] Their major competitor is Ahmad, a monthly magazine targeting ages 8-14 which, according to its website, aims at inciting children to read and to encourage artistic, intellectual and educational improvements[92] although religious topics also exist.[93]

Hajj Abbas Charara explains that Mahdi magazines aim to provide its audience with a "ru'ya 'amma kayyima" (general vision of value) in which the value systems that it promotes are universal ones such as "honesty, trust and helpfulness." However, he goes on to clarify that

> these value systems fall under our [Hizbullah's] vision and understanding of values... all human and universal values are in retrospect religious ones. This is because religious values cannot contradict humanness nor can they contradict reasoning.

Interestingly, to Hajj Charara, promoting resistance is not viewed as promoting a political ideology but is rather seen as promoting values. As he frames it,

> Resistance is a value because it is the act of refusing attack and a method of preserving one's dignity. Promoting it is a form of edification as there is a

---

[91] The magazine categorisation is based on the Arabic alphabet.

[92] The competitors here have been limited to magazines. In terms of general children's literature, multiple publishing houses produce or import books as is evident in the yearly books fair. These include educational books (science and animals, among others) and prosocial ones. Recent publications include a wide range of 'new' subjects such as illness and modern family relations among others. In addition, since Lebanese tend to be bilingual, English and French produced books are abundant in multiple bookshops.

[93] http://www.alhadaekgroup.com/pages/als_fxh629-alr626isi629/almglat/axhmd/nbdh629-utyrif.php Last accessed January 15, 2018.

necessity to highlight the need to not surrender. Promoting resistance is also

promoting the act of loving one's homeland. That is why we include stories to

highlight the concept of resistance. And because we have children audiences

who have lost family members to martyrdom, we want them to feel the

honour of martyrdom... and we want to tackle the reality that the child is

living...

To move to the structure and content of the magazines, it is first worth highlighting

that as with all publications that have been in the market for a long period, the

magazines have witnessed upgrades – typically annually - in terms of content,

design, structure and approach. These take place within the summer period where

monthly issues are halted thus allowing for research and preparation for the

upcoming year as Hajj Charara explains. Each magazine adopts specific material

and approach depending on suitability to the target age. Below is a brief summary

of each target group's magazine.

Magazine A is composed of 28 pages of text in combination with brightly coloured

illustrations, 8 of which are dedicated to activities such as writing and drawing and

games such as simple mazes. Each issue tackles a specific theme (for example,

issue 9 covers the subject of autumn and issue 28, the father) and content mostly

pertains to education, religion, prosocial behaviour (such as helping one's parents)

and family dynamics. Interestingly, resistance makes a fleeting presence and out of

the 17 magazines that were collected for this chapter, only one 'Ana Ukawim' (I

Resist) addressed resistance although subtle illustrations and references are

occasionally made.

Magazine B is composed of 36 pages and incorporates text, illustration and occasional photography and sees a major rise in text based material in comparison to Magazine A. Magazine B contains all the elements found within magazine A - although instructions for direct family relationships are ignored and replaced with tacit presence through illustrations and religious narratives. There is an increased focus on education and religion (see Figure 7.1) and resistance starts to make a more overt, impactful and monthly presence, especially with the start of issue 120, which marks the 2015 annual upgrade.

Magazine C is also composed of 36 pages. Again, resistance is overtly present with the biography of a resistance fighter available in every issue. Politics becomes a strong element in the magazine as different political systems and histories of countries are provided for the reader as are cultural sections such as book and film reviews which were introduced starting from issue 120.

Evidently, the focus on content differs amongst the three publications depending on the target audience and intellectual abilities. To get a clearer idea and to analyse the content of the magazines, content analysis was conducted on a number of issues (see chapter 3 for process), the result of which are displayed in figure 7.1. The table provides a summary of the themes that were tackled in the 12 chosen issues and shows the changes, focus and additions or eliminations that were implemented in 2015. To briefly explain the table, Magazine A is signified with yellow tabs, Magazine B with green and Magazine C with blue. Each tab corresponds to the total number of instances where a particular topic is evident in

the examined magazines. The first two rows explain the format a theme is presented in and which is typically in a story or entertaining (games and activity) format. The main sections (in bold and blue at the top of the table) are the dominant theme of a segment while the bottom rows correspond to the additional themes that are promoted in each segment. This is because the categorisation of content is not a strict one as articles pertaining to religion also promote morals, resistance and gender dynamics. And since this chapter is also a study of transformation over time, the table reflects the change in focus before (pre columns) and after (post columns) the 2015 modifications in content. Let me clarify this by explaining the first two yellow columns. In the pre tab, the number 14 corresponds to the total number of entertaining segments in the examined issues of Magazines A before the 2015 changes. 6 of these were presented in story format while 8 were through entertaining activities. However, as the below tabs reveal, out of the 14 entertaining segments, there is one mention or latent meaning referring to resistance, 1 to arts, 1 to morals and 1 to family dynamics. Such numbers differ slightly in the post 2015 tab as the number of entertaining articles decrease to 10. There is also the introduction of religion and educational content within entertainment segments. Such numbers differ significantly in Magazines B and C, which see an increase focus on religion and resistance topics. The table thus reveals the content of the magazines, allowing for a more scientific and precise understanding, ultimately resulting in more solid arguments. The table also uncovers how morals, education, resistance and the like are not separate entities within the magazines but are presented as intertwined - very much similar to the intertwining of resistance and politics within the Party's discourse.

Below, I present a detailed analysis of the magazines' content and do so by exploring two different themes: intellectual education and character education, terms that I adopt from O'Dell (1978). While all of the magazines' content can be considered educational, I use intellectual education for that which relates specifically to school subjects (for example, science and maths) and the term character education for that which relates to improving one's character traits such as morals, religion and political and social attitudes. Within Hizbullah's religio-politico nation, it is the content that falls under character education that teaches the reader about the values and bahaviour expected of a member.

2.2 Intellectual Education

As previously mentioned, Hizbullah has built schools (both mainstream education and religious schools [hawzas]) and has assigned gifted students (and those whose parents have strong ties to the Party) with scholarships to universities within Lebanon and in Iran. Thus, education holds a significant place for Hizbullah, an aspect that is further confirmed within Mahdi magazines where table 7.1 reflects the high percentage that science and knowledge occupy.

Educational emphasis starts with Magazine A where readers are educated about a chosen topic. For example, in issue 9 about autumn, young readers learn about the different seasons, what happens to nature during autumn and that birds migrate during the period. There is also a focus on developing the child's reading and writing abilities as well as maths and alphabets and which are in the form of

Figure 7.1 Analysis of themes in 12 issues of Mahdi Magazines. (The table below is a rotated cross‑tabulation; each theme is split into multiple Pre/Post sub‑columns.)

	Entertainment						Education						Religion						Resistance						Morals and Values						Character				
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Post
(total)	14	10	24	22	14	18	23	29	15	14	15	29	6	7	17	15	14	11					2	3	8	2	7	5	9	4	1	4	1	4	4
Story	6	6	12	10	6	11	13	7	2	3	2	1	2	3	8	8	5	7					2	2	5	2	3	3	3	4	1		1	4	4
Games and Activity	8	4	13	12	2	4	12	15	4	2	1														1										
Religion	1	1	3	2	2	2	2	1			5	6														1	1	2	2		2				1
Resistance	1		1	1		1					2	4	1	1				1								1	1								
Education		3	2	2	3	3					3	1																							
Arts	1	1	4	1								2																							
Politics											2	5																							
Morals and Values	1		5	3	1	2	2	1	2		2				1	1	2	2								1	1		1		2	1	2	2	
Family and Dynamics	1	4	2	5	1	1	2	1			2	1			1	1									1						1	2	1	2	1

activities and games such as counting the number of a particular object. And in line with behaviourist methods which see that actions that are followed by a reward are strengthened (Raiker 2007, p. 75), this target age group, who read the magazines with their parents, are rewarded with a sticker for correct answers.

Within Magazines B, education makes a stronger presence. Segments dedicated to scientific information such as those pertaining to chemistry and physics, history and health are available. And with the upgrades implemented from issue 120 came the introduction of sections pertaining to geography and tourism and the fostering of readers' creative abilities. More challenging games such as Sudoku, crosswords and maths problems among others are abundant.

However, it is in magazine C that educational information reaches its pinnacle. Multiple segments pertaining to science, the testing of scientific hypotheses, health, history and nature are provided in addition to even more complicated maths games – and which I was incapable of solving. Scientific information includes that which pertains to energy, organic cars and mini electronic devices among others. And starting from issue 120 came the introduction of articles on culture such as film and book reviews. Also, a political article entitled 'File' and occupying a whole spread, makes an interesting addition as it reflects Hizbullah's political stances and rhetoric. The articles mostly cover Middle Eastern issues such as the Saudi war on Yemen and the shaping of a new Middle East, in reference to Western efforts to divide the region according to its interests among others.

The focus on education within Mahdi magazines should come as no surprise since most material aimed at children is to some degree educational. But I argue that for Hizbullah, the magazines, in conjunction with the schools and other educational channels, reflect grander aims that pertain to the Shiʿa demographic and Hizbullah's religio-politico nation. Indeed, Shiʿas have historically been the least educated amongst the different sects in Lebanon, an aspect that has furthered the negative stereotypes. So the magazines, along with other educational outlets, aim to improve the intellectual standards of the Shiʿa community to counter these stigmas. But since Hizbullah schools and university scholarships are aimed at the Party's supporters, by improving educational standards, the Party attempts to counter the negative perceptions of the Party and its members. This occurs not merely through changes in visual aesthetics for example but through actual, felt improvements that raise the position of Shiʿas thus allowing them to be educationally equal to the wider Lebanese society. In that sense, the ultimate aim of the magazines and focus on education is to promote the identity of the Party's nation as intellectually equal rather than an isolated, illiterate entity. In this way it is similar to the aim of Dahiya's buildings and cultural life that promote the area as an extension of other parts of Beirut. So, the cultural articles presented in magazines B and C can be understood as further efforts to affirm the links to Lebanon's nation not just in terms of sameness in cultural activity but also through the intellectual abilities and knowledge of international books and films.

On a more significant level however lies the functioning of Hizbullah's nation and its future. Let me explain this by a comparison with Fethullah Gulen's school system in Turkey. According to Agai (2002), Gulen's educational system is one that

stands in the mid-ground between secular positions (that promoted Western concepts such as Darwinism and called for the use of technology in an attempt to restrict the authority of religious figures in Turkish society) and traditionalists (who saw that the lack of religion was the reason for the weakening of the Ottoman Empire and who believed that science and modernity contradicted Islam and its principles) (pp. 29-30). Gulen, having adopted Said Nursi's position that sought to bridge this gap, combined religion and science as he "gave science a place in religion and appreciated the study of science" (p. 31). His vision was also one where he wanted to raise individuals that were both religious and educated in science and the modern world and who could "solve the problems of the future" (p. 35). These, he considered, would be the "educated elite" (p. 29) that would "create a 'golden generation' that is armed with the tools of science and religion" (p. 35) thereby countering the decline in Muslim societies (p. 29). They would be more influential in society than religious preachers (p. 33). And as Agai analyses, it is education that plays a key part in social change by acting as a driving force for political and social involvement (p. 29).

Agai's analysis is specifically about Gulen's educational system but is also applicable to Hizbullah's religio-politico nation, especially because the magazines also focus on religion. Hence, one should consider that Hizbullah's building of schools and the scholarships that the Party provides do not only fall under the title of social work and the garnering of Shiʿa support but perhaps also involve the building of a nation where its members are educated, informed and knowledgeable and who can – similar to Gulen's aims - become active participants in the

community to eventually form the new elite, "with an Islamic and modern orientation to lead the country" (Agai 2002, p. 33).

But while Gulen's system aims at educating students to become active in the wider Turkish nation, Hizbullah's focus on education relates primarily to its own Shiʿa nation. For, as Nasrullah addressed university students in 2016: "what is required of you is true education, 'outstanding abilities' and not just attaining degrees… for if we are all fighters, who would be a General?" (Nasrullah 2016). Hence, education is promoted as the centre of Hizbullah's religio-politico nation, necessary for its operation whereby the educated members are the future cadres of Hizbullah, the future individuals who calculate the firing of missiles, who execute resistance activities but also those who grow up to become architects and civil engineers who rebuild Dahiya and its bridges. One need only examine the scientific topics that Magazine C contains and which perhaps raise the readers' interest into perusing specific fields that can be valuable to the nation's resistance. In that sense, the educational content of the magazines promotes specific subjects to ultimately utilise educated childrens' abilities for Hizbullah's resistance. Indeed, Hizbullah is rumoured to approach outstanding design Shiʿa students in universities such as the American University of Beirut to join their design agency whereby they create ʿAshura posters and other visual material. Education thus ultimately serves the nation.

The political content that was introduced from issue 120 onwards, which is blatantly anti-Wahhabi, anti-Saudi politics and anti-Western hegemony in the Middle East among others, can be understood in the same manner, albeit with a

slightly different aim. For, the politics section includes information that promote the Party's political stances thus educating readers about Hizbullah's political rhetoric ultimately socialising them into the Party's discourse. The content cannot be viewed alone but rather in conjunction with other communication sites such as Nasrullah's 'Ashura speeches where, as explored in chapter 5, the majority of attendees are of a young demographic, with many falling in the age group that magazine C targets. Consequently, the political information garners the support of readers for Hizbullah's expansion of resistance beyond Lebanese territories and more importantly, their support for an upcoming regional war that involves Saudi Arabia collaborating with Israel and in opposition to Hizbullah. The magazine readers thus perceive Hizbullah as the protector of the region and as such, understand that the religio-politico nation is, in essence, of an Arab, regional and anti-colonial nationalist identity. So while promoting these identities to a wider audience garners regional support for Hizbullah's activities and counters the uproar following Hizbullah's participation in the Syria war, promoting these identities to the Shi'a support base likewise acts in the same manner - albeit here, mobilising men to join its fight against ISIS and any oppressive group in the region also comes to the forefront.

2.3 Character Education

As table 7.1 reveals, Mahdi magazines are heavily loaded with moral and religious segments, all of which fall under the broader topic of character education which I argue promotes the personal attributes that members of the religio-politico nation

should garner. These include religious knowledge, especially Shiʿa history, support for resistance and a nationalist identity.

2.3.1 Religion

Mahdi magazines' religious focus (see Figure 7.1) should come as no surprise considering Hizbullah's emphasis on religion in all aspects of the Party's activities as explored in previous chapters and that books have historically been a method through which children are socialised into religious life (Sekeres 2008, Ghesquière 2004) and through which they can learn ethics and religious rituals thereby becoming pious members of a society (Szanto 2012, p. 361). In fact, the magazine's sectarian identity is made clear in its name where the "title acts as a roadsign" (Ghesquière 2004, p. 313) that flags up the Muslim - twelver Shiʿa – nature of the material.

To analyse the religious content, material and articles pertaining to religion are rich and diverse. Stories from the Qurʾan,[94] explanations of verses (which draw on modern day situations that link them to a child's daily life), sayings and teachings of Prophet Mohammad and different Imams, narratives of events of Imams and religious figures (usually with a didactic and moral nature), short prayers, dates of the births and deaths of religious figures and poetry glorifying God, Mohammad and Imams are regular features. There is a positive approach to religion and God is presented as a being one strives to please through abiding by high morals. The

---

[94] Because of the presence of Qurʾanic verses, disposing of the magazines become problematic as discussed in chapter 3.

same is applicable for Mohammad and the Imams who are adopted to teach values such as honesty, sympathy and helpfulness, thus portraying Mohammad and the Imams as models to look up to and emulate. Interestingly, there is no direct mention of marjaʿ al-taqlid that Hizbullah emulates thus allowing Hizbullah to target a wider demographic than Hizbullah circles. The magazines also do not provide a review of other religions such as Judaism and Christianity nor do they acknowledge Sunni Islam (through acknowledging figures such as Abu Bakr, Omar and Aisha). It is God, Mohammad, the Qurʾan and the Imams – and regularly their daughters - that take centre stage ultimately placing them at the centre of readers' religious life. In addition, in issues B and C, Khomeini and Khamenei make a religious presence and are again figures that are adopted to promote morals. Such religious content no doubt has a promotional element attached. Indeed, the magazines' religious content promotes religion but more importantly, does so by educating children about historical figures and narratives. While some pertain to the Qurʾan thus disseminating Muslim narratives and ingraining readers with a Muslim identity, the focus on Shiʿa figures emphasises the Party's Shiʿa identity on the one hand but also educates readers about Imams whose teachings and acts are the ideological basis of the Party's religio-politico nation. And in asserting the close relationship that Mohammad had with his grandsons, Hasan and Hussein, Hizbullah promotes the Imams at the heart of Islam and in that, a particular Shiʿa school of thought as the authentic version of Islam. Likewise, in promoting the Imam's values and teachings and by directing readers to emulate them, and in framing resistance as a value in itself as Hajj Charara explained, resistance gains a religious, moral ground. Hence, promoting the religio-politico nation's values and the strong links between religion and politics starts at a young age to ingrain the

child with the tenets that can uphold the political dimension of the nation.

Other, subtler religious markings that associate religion with the "slow rhythms of ordinary life" (Szanto 2012, 370) also make a presence. For example, the magazines emphasise social and common practices such as the use of "Arabic phrases used ritually in greeting and in reference to Allah" (Sekeres 2008, p. 155) such as 'alhamdulillah' (Praise to God) and 'allahu akbar' (God is great). Similarly, names readers are familiar with such as Ali are regularly used and pigs and dogs - considered unclean - are non-existent as is, unsurprisingly, alcohol. These are significant in that they promote and educate readers about the day-day-to day reality, interactions and articulations within the Party's religious circles and spaces. The same can be argued with regards to the presence of the mosque, which makes a regular illustrative presence as well as female figures such as mothers, grandmothers and girls above nine who are illustrated with a headscarf. Such illustrations are important in that they recreate the landscape that most readers live in, be it in Dahiya or other Shiʿa areas in Lebanon, and recreate the daily reality that most readers experience but more importantly, one which Hizbullah believes to be appropriate. They also provide a space where religious people are represented. For, as a children's literature author who wishes to remain anonymous explains, public school textbooks in Lebanon prohibit references to religion, including through illustrations, and hence images of the headscarf are non-existent. So by illustrating religious practice, Hizbullah is ensuring the representation of its demographic – while excluding others – thereby portraying religious practice as natural and common. Ultimately, they socialise children into the reality of living in Hizbullah's spaces, one of which is Dahiya (chapter 4).

Another significant aspect of the magazines is that which relates to the portrayals of Hasan, Hussein and Fatima. While Mahdi magazines, similar to those sold around the shrines of Lady Zaynab in Syria, draw on family settings that portray the mother or father teaching the young child specific narratives – and thus drive children to adopt the collective religious identity of the group - it is pertinent to draw attention to the age depictions of the Imams and their sister relative to the magazines' target groups. For, in Magazine A, the figures of Hasan, Hussein and Fatima are illustrated as close to the readers' age, as is their portrayal in Magazines B and C. The readers thus become familiar with the figures and grow up with them and develop a close and personal connection as they become "intimately knowable" (Szanto 2012). Consequently, mourning Hussein during the 'Ashura gatherings that are aimed at children is not merely an act of learning how to mourn a religious figure but rather of mourning an intimate one, a friend; following in Hussein's footsteps is not merely for religious reasons, but also for personal ones based on loyalty, love and a history; protecting the shrine of Lady Zaynab in Syria is not only because they revere her but also because they love her and have known her since they were children. There is much to say about such dynamics with regards to Hizbullah's religio-politico nation. To begin with, by creating strong ties between readers and their Imams, loyalty is established and Hussein's calls to fight Yazid are heeded and answered in whatever context that requires their participation, be it against Israel, ISIS or whatever new enemy is declared. So while not directly recognisable as promotional, the established loyalty promotes the values of Hizbullah's religio-politico nation, the centrality of the Imams to the nation and the loyalty to Hussein and Zaynab that is required of those within it.

Ultimately, the Party's nation survives as the readers grow up to participate in Hizbullah's 'Ashura rallies and emulate Hussein by defending the nation.

2.3.2 Resistance and the Nation

Previous empirical chapters have explored the notion of land, nationalism and resistance within Hizbullah's discourse and demonstrated that resistance is no longer limited to the Lebanese territorial entity but has rather moved beyond it into Syria and the wider region. Mahdi magazines similarly promote these slightly shifted brand values to the younger audience whereby the Party's Lebanese identity is articulated in a number of different forms and where resistance also includes a wider and expanded dynamic.

To begin with, Hizbullah's Lebanese nationalist identity is manifested in the notion of promoting the homeland. In the three magazines, readers are taught about different aspects of Lebanon such as its weather, historical figures (amongst them Gibran Khalil),[95] different tourist locations as well as prophets' different burial places. In issue 17 of Magazine A, entitled 'Libnan Watani' (Lebanon is my Homeland), children are taught about the proper way to treat one's land (for example, not cut flowers and not throw garbage on the street), the Lebanese flag and the country's army (children are illustrated giving flowers to an army member). Such aspects are educational since they improve a child's knowledge about their country and because they infuse the reader with a belonging to the

---

[95] Gibran Khalil is a world famous writer and poet.

Lebanese nation. Ultimately, the magazines promote a Lebanese identity as part of the religio-politico nation, hence presenting a quintessential example of how education is promotional as this thesis argues.

However, a more prominent and recurring theme related to promoting a Lebanese nationalist identity is the concept of defending it: resistance – a task that Hizbullah's members take up and which the Lebanese army are not portrayed as involved in. Although not a dominant element, resistance starts to make a presence in Magazine A where, in issue 17 for example, Maryam, who is witnessing two young boys agitate a beehive, is impressed that the bees attack the boys and remembers her late father's sacrifices to protect his own land. This emphasis on resistance fighters as the protectors of land is again reiterated in issue 25 which includes the illustration of a fighter engulfing a house with a mother and two children (in reference to protecting the home and its inhabitants) thereby promoting the Party's modernist Lebanese nationalist identity as one related to protecting land and those within it. And while resistance makes occasional appearances in Magazine A, issue number 7, entitled 'I Resist' was dedicated to it through simple narratives of animals who protect their young as well as through games.

The notion of defending the nation becomes more present in magazines B and C, although the approach differs between those produced prior to issue 120 and those after. Indeed, while the magazines generally adopt comics as a method to promote resistance narratives, those produced prior to issue 120 are focused on resistance battles against the Israeli army within Lebanese territory. With that, the

comics portray resistance fighters as the defenders of the Lebanese nation and

assert the Party's Lebanese identity, again placing the fighters at the centre of both

Hizbullah's religio-politico nation as well as the Lebanese one.

Equally significant, the comics act as a recollection and reimagining of past battles

thereby acting as an educational channel through which children can learn

Hizbullah's history, which is linked to that of Lebanon. However, much like the

Party's videogames that Saber and Webber (2016) analyse, the comics provide a

subjective truth through the reimagining and reordering of the past in which

Hizbullah's fighters are the victors: they protect the land and those within it and if

they die, they are rewarded with heaven. This no doubt educates children about

how the religio-politico nation interprets the martyrdom of its resistance fighters

and in effect, reveals how education is adopted to promote Hizbullah's brand

values. However, I argue that there is another dimension related to the subjective

recollection, one that involves a nationalist dimension. To Parlevliet (2014) who

writes about Dutch historical novels of the nineteenth century, the novels focused

on triumphant events in order to create a sense of patriotism (p. 475). To apply

that to Hizbullah, although the comics present a subjective history and frame

battles (whether real or inspired by actual events) as victorious, the aim is to

encourage the child to "develop the *right* conception of '*our past*' and regard

certain historical figures as national heroes" (Parlevliet 2014, p. 477, my italics). In

effect then, Mahdi magazines assert the position of resistance fighters and their

significance to Hizbullah's nation and the wider Lebanese one.

The comics also act to promote the Party's resistance values and its links to Hussein and the Karbala battle. The fighters in the comics declare 'Allahu Ahbar' and shout 'ya Zahraa' and 'Ya Hussein' before and after their missions, as the Imam once again becomes the basis for resistance. The fighters are also endowed with Hussein's attributes: they are courageous, dedicated and fearless. They also don't leave the fallen behind, and are willing to sacrifice themselves for land and their comrades. Such representations again promote Hussein's centrality to the Party's nation but also educate readers about the qualities expected of them to be part of it.

These representations are again emphasised in the issues following the changes applied in 2015, despite resistance now including new enemies and new territories beyond Lebanon. For example, biographies of fallen martyrs are introduced starting from issue 120 and assert each fighter's reverence for Hussein, and their deep connection and love for ahl-il Bayt. They are portrayed as religious and are presented as craving martyrdom to follow in Hussein's footsteps therefore again promoting the character attributes of Hizbullah's men.

Particularly interesting is the description of the enemy. Indeed, while the comics produced prior to 2015 focus on Israel as an enemy and on battles taking place on Lebanese soil, those starting from issue 120 include ISIS in collaboration with Israel in an undisclosed location. Hence, the notion of resistance and of emulating Hussein in the magazines, much like the rhetoric in Nasrullah's speeches (chapter 5) and 'Ashura posters (chapter 6), promote Hussein's resistance as transcending place to become a global signifier and symbol for anti-oppression. This is further

complemented through the portrayals of ISIS and resistance fighters. For, while the enemy within ʿAshura posters is non-existent but is connoted through meaning, the faces of the enemy within the comics are covered with a black mask. This, on the one hand, connotes the foe's cowardice, but on the other, allows for the imagination of 'an' enemy and not 'the' enemy, whereby the latter becomes that which Hizbullah declares thus allowing the Party the ability to further expand its future battles but more importantly, drive Shiʿas to join their ranks. In whatever battle taking place however, it is Hizbullah's men, whose faces are unmasked and clear, that are the defenders, the Hussein of "our" time.

2.3.3 Gender and Family Dynamics

Previous empirical chapters have alluded to the gender and family dynamics within Dahiya and ʿAshura rituals, and even within ʿAshura posters: gender segregation is the norm and Zaynab's role in the Karbala battle did not include physical participation but rather as a carer. In addition, children accompany their grandparents to ritual gatherings whereby the latter play a part in socialising children into religion. Such dynamics are also evident in Mahdi magazines, which reflect and promote Hizbullah's understanding of what is appropriate gender and family relations. In addition, I argue that they involve wider nationalist implications whereby the family is the symbolic nation.

To begin with the issue of gender and family dynamics, Mahdi magazines, especially those following the changes in 2015, do not preach about appropriate behaviour but rather, much like the presence of the mosque and of the headscarf,

promote them through illustrations and narratives. To give an example, rather than overtly instructing girls to accompany their mothers and likewise, boys their fathers, the magazines create settings that normalise these dynamics: boys are depicted as involved in outdoor activities and as independent, adventurous and wild. They play rough and build structures with their fathers who are the breadwinners and similarly, the ones who venture into the outside world. In contrast, girls are portrayed in domestic settings and in outdoor settings, are with their mothers, who are housewives responsible for the cooking, cleaning and childcare.

The family environment is also depicted as a traditional one: the magazines emphasise the ideal family relations for its smooth functioning and is presented as a stable, warm and happy environment. Children help their parents with household chores and are polite, helpful, respectful and attentive to their parents' advice and instructions. Siblings are compassionate with one another and in certain issues, the relationship between Zaynab and her brothers is adopted to highlight sibling relations. For example, in issue 111 of magazine B, the writer narrates how young Zaynab stood before her tired brother Hussein until he woke up so that she would shield him from the sun. It is also the family, including grandparents, that is portrayed as a social agency for teaching values and morals under a rubric of religion and religious values and relations.

Such depictions can be understood as Hizbullah's attempts at promoting the ideal relationships within Hizbullah's religio-politico nation, the roles expected of each gender and the allowed interactions. Indeed, while Hizbullah's presence in Dahiya

limits physical interaction between different genders in the area's leisure and

cultural sites, in the magazines, they are non-existent with no reference to

romantic relationships or even friendships between children of opposite genders.

To a young child – and the parent - reading the magazine, such representations

become the criteria they are socialised into and which are reiterated in one's daily

life. For, children's literature's has been a method through which children

understand gender roles and differences as is evident in Iranian books of the early

2000s. As Malekzadeh (2012) explains, within Iranian publications, boys,

irrespective of their age, became men when they stood against an enemy and girls

transitioned into adulthood as a result of biological changes and were only

required to "embrace the various religious duties and obligations associated with

adulthood" (Malekzadeh 2012, p. 394). Thus, Mahdi magazines educate children

into societal expectations as promotion is once again, not merely to diffuse

information but is rather involved in wider educational and socialising processes.

However, there is a more significant aspect to promoting these gender and

dynamics: the nation. Writing on child image in Muslim contexts, Karimi and

Gruber (2012) explore caricatures of 1920 Egypt where "revolutionary energy and

nascent nationalism are [] embodied in a [] child" (p. 277). Similarly, in her study

of cartoons during the Kemalist period of the 1920s in Turkey, Gencer (2012)

argues that the cartoons, through a combination of "calculated use of text, image,

and satirical wit" likened the child to "abstract concepts such as nationhood and

republic." And through portraying familial settings, the cartoons put forth "ideas of

belonging to a national family" and emphasised "a unified national identity" (p.

295) with children portrayed as the future of the nation, raised politically and

culturally to do so. Likewise, in Soviet children's books, O'Dell (1978) writes that the family within Soviet Russia is understood to be "one of society's [smaller] collective units" where each member has a specific helpful role and contributes to the collective good. This small collective group has a "wider social significance" that acts as

> a microcosm of that outside world in which the child prepares himself for future civic participation. In other words, as a collective, the family is subject to rules in the same way as other collectives (p. 91)

In that way, Mahdi magazines' portrayal of stereotypical gender and family representations promote the roles expected of children within the nation: while mothers and daughters are depicted as responsible for the house, in society, they become the future women who care for the injured; while fathers and sons venture out and build structures, they become the future resistance members venturing out to defend the land. In the former and as issue 123 of Magazine C demonstrates, a mother is asked to prepare food for the fighters in her son's squad thereby affirming and promoting the role of women within resistance in reality and the role expected of her in nationalist discourses. The family thus becomes the nation and the relations within the family become the basis for the dynamics within the Party's religio-politico nation.

To conclude this section then, Mahdi magazines promote Hizbullah's values of religion and resistance and emphasise the significance of martyrdom to the Party's discourse and expanding battles. They also assert the significance of education to

the Party, not only as a means of promoting a positive image to the wider Lebanese demographic but to utilise educated members for resistance. Similarly, the magazines act as a channel through which the Party can promote the roles expected of members of the nation but more importantly, how these day-to-day interactions are a means to promote the dynamics of Hizbullah's nation. Hence, the magazines are promotional in the sense that they educate and socialise through modalities of narratives and stories, entertainment, activities and the like, ultimately allowing for a deeper attachment to the brand in that, much like brand events, they allow for experiences. However, the chapter treats Mahdi magazines as one amongst multiple communicative channels and thus, act in line with Carey's 'ritual view' of communication to emphasise and maintain the values of the group.

3. Taha Television Channel

While Mahdi magazines enjoy a more localised reach, in this section, I explore Taha, a channel of global diffusion as a result of satellite broadcasting and Internet livestreaming. I examine how its content relates to Hizbullah's vision of the religio-politico nation and uncover the similarities and differences with Mahdi magazines, ultimately demonstrating how these changes promote a specific image of Hizbullah. This section, the result of intermittent research on the channel for two years, starts by presenting an overview of Taha and follows the categories that were adopted to examine Mahdi magazines.

3.1 An Overview

Launched in 2010, Taha is aimed at children between the ages of two and fourteen. Taha broadcasts 24/7 and is available on satellite as well as through Internet live streaming thereby allowing it global reach. Additionally, different segments, particularly songs, are available on Facebook and Youtube.

Similar to Mahdi magazines, the channel's programs are varied and the lines between entertainment, religion and ideology are blurred as one program/segment can contain all elements. Taha programs strongly reflect the aims of the channel which are outlined on their website. As explained, Taha

> is committed to Islamic values and is dedicated to shaping an innovative, efficient and ethical character in a child. It provides meaningful entertainment that befits humanitarian instincts and contributes to the development of talents, a sense of humanity and understanding of others. It also allows its audience access to scientific developments as well as the proper way to deal with the environment, nature and animals within religious ideals and ethics in a manner that enriches a balanced, active, strong and sympathetic personality that is also socially responsible and respectful of human diversity and human life. (tahatv.com)

Taha relies heavily on songs, animation and short films. Repetition of content is common as songs are repeated not only daily but also multiple times a day, possibly to fill the 24 hours of broadcasting. However, this repetition helps "maintain attention, in part because comprehension increases across exposures until it finally reaches ceiling levels" (Barr 2011, p. 149). Segments also tend to be

fast moving and short – with some not exceeding two minutes. This is highly effective as children's "[a]ttention decreases as the length of a segment increases" (Barr 2011, p. 147). Similarly, dynamic, fast moving scenes and loud sounds are important since children find it difficult to maintain attention during "low-action sequences, and during periods of adult narration or abstract adult dialogue." In addition, "singing and lively music, peculiar voices, and sound effects" as well as animation, [and] active movement" increase children's "selective attention to television content" (Barr 2011, p. 147). Hence, Taha channel adopts effective techniques to render the messages that it promotes more successful.

3.2 Taha and Education

Taha's educational content mostly pertains to science and animals. Programs such as *Fulli and Fulla* use entertainment to tackle different scientific issues such as how to use the wind to navigate and how to stay warm in the winter for example. On a more outdoorsy realm, *Kun Mughamiran Sagheeran* (Be a Little Adventurer) follows young boys, led by an adult, into the wilderness where they are taught about survival tactics and identifying different plants and trees among others.[96] Also, different animals such as cows, sheep, and birds are introduced as well as the ethical way to treat them.

---

[96] 'Kun Mughamiran Sagheeran' is a foreign program.

Still, despite education occupying a segment of the channel's programs, it is not as dominant as it is within Mahdi magazines. However, as will be explored in the next section, that is not the case with religion.

3.3 Religious Segments

To begin with, Taha is the name of the twentieth surah (chapter) in the Qur'an and again serves to assert the Muslim identity of the channel albeit one inclusive of all Muslims contrary to Mahdi magazines whose sectarian identity is made clear from the title. The name thus allows Hizbullah to appeal to a wider Muslim audience. Segments pertaining to the Qur'an are plentiful and include recitations as well as *Kusas al Anbiya* (Stories of the Prophets), a thirty-minute program - the longest program as of yet – which presents the story of a different Prophet in each episode. Other religious programs also include explaining different Qur'anic verses and is in many cases, presented by young boys who explain their relationship with the Qur'an and typically highlight the importance of reading it and how it has positively affected their lives (in dealing with people, parents, friends, studies...). Hence, Taha promotes the significance of the Qur'an to children and emphasises the practice of reading it on a daily basis thus educating viewers into the tenets of religious duties. Taha also highlights the importance of prayer and doing so on time in addition to the manners one should abide by when entering religious spaces (such as taking one's shoes off before going in). So, much like Mahdi magazines, promoting religious discourse is very much linked to educational and wider socialisation processes.

Taha's religious segments also include those glorifying God, specifically through songs. He is the creator of animals and nature and his importance as the source that lights one's path (*Ya Rabba Kul il Kawn* [The God of all the Universe]) and the being who children are obedient to and who loves them all (*Ahbab Allah* [the beloved to God]). The same glorification is adopted to portray Prophet Mohammad who is compassionate and contemplative (*Rasoul Allah* [Prophet of God]). Such representations serve to establish a strong relationship between children, God and the Prophet to create intimate relationships, much like the representations of Hasan, Hussein and Fatima in Mahdi magazines, and to place Islam at the centre of one's religious life. This is further emphasised since Taha, similar to Mahdi magazines, makes no mention of other religions.

While such programs promote Islamic thought and practice and consequently promote Hizbullah's Muslim identity to a wider demographic since Taha is of global reach, the channel also contains programs related to Shiʿa figures and narratives. Segments introducing different Imams such as their names, parents, nicknames, birth, kids, duration of imamate and burial place are abundant. Segments pertaining to the Shiʿa school of thought differentiate Taha from other religious children channels in the region. Indeed, through Shiʿa figures and narratives, Hizbullah brands Taha as a Shiʿa channel, especially when compared to other stations such as 'Semsem' and 'Jeem' which focus on the life of Prophet Mohammad and Muslim responsibilities generally. So, much like Mahdi magazines, Taha channel promotes a Shiʿa identity and in turn, asserts the centrality of Shiʿa thought and history to the Party's discourse. The same however, cannot be said of resistance.

3.4 Resistance

The notion of resistance is surprisingly non-existent on Taha. Indeed, the only reference is a short video song which depicts two kids - drawing on the ground with chalk - being arrested by 2 young officers after which they forcefully evict the children out of their area to build houses. And while the narrative is very similar to the Palestinian reality, the only direct clue to Palestine is the kufiyya that the boys wear. Thus, contrary to Mahdi magazines, resistance makes no appearance on Taha channel, despite the ability to promote a brand value to a global audience as one of anti-oppressive and anti-colonialist in the same manner that Nasrullah's 'Ashura speeches and 'Ashura posters act. So why is that?

Yael Warshel (2012) studied the "Mickey Mouse look-alike character" created in 2009 for Hamas's al-Aqsa television channel. Titled *The Pioneers of Tomorrow*, the program sought to foster the concept of martyrdom, advocate the "Islamic umma in territorial terms" and advocate "the use of violence against Jews" (pp. 212-213). As Warshel explains, the program reflects Hamas's rhetoric and their attempt at using "media to promote its political philosophy and related strategies" (pp. 214-215). While the aim of Warshel's study was to study the impact of the program on Palestinian children, the writer draws attention to the critical reactions that it generated and the concerns that it raised considering the target audience: the child, whose innocence made the anti-Jewish sentiments and war topic particularly sensitive because of the violence that they incite.

So, Taha channel, while actively used to promote religion, steers away from references to resistance – even as an act of self-defence/retaliation - because promoting anti-Jewish sentiment, martyrdom and violence against the enemy will garner the same outcry that *The Pioneers of Tomorrow* did (Taha's channel started broadcasting after Hamas's program and the reactions that it generated perhaps served as a guide for Hizbullah in deciding on the channel's content). In that sense, Taha, while again not immediately recognisable as promotional, acts in that manner in that it is designed to refute claims that Hizbullah indoctrinates children, or steers them towards violence and death, and teaches them anti-Semitic behaviour. While this requirement restricts Hizbullah's ability to promote its brand values where resistance is core, what occurs then is a 'trade off' between the need to encourage the development of children and to socialise them to - at some stage - be willing to fight on the one hand and the need to protect their own brand image on a global level on the other. Hence, Hizbullah practices branding on two different levels: one aimed at the internal audience whereby it teaches brand values and another involves a global brand image that seeks to present the Party in a positive light. Indeed, with a global reputation as a death loving terrorist group, suicide bombings and the false accusation that Hizbullah performs latm during ʿAshura among others, Hizbullah's resistance activities have been questioned and framed as terrorist. So by avoiding images of violence on Taha, Hizbullah's Shiʿa nation gains global authenticity: those who resist, do so by choice not because of indoctrination. And those who resist, do so for a just cause that is not about hatred but about reclaiming what was stolen, as is evident in the short video song explored above. Consequently, by not promoting resistance to children, Hizbullah promotes itself and its nation in a positive light and its resistance activities as a

fight against oppression, an act which is emphasised as a result of Taha's attempts to disseminate strong values and morals.

3.5 The Moral Citizen

Much like Mahdi magazines, children on Taha are portrayed as respectful and attentive to their parents and elders, as occupying specific positions within the family and of abiding by stereotypical roles. The family is consistently a close unit that provides children with religious knowledge and moral standards. Grandparents are again significant characters in children's lives and women, and in most cases, girls wear the scarf when represented.

However, the core of the content pertaining to character education lies in abundance of para-social segments, which, contrary to the magazines, are not necessarily presented under the guise of religion but rather in the form of entertainment such as songs and narratives. These segments "provide an excellent avenue to encourage prosocial behaviour" because children learn from observing actions and their consequences be it those occurring in real life observations or of scenarios represented in the media (Mares et al 2008, p. 269).

To define para-social behaviour, Mares et al (2008) include

> (1) positive interactions (friendly play or peaceful conflict resolution), (2) aggression reduction (both physical and verbal), (3) altruistic actions (sharing, donating, offering help, comforting), and (4) stereotype reduction

(attitudes, beliefs, and resulting behaviours countering stereotypical

portrayals of gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation). (p. 269)

While the last point is not applicable to Taha channel – or Mahdi magazines - the

first three points are highly relevant: different songs and episodes teach the effects

of greediness, the importance of correcting one's negative actions, the

repercussions of excessive joking and one's responsibilities towards parents,

friends, animals and even plants. The channel also highlights the positive effects of

hard work and determination and the importance of selflessness, compassion and

love as children are portrayed as kind to each other and to others. It is through this

that children are depicted as happy and healthy.

Taha's para-social content falls in line with children's television programs

generally. For example, in Britain *Topsy and Tim* relies heavily on it and in

Lebanon, local channels such as LBC and MTV which broadcast daily children's

programs also teach children the need to be kind and helpful. However, much like

the content of Mahdi magazines, one needs to understand Taha's para-social

programs within the Party's wider promotional channels. For, similar to the

arguments put forth, highlighting the importance of morals and family and gender

roles are a way through which Hizbullah can socialise children into the patterns of

behaviour that are expected of them generally and into Hizbullah's religio-politico

nation specifically since it is Hizbullah's demographic – and wider Lebanese Shiʿa

audience – that is the main viewer. And in raising upright and ideal citizens,

Hizbullah ensures the better functioning of its society. More importantly, Taha

educates children about the dynamics of relationships with friends and loyalty to

them, which I argue instills the child with values that they will apply in the battlefield: helping a friend on Taha channel is translated into helping one's resistance brothers in Mahdi magazines and ultimately into helping one's comrades in real battle grounds. So, while the channel is devoid of *any* resistance rhetoric, one needs to see them in conjunction with other Party outlets that do promote resistance and ultimately, the brand values of the religio-politico nation.

4. Conclusion

This chapter explores two of Hizbullah's communication sites that are specifically aimed at children. It starts by examining Mahdi magazines, which are of a localised reach, before studying Taha television that enjoys global diffusion. In line with the tasks of the thesis, the chapter examines the extent to which both sites promote Hizbullah's brand values. It examines the channels during a specific time period that saw the Party respond to growing internal and international attacks and explored whether Hizbullah's reactions to such events were promoted to children. The chapter analyses the two sites through a theoretical and empirical lens that sees promotional elements in educational and socialising processes, which connects the Hizbullah 'brand' to these activities.

The chapter uncovers how Mahdi magazines emphasise and promote the Party's religious ideologies. However, the chapter also demonstrates that while the magazines aim to raise pious individuals, they also promote resistance discourses and the two are again presented as linked. As such, the aim is to educate children about the dynamics of Hizbullah's religio-politico nation to socialise the young into

the wider group. Exploring Mahdi magazines however, draws attention to other dynamics at play within the Party's nation such as education and gender and family dynamics. While education is necessary to eventually serve resistance and to intellectually improve the status of those within Hizbullah's nation as equal to the general Lebanese demographic, gender and family dynamics educate children about the role expected of them within the family, which ultimately mirrors how Hizbullah envisions each genders' position within the wider religio-politico nation. So, Mahdi magazines, while not excluding communicating messages with the wider Lebanese demographic, are focused on children themselves– and perhaps their parents – to teach them the religious and resistance tenets necessary for Hizbullah's survival. And while promoting a Lebanese, Arab, Muslim and regional nationalist identity through rituals and posters is an attempt to garner wider demographic support, within the magazines, this transforms into teaching children that Hizbullah's contemporary and future battles are not limited to battles with Israel on Lebanese territory but rather against whatever Yazid is declared. In that way, they guarantee their support in whatever future war Hizbullah declares as one that reflects their emulation of Hussein.

In contrast, Taha television's global diffusion has stipulated certain promotional restrictions on the Party. While religion and family and gender dynamics are abundant, during the period this chapter analysed, no direct references to resistance were made. This demonstrates that while Hizbullah promotes its brand values through multiple sites, the Party's global brand image is also of significance thus drawing attention to the multiple promotional levels that Hizbullah attends to. By refraining from promoting violence or resistance narratives, Hizbullah

depicts itself in a positive light and its resistance activities as a choice, something likely aimed at refuting accusations of brainwashing and indoctrination.

But can one entirely refute accusations of Hizbullah's indoctrination of children? It is difficult to give a final answer about Hizbullah's promotion targeted at children considering that the chapter here analysed two of many of Hizbullah's communication sites aimed at the younger generation. As Sonia Livingstone (2007) argues, responding to fears about media's harmful effects on children, media is "one among several identifiable factors" that affect children and thus, media should be analysed as one factor within a larger system of influences (p. 9). However, based on the findings uncovered in this chapter, neither Mahdi magazines nor Taha channel directly incite children to carry arms and fight, nor do they spread messages of hatred against Jews or Israeli children for that matter. Still, the magazines are accused by Hizbullah's political opponents of indoctrinating children as is evident in the reactions that the issue 'Ana Ukawim' (I Resist) of magazine A resulted in. This is because the issue contains a game where children have to find the mines left behind by Israel, resulting in outcries that Hizbullah was teaching children violence, an accusation that Hajj Charara finds surprising because the intention, as he explains, was to educate children about the danger of mines in the South thus aiming to save their lives.

It becomes clear then that situating Hizbullah's media aimed at children is affected by one's religious and political background: while Hajj Charara, and in turn Hizbullah, view the magazines as educational, opponents view them as channels for brainwashing and indoctrination. But based on the findings that this chapter

uncovers, analysed independent of the wider communicative sites that Hizbullah adopts, there is no indication of indoctrination but rather the act of presenting subjective recollections of historical battles and more contemporary ones in the aim that they educate and emphasise the values of society and the group in line with Carey's 'ritual view.' Whether Hizbullah indoctrinates children through other communications sites, especially face-to-face ones, is a matter that this chapter cannot answer.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Hizbullah has come a long way since its inception in 1985. In the early stages, the Party did not have its own logo and instead adopted the Islamic Revolution's flag and images of Khomeini as the basis for its visual identity. The reality of the Party's communication today is much different as it produces and adopts a plethora of media channels and has utilised a number of other non-traditional media sites, such as public spaces and religious rituals among others as was explored in this thesis. It is the task of this chapter to summarise the main contributions of the thesis, to highlight the significance of the theoretical and empirical approach that it adopts and the issues it raises and to outline the implications of the work for future studies.

To briefly outline the thesis, it explores five of Hizbullah's contemporary communication channels with a view to examine the Party and its media content through the lens of promotion and branding. The chapters argue that the concept of 'brand values' of religion and resistance are central to understand how Hizbullah defines and promotes itself and how it structures its activities. Different chapters examine religious channels as significant to the Party's political communication and study a range of sites from 2006 until the present day to reveal the Party's expanding nationalist rhetoric as it attempts to appeal to a wider Lebanese, Arab, Muslim and transnational audience. In doing this, the thesis sheds light on the relevance of the modernist and ethno-symbolist schools of thought for understanding Hizbullah's conception of the 'nation'.

1.1 A Promotion and Branding Lens

The literature on branding imagines organisations as having values and argues that it is these values that guide the organisation – or ought to guide it – as it expresses them in multiple ways and channels. Branding literature, similar to literature on promotion, also asserts and recommends the extension of communication beyond traditional communications media to different sites such as spaces (Moor 2007, Klingmann 2007), employee dress codes and mannerism (Lury 2004, Moor 2007) and staged events (Arvidsson 2006) to render them communicative. Proponents of brands also highlight the loyalty that can be created between consumers and organisations and products, allowing a brand to expand (Moor 2007) to new lines. And much like literature on promotion, theories of branding have been applied beyond the commercial sphere to political and religious groups (Einstein 2008, Mellor 2018).

This thesis's adoption of the literature on promotion and branding has provided a lens to understand the content of Hizbullah's communications: the Party promotes its core values through the multiple sites that the thesis examined, regardless of their audience, impact and reach. It also highlights the multiplicity of communicative channels that can be and have been adopted by Hizbullah as well as the Party's focus on myths and narratives related to Hussein's martyrdom as a strategy for structuring the brand and creating a sense of loyalty. The use of the branding literature allows this thesis to explore Hizbullah's territories, buildings and the landscape, as well as its rituals, as communicative and promotional, thus highlighting the significance of adopting promotion and branding as a theoretical approach rather than focusing on Carey's categories on communication. Indeed,

the thesis argues that the Dahiya suburbs – at least to a certain extent - function as a branded space and that ʿAshura rituals can be understood as brand events. So while Lina Khatib (2014) focuses on memorabilia and merchandise to justify seeing Hizbullah as a brand, in this thesis, I focus on the inner workings of the Party, its identity and the diffusion of this identity, providing the grounds to examine Hizbullah's past and present. Ultimately, examining Hizbullah's different communication sites also involves uncovering the Party's promotional and branding approach, core ideologies and political aims. This is in placed comparison to other groups, both within the Lebanese political scene and on a regional and global level, particularly that which relates to ISIS and Wahhabi thought. Within the Lebanese scene for example, the thesis reveals that Hizbullah's articulation of a Lebanese identity is through highlighting territorial defence while other groups such as the Future movement do so through envisioning economic prosperity. Similarly, Hizbullah attempts to differentiate itself from other Shiʿa groups such as Amal and Fadlullah in what is understood as branding efforts. On a regional scale, highlighting the differences between itself and ISIS and Wahhabi thought and marking itself as different, Hizbullah attempts to counter its global terrorist reputation by emphasising their fight against the real terrorists. In parallel to such efforts, Hizbullah elevates the martyrdom of Hussein in Karbala to a global level as the Imam becomes a symbol for resistance and anti-oppression, ultimately differentiating the Party from other local groups that interpret the Karbala battle on more individual terms.

In addition, by examining Hizbullah through the lens of promotion and branding, the thesis generally contributes to growing literature that highlights the adoption

of commercial techniques into the field of politics and religion. And by examining the Party's multiple sites, the thesis sheds light on diverse communication processes that are adopted by religious and political institutions thereby broadly contributing to political communication studies that move beyond media-centric approaches.

It is important to note, however, that some aspects of Hizbullah's behaviour lead to questions about the applicability or limits of the terms 'brand' and 'branding.' Indeed, the Party's use of force against those who stray from their religious doctrines within their territories (as described in chapter 4 on Dahiya) means that their attempts to pursue their interests are not limited to branding practices and other persuasion techniques that steer 'consumers' in particular directions that emphasise its values. However, the ultimate aim of this force is to promote Hizbullah's religious identity through lived experiences and to create a brand space that functions in a manner that applies and abides by the tenets of the faith. As chapter 4 argues, it is more suitable to view Dahiya through the angle of nation branding but one should perhaps also consider how brands function internally. Indeed, Anholt (2007) draws attention to the "despotic management style" (p. 82) of brand executive officers who dictate and police employee behaviour. Equally significant, Lury (2004) examines the significance of the law to manage and regulate the relations between producers and consumers whereby many commercial brands pursue legal action against consumers who 'infringe' their trademark. Hence, while there are clear differences between Hizbullah and commercial brands due to Hizbullah's use of force, it should also be noted that there are nonetheless parallels between the Party and commercial brands in the

sense that both seek to 'police' people's behaviour, including that of their own representatives as well of that of consumers.

Beyond the commercial world, one should note the historically strong link between branding and entities that use coercion. All states more or less depend on a combination of consensus and coercion. One can also find such a link in a nation's army and navy which have both adopted uniforms, postures, rallies, speeches and demonstrations among others and in that present themselves as branded. One need not forget the Nazis who adopted the same practices in addition to architecture as explored in previous chapters.

1.2 Memory, Myth and Identity

This thesis is not a study of cultural memory but the adoption of branding literature to think about the Party's communications strategies has nonetheless instigated an exploration of Hizbullah's core identity which is linked to myth and memory. Indeed, the thesis argues and demonstrates that Hizbullah's identity is rooted in Shiʿa history, particularly Hussein's martyrdom in the battle of Karbala, which is adopted for political activities.

Hizbullah's identity and values have implications for how the Party understands and promotes itself and how it functions. As the thesis demonstrates, Hussein's martyrdom, which has throughout been a model for revolt and resistance, has been significant in the Lebanese context where Shiʿas have historically been marginalised. By reviving the Karbala narrative and reinterpreting it in

revolutionary times, Hizbullah, like al-Sadr, has given a voice and power to the Shiʿa demographic to improve their political and social status. Such attempts were previously articulated by leftist parties, which Shiʿas joined as a means to counter their marginalisation, but since al-Sadr's arrival to Lebanon and the Iranian revolution, religion and Hussein have come to the forefront.

Equally significant, the Party's Shiʿa identity and focus on Hussein has mobilised men to resist Israel and as a means to defend the land and those within it. The notion of 'resistance' is understood as something that emulates Imam Hussein and his sacrifices as those who follow in his path are believed to be gifted with heaven, thus drawing attention to the religious rootedness of Hizbullah's political resistance. Interestingly, religious myth and cultural memory of the Karbala battle have been reinterpreted and the focus re-shifted by Hizbullah. Ultimately, this has impacted on how Hizbullah promotes itself and how it presents the memory of Hussein as the Party attempts to reflect an image of modernity and to interpret the Karbala battle in more revolutionary terms. On a more significant level however, the reinterpretation of Hussein's role in Karbala has allowed the Party to expand beyond the confines of the Lebanese state and to transform Hussein's martyrdom into a global symbol for anti-oppression and anti-colonialism. Within branding literature, one might compare this with the idea of having brand values that are flexible enough to allow for the expansion of a product line or an organisation's services (Arvidsson 2006).

In all this, Hizbullah cannot be viewed as a Shiʿa party that performs political activities but rather as a Shiʿa political party as the two values are very much

intertwined. And as the empirical chapters show, despite Hizbullah's multiple political activities, the Party views itself as a resistance party first and foremost, allowing Hizbullah to carve a place for itself within the Shiʻa demographic, the Lebanese scene and more recently, the regional and transnational level. Internally and in more recent times, this is perhaps most evident in the Party's slogan for the 2018 parliamentary campaign "We protect, and we build" in which Naim Qassem, Hizbullah's deputy secretary-general, explained that Hizbullah's task within Lebanon is to resist occupation and also to provide aid to the Lebanese population. But to view resistance without considering the significance of religion and memory fails to comprehend the Party's identity and driving force.

1.3 Education and Socialisation

James Carey's (2009) account of the 'transmission view' of communication shows that it understands the media's role as that of diffusing information and in socialising audiences while the 'ritual view' emphasises the ways in which media content acts to confirm the views and opinions of the group thereby consolidating and affirming society and its values. Carey's theories are echoed in the literature of Wernick (1991) on promotion, which acknowledges the wider educational and socialising impact of promotion. But while Carey focused on media channels, Wernick – and likewise the literature on branding - expand communication and promotion beyond the commercial world onto different sites such as architecture and events among others.

The thesis demonstrates the applicability of both Carey and Wernick's theories for

understanding the socialising and educational processes involved in Hizbullah's communications. It uncoveres the significance of space, magazines, television and social media in educating the Party's followers (as well as those it wishes to persuade) about the tenets of Hizbullah's religio-politico nation. But it also demonstrates that such processes should take into consideration how lived experiences and the use of force are similarly involved. Leisure and cultural activities are not merely entertainment sites but part and parcel of Hizbullah's efforts at creating and maintaining its nation. Similarly, the use of force, while questionable - and sometimes ineffective as chapter 4 demonstrates since inhabitants simply leave Dahiya for the experiences that they seek - raises questions about the impact that Dahiya has on those who are religious and do not deviate from Hizbullah-prescribed rules. By providing the setting that Hizbullah finds religiously suitable, in tandem with other factors that educate individuals about the principles of the faith, the use of restrictions and punishment indirectly becomes a method through which Hizbullah can socialise individuals into the religio-politico nation by denying them the experiences that stray from it.

But as this thesis confirms, educational and socialising processes start from a young age through schools, the family, al-Mahdi Scouts association and magazines and television, the last two of which were the focus of chapter 7. Hence, the thesis adds to growing research that highlights the role of literature (O'Dell 1978) as well as television (Mares et al 2008) in socialising children and provides a window to understand the masses of people that participate in the Party's ʿAshura rituals, the number of Shiʿas who support their resistance activities and who join their ranks to resist. Such media channels need to be understood within wider socialisation

efforts but no doubt draw attention to the under-developed focus that children's

media in the Arab world occupies thus highlighting the significance of examining

other sites of study generally. Relative to Hizbullah, despite increased interest in

the Party's media aimed at the young (Souri 2007, Tagliabue 2015, Saber and

Webber's 2016), there are still vast areas worthy of analysis specifically because of

their impact and perhaps to understand the Party's future.

1.4 Religious and Political Communication

The literature on promotion and branding highlights the extension of commercial

techniques and its adoption by political and religious groups. This is exemplified in

Mara Einstein's (2008) examination of the Christian, American context and in Noha

Mellor's (2017) analysis of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt. Likewise, it is

demonstrated in this thesis which analyses Hizbullah's religious and political

communication. Indeed, the thesis uncovers Hizbullah's capitalising on its image

and popularity in the early days to transform itself into a political party within the

Lebanese state and its adoption of religious and political merchandise as a means

to promote its rhetoric – in what Einstein explains is a means to spread the faith.

However, the thesis demonstrates that the Party's 'Ashura rituals and posters

among others function in the same way thus extending the focus on merchandise

beyond the physicality of products. Likewise, the thesis extends Einstein's

emphasis on merchandise as a means to assert the adoption of a faith by

consumers who purchase religious products to include social media statuses of

posters and photographs as a means of asserting one's belonging to Hizbullah's

religio-politico nation and the adoption of its tenets.

The thesis also asserts the significance of understanding Hizbullah as a religious brand and not merely as a political one. While the research on Hizbullah as a brand (Khatib 2014) has focused on the Party as a political one that produces political mechanise, this thesis understands the Party's communication as one that emphasises a religious branding dimension on the one hand and more importantly, that views the promotion of values as central to its branding activities.

On another level, the thesis fills what it sees as a major gap in the research on Hizbullah, which focuses on the Party's communication channels to understand political messages and content. As the explorations in chapters 5 and 6 uncover, the Party's 'Ashura rituals and posters are to commemorate Hussein's martyrdom but are very much involved in processes of political communication, be it with supporters and enemies, internal and external ones. Such sites deserve exploration because they demonstrate the extension of communication beyond media channels on the one hand and because both channels enjoy widespread reach thus allowing the Party to disseminate its messages to a global audience and to educate and socialise audiences into the Party's nation on a global level, irrespective of time and place. Hence, while research on Hizbullah's communication has focused on the politics within the political, the thesis uncovers the political within the religious thereby confirming the intertwining of religion and politics within Hizbullah's discourse.

On a broader scale, this thesis contributes to religious and political communication in general. By drawing on the literature of promotion and branding and by

examining Hizbullah's different communicative sites, the thesis at hand draws attention to the diverse ways through which religious and political communication occurs when existing literature - while not overlooking platforms such as those explored in this thesis - mainly focuses on media centric channels such as television. Ritual gatherings, face-to-face communication and spaces are thus significant sites of religious and political communication and, along with traditional media channels, deserve much scrutiny. Ultimately, one should examine communication as a holistic system of integrated and interconnected channels that emphasise ideas, messages and values, an aspect that is allowed by adopting the literature on branding.

Similarly, and on a broader scale, the thesis draws attention to the significance of religion to politics and vice versa. While theorists of modern nationalism separate the two, the thesis demonstrates their interconnectedness. Indeed, one need only examine politics in Lebanon and to parties such as Hizbullah. Yet, such practices are not confined to the Lebanese scene but also evident in North American and European contexts such as those that Mara Einstein examines.

 1.5 Timeframe and Context

One of the thesis's contributions has been to examine Hizbullah's communication during a very specific time frame: 2006-2018. As such, it complements existing research on Hizbullah that highlightes the Party's responses to specific events, be it the religious or political. It also complements research which understands that Hizbullah has transformed from a party occupied solely with resistance activities

to one that is also involved in internal Lebanese politics and which seeks to attract a Lebanese audience as well as a wider Arab and Muslim one.

However, this thesis presents a more contemporary understanding of Hizbullah's communication and its nationalist identity, as it situates the research and findings within a wider religio-politico context and timeline of events. It shows that Hizbullah's resistance is no longer limited to the territorial nation of Lebanon as the Party has become a key regional political player with the ability to change the course of the Syrian war and Assad's fate and one which will be heavily involved in future battles with Israel and ISIS. The thesis also examines the Party's more contemporary framings of its nationalist identity as Hizbullah has increasingly attempted to appeal to a wider demographic and to assert a nationalist identity beyond the Shiʿa and Lebanese one to include a Muslim, Arab and regional one.

In doing so, the thesis presents Hizbullah's recent transformations, demonstrating the Party's ability to draw on a brand value, the historical narrative of Hussein's martyrdom and the notion of 'resistance,' that is flexible enough to allow Hizbullah to re-shift focus and to expand beyond Lebanese territories. Despite these transformations, the thesis demonstrates that what remains unchanged are religiously drawn messages about Shiʿa identity and the centrality of Hussein, and resistance. This perhaps opens the gateway for understanding how Hizbullah will frame itself in the near future in its regional war against Israel and ISIS but the specificity of the time frame that the thesis examines highlights the need to constantly consider context while taking into consideration the Party's identity.

1.6 Nationalism

Literature on nationalism and nationalist identity provides multiple schools of thought including the modernist (Kedourie 1974), primodialist (Geertz 1973), perennialist (Armstrong 1982) and ethno-symbolist (Smiths 2003). Of particular relevance to exploring Hizbullah's nationalism in this thesis are the modernist and ethno-symbolist schools. The former, although assuming a secular and homogeneous nation, is useful for acknowledging Hizbullah's territorial protection of Lebanon and those within it. In contrast, the ethno-symbolist paradigm, while not ignoring territory, acknowledges the impact of religion on the nation (Smith 2003) on the one hand and the creation of a nation centred around religion (Juergensmeyer 1993) on the other.

The thesis emphasises the Party's multiple nationalist identities and draws attention to the interconnectedness of the modernist and ethno-symbolist schools within the Party's discourse. In examining the Party's modernist nationalist identity, which stresses territorial protection and those within it, the thesis demonstrates the extension of activities typically limited to one's territorial nation beyond the confines of the Lebanese state as Hizbullah battles ISIS in Syria to protect the Lebanese nation - as it claims - and to protect Syria and other Arab nations (Nasrullah claims that battling ISIS has ultimately protected Saudi Arabia and Jordan among others as chapter 5 demonstrated). In that sense, it is the act of defence – and of asserting that defence in different media outlets - that has allowed Hizbullah the ability to promote an Arab, Muslim and regional nationalist identity at a time when there are growing attacks against the Party. On another level, the

thesis demonstrates that the Party's act of territorial defence - be it in Lebanon or beyond – is one that is mobilised through drawing on religion and Hussein in the Karbala battle, thereby highlighting that the modernist and the ethno-symbolist school, relative to Hizbullah, cannot be separated. It is religion that supports the act of defence thus stressing the inapplicability of the modernist's approach to the nation as secular.

In a similar manner, the study of Hizbullah's religious nation highlights the politics of religion. Indeed, the religious nation that Hizbullah promotes and which it socialises individuals into does not include all Shi'as, or even all of Lebanon's Shi'as, but specifically those who adopt the interpretation of Hussein's martyrdom that the Party promotes and who adopt the notion of resistance as a tenet. Equally significant, Hizbullah's religious nation is one that differentiates itself from other Shi'a groups in Lebanon as the Party separates itself from the religious practices of Amal and Sayyed Fadlullah for example, in what this thesis argues is an attempt by Hizbullah to survive as a political entity.

To claim, however, that the study of Hizbullah's nationalist identity is a pioneering one would be false. Indeed, and as chapter 2 demonstrates, starting from the early 90s, Hizbullah promoted itself as a Lebanese Party and following the liberation of the South in 2000 and the 2006 war, appealed to a wider Arab audience. Similarly, in his thesis, El-Hage examines how Hizbullah maintains its religious nations through multiple institutions. However, this thesis makes a significant contribution to the study of the Party's nationalist discourses and which is brought about through a more contemporary examination of Hizbullah and its activities. Indeed,

by studying Hizbullah's communication between 2006 and 2018, the thesis reveals a new nationalist discourse: a regional one. By presenting itself as the protector of the region and those who occupy it (either from ISIS or from Israel and its attempts at dividing the region), Hizbullah promotes a regional nationalist identity with Hussein as the driving force and at the centre of the Party's territorial defence of the region. Second, the time frame that this thesis examines reflects Hizbullah's urgency in promoting and asserting a nationalist belonging beyond the Shi'a and Lebanese one. While in 2000 and 2006, Hizbullah tapped into existing sentiments of Lebanese and Arab nationalism to bask in and capitalise on wider support against Israel, more recent political events - and what I argue is a preparation for a regional war yet to come - has seen the Party increasingly attempt to appeal to and recapture a wider audience that it had lost following its participation in the Syrian war. Such an attempt has seen the Party move beyond emphasising solidarity and collective belonging to Arab nationalism for example to emphasise this identity through stressing its active dimension: the physical act of protection, thereby stressing the transformation in Hizbullah's nationalist rhetoric and activities. Ultimately then, this thesis does not focus on one form of Hizbullah's nationalism at the expense of the other but examines the Party's multiple nationalist identities and which are very much intertwined.

On a broader level, the thesis makes a significant contribution to theories of nationalism, be it the modernist school or the ethno-symbolist one. In the former, the thesis asserts Mihelj's (2007) position in that the modernist school fails to acknowledge the relationship between nationalism and religion, especially that which relates to territorial protection as is the case with Hizbullah's adoption of

Hussein's sacrifices as a model for defending Lebanon. Similarly, while theorists on modernist nationalism (Gellner 1985, Anderson 1991, Giddens 1985, Kedourie 1960) limited territorial protection to the confines of the nation-state, this thesis demonstrates the adoption of activities typically limited to a nation beyond its confines as is the case in Hizbullah protecting Syria from ISIS. With regards to the ethno-symbolist school, the study of Hizbullah's nationalist discourse uncovers faults in Smith's (2001) and Juergensmeyer's (1993) religious nation when applied to Hizbullah. To begin with, one should consider the political dynamics of religious nations. In the case of Hizbullah, this is articulated in two cases, the first of which is that Hizbullah's religious nation involves the act of defending territory meaning that in essence, it is political. Second, by marking itself as different from other Shiʿa groups and not only Muslim ones, Hizbullah becomes a clear example of how the religious nation is again subject to political dynamics, ultimately demonstrating that religious nations are not homogeneous.

1.7 Research Methods

This thesis examines a number of different sites to uncover Hizbullah's promotional and branding techniques. While the different explorations demonstrate that Hizbullah's promotional content of religious and political identity and messages are consistent throughout the diverse channels, the research methods that have allowed for this argument to be made are not. Indeed, each site required different research methods depending on the site itself and the available material among others. Still, to uncover the depth and breadth of articulated meaning, both manifest and latent, multiple research methods are

adopted for each site. Such an approach no doubt emphasises the significance of a mixed method approach and the necessity to adapt research methods depending on one's study and research questions. To have adopted semiotics to examine Hizbullah's 'Ashura posters for example would have been insufficient as the method does not allow for the study of change and which is necessary to uncover the Party's visual transformations. Such transformations are significant in that they reveal Hizbullah's visual articulation of its expanding nationalist identity and which the iconological method draws attention to. Likewise, relying on participant observation as a method to study Hizbullah's 'Ashura rituals or Dahiya would again have been insufficient as interviews were, in many cases, vital to present new information, or to confirm findings. Ultimately, the mixed methods approach emphasises the need for one's awareness of their research topic and questions, an understanding of the gaps in one's findings and a flexibility in adopting research methods with the awareness that adaptation is in many cases, vital and significant.

1.7 Final Thoughts

In 2006, Israel's aim was to weaken and destroy the Party's weaponry stash and to turn the Shi'a population against Hizbullah, an act which proved unsuccessful. In more recent times and as Nasrullah has articulated, Saudi Arabia has pledged to cover the war bill if Israel would again target Lebanon and erase Hizbullah. Clearly, different groups, both locally and regionally, aim to see the erasure of the Party as a resistance and political party.

There is no doubt that certain measures such as the monitoring of banks and funding to Hizbullah, destroying its weaponry stashes coming through Syria and the targeting of high cadres of the Party has weakened the Party, most of all financially. But to what extent can the Party be erased? To begin with, even if Hizbullah's destruction and erasure is possible militarily and politically, how socially, culturally and ideologically feasible is that? As the empirical chapters have demonstrated, promoting Hizbullah's values, messages and rhetoric is not simply about transmitting information but is also in the maintenance of the group and its values over time, which in branding literature assumes that when successful, allow for a sense of enduring loyalty to the brand and its values. From that perspective, one should understand that Hizbullah's strength lies not only in its military and political power but also in its existence as an ideological, cultural and resistance entity, whose survival rests on the men, women and children who share their values and also see themselves as following in the footsteps of Hussein by engaging in resistance. This cultural and ideological belonging runs deep as children are socialised into Hizbullah circles from a young age, as chapter 7 has demonstrated.

The point here is to highlight the significance of the Party's communication, drawing attention to the deep and ingrained impact that promotional, educational and socialising efforts result in. Indeed, the masses of people who attend Hizbullah's rituals or view their mediation on al-Manar, who choose to live in Dahiya and who like and share the Party's 'Ashura posters among others attest to the significance of the Party's communication. But while research on Hizbullah's communication has focused on the political within political sites and while existing research focus on traditional media channels, the thesis draws on the literature on

branding and promotion to stress the significance of religious sites in political communication processes and the extension of Hizbullah's communication beyond media to include non-traditional forms such as spaces and gatherings among others. Likewise, the thesis focuses on a specific time period, drawing attention to the Party's changing resistance rhetoric, interpretation of Hussein's martyrdom and expanding nationalist discourses. This, I argue, is to allow the Party to garner wider support in preparation for a regional war with Israel. The level of success of the Party's more contemporary rhetoric is not an aspect that the thesis examined but so far, the media has no doubt been a major factor in the Party's survival, growth and success and hence, deserves much focus.

So while the thesis presents key findings and explores new sites and recent timeframes that have been overlooked, there is still much to study as the thesis does not claim to be a complete and exhaustive study of all of Hizbullah's communication channels. Indeed, to follow a theoretical approach focused on branding, which acknowledges the "expanded spatial scope" (Moor 2007) of contemporary brand-led communication, is to assume that any "touchpoint" that Hizbullah might appear in could, in principle, be a site through which the brand is promoted. The thesis selects a number of channels that it views as particularly significant but the Party, as mentioned above, produces multiple media and communication sites, targeting different audiences and achieving different aims. In listing the sites that could be examined for this research, I was surprised by the number of publications, websites, magazines, activities, schools and the like that Hizbullah adopts. Clicking on one website for example, led to numerous others in a never-ending cycle of promotional material. So by highlighting the significance of

branding's widening scope, the thesis draws attention to the multiplicity of sites that one could potentially explore.

Similarly, although chapter 7 examines two of Hizbullah's media outlets aimed at children - which I argue have been ignored in studies of its communication processes – and asserts Hizbullah's focus on its younger audiences, there are equally significant and unexamined channels that might be considered in the future, most important of which is al-Mahdi Scouts. Tagliabue (2015) investigates the Party's scout troupe but a deeper examination is needed – one that adopts participant observation and interviews with cadres of the association to gather inside information that children for example, cannot provide. Understanding the future of Hizbullah and its position in the region as a religio-politico Party lies in uncovering the impact of children's media generally and relative to the Party specifically.

Appendix A

Here Are The 100 Reasons Why We Support 14th Of March:

1) We Liberated Lebanon From The Syrian Occupation Without Burning One Tire.

2) We Loved Mr. Rafik Hariri.

3) We Never Drove Lebanon To War.

4) We Loved Down Town Beirut (Before Occupation).

5) We Believe In Deodorant.

6) We Wear Prada, Gucci And Dolce And Gabbana.

7) Our Ladies Don't Grow Moustaches.

8) We Love Life.

9) Fouad Siniora Is Our Free P.M.

10) We Want To Build 3 Houses And Not Rebuild The Same House 3 Times.

11) Our Capital Is Beirut (Not Damascus Nor Tahran).

12) We Believe In Blue Red And White.

13) Orange Causes Ulcers.

14) Our Leaders Don't Sweat On T.V.

15) We Are Always Different.

16) Our Leaders Don't Suffer From Recurrent Nervous Break-Downs On T.V.

17) Our Ladies Don't Look Like Scary Black Ninjas.

18) Our Children Watch Disney Channel Not Manar Al Sigher.

19) We Don't Live In Tents.

20) Nayla Moua3awwad Is Funny When She Gets Mad.

21) We Speak Arabic, French And English Not Farsi.

22) We Call Straws 'Straws' Not 'Mashifta'.

23) We Love Verdun (Not 7arit 7rek).

24) We Love Pain D'Or (Not Cremino).

25) We Love Star Academy (Not Shaheed Academy).

26) We Love Project Fashion (Not Wa3ed Al Sadek).

27) We Smile.

28) We Shower On A Daily Basis.

29) Ali Hamade (Not Imad Marmal).

30) We Work Out With Dumbells Not With Zilzal Or Ra3ed.

31) We Love Elissa.

32) We Love Noura Joumblat Not Randa Berri.

33) Talal Irslan Is Gay (For God's Sake He Shaves His Legs!!!).

34) Wi2am Wahhab Is Not A Member (Thank God).

35) We Shake Hands With Jaques Chirac Not Ahmadi Nijad.

36) We Do Not Worship Our Leaders.

37) We Are Not Ungrateful To Those Who Gave Us Shelter In July War.

38) We Watch Future, LBC And 3arabiyya.

39) Our Leaders Don't Say 'Khara' On T.V. (Michel Aoun).

40) Ghinwa Jalloul Is Cute.

41) Our Leaders Live In Palaces Not UnderGround.

42) We're Not Big Fans Of 'Ka3ek' (We'd Rather Eat Donuts).

43) Majida Al Roumi Not Julia Boutross.

44) Elie Sa3eb Not 'Tchador Store.'

45) A.U.H. Not ' Al Rasoul Al A3zam Hospital.'

46) We Protest Decently With Flags (Not Sticks).

47) We Don't Die By Thousands Then Claim An ' Intisar Ilahy.'

48) Ma Min 3alli2 3a Khat El Kahraba.

49) We Don't Have American Passports Then Say ' Death To Amreeca.'

50) We Know How To Shave Our Beards.

51) Saad Hariri Is Rafic Hariri's Son.

52) Rafic Hariri (God Bless His Soul).

53) Al Mou3allim Walid Not Walid Il Mou3allim.

54) Our Women Don't Go To Filthy Costa Brava.

55) Phoenicia Not Golden Blaza!

56) We Go On Dates Not On 3amaliyye Inti7ariye.

57) We Don't Have Trouble Spelling 'R.'

58) 1559, 1701

59) Lycee, College, I.C. Not 'Thanawiyyat Al Zahra2.'

60) We Do Not Celebrate Death For 1500 Years In A Row.

61) We Use FireWorks Not Gun Shots.

62) 'F.R.I.E.N.D.S' Not 'Jamil Wa hana2.'

63) We Don't Follow Bashar El 7mar.

64) Our Men Shake Hands With Women

65) Our Men Don't Wear ' Khatem Ja3far '

67) Rafic Hariri Taught 35,000 Students, Hassan Nasrallah Has 35,000 Rockets!

68) We Don't Sing '3aytaaaaa' And 'Khasrak Haz Il Dini'

69) We Know (You Idiots) That Qatar Has Political Ties With Israel.

70) We Do Not Have Ambitions To Liberate Golan From Lebanon.

71) Fate7 Not Hamas.

72) Condoliza Rice Is Hot, Larigani Is Not.

73) Tourism Not Terrorism.

74) We want 1,000,000 Seyi7 Not 1,000,000 Nezi7.

75) May Chidiac Not Kawthar Mousawi Noun.

76) We Do Not Decorate Our Streets And Roads With Pictures Of Dead Scary Foreign Religious Leaders (Khoumayni).

77) Democracy Not Tyranny.

78) We Don't Rally To Thank Syria.

79) We Do Not Beat Up Electricity Bills-Collectors.

80) Unleaded 98 Octanes Not Mazout.

81) We Plant Trees Not Cut Them To Block Roads.

82) Our Regions Didn't Get Bombed In The July War That Hassan Brought Upon Us.

83) Biel Not 'Al Mourabba3 Al Amni.'

84) Ni7na Kteer Cool.

85) Badna Nifham, Ma Badna 7adan Yifham 3anna.

86) We Eat 'Ghanam.'

87) Shou 3amil Il Layle: 'Rayi7 It3asha Not 2o7ro2 Douleb.'

88) We Believe In Freedom Of Speech.

89) We Are Allowed To Wear Ties.

90) We Don't Use Terms Like 'Fida Il Sormeye' On A Daily Basis.

91) 2 Children Are Enough In One Family (No Need For The Dazzine).

92) We're Not Hypnotized Nor Brain-Washed.

93) We Have Hundreds Of Detainees In Syria But We Don't Destroy Lebanon For Their Sake.

94) We Like To Drink Tea With Neighbours.

95) Our Flags Don't Show Weapons.

96) Nasib Lahoud Not Emile Lahoud.

97) Ouza3i Smells Like Shit.

98) Our Cameras Don't Zoom In.

99) Faja2nakon Mou?

100) Finally Because We Love LEBANON . . .

References:

Books:

Aberbach, D. (2008) *Jewish cultural nationalism*: Origins and influences. London: Routledge.

Abu-Lughod, L. (1991) 'Writing against Culture' in Fox, R. (ed.) *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present.* Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, pp. 137-162.

AbuKhalil, A. (1991) 'Ideology and practice of Hizballah in Lebanon: islamization of Leninist organizational principles,' *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27(3), pp. 390-403.

Agai, B. (2002) 'Fethullah Gu¨len and his movement's Islamic ethic of education,' *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, 11(1), pp. 27-47.

Aghaie, K. (2005) 'Introduction: gendered aspects of the emergence and historical development of Shi'i symbols and rituals,' in Aghaie, K. (ed.) *The women of Karbala: Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shi'I Islam*. Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. 1-21.

Al-Harithy, H. (2010) 'The politics of post-war reconstruction in Lebanon: an introduction, in Al-Harithy, H. (ed.) *Lessons in Post-War Reconstruction: Case Studies from Lebanon in the Aftermath of the 2006 War*. Oxfordshire: Routledge, pp. 1-20.

Alshaer, A. (2014) 'The poetry of Hizbullah,' in Khatib, L., Matar, D. and Alshaer, A. (eds.), *The Hizbullah phenomenon: politics and communication.* London: Hurst and Co Ltd, pp. 119-152.

Ajemian, P. (2008) "Resistance beyond time and space: Hezbollah's media campaigns", Arab Media and Society, May 2008,

http://www.arabmediasociety.com/articles/downloads/20080510192814_ams5_
pete_ajemian.pdf.

Ajami, F. (1986) *The vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon*. London:
Cornell University Press.

Alagha, J. (2006) *The shifts in Hizbullah's ideology: religious ideology, political
ideology, and political program*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Alagha, J. (2011) *Hizbullah's documents: from the 1985 open letter to the 2009
manifesto*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Alagha, J. (2012) 'Jihad through 'music': The Taliban and Hizbullah,' *Performing
Islam*. 1(2), pp. 263-289.

Alamuddin, H. (2010) 'Wa'd: the reconstruction project of the southern suburb of
Beirut,' in Al-Harithy, H. (ed.) *Lessons in Post-War Reconstruction: Case Studies from
Lebanon in the Aftermath of the 2006 War*. Oxfordshire: Routledge, pp.46-70.

Anholt, S. (2007) *Competitive identity: the new brand management for nations, cities
and regions*. Hampshire: Palgrave macmillan.

Anders, S. and Wärn, M. (2011) *Islamism*. Cambridge: Polity.

Anderson, B. (1983, 2006) *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and
spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.

Arvidsson, A. (2006) *Brands: meaning and value in media culture*. London:
Routledge.

Aslan, R. (2011) *No God but God.* London: Arrow Books.

Assmann, J. (1997) *Moses the Egyptian. the memory of Egypt in western monotheism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Assmann, J. (2006) *Religion and cultural memory: ten studies*. Translated by Rodney Livingstone. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Atran, S. and Ginges, J. (2012) 'Religious and sacred imperatives in human conflict,' *Science*, 336(6083), pp. 855-857.

Ayoub, M. (1978) *Redemptive suffering in Islām, a study of the devotional aspects of 'Ashura' in Twelver Sh'ism*. Mouton Publishers: New York.

Barr, R. (2011) 'Attention and learning from media during infancy and early childhood' in Calvert, S. and Wilson, B. (eds.) *The Handbook of Children, Media, and Development*. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., pp. 143-165.

Barthes, R. (1977) *Image music text*. London: Fontana Press.

Batey, M. (2008) *Brand meaning*. New York: Routledge.

Baylouny, A. (2009) 'Not Your Father's Islamist TV: Changing Programming on Hizbullah's al-Manar,' *Arab Media and Society*. Issue 9.

Bell, C. (1997) *Ritual: perspectives and dimensions*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bellah, R. (2005) 'Durkheim and ritual' in Alexander, J and Smith, P (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Durkheim*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 183-210.

Berger, J. (1972) *Ways of Seeing*. London: British Broadcasting Association and Penguin.

Bernard, H. (2013) S*ocial research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Billig, M. et al. (1988). *Ideological dilemmas: a social psychology of everyday thinking*. London u.a.: Sage.

Billig, M. (1991) *Ideology and opinions: studies in rhetorical psychology*. London: Sage Publications.

Billig, M. (1995) *Banal nationalism*. London: Sage Publications.

Binet, A. and Fe´re´, C. (1888) *Le magne´tisme animal*. Paris: Fe´lix Alcan.

Blumler, J., And Kavanagh, D. (1999) 'The third age of political communication: influences and features,' *Political Communication,* 16(3), pp. 209-230.

Boof, L. and Boff, C. (1987) *Introducing liberation theology*. Kent: Burns & Oates/Search pressLtd.

Bogner, A., Littig, B. and Menz, W. (2009) 'Introduction: expert interviews – an introduction to a new methodological debate,' in Bogner, A, Littig, B. and Menz, W (eds.) *Interviewing Experts.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-16.

Bogner, A. and Menz, W. (2009) 'The theory-generating expert interview: epistomological interest, forms of knowledge, interactions,' in Bogner, A, Littig, B. and Menz, W (eds.) *Interviewing Experts.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 43-80.

Bonnell, V. (1997) *Iconography of power: Soviet political posters under Lenin and Stalin*. California: University of California Press.

Bou Akar, H. (2012) 'Contesting Beirut's frontiers,' *City & Society*, 24(2), pp.150-172.

Boyle, R. and Haynes, R. (1996), 'The "grand old game": football, media and identity in Scotland,' *Media, Culture & Society*, 18 (4), pp. 549-564.

Calhoun, G. (1997) *Nationalism*. Buckingham: Open University Press

Carey, J. (2009). *Communication as culture*. New York: Routledge.

Certeau, M. (1984) *The practice of everyday life*. Translated by Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Chalfen, R. (2011) 'Looking two ways: mapping the social scientific study of visual culture,' in Margolis, E. and Pauwels, L. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Visual Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 24-48.

Cheater, A.P (1987) 'The anthropologist as citizen: the diffracted self, in Jackson, A. (ed.) *Anthropology at Home*. London: Tavistock, pp. 166-179.

Chelkowski, P. and Dabashi, H. (2000) *Staging a revolution: the art of persuasion in the Islamic Republic of Iran*. London: Booth-Clibborn Editions.

Cherribi, S. (2006) 'From Baghdad to Paris, Al Jazeera and the veil,' *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*. 11, pp. 121-138.

Chowdhury, D. (2011) 'Space, identity, territory: Marichjhapi Massacre, 1979,' *The International Journal of Human Ri*ghts. 15(5), pp. 664–682.

Coleman, S, and Blumler, J. (2009) *The internet and democratic citizenship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Comaroff, J. (1985) *Body of power, spirit of resistance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Constas, M. (1992) 'Qualitative analysis as a public event: the documentation of

category development procedures,' *American Educational Research Journal,* 29, pp. 253–266.

Corbetta, P. (2003) *Social research: theory, methods and techniques*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Corstange, D. (2012) 'Religion, pluralism, and iconography in the public sphere: theory and evidence from Lebanon,' *World Politics*, 64(1), pp. 116-160.

Couldry, N. (2003) *Media rituals: a critical approach*. London: Routledge.

Cox, K. (2002) *Political geography: territory, state, and society*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Crary, J. (1999) *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture.* Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Crilley, D. (1993) 'Architecture as advertising: constructing the image of redevelopment,' in Kearns, G. and Philo, C. (eds.) *Selling Places: The City as Cultural Capitalist, Past and Present*. Oxford: Pergamon, pp. 231-

Croft, R., Hartland, T. and Skinner, H. (2008) 'And did those feet? Getting medieval England "on-message,' *Journal of Communication Management*, 12(4), pp. 294-304.

Curran, J. (2002) *Media and power*. London: Routledge.

Curran, J., & Park, M. J. (Eds.) (2000) *De-Westernizing media studies*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Dabashi, H. (2012) *Shi'ism: a religion of protest*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Dahlgren, P. (2005) 'The internet, public spheres, and political communication: dispersion and deliberation," *Political Communication*, 22(2), pp. 147-162.

Dakhlallah, F. (2012) 'Al-Manar tv and the Islamic sphere in Lebanon: an evolving agenda' in Hroub, K. (ed.) *Religious Broadcasting in the Middle East*. London: Hurst & Company, pp. 219-236.

Davis, A. (2007) *The mediation of power*. London: Routledge.

Davis, A. (2013) *Promotional cultures*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Dayan, D. and Katz, E. (1992), *Media events: the live broadcasting of history*. London: Harvard University Press.

de Leeuw, R., Kleemans, M., Rozendaal, E., Anschütz, D. and Buijzen, M. (2015) 'The impact of prosocial television news on children's prosocial behavior: an experimental study in the Netherlands,' *Journal of Children and Media*, 9(4), pp. 419-434.

Deeb, L. (2005a) 'From mourning to activism: Sayyedeh Zaynab, Lebanese Shi_i women, and the transformation of Ashura,' in Aghaie, K. (ed.) *The women of Karbala: Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shi'I Islam*. Austin: University of Texas Press, pp.

Deeb, L. (2005b) 'Living Ashura in Lebanon: mourning transformed to sacrifice,' *Comparative Studies of South Asia,' Africa and the Middle East*, 25(1), pp. 122-137.

Deeb, L. (2006) *An enchanted modern: gender and public piety in Shi'i Lebanon*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Deeb, L. (2008) '"Exhibiting the just-lived past": Hizbullah's nationalist narratives in transnational political context,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 50(2), pp. 369-399.

Deeb, L. and Harb, M. (2009) 'Politics, culture, religion: How Hizbullah is

constructing an Islamic milieu in Lebanon,' *Review of Middle East Studies,* 43(2), pp. 198-206.

Deeb, L. and Harb, M. (2013) *Leisurely Islam: negotiating geography and morality in Shi'ite south Beirut*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Delamont, S. (2004) 'Ethnography and participant observation,' in Seale, C. et al (eds.) *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 205-217.

DeWalt, K. and DeWalt, B. (2011) *Participant observation: guide for fieldworkers.* 2nd edition. California: Altamira Press.

Dewey, J. (1886) *Psychology*. New York: Harper.

Durkheim, E. (1995) *The elementary forms of religious life*. Translated by K. E. Fields. New York: Free Press.

Eagleton, T. (1991) *Ideology: an introduction*. London: Verso.

Einstein, M. (2008) *Brands of faith*. London: Routledge.

El-Hibri, H. (2017) 'Disagreement without dissensus: the contradictions of Hizbullah's mediatized populism,' *International Journal of Communication,* 11(2017), pp. 4239–4255.

Elder, C. (2011) The Hezbollah Model, thesis, Georgetown University, viewed 23 January, 2014https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/558052/Elder_georgetown_0076M_11475.pdf?sequence=1.

El-Nawawy, M., & Gher, L. (2003). Al Jazeera: Bridging the East-West gap through public discourse and media diplomacy. Journal of Transnational Broadcasting Studies, 10. Retrieved from http://www.tbsjournal.com/Spring03/nawawy.html

Farah, M. and El Samad, L. (2014) 'The effects of religion and religiosity on advertisement assessment among Lebanese consumers,' *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 26(4), pp.344-369.

Farthing, S. and Cork, R. (2010). *Art: the whole story*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Fawaz, M. (2009) 'Beirut: The City as a body politic,' *ISIM*. 20, pp. 22-23.

Fawaz, M. (2009) 'Hezbollah as urban planner? questions to and from planning theory,' *Planning Theory*, 8(4), pp. 323-334.

Fawaz, M. (2014) 'The politics of property in planning: Hezbollah's reconstruction of Haret Hreik (Beirut, Lebanon) as case study,' *Int J Urban Reg Res*, 38(3), pp. 922-934.

Finke, R., and Iannaccone, L. R. (1993) 'Supply-side explanations for religious change,' *The Annals of the American Academy*, AAPSS, 527, 27–39.

Firro, K. (2006) 'Lebanese nationalism versus Arabism: from Bulus Nujaym to Michel Chiha,' *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40(5), pp. 1-27.

Flaskerud, I. (2010) *Visualizing belief and piety in Iranian Shiism.* London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Foster, H. (1988) 'Preface,' in H. Foster (ed.), *Vision and visuality*. Seattle: Bay Press, pp. ix-xiv.

Foster, S. (2010) *Political communication*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Fregonese, S. (2009) 'The urbicide of Beirut? geopolitics and the built environment in the Lebanese civil war (1975–1976),' *Political Geography*, 28(5), pp. 309-318.

Frembgen, J. (2012) 'The horse of Imam Hoseyn: notes on the iconography of Shi'i devotional posters from Pakistan and India,' in Khosronejad, P. (ed.) *The Art and Material Culture of Iranian Shi'ism: Iconography and Religious Devotion in Shi'i Islam*. London: I.B. Tauris and Co Ltd., pp. 179-194.

Friedl, E. and & Hegland, M. (2004) 'Guest editors' Introduction,' *Iranian Studies*, 37(4), pp. 573-569.

Fry, K. (1998), 'A cultural geography of lake Wobegon,' *Howard Journal of Communications*, 9 (4): 303–321.

Gaskell, G. (2000) 'Individual and group interviewing,' in Bauer, M. and Gaskell, G. *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound: a practical handbook*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 38-56.

Geertz, C. (1973) *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Gellner, E. (1983) *Nations and nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Gellner, E. (1994) *Conditions of liberty: civil society and its rivals*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Gellner, E. (1997) *Nations and nationalism*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Gellner, E. (2006) *Nations and nationalism*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Gencer, Y. (2012) 'We are family: the child and modern nationhood in early Turkish republican cartoons (1923-28),' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 32(2), pp. 294-309.

Gephart, W. (1998) 'Memory and the sacred: the cult of anniversaries and commemorative rituals in the light of the elementary forms,' in Pickering, A. and

Miller, W. (eds.) *On durkheim's elementary forms of religious life*. London: Routledge, pp. 127-135.

Geukjian, O. (2014) 'Political instability and conflict after the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon,' *The Middle East Journal,* 68(4), pp. 521-545.

Ghesquière, R. (2004) 'Contemporary religious writing' in Hunt, P. (ed.) *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*. 2nd Edition, Volume1. London: Routledge.

Giddens, A. (1985) *Nation-state and violence.* Cambridge: Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gottdiener, M. (1997, 2001) *The theming of America: American dreams, media fantasies and themed environments*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Gray et al (2007) *The Research Imagination: An introduction to qualitative and quantitative methods*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gutiérrez, G. (1988) *Theology of liberation: history, politics, and salvation*. Translated and edited by lnda, C. and Eagleson, J. New York: Orbis Books.

Haddad, S. (2002) 'Cultural diversity and sectarian attitudes in postwar Lebanon,' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 28(2), pp. 291-306.

Haddad, S. (2013) 'What leads some Lebanese Shiis to support Hizballah?,' *Comparative Strategy*, 32(1), pp. 71-87.

Hamdar, A. (2009) 'Jihad of words: gender and contemporary karbala narratives,' *The Yearbook of English Studies,* 39(1), pp. 84-100.

Hamzeh, N. (1993) 'Lebanon's Hizbullah: from Islamic revolution to parliamentary accommodation,' *Third World Quarterly*, 14(2), pp. 321-337.

Harb, M. and Fawaz, M. (2010) 'Influencing the politics of reconstruction in Haret Hreik," in Al-Harithy, H. (ed.) *Lessons in post-war reconstruction: case studies from Lebanon in the aftermath of the 2006 war*. Oxfordshire: Routledge, pp. 21-45.

Harb, M. and Leenders, R. (2005) 'Know thy enemy: Hizbullah, 'terrorism' and the politics of perception,' *Third World Quarterly*, 26(1), pp. 173-197.

Harb, Z. (2011) *Channels of resistance in Lebanon: liberation propaganda, Hezbollah and the media*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Harik, J. (1996) 'Between Islam and the system: sources and implications of popular support for Lebanon's Hizballah,' *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 40(1), pp. 41-67.

Hastrup, K. (1995) *A Passage to Anthropology*. London: Routledge.

Hegland, M. (2004) 'Zip in and zip out fieldwork,' *Iranian Studies*, 37(4), pp. 583-575.

Henneberg, S.C. (2004) 'The views of an advocatus dei: political marketing and its critics,' *Journal of Public Affairs*, 4(3): 225-243.

Henneberg, S.C. and O'shaughnessy, N.J. (2007) 'Theory and concept development in political marketing,' *Journal of Political Marketing*, 6(2), pp. 5-31.

Hipp, J. (2009) 'Specifying the determinants of neighborhood satisfaction: a robust assessment in 24 metropolitan areas,' *Social Forces*, 88(1), pp. 395-424.

Hudson, M. (1999) 'Lebanon after Taif: another reform opportunity lost,' *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 21(1), pp. 27-35.

Hussain, A. (2005) 'The mourning of history and the history of mourning: the evolution of ritual commemoration of the battle of Karbala,' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 25(1)1, pp. 78-88.

Hust, S. and Brown, J. (2008) 'Gender, media use, and effects' in Calvert, S and Wilson, B. (eds.) *The Handbook of Children, Media, and Development*. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., pp. 98-120.

Juergensmeyer, M. (1993) *The new cold war? Religious nationalism confronts the secular state*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, CA and London: University of California Press.

Karagiannis, E. (2009) 'Hizballah as a social movement organization: a framing approach,' *Mediterranean Politics*, 14(3), pp. 365-383.

Karimi, P. and Gruber, C. (2012) 'Introduction: the politics and poetics of the child image in Muslim contexts,' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 32(2), pp. 273-293.

Kaufman, A. (2004) 'Tell us our history': Charles Corm, Mount Lebanon and Lebanese nationalism,' *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40(3), pp. 1-28.

Kedourie, E. (1960) *Nationalism*. London: Hutchinson.

Kedourie, E. (1971) *Nationalism in Asia and Africa*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Kenney, K. (2009) *Visual communication research designs*. New York [u.a.]: Routledge.

Khalidi, R. (1991) 'The origins of Arab nationalism: introduction' in Khalidi et al (eds.) *The origins of Arab nationalism: introduction*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Khalili, L. (2007) 'Standing with my brother': Hizbullah, Palestinians, and the limits

of solidarity,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 49(02), pp. 276-303.

Khashan, H. (1992) *Inside the Lebanese confessional mind*. Lanham: University of America Press.

Khatib, L. (2007) 'Television and public action in the Beirut spring,' in Sakr, N. (ed.) *Arab Media and Political Renewal: Community, Legitimacy and Public Life*, London: I.B. Tauris, London, pp. 28-45.

Khatib, L. (2011) 'Hizbullah's political strategy,' *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 53(2), pp. 61-76.

Khatib, L. (2012) *Image politics in the Middle East*. London: I B Tauris.

Khatib, L. (2012) Hizbullah's image management strategy, e-book, Figueroa Press, Los Angeles, accessed 24 January 2014, http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/publications/perspectives/CPD_Perspectives_Paper1_2012_Final.pdf.

Khatib, L. (2013) *Image Politics in the Middle East: The Role of the Visual in Political Struggle*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Khatib, L. (2014). 'Hizbullah's political strategy,' in Khatib, L., Matar, D. and Alshaer, A. (eds.), *The hizbullah phenomenon: politics and communication.* London: Hurst and Co Ltd, pp. 13-38.

Khatib, L. and Matar, D. (2014). 'Conclusion: Hizbullah at a crossroad,' in Khatib, L., Matar, D. and Alshaer, A. (eds.), *The hizbullah phenomenon: politics and communication.* London: Hurst and Co Ltd, pp. 181-190.

Khatib, L., Matar, D. and Alshaer, A. (2014) *The Hizbullah phenomenon: politics and communication*. London: C. Hurst and Co Ltd.

Khashan, H. (1992) *Inside The Lebanese Confessional Mind*. Lanham: University of America Press.

Khiabany, G. (2010) *Iranian media: the paradox of modernity*. New York: Routledge.

Khiabany, G. and Sreberny, A. (2013) 'Beyond metropolitanism and nativism: re-grounding media theory," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 41, 41(5), pp. 491–471.

Klingmann, A. (2007) *Brandscapes: architecture in the experience economy*. Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press.

Kirkorian, H. and Anderson, D. (2008) 'Learning from educational media' in Calvert, S. and Wilson, B. (eds.) *The handbook of children, media, and development*. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pp. 188-213.

Kizilkaya, Z. (2017) 'Identity, war, and just cause for war: Hezbollah and its use of force,' *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 28(2), pp. 80-105.

Knowles, M. and Malmkjaer, K. (1996) *Language and control in children's literature*. London: Routledge.

Kunkel, D. (2009) 'Linking content analysis and media effects research,' in Jordan, A. et al (eds.) *Media Messages and Public Health A Decisions Approach to Content Analysis*. New York: Routledge, pp. 15-31.

Kymlicka, W. (1999). 'Misunderstanding nationalism,' in Beiner, R. (ed.) *Theorizing nationalism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 131-140.

Lamloum, O. (2010) 'Hezbollah's media: political history in outline,' *Global Media and Communication,* 5(3), pp. 353–367.

Lazzarato, M. (1997) *Lavoro immateriale: Forme di vita e produzione di soggettività*. Verona: Ombre Corte.

Leach, N. (2002) 'Erasing the traces: the 'denazification' of post-revolutionary Berlin and Bucharest," in Leach, N. (ed.) *The Hieroglyphics of Space Reading and Experiencing the Modern Metropolis*. London: Routledge, pp. 92-99.

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The Production of space*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Levi-Strauss, C. (1968) *The savage mind*. London: The University of Chicago Press.

Livingstone, S. (2007) 'Do the media harm children?,' *Journal of Children and Media,* 1(1), pp.5-14.

Lob, E. (2017) 'Researching Hizbullah in Lebanon,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 49(03), pp. 521-525.

Lury, C. (2004) *Brands: the logos of the global economy*. London: Routledge.

Lundby, K. (2011) 'Patterns of belonging in online/offline interfaces of religion,' *Information, Communication & Society*, 14(8), pp. 1235-1219.

Lyme, R. (2009) 'Hizb'allah's communications strategy: making friends and intimidating enemies", DIIS Danish Institute for International Studies, Online, accessed 22 January 2014.

Maasri, Z. (2009) *Off the wall: political posters of the Lebanese civil war*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Maasari, Z. (2012) 'The aesthetics of belonging: transformations in Hizbullah's political posters (1985–2006),' *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication,* 5, pp. 149-189.

Maganello, J. and Fishbein, M. (2009) 'Using theory to inform content analysis,' in Jordan, A. at al (eds.) *Media Messages and Public Health A Decisions Approach to Content Analysis*. New York: Routledge, pp. 3-14.

Malekzadeh, S. (2012) 'Children without childhood, adults without adulthood: changing conceptions of the Iranian child in postrevolutionary Iranian textbooks (1979-2008),' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 32(2), pp.339-360.

Mann, M. (1986) *The sources of social power*, Volume 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mares, M., Palmer, E. and Sullivan, T. (2008) 'Prosocial effects of media exposure' in Calvert, S. and Wilson, B. (eds) *The Handbook of Children, Media, and Development*. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., pp. 268-289.

Marzolph, U. (2012) 'The pictorial representation of Shi'i themes in lithographed book of the Qajar period,' in Khosronejad, P. (ed) *The Art and Material Culture of Iranian Shi'ism: Iconography and Religious Devotion in Shi'i Islam*. London: I.B. Tauris and Co Ltd., pp. 74-103.

Mason, J. (2002) *Qualitative researching*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Massey, D. (1993) 'Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place,' in Bird, J at al (eds.) *Mapping the Futures: Local cultures, global change*. London: Routledge, London, pp. 60-70.

Matar, D. (2014) 'Hasan Nasrallah: the central actor in Hizbullah's political communication strategies,' in Khatib, L., Matar, D. and Alshaer, A. (eds.), *The Hizbullah phenomenon: politics and communication.* London: Hurst and Co Ltd, pp. 153-180.

Matar, D, Alshaer, A. and Khatib, L. (2014) 'From the invasion to the liberation: communicating Hizbullah's political repertoire, 1982-2000,' in Khatib, L., Matar, D. and Alshaer, A. (eds.), *The Hizbullah phenomenon: politics and communication.* London: Hurst and Co Ltd, pp.

Matar, D. and Dakhlallah, F. (2006) 'What it means to be Shiite in Lebanon: al Manar and the imagined community of resistance,' *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 3(2), p.22.

Matin-Asgari, A. (2004) 'Islamic studies and the spirit of Max Weber: a critique of cultural essentialism,' *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, 13(3), pp. 293-312.

Meier, D. (2015). '(B)ordering south of Lebanon: Hizbullah's identity building strategy,' *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 30(1), pp. 97-109.

McAuley, J. (2003) *An introduction to politics, state and society*. London: Sage Publications.

Mdallel, S. (2003) 'Translating children's literature in the Arab world: the state of the art,' *Meta: Journal des traducteurs*, 48(1-2), pp. 298-306.

Mellor, N. (2017). *Voice of the Muslim brotherhood*. Milton: Taylor and Francis.

Melucci, A. (1995) 'The process of collective identity,' in Johnston, H. and Klandermans, B. (eds.) *Social Movements and Culture: Social Movements, Protest, and Contention*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 41-63.

Meuser, M. and Nagel, U. (2009) 'The expert interview and changes in knowledge production,' in in Bogner, A, Littig, B. and Menz, W (eds.) *Interviewing Experts.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 17-42.

Mihelj, S. (2007) 'Faith in nation comes in different guises': modernist versions of religious nationalism,' *Nations and Nationalism*, 13(2), pp. 265-284.

Mitchell, T. (2002) 'McJihad: Islam in the U.S. global order,' *Social Text*, 20(473), pp. 1-18.

Moazzen, M. (2015) 'Rituals of commemoration, rituals of self-invention: Safavid religious colleges and the collective memory of the Sshi'a,' *Iranian Studies*, pp. 1-21.

Nielsen, K. (1999) 'Cultural nationalism, neither ethnic nor civic,' in Beiner, r. (ed) *Theorizing nationalism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 119-130.

Noe, N., ed. (2007) *Voice of Hezbollah: the statements of Sayed Hassan Nasrallah*. London, Verso.

Moor, E. (2003) 'Branded Spaces: The scope of 'new marketing',' *Journal of Consumer Culture*. 3(1), pp. 39-60.

Moor, L. (2007). *The rise of brands*. Oxford: Berg.

Moor, L. (2014) Branding,' in Maguire, J. and Matthews, J. (eds.) *The Cultural Intermediaries Reader.* London: Sage Publications Ltd. Pp. 77-88.

Mrazek, R. (1997) '"Let us become radio mechanics": technology and national identity in late-colonial Netherlands east indies', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 39(1), pp. 3–33.

Muller, M. (2011) 'Iconography and iconology as a visual method and approach,' in Margolis, E. and Pauwels, L. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Visual Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 283-297.

Nakash, K. (1993) 'An attempt to trace the origin of the rituals of 'Ashura', '*Die Welt des Islams*, 33(2), pp. 161-181.

Nisbet, C. and Myers, T. (2010) 'Challenging the state: transnational tv and political

identity in the Middle East,' *Political Communication,* 27(4), pp. 347-366.

Nisbet, C. and Myers, T (2011) 'Anti-American sentiment as a media effect? Arab media, political identity, and public opinion in the Middle East,' *Communication Research,* 38(5), pp. 684-709.

Norton, R. (2007a) 'The role of Hezbollah in Lebanese domestic politics,' *The International Spectator,* 42(4), pp. 475-491.

Norton, A. (2007b) *Hezbollah: a short history*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

O'Dell, F. (1978) *Socialisation through children's literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ortner, S. (1978) *Sherpas through their rituals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Osborne, B. (1998) 'Constructing landscapes of power: the George Eetienne cartier monument, Montreal,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 24(4), pp.431-458.

Panofsky, E. (2009) 'Iconography and iconology: an introduction to the study of renaissance art' in Preziosi, D. (ed.) *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 220-235.

Parlevliet, S. (2014) 'Bring up the children: national and religious identity and identification in Dutch children's historical novels 1848–c.1870,' *History of Education*, 43(4), pp. 468-486.

Pfadenhauer, M. (2009) 'At Eye level: the expert interview – a talk between expert and quasi-expert' in Bogner, A, Littig, B. and Menz, W (eds.) *Interviewing Experts.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 81-97.

Potter, W. (2009) 'Defining and Measuring Key Content Variables,' in Jordan, A. et al (eds.) *Media Messages and Public Health A Decisions Approach to Content Analysis*. New York: Routledge, pp. 35-52.

Purzycki, B. and Sosis, R. (2013) 'The extended religious phenotype and the adaptive coupling of ritual and belief,' *Israel Journal of Ecology & Evolution*, 59(2), pp. 99-108.

Qassem, N. (2005) *Hizbullah: the story from within*. London: Saqi.

Quinn, M. (1994) *The Swastika*. Routledge: London.

Raiker, A. (2007) 'Cognitive development,' in Zwozdiak-Mayers, P. (ed) *Childhood and Youth Studies*. Learning Matters Ltd, pp. 74-84.

Rapley, T. (2004) 'Interviews,' in Seale, C. et al (eds.) *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 15-33.

Rappaport, R. (1999) *Ritual and religion in the making of humanity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rembold, E. and Carrier, P. (2011) 'Space and identity: constructions of national identities in an age of globalisation,' *National Identities*, 13(4), pp. 361-377.

Riewoldt, O. (2002) *Brandscaping: worlds of experience in retail design*. Basel: Birkhauser.

Rogowski, R. (1985) 'Causes and varieties of nationalism: a rationalist account, in E.A. Tiryakian and R. Rogowski (eds). *New nationalisms of the developed West*. Boston, MA: Allen & Unwin.

Rose, G. (2011) *Visual methodologies: an introduction to the interpretation of visual material*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Rubin J. and Rubin I. (1995) *Qualitative interviewing: the art of hearing data.* London: Sage Publications Inc.

Saad-Ghorayeb, A. (2002) *Hizbuĺlah*. London: Pluto Press.

Saade, B. (2016) *Hizbullah and the politics of remembrance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Saber, D. and Webber, N. (2016). 'This is our call of duty': hegemony, history and resistant videogames in the Middle East,' *Media, Culture & Society*, 39(1), pp. 77-93.

Said, E. (1979) *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Santo, A. (2013). 'Is it a camel? is it a turban? no, it's the 99": branding Islamic superheroes as authentic global cultural commodities,' *Television & New Media*, 15(7), pp. 679-695.

Saouli, A. (2011) 'Hizbullah in the civilising process: anarchy, self-restraint and violence,' *Third World Quarterly*, 32(5), pp. 925-942.

Savitch, H. (2008) Cities in a time of terror: space, territory, and local resilience. London: M.E. Sharpe.

Schmid, C. (2008) 'Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space: towards a three-dimensional dialectic,' in Goonewardena, K. et al (eds.) *Space, difference, everyday life: reading henri Lefebvre*. New York: Routledge, pp. 27-45.

Sekeres, D. (2008) 'Ideal literature: faith-based books for children,' *Intercultural Education*, 19(2), pp. 151-161.

Shahbazi, M. (2004) 'Insider/outsider: an indigenous anthropologist bridges a gap,' *Iranian Studies*, 37(4), pp. 602-593.

Shankland, D. (2012) 'Are Alevis Shi'ite?' in Ridgeon, L. (ed) *Shi'i Islam and identity: Religion, politics and change in the global Muslim community*. London: I.B. Taurus, pp. 210-225.

Shanneik, Y. (2015) 'Remembering Karbala In the diaspora: religious rituals among Iraqi Shii women In Ireland,' *Religion*, 45(1), pp. 1-14.

Sharara. W. (1998). *Dawalat Hizbullah: Lubnan mujtamaʿan Islamiyyan*. Beirut: Dar al-Nahar.

Shilling, C. (2005) 'Embodiment, emotions and the foundations of social order: Durkheim's enduring contribution' in Alexander, J. and Smith, P. (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Durkheim.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 211-238.

Shirazi, F. (2016) *Brand Islam: the marketing and commodification of piety. Austin: University of Texas Press.*

Slater, D. (1983) `Marketing mass photography', in H. Davis and P. Walton (eds.), *Language, Image, Media*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 245-63.

Smith, A. (1991) *National identity*. London: Penguin Books.

Smith, A. (1999) *Myths and memories of the nation*. Oxford [u.a.]: Oxford University Press.

Smith, A. (2001) *Nationalism: theory, ideology, history*. Malden, Mass.: Polity Press.

Smith, A. (2003) *Chosen peoples*. Oxford [u.a.]: Oxford University Press.

Souri, H. (2007) 'The political battlefield of pro-Arab video games on Palestinian screens,' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27(3), pp.

536-551.

Stephens, J. (1992) *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction*. London, New York: Longman.

Sumi, G. (2005). *Ceremony and power. Performing politics in Rome between Republic and Empire*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Sumiala, J. (2013) *Media and ritual: death, community and everyday life*. New York: Routledge.

Szanto, E. (2012) 'Illustrating an islamic childhood in Syria: pious subjects and religious authority in Twelver Shi'i children's books,' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 32(2), pp. 361-373.

Szekely, O. (2012) 'Hezbollah's survival: resources and relationships,' *Middle East Policy*, 19(4), pp. 110-126.

Tagliabue, S. (2015) 'Inside Hezbollah: the al-Mahdi scouts, education, and resistance,' *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 24(1), pp.74-95.

Thaiss, G. (1994) 'Contested meanings and the politics of authenticity: the Hosay' in Trinidad," in Ahmed, A. and Donnan, H. (eds.) *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity*. London: Routledge.

Thurfjell, D. (2012) 'Emotion and self-control: A framework for analysis of Shi'ite mourning rituals in Iran" in Ridgeon, L. (ed) *Shi'i islam and identity: Religion, politics and change in the global Muslim community*. London: I.B. Taurus, pp. 9-23.

Tsaliki, L. (1995) 'The media and the construction of an imagined community: the role of media events on Greek television,' *European Journal of Communication*, 10 (3): 345–370.

Tschabrun, S. (2003) 'Off the wall and into a drawer: managing a research collection of political posters,' *The American Archivist*, 66(2), pp. 303-324.

Van der Veer, P. and Lehmann, H. (1999) 'Introduction,' in Van der Veer, P. and Lehmann, H. (eds.) *Nation and Religion: perspectives in Europe and Asia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 3-14.

van Leeuwen, T. (2001) 'Semiotics and iconography,' *Handbook of visual analysis*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 92-118.

van Marrewijk, A. and Broos, M. 2012, 'Retail stores as brands: performances, theatre and space' *Consumption Markets and Culture.* 15 (4), pp. 374-391.

VanderStoep, S. and Johnston, D. (2009). *Research methods for everyday life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wagner, J. (2011) 'Visual studies and empirical social inquiry,' in Margolis, E. and Pauwels, L. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Visual Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 49-71.

Wallerstein, I. (1997) 'Eurocentrism and its avatars: the dilemmas of social science,' *Sociological Bulletin*, 46(1), pp. 21-39.

Wartella, E. and Robb, M. (2007) 'Young children, new media,' *Journal of Children and Media*, 1(1), pp. 35-44.

Warshel, Y. (2012) 'It's all about Tom and Jerry, Amr Khaled and Iqra, not Hamas's Mickey Mouse: Palestinian children's cultural practices around the television set,' *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, 5(2), pp. 211-245.

Watkins, C. (2005) 'Representations of space, spatial practices and spaces of representation: an application of Lefebvre's spatial triad,' *Culture and Organization*, 11(3), pp. 209-220.

Watson, T. (2008) 'Creating the cult of a saint: communication strategies in 10th century England,' *Public Relations Review*, 34(1), pp.19-24.

Weber, M (1961) *General Economic History*. New York.

Wedeen, L. (1999) *Ambiguities ff domination: politics, rhetoric, and symbols in contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wernick, A. (1991) *Promotional culture*. Newbury Park (Calif.): Sage publications.

Welch, D. (2007). *The third Reich: politics and propaganda*. 2nd Edition. London: Routledge.

Williamson, J. (1978) *Decoding advertisements: ideology and meaning in advertising*. Marion Boyars Publishers LTD, London.

Wimmer, A. and Glick Schiller, N. (2002) 'Methodological nationalism and beyond: nation-state building, migration and the social sciences,' *Global Networks*, 2(4), pp. 301-334.

Zubaida, S. (2011). *Beyond Islam: a new understanding of the Middle East*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Thesis:

El Houri, W. (2012) *The meaning of resistance: Hezbollah's media strategies and the articulation of a people*, e-book, Rozenberg Publishers, Amsterdam, accessed 23 January 2014, http://dare.uva.nl/document/355042.

Hage Ali, M. (2015) *Hizbullah's identity: Islam, nationalism and transnationalism*. PhD thesis. London School of Economics and Political Science. Available at http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/3300/ (Accessed 13 March 2016).

Links:

Davies, C. (2012) 'Low-budget Muhammad film attempts to depict prophet as fraud.' Available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/12/low-budget-muhammad-film-prophet (Accessed April 1, 2018).

Fahs, K. (2013) *Makahi al nisa': Hawa' baeedan an ainayy Adam*. Available at https://al-akhbar.com/Community/45450. (Accessed April 1, 2018).

Fordham and Fitzsimons, T. (2009) Available at http://tfitzsimons.com/lebanese-paintball-craze-springs-from-harsh-reality/ (Accessed February 20, 2013).

Haddadin, F. (2017) *The Future of the 'Islamic NATO.'* Available at https://foreignpolicyblogs.com/author/fadihaddadin/ (Accessed April 1, 2018).

Kovaleski, S. and Barnes, B. (2012) *From Man Who Insulted Muhammad, No Regret.* Available at https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/26/us/from-the-man-who-insulted-islam-no-retreat.html (Accessed April 1, 2018).

Audio Visual Material:

(Sabah al-Kawthar 2013) Al-Kawthar. December.

Habbet Misk (2016) Al-Manar. November.

Interviews:

Charara, A. (2016) Conversation with Sarah Hamdar, 15 March.

Daher, A. (2016) Conversation with Sarah Hamdar, April.

Awad, I. (2016) Conversation with Sarah Hamdar, 31 March.

Daher, Hani (2016) Conversation with Sarah Hamdar, 14 March.

Lina (2014) Conversation with Sarah Hamdar, 18 November.

Mohammad (2015) Conversation with Sarah Hamdar, November.

Rana (2016) Conversation with Sarah Hamdar, 11 March.

Ghada (2015) Conversation with Sarah Hamdar, November.

Rasha (2014) Conversation with Sarah Hamdar, December.

Zeina (2015) Conversation with Sarah Hamdar, November.

Image Sources:

Image 5.1. Computer screenshot. 2015.

Image 5.2. Computer screenshot. 2017.

Figure 5.3. Created by thesis researcher.

Image 6.1. Image courtesy of Rissalat.

Image 6.2. Image courtesy of Rissalat.

Image 6.3. Image courtesy of Rissalat.

Image 6.4. Image courtesy of Rissalat.

Image 6.5. Image courtesy of Rissalat.

Image 6.6. Image courtesy of Rissalat.

Image 6.7. Image courtesy of Rissalat.

Image 6.8. Image courtesy of Rissalat.

Image 6.9. Facebook 2015.

Image 6.10. Facebook 2015.

Image 6.11. Facebook 2015.

Image 6.12. Facebook 2016.

Image 6.13. Image courtesy of Rissalat.

Image 6.14. Image courtesy of Rissalat.

Figure 7.1 Created by thesis researcher.