

Not Your Father's Islamist TV: Changing Programming on Hizbullah's al-Manar

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The image of Islamist media is one of grim old men dictating extremist and male-centered religious precepts; Hizbullah's al-Manar television, not just Islamist but also owned by a political party with a militia, has been equated with broadcasting terrorism and waging psychological operations against its enemies.^[1] Yet much of al-Manar today is nothing like the picture painted of the station. Classified as terrorist by the U.S., most topics broadcast have little to do with Hizbullah, its resistance, Shi'a religious teaching, or the fight against Israel.

On Hizbullah's al-Manar, non-veiled women dominate the airwaves on many programs. Only a small minority of programs on the television is religious. Christians regularly participate as experts and audience members, including priests and bishops, and scientific studies from the west are used as affirmative demonstrations of how Lebanese need to change. Problems are discussed in an open-ended, non-authoritative format, and a broad, multi-communal audience regularly participates. Programming promotes values often considered western, such as individual and human rights, and non-violence. Television shows tackle domestic violence by patriarchal figures and protest violence in video games. In a style echoing Oprah, civil society is urged to volunteer and help the disadvantaged, even though this affects the core of what many assert is Hizbullah's base of legitimacy--its provision of social services.



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Hizbullah has had ongoing political alliances with other sects since its entrance into the electoral field in post-civil war elections, yet in its media in recent years the organization has gone beyond politically pragmatic moves to affirm its inclusion of alternative communities and sects. The media presentation of other communities demonstrates to viewers an acceptance of diverse lifestyles and ideas, often highly Westernized, that is communicated in the sphere of popular media run by Hizbullah members.^[2] This change has been taking place particularly since 2000, but was sped up in the following years. Such programming, diametrically opposed to popular and Western images of Hizbullah as a terrorist organization and its media as a propaganda outlet for violence and Shi'a exclusivism, is a result of Hizbullah's increasing Lebanonization or nationalization. The organization is becoming more beholden to and embedded with domestic actors than was true of the organization's founding some two decades ago, reinforcing its Lebanese character. Al-Manar is a window into these changes, for some more dramatic and perhaps convincing than the organization's political statements and alliances. The television demonstrates Hizbullah's desire to broaden its support and assure its future domestic legitimacy within the Lebanese multi-religious community. The extent of the television's integration of other communities suggests that the embrace of the multi-confessional nature of the country is not fleeting. Indeed, al-Manar presents to its constituency the image that a multi-religious community is legitimate, even promoting unveiled Christians as experts in the intimate zone of family matters.

The practice of incorporating multiple perspectives and communities on the television indicates an acceptance and commitment to a multi-cultural nation, potentially intended to assuage fears that the organization takes orders from Iran or seeks to establish an Islamic state. Such reassuring messages are increasingly important as foreign threats and foreign presence disappear from Lebanon, removing the primary *raison-d'être* of Hizbullah's militia. Further, through al-Manar, Hizbullah attempts to demonstrate how the organization addresses issues of concern throughout Lebanon, particularly among youth and women, in ways that are modern and progressive. In doing so the organization positions itself at the forefront of Lebanese ideas about the future, securing Hizbullah's existence in a peaceful Lebanon. In turn, these messages have profound potential to affect the actions and expectations of Hizbullah's constituency.

Media messages differ from political speeches and alliances, since media is not merely public but also

popular, and potentially, lasting. It can reach wide segments of society communicating images of society and behavior that other forums cannot. In other words, the multiple voices and approval of differing perspectives communicated on al-Manar cannot be easily reversed.[3]

In this article I provide an initial analysis of this change in al-Manar's programming, concentrating on non-political programs.[4] Before reviewing al-Manar's human interest profile, I depict the progression of the television station along with Hizbullah's changing position in Lebanon. I deal briefly with al-Manar's political programming—the news, talk shows and promotional spots. These have changed through the years as Hizbullah has evolved but are more clearly political and embrace a line close to the organization's image as defender of Lebanon. I demonstrate that a substantial amount of al-Manar's current shows and their substance do not fit the common idea of al-Manar as affirming violence, religious preaching or particularism. They deal with human-interest concerns, especially women, youth, and community relations, many of which would be topical for Westerners as well. Research for this article was conducted primarily by watching al-Manar from November–December 2004, May–June 2005, and from October 2007 to the present. The 2004 research was completed with the aid of a researcher; the author completed the rest. Television from 2007 on was viewed by streaming media over the Internet. Viewing averaged seven to ten hours a week over the Internet and twenty hours a week in 2005.[5]

Lebanonization and Changing Programming

Al-Manar, the television affiliated with Hizbullah in Lebanon, mirrors Hizbullah's stance and projects an image that the organization foresees as important for its future. Hizbullah, simultaneously an Islamist social movement, militia, political party, and participant in government, has taken part in political institutions in Lebanon **since the post-civil war elections in 1992.**

Scholars note the pragmatism of the organization, for example, pointing out how it advocates for its allies, Christian and non-Hizbullah in elections, and formal alliances.[6] Hizbullah's "Lebanonization," or becoming more Lebanese than Shi'a, was facilitated by two major events in Hizbullah's history.[7] These events were first, the decision to enter the 1992 Lebanese elections as a political party, which necessitated a decision to relinquish the goal of an Islamist state. Second was the withdrawal of the Israelis from southern Lebanon in spring 2000, which removed the main basis for the organization's existence. The 2005 removal of the Syrian from Lebanon left Hizbullah on its own and arguably sped up the nationalization or Lebanonization process.

In public relations, no less so than in politics, Hizbullah has proved to be pragmatic. As Hizbullah has transformed its messages and stance, al-Manar has also. Al-Manar television is the land and satellite station of Hizbullah. Hizbullah began its television station in 1991 broadcasting locally in Lebanon. Beginning as "resistance media," a station linked to the fight of Hizbullah against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, al-Manar's start was politicized and religious. For most of the 1990s, al-Manar concentrated on the fight against Israel. This war coverage emphasized the need to defeat the enemy and highlighted Hizbullah's military operations against the Israeli army. Al-Manar broadcast Hizbullah military operations, covered by al-Manar reporters "embedded" with them. These episodes showing Israeli troops killed in southern Lebanon were initially shown on al-Manar,[8] and later picked up and aired on Israeli TV.[9] The station's psychological campaign "Who's next?" showed Israeli casualties with a blank space for future potential soldiers killed by Hizbullah.[10] Al-Manar broadcasted some spots in Hebrew, aimed at demoralizing the Israelis. Some analysts credit these and other psychological operations with the withdrawal of the Israelis from southern Lebanon in 2000 by demoralizing the Israelis.[11]

In May 2000, al-Manar began transmitting by satellite, as the Israelis withdrew from southern Lebanon. This withdrawal of a foreign occupier, enemy of Hizbullah, from Lebanese soil, has been viewed as causing an identity crisis for Hizbullah. Much of the justification for the organization and its militia was fighting Israelis in the south.[12] Since, the second Palestinian intifada began soon after the withdrawal of the Israelis, the station and Hizbullah substituted new issues in the short-term. Thus, in the beginning of the second intifada in 2000, al-Manar devoted 40 percent of its time to coverage of the conflict with Israel.[13] However, as time went on, Hizbullah's media developed alternative bases for its attractiveness to Lebanese society beyond its resistance role, while also retaining that military identity.

Some research on al-Manar during the early 2000s emphasized the station's identity as a terrorist, dangerous to the U.S. and Israel, overtly teaching and promoting terrorist techniques and airing anti-Semitic and anti-American messages.[14] That research formed the basis for world opinion on the station. Jorisch concluded that the station's core mission was to promote terror, hatred and radicalism.[15] He found no redemptive value to al-Manar's coverage;

al-Manar was undiluted propaganda, wholly dictated by its militant funder, Iran. Jorisch maintained that the station was active in the incitement to violence, providing video instructions of suicide bombing techniques.^[16] The U.S. responded to this information about al-Manar by banning it entirely from U.S. satellite audiences and by listing the station as a terrorist group. It was also banned in Europe.^[17] The station was added to the terrorist exclusion list in the U.S. in 2004, and in spring 2006 was declared a specially designated global terrorist entity.^[18]

Yet the dominance of television coverage by military topics and resistance of the enemy began to fade between 2000 and 2004; the Palestinian cause not long replaced the Israeli-occupation of southern Lebanon for the station. The present research, taking place from fall of 2004 to present, found no instructional programs for terrorism or bomb-making on al-Manar, perhaps demonstrating change in the station. Some maintain that the Iraq war caused Hizbullah to decrease its emphasis on the United States as enemy, and focus on Israel.^[19] But even before 2003, al-Manar had begun targeting a wide audience beyond its core Shi'a constituency.^[20] The station reorganized in an attempt to broaden its appeal while also keeping pace with the party's developing political stance.^[21]

Indeed, the station was sufficiently diversified so that its programs won awards. At the 8th Cairo Television and Radio Festival, al-Manar won the most awards of all competitors.^[22] By the Syrian pullout in 2005, Hizbullah's television was overtly targeting multiple constituencies within Lebanon, proving its Lebanese credentials. One series, interviewing civil society and media personalities, including Christians and those opposed to Hizbullah and Syria, was deemed by one author to be a demonstration of Hizbullah's increasing Lebanonization.^[23] Other observers noted that al-Manar had become more critical and objective in its news talk programs, to order to increase its viewership and expand its support. For the same reason, interviews began to encompass all the communities and political ideologies in Lebanon.^[24] There was a rise in al-Manar programs geared toward consumers, including American movies and cartoons, along with a decline in propaganda, others noted.^[25] This trend continued up to the 2006 war with Israel. In line with Hizbullah's attempt to attract other Lebanese communities and especially its political alliance with a Christian political party, al-Manar aired programs of interest also to the Christian community, including a popular series on Mary, the mother of Jesus, on al-Manar, a woman revered by Christians and Muslims alike.^[26]

In political topics the station maintains its stance as the mantle of the resistance against foreign domination and the protector of Lebanon, affirming its strength as a party and a militia. However the presentation is more subtle than that depicted in prior writings on the station. No instructional videos on bomb-making were viewed during the long research period of this study, and violence against civilians is eschewed. In fact, during some participatory programs hosts hang up on callers who insist on calling world leaders "dogs," stating that such language and attacks on a person are not proper or acceptable (*al-mushahideen*, 3-7-09). Instead, the host steered the audience to analyze the policies and compare them to how they fit with international law. Resistance against militaries are another matter. Al-Manar news highlights Shi'a insurgent activities against the American military in Iraq and the station affirms Hizbullah's strength and ability in resisting the Israeli military through documentaries and promotional spots. News concentrates on topics of interest to Hizbullah, similar to other private stations in Lebanon such as Hariri's Future television, but presents such news in a matter-of-fact manner. Hizbullah events are given priority and talk shows discuss issues of importance to the organization.

Al-Manar currently provides a forum for a diverse range and variety of voices, most uncensored. Hizbullah's viewpoint is not the sole one projected. The news and talk shows reiterate that Israel and, to a lesser extent, the United States, are still at odds with Hizbullah's program, but this view coexists with programming taking the U.S. and western social and civil society as a positive model. For an organization beginning life as an exclusive, violent movement, this opening to diverse points of view is significant. Multiple views demonstrated on different programs show a broadening of the station, not a forsaking of its original constituency. Programs with progressive and gender-liberating views coexist with religious programs on personal and family life (*ila al-qalb*, 2008-present), which, while not depicting an oppressive view of women's roles, present the issue more narrowly, from the perspective of religion and Hizbullah's traditional constituency. It is not a simple switch. This spectrum of multiple views is playing out on Hizbullah's television, and the audience has become similarly diverse.^[27] The varied programming attracts different and new constituencies, and it appears that space is being provided for new perspectives in certain forums.

Firmo-Fontan determined al-Manar to be a substitution channel, not watched constantly but viewed for particular programs.^[28] Increasing numbers of Lebanese noted to me the stray away from the ideological platform of the party to topics important to Lebanese generally.^[29] Some Lebanese and Arabs refuse to watch al-Manar, rejecting all things religious, and these often watch the Christian-affiliated station LBC. Others are attracted to the

station, citing its good programmes. Some individuals said that the station does air some extreme statements, but also many good points not found elsewhere. Many Sunni Muslims in Lebanon have differences with the station over al-Manar's close relationship with the Shi'a and the Da'wa party in Iraq. Al-Manar appears to be popular in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon due to its coverage of Palestine and news there. Many Christian constituents of the Free Patriotic Movement, led by former General Michel Aoun, allied to Hizbullah from early 2006, watched the station's news regularly.[30]

While the removal of foreigners from Lebanese soil pushed Hizbullah and its media al-Manar into a deeper reliance onto the Lebanese scene, this orientation was challenged by the 2006 war with Israel, known in Lebanon as the July war. The resistance and militaristic side of al-Manar was heightened, and the station was used as a tool of psychological combat and target of war similar to its origins.[31] Both the television station and its web site were the objects of military attacks by Israelis, government and civilians. Al-Manar was among the first targets hit, and bombed repeatedly. The station stayed on the air, moving to another (secret) location.

Israelis briefly interrupted the broadcast to air their own messages, such as "Your day is coming, coming, coming" with a drawing of Hizbullah's leader.[32] Another depicted a picture of Nasrallah, Hizbullah's leader, with "no signal" on top of his face and a message in Arabic, telling members of Hizbullah to watch out.[33] They also broadcast pictures of Hizbullah's dead on the station.[34] After Israelis used Google Earth to demonstrate the Hizbullah locations Israel bombed in Lebanon, al-Manar responded similarly, broadcasting Hebrew messages and using Google Earth to demonstrate potential targets in Israel.[35] Al-Manar launched other public relations campaigns against the Israelis, and both Hizbullah and foreign observers declared al-Manar a weapon allowing Hizbullah to win the public relations contest of the war.[36]

The 2006 war showed the military value of the television, but its use for this purpose proved temporary. The end of the 2006 war revealed new challenges. Lebanese backed Hizbullah during the war, but subsequently questions about the proper place of the organization and its arms in the country surfaced.[37] The television switched back to predominant human-interest programming, and continues to follow that practice, interrupting the tone of programming on the occasion of events interpreted as threats to Lebanon, Hizbullah, or the Palestinians, or religious holidays.

Current Programming: Dual Identity of the Television

Like Hizbullah, al-Manar holds a dual nature; it is both a politically-oriented and military-supporting media, and one airing programs separate from politics and its militia. While Hizbullah has relied upon its military legitimacy and provision of social services as pillars of its claim to be a crucial organization in Lebanese society, al-Manar is laying the foundation for Hizbullah's future beyond sole reliance upon the organization's military credentials. Simultaneously, through human-interest programming Hizbullah inserts itself deeper into Lebanese society by discussing popular issues and presenting forward-looking perspectives.

The inclusive, multi-confessional programming on al-Manar does not indicate that the station has abandoned its fundamental support for Hizbullah; rather, the programming demonstrates a broadening to encompass other communities and lifestyles without forsaking the key Hizbullah positions of the moment.

The television reflects the combined political, social, and military goals of Hizbullah, goals that have changed over time to encompass the views of other communities. The balance of programming **depends upon the presence or absence of threats to Lebanon or Hizbullah**. During periods of crisis or military threat, Hizbullah is able to capitalize upon popular fears and return to emphasizing the importance of its resistance (militia).[38] Such threats demonstrate the continued need for its military abilities. **During these periods**, human-interest programming takes a backseat, although it is still present. In the absence of such threats and once the peak of the crisis has passed, al-Manar returns to its usual programming, reversing the balance: now the affirmation of the military abilities of Hizbullah constitutes the smaller portion of airtime.

Al-Manar is available throughout the Arab world by satellite, in Lebanon over land, and globally over the worldwide web. Many polls list al-Manar as one of the top stations in the Middle East, particularly for news on Palestine. Some estimate ten million viewers tune in to the station, a figure often cited but without attributing a source.[39] Others simply list al-Manar among the top influential outlets in the Arab world.[40] The top four news stations, which capture 70-80% of satellite viewers, are often listed as including al-Manar.[41] According to the Jerusalem Media Communication Center, the majority of Palestinians watch al-Jazeera, Abu Dhabi, and al-Manar.[42] Jorisch reports a poll in 2003 that found those in Jordan turned first to al-Manar for news of Palestine

(28%), followed closely by al-Jazeera (27.5%).^[43] Audience figures go up in any time of crisis, local or in Israel/Palestine.

Al-Manar's audience increased dramatically during the 2006 war, and the station was viewed as presenting the most up to the minute information on that war. The television moved from 83rd to 10th watched in the Arab world during the war, according to Israeli sources.^[44] A 2008 Zogby poll puts the viewership of al-Manar at 2% of the Arab world, which translates to about \$10 million. By comparison, al-Arabiya had 9% and one of the most popular Lebanese stations, Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation, 3%.^[45]

Still, the television is reportedly limited in its regional appeal during normal times due to its perceived character as a Shi'a station. Al-Manar's has achieved some recognition, winning the 2007 Inquirer Award from the Thompson Foundation and the British Embassy in Amman for best investigative television report, for a piece on environmental pollution in Lebanon.^[46] Further, the station is credited with spurring Arabs to demand accountability, performance, and transparency from their own militaries,^[47] and forcing a reversal in foreign policy in the Gulf states during the 2006 war.^[48]

Funding for the station comes overwhelmingly from Hizbullah, whose main revenue is through such sources as labor remittances, donations, tithes, funding from Iran, and other income.^[49] Al-Manar operates on \$15 million annually.^[50] Al-Manar relies little on advertising, similar to many other Arab and Lebanese media, although commercials are increasing. The station reportedly turned down 90% of potential advertisers due to their violation of its standards.^[51] Until 2004, ads were broadcast only on the land-based station, not the satellite. Among their advertisers were big American and European companies. A scandal brought this to the attention of the U.S. Congress, which accused the companies of aiding terrorism. American and European advertisers subsequently withdrew their commercials.^[52] Currently, ads on al-Manar are few but increasing, and these local-based ads airing mainly in prime time with a long infomercial program in the mid-morning.

Current programming on al-Manar is of two types, one concerned with military and regional enemies and the other local and multi-communal. Both are participatory, with programs designed to allow the expression of views, dialogue and interaction. Distinct from al-Jazeera style debates that pit polar opposite positions against each other and encourage verbal fighting, on al-Manar the forums entail learning and searching for solutions, not fights for the sake of drama. The first type of program is consistent with the ideological worldview of Hizbullah. It promotes pride in Islam, Islamic history, Shi'ism, the Islamic resistance (Hizbullah's militia activities), resistance against hegemonic powers, and highlights injustices done to Arabs. This programming directly connects with movement goals, and resembles the coverage discussed exclusively in previous writings on the station. Military campaigns, the conflict with Israel, and the threatening role of the United States in the Arab region are all included in this segment of programming.^[53] During a crisis in Lebanon or the Palestinian territories, the station switches to a programming mode familiar to the West as 24-7 coverage, as al-Manar focuses the vast majority of news and programming on the crisis. Other programs are sidelined until the crisis ends, and audience call-in participation programs increase dramatically as viewers express their frustration and opinions. In normal times, the station's programming, including the news, is overwhelmingly geared toward the local Lebanese audience and its issues, far removed from war, Israel, and the United States.

The second type of programming deals with particular population groups and their problems, generally unrelated to the grand vision traditionally attributed to Hizbullah. This programming focuses on youth, women, middle class issues mainly but also those of the struggling ordinary, lower class person, what in Arabic is called *tabaqa al-dunya* (the phrase implies a lack of means). The bulk of programs focus on the educated middle class. Individual and sub-group issues and rights are emphasized, validated and discussed, and options for solutions provided. No one solution is given; this is not a directed lecture but participation, a two-way conversation. Experts, knowledge, opinion polls, scientific findings, and audiences are all remarkably mixed and divorced from an "Islamic" context. Often only the hosts--or more often, hostesses--of the programs are dressed in line with Islamic norms. Experts are often Christian, many expressions are specifically American ("quality time," thinking "outside the box"), and audiences are heavily female, unveiled, young, and from all Lebanese sects. Other programs are popular entertainment series similar to soap operas, nature and history programs, game shows and children's programs. Together, these form the bulk of al-Manar's airtime.

In general, al-Manar's news communicates the political point of view held by Hizbullah. Its news, spots, and some documentaries emphasize the mistakes and threatening actions of Israel and the United States, clearly depicting the enemy as Israel sometimes including the United States as Israel's enabler. Yet outside of these

instances, programs concentrate on domestic issues of concern to Lebanese in general, and women and youth in particular. Religion is not emphasized except on religious programs, a few songs, some episodes of children's shows, and during religious occasions such as the holy month of Ramadan or Ashura. Statements and speeches by Hizbullah's leader Hassan Nasrallah are covered. Apart from news highlighting events pertinent to the Shi'a community, the main difference setting the station apart from others is their spots of varying length celebrating the Islamic Resistance, Hizbullah's militia fighting Israel, and the overt denunciation in these spots of US and Israeli hegemony. In comparison with overall Arab media environment, al-Manar's views may not be extremely out of step.[54]

Al-Manar daily schedule begins in the morning with a program on the Quran and morning prayers, together one and a half hours. The station broadcasts an hour news bulletin followed by *sabah al-manar* (Manar's morning) at 9am, an hour and a half program devoted to family, health, and other issues of concern to women or the primary caretaker. A news talk show follows, then an infomercial type program (Amana Care), the news, and a news talk show are aired between 10am and 4:30pm. In the late afternoon, a program for children is broadcast, then a program on health, the news, and the evening's programs. A brief news bulletin (about four minutes) is aired about every half hour. Programs for the evening change by day and as new programs are introduced. Travel, historical, science and nature programs, and soap operas are fillers. Many programs are re-broadcast at night. Many programs are live, averaging four or five hours daily, including the morning program for women. Women host thirteen out of 24 programs, including news talk shows, in addition to two more that have both male and female hosts. The female hosts are hard-hitting and assertive, interrupting and cutting off guests and callers, including sheikhs. In addition, the face of Hizbullah's international English language program is female.

Numerous programs parallel western public broadcasting such as PBS. This includes scientific interviews on meteors and geology, new technology from the U.S., and "Discovery"-style programs on animals, including some targeted toward the needs of the agricultural segment of the audience (such as new cow-milking technology for example). Others discuss history, architecture, and nature. The programs are not local, but Western with voice-over. They are not censored. Men and women dressed in styles that contravene current Islamic norms are shown as is. Many historical programs focus on Arab topics, examining places, art, and architecture in the Islamic and Arab worlds. Programs acting out historical events are often aired. As elsewhere in the Arab world, popular series are historical or have political importance, such as the Syrian *bab al-hara* (The neighborhood gate).[55] Soap operas also air uncensored. Romantic series from Egypt, the Gulf, and Syria depict men and women's love and family problems. The women, veiled or not, appear as in the original soap, and a significant amount of the soap operas contain unveiled and scantily-clad women. One racy series is set in a hospital. Children's programs resemble public television elsewhere in the world. There are cartoons, computer-generated "Teletubbies"-style shows, and puppet shows that warn about the dangers of smoking.

New Perspectives and a Multi-confessional Audience

Through al-Manar, Hizbullah is building a new image of itself and projecting this to its constituency and new audiences. In[ABI] this vision, Hizbullah is not only modern, but future-oriented, multi-cultural, and progressive.[56] and the programs on the television bear such an image. Al-Manar communicates a sphere of debate that specifically marginalizes political cleavages and discussions in favor of general problems common across religions and political parties. Further, the programs project a view of life that appears to contradict Hizbullah and its interests, quite surprising given the image of the station is a propaganda front for Hizbullah. Al-Manar caters to and reflects a wide range of audience of religions and lifestyles, and has successfully attracted at least some of these broad constituencies as participants on the station.

Non-political programming includes shows centered on youth, women, and community issues, which I describe here.[57] Al-Manar airs programs for women, such as *sabah al-manar* (Manar's morning), *mushkila wa rai'* (Problem and opinion), and *wijhat nathr* (Point of view); programs for youth, *taht al-ashreen*, now *'ashreenat* (Under twenty; changed to Twenties in 2008) and *shebab* (Youth); and community and civil society programs such as *safahat mulawanna* (Multi-color magazine), a variety show, and *ya'ishouna baynana* (They live among us) spotlighting the disadvantaged. *Sabah al-manar*, a daily program, is geared toward women's issues, discussing health problems, how food should be handled and meat cooked, how people can get the medicine they need, how to mix work with family, legal issues of female equality in Lebanon, senility and problems of the elderly, how to deal with fear, and parents' expression of anger. *Mushkila wa rai'* and *wijhat nathr* are weekly shows focusing on women's and family issues. *Wijhat nathr* turned political in its focus. The new "Youth" program took its spot. *Mushkila wa rai'* is a long-standing show, taking problems submitted by the audience each week and demonstrating

them in a dramatic skit. Experts, audience members and callers share their opinions on how to solve the situation. The various youth programs deal with issues of young people such as driving recklessly, violence against children, male authority, creativity, and inventions by youth. *Safahat mulawanna* is a variety show that spotlights art, plays, and other achievements of the community, only rarely are these connected to Hizbullah's resistance, Israel or the United States. *Ya'ishouna baynana* spotlights individuals and families living in extremely difficult circumstances in Lebanon, explores how they could be helped, and the ways society needs to change to prevent such situations.

The community of participants on these al-Manar programs crosses religious divides. The participants and subjects of the programs, from experts to guests, include Muslims and Christians. A priest handicapped as the result of being kidnapped during the civil war was the expert guest on one program, discussing a disabled person's situation, and a bishop was the guest on another program. Female guest experts, audience members and callers are not only regularly non-veiled, but are often Christian (in one case the professor could hardly speak Arabic but kept speaking in French and the hostess translated). In one program, out of 29 episodes for which I recorded data on guest dress, 57% were unveiled women in Western dress, 11% were veiled, and 33% were men. Often, the only one veiled on stage was the hostess. Seven percent were sheikhs, who appeared particularly during programs that pushed the boundaries, such as adoption, men contributing to housework, societal restrictions and stereotypes of divorced women, and violence in the family. A substantial number of these unveiled women and many men were Christian, apparent either by their names or language use. Some were unable to express concepts except in French (in one case the professor could hardly speak Arabic but the hostess translated from the French).[58] The audience and callers mirror this pattern. For one program, half of audiences were consistently non-veiled. In *mushkila wa rai'*, Problem and opinion, a skit is acted out to illustrate the problem for that week, brought by a viewer. The skits show veiled and non-veiled women. In another example, a Christian man working in the non-profit sector brought a problem to the station, indicating that different religious communities are more than guests, audience, and callers to al-Manar, they also turn to this Shi'a-owned station for help. The constituency is not only multi-communal, but international as well.

The multi-communal atmosphere of Lebanon, a country intensely globalized in the ideational realm, is reflected in the norms and values proposed in al-Manar's non-political programming. Indeed, the ideas communicated in the non-news programming bear striking resemblance to those promoted by the United States and the West generally. Far from positing an alternative vision of modernity from an Islamist point of view, in most issues Western knowledge, idioms, and solutions dominate the discussion. The reputed xenophobia of Hizbullah to the West, or at least its animosity to the United States, is nowhere to be found. American scientific studies are used as proof and to demonstrate points, and individual rights are emphasized. This ranges from the benefits of modern western education with its emphasis on creativity to the need for civil society to care for the disadvantaged including women at risk for domestic violence. Family relations are subject to new norms, as women are assumed to be educated and working. On these programs, men need to participate in household chores and encourage women the way women do for men. Like Western think tanks and Western government policies, al-Manar focuses particular attention to women, youth, and civil society. The multi-communal aspects of the station runs counter to the Lebanese trend of media promoting the sponsor's sect group.[59]

While al-Manar is global in reach, through the Internet and satellite, many of these programs are live and clearly depict the concerns and audience of Lebanon. However, viewers participate internationally, even bringing topics to discuss, not only expatriates but also individuals with no connection to Lebanon. Participants hail from Yemen, the Gulf, and Lebanese expatriates in the United States and Europe. Yet the solutions and perspectives aired on these programs give the distinct flavor of Lebanon or a community comfortable and accepting of current Western ideas. For example, one program expressed that determining what styles and amount of dress for women qualifies as provocative depends on what the society is accustomed to, while another brought up the possibility of stay-at-home dads instead of mothers.

Sectarianism, or the promotion of one sect, its politics or religion, is sidelined. In religion, an ecumenical view is dominant outside the few specifically religious shows. Far from hate speech against Jews, several programs discuss the common, positive, values of the Semitic religions, specifically stated as such, which encompasses Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (for example, *ya'shouna baynana*, 11/5/08). Christian religious authorities appear on the programs. One program was set at a Bishop's house in southern Lebanon, and a priest was the guest speaker on another. Shi'a religious authorities are careful to use terms available to all the monotheistic religions, speaking of God in general and not any one religion's precepts. Religion is not generally depicted as the solution to problems. Hosts ignore the few comments contending that religious practices are the solution, suggested by the audience or callers. In one case, an audience member stated that memorizing the Quran was a solution to the day's question, which focused on raising the self-esteem and confidence for all family members (*wijhat nathr*, 10/7/07). The hostess

interrupted and did not repeat the question to the guest to answer. "Never mind," she stated, and moved on to ask the guests another question. During the same show, a caller attempted to remind the audience of the need to confront Israel and the needs of the nation, and the hostess cut him off. An attempt is made to differentiate between religion and country, between Jews, Judaism, and Israel. Further, the station tries to eliminate negative ad hominem comments, although due to the live nature of many programs it is not always able to do so. In the program *ma`al-mushahideen* (With the viewers), people call in and express their feelings and opinions on a particular subject. On one, a viewer called a leader of Israel a dog, to which the host replied that was not appropriate language, that they were discussing issues, and that he would be cut off if he persisted. He persisted and was cut off with apologies from the host regarding such language (3/7/09).

Others programs put aside political differences, as in *'ashreenat's* introduction of a young woman who had created a project to promote dialogue in Lebanon (12/13/08). "Not March 14th or March 8th," the announcer stated, but any day in March, referring to the government-supporting coalition (March 14th) versus the opposition (March 8th) of which Hizbullah is a member. Hizbullah's politics are vehemently against the March 14th coalition, but this woman's project cut across the two and aimed at establishing a national dialogue. Some programs are meant to heal sectarian divides, as after the confrontation in May 2008 between opposition, mainly Shi'a and pro-government (primarily Sunni and Druze) armed groups. Programs brought mixed couples to discuss how they were coping and how the Lebanese could begin to heal from this. In one, the host stated that we all made mistakes in this conflict, some more than others, but now we were beginning to patch up the wounds and learn from what happened (5/20/08). Repeatedly, if guests promote one side's politics, particularly if they laud the political stance of Hizbullah, the host interrupts and reminded them that politics are to be kept out of this forum. Political confessionality is depicted as negative. Instead, political battles that do not conflate religion or race with political stance are to be emulated. The American elections were referenced repeatedly in this respect, as guests discussed the positive example of how politics is run in the United States on numerous programs.

Education, creativity, and an orientation toward the future are themes running through the various programs. Arab education is decried for relying on rote memorization and failing to encourage creativity and critical thinking, just as academics, NGOs, and USAID complain. Creativity and innovation were the subject of *shebab* (11/6/08). Young Arab inventors and artists from various parts of the Arab world discussed the importance of free-thinking. American business models were lauded, from Kentucky Fried Chicken to Walt Disney, and Edison's numerous failures and ultimate success held up as an exemplar of perseverance. Guests stated that what needs to change is a mentality that resists creativity and new ideas, along with governments that do not encourage, or work against, innovation. A female artist (unveiled) discussed her problems being taken seriously as a woman, and her desire to express what women experience. So important is creativity that coverage of innovations and new practices form the bulk of the weekly program "Twenties" (*'ashreenat*) and the weekly *safahat mulawanna*. Episodes of *'ashreenat* cover the latest, cutting edge gadgets and technological advances, such as a yoga mat with built-in streaming video and mp3 speakers, and profile successful youth or those proposing new projects. Advances in robots appear regularly, and green or environmentally-friendly advances are reported with admiration. Street plays against war by young Lebanese youth are highlighted.

To accomplish the goal of innovation, the value of time and planning were the subject of another episode of "Youth" (11/13/08), simultaneously discarding concepts of fate that have been interpreted as resignation. The notion of *al-rabbaniyya*, or relying on God for the future, was rejected as not useful or valid. The result may be up to God, but the person has to do his duty, working, planning, and creatively imagining new futures. The management of time, a quintessential enterprise of modernity, was emphasized as necessary for success and direction.

By itself, the modern mind-set of the station, imparting a belief and duty for people to creatively alter their world for the better, would be unexpected given common views of Islamism or political Islam. Shows on al-Manar do not stop there, but also take on patriarchy and promote an ideal of working women and male responsibility for household chores. Change from tradition is a strong theme. Tradition is viewed as negative, something to be changed, and was directly confronted in segments dealing with male authority, marriage as oppression, views of divorced women, men doing housework, domestic violence including honor crimes, countering the norm of silence against abuse, and choosing a spouse (3/17/08-10/13/08). In all these, the views presented did not differ extremely from those promoted by the West. Killing a woman because she was raped or committed adultery (honor crimes) is condemned, as is domestic violence against women and children. Divorced women should not be viewed with suspicion or seen as loose, and women should be free to stay single and not marry. In many of the more controversial episodes, those breaking traditional barriers, a religious cleric was either a guest on the show or called for his opinion. In all cases, the cleric affirmed what the experts had stated and did not contradict the tone or conclusions of the episodes, thus adding the stamp of religious legitimacy to new ideas.

Common knowledge and inherited understandings are subjected to scientific findings in order to educate for change. Western countries are lauded for safe houses for battered women, creativity-inspiring education, and the strong role of civil society. Hostesses discuss needing to "think outside the box," stated in English and translated into Arabic, and the importance of quality time. Women as caretakers are not assumed. A hostess was careful to correct a guest and instead use gender-neutral terms. Whoever prepares the food, be it the lady or the man of the house, should know how to handle meat properly, the hostess stated, as opposed to assuming a woman would always do the cooking.

The programs promote more equitable distribution of responsibility and tasks among all family members, not limited to women only taking care of the family and home. This includes more responsibility for men in the family, from chores and child caretaking to encouraging wives in their careers. Relationships within the family between parents and children have become subject to new norms for the optimum relationship between individuals. The goal and the role of the parent on these programs are to treat each child equally and obtain compliance without the traditional stick of force. Further, parents should promote creativity and self-worth for all family members, including the elderly. Each one needs to feel affirmed, valued, and celebrated, and their individual talent encouraged. Parents should not project their own lack of accomplishment or their own goals onto their children, but let them choose their own path. Work is also seen as fulfillment for women, an outlet for her to have a separate source of self-esteem. When a woman had a rebellion problem with her children, the first thing the guest experts wanted to know was if she had her own life and work (*mushkila wa rai'*, 2/4/08). Without a separate life away from home, the woman could feel empty and unfulfilled, and thus place her life expectations onto the children, which would be negative.

Another program discussed silence (negative silence, *al-samat al-salbi*) about domestic abuse and rape (*wijhat nathr*, 4/10/08). Eastern culture, stigmatizing a woman for crimes committed against her, was explicitly condemned in favor of Western practices. "In this, an Eastern country, if you breathe in the north," an unveiled woman stated, "they are listening in the south." Civil society, aiding women in the west, was hailed as the answer but was lacking in Lebanon. Other countries have safe houses as a solution, here she stays oppressed, another stated. Having a profession or at least a job and being financially independent are advocated as solutions for women. When a caller stated that we in Lebanon should not be subject to the norms of other people's cultures and need to stick to our own, especially since Lebanon's culture is under attack, he was ignored entirely (*wijhat nathr*, 2/28/08) and the discussion continued seemingly uninterrupted.

Individual rights and social responsibility are promoted, while violence is rejected. Numerous programs discuss rights for women and children, using the language of human rights and even the international posters delineating the rights (in French). Violence in the family and society against children (by teachers) is condemned. The law, civil society, and knowledge are viewed as the solution, following and obeying the law is important but civil society needs to identify and lobby against violations of rights and the use of violence. Hosts discuss the rights of women in Lebanese law, and state that women must fight tradition for their rights. Women's rights organizations are profiled, and warning signs of abuse discussed (*'ashreenat*, 4/11/08).

The rights of youth against their families are acknowledged, and children are asked what they want from their parents that they do not receive. Many answered respect and trust (*wijhat nathr*, 4/3/08), including a young unveiled woman who acknowledged the parents may be concerned because she is a woman and unveiled, but she wants her own freedom. Social responsibility and volunteerism are promoted, encouraging the audience to help themselves and each other. Programs advocate community solutions for problems typically viewed as generating the bulk of Hizbullah's legitimacy--Hizbullah's monopoly of social aid for much of the Lebanese population. Programs criticize the government's lack of social services and inform the audience how to obtain aid or medicine from government institutions.

Much of the programming is self-critical, ranging from criticism of current practices and tradition to leadership in the Arab world. In one case, mediating a dialogue between loyalists of Fatah and those of Hamas, the host countered a statement blaming Israel by stating, "OK, we know that is the enemy, but what about the other side, the Arab states? What about their responsibility?" The host then asked people what they wanted from the Arab states (*qadaya al-nas*, 12/2/08).

A few examples illustrate the popularity and relevance of topics on this part of al-Manar, and their distance from directly supporting Hizbullah's militia, politics, or perspectives often considered typical of Islamism. One episode of the program "20s" (*ashreenat*, 4/11/08) dealt with violence, primarily within the family. The guests were

three (unveiled) young women from a woman's rights organization. The hostesses were three (veiled) young women. Violence was depicted as violence against women, children, and even verbal violence. The laws were scrutinized and criticized: domestic violence must be punished, but here there is no law for it one woman stated. Yet all Semitic religions prohibit such violence, they said. The example of a man hitting his wife because she did something he did not approve was mentioned, and one of the women guests discussed the necessity of recognizing that he did something wrong. There are reasons for it, he can have a weak character or his family treated him that way, but there are programs to change such behavior. Statistics from the United States on violence were mentioned, not as a demonstration of the negative American community, but as a general example of how much violence is probably occurring in the family, since that goes unreported often in Lebanon, and can occur in society. Violence on television and its harmful effects was discussed, as was Internet and game violence.

In another program, Youth (*shebab*, 11/6/08), an episode highlighted creativity and its importance. This program brings four young adults who are successful in their fields from around the Arab world, usually with a mix of men and women. The host, a young man, asks questions and moderates a discussion among them. This episode had three young men and one (unveiled) young woman. The Arab world does not encourage innovation, a guest stated, and people do not invest in Arab projects. One guest had a project for sports, while another was an artist. Examples of successful investment and creativity in the United States were offered as positive role models that the Arab world does not follow: Walt Disney, Rambo, and Kentucky Fried Chicken's business model. The artist discussed how creativity differs from high grades in school. The host asked what the role of government in supporting these should be. The mentality in the Arab world and the politics of governments needs to change, one guest stated, and others agreed.

Another program, geared often toward women's issues, discussed the common practice of spanking children in the Arab world (*wijhat nathr*, 2/28/08). This program is live, with a studio audience, guest experts, and callers. The program includes a segment interviewing people on the street on the topic of the episode. (In this episode children were asked their experiences of being disciplined by their parents.) The guest expert (an unveiled woman) on this program continued to drift into French, generally a sign of a Christian Lebanese upbringing. The audience was almost completely women, roughly evenly split between veiled and non-veiled, including Christians and Muslims (demonstrated by the names), working and stay at home mothers. All agreed they should find alternatives to spanking, but were frustrated how they could still discipline their children. A caller decried the entire discussion, seeking alternatives to spanking, saying that especially at this time of cultural onslaught we Easterners and Lebanese should stick to our culture. He was referring to the common idea that spanking was an Arab way of parenting, while not to do so was Western. He was completely ignored by the women in the audience and hostess; the women in the audience enthusiastically picked up the conversation precisely where it had stopped before the caller, as if he had never spoken, jumping in and passing the microphone among the audience to state their opinions and situations, seeking another way of disciplining children. A stay-at-home mother stated that work had nothing to do with it—she could not discipline her children and she was home with them all the time. Alternative methods of disciplining and detecting root causes for children's behavior were discussed.

The new message of al-Manar

Bombed and banned, only the news and blustering rhetoric of al-Manar have drawn attention. Unnoticed are the numerous human-interest programs and their content. The human-interest and non-religious programming of al-Manar signals and reinforces the organization's embrace not merely of the multi-confessional nature of the country, but the legitimacy of alternative lifestyles, an orientation far from its origin over two decades ago, calling for an Islamic state. The change in programming, from al-Manar's origins to today, was caused by Hizbullah's view of a future for itself among Lebanon's communities, a vision it is communicating and affirming through the station. Static depictions of Hizbullah and its media, continuing to associate Hizbullah's often-fiery foreign policy speeches with its policies and plans toward the domestic community, miss these important changes. Al-Manar reveals the far-sighted intention of Hizbullah to establish a life in Lebanon beyond its military legitimacy, promoting audiences and allowing space for discussions popular with Lebanese outside Hizbullah's core constituency. Particularly interesting is the focus on social groups deemed important for the future (youth) and those typically targeted by Western policies (women). Yet this is not a case of conflict over messages to these groups, with Hizbullah spouting a line diverging from the West. Instead, the content of these programs generally align with current Western and international norms. The programs target the same problems and often propose the same solutions as international organizations.

* Author's note: The views here are the author's alone and not that of the U.S. government or any other institutional affiliation. The author thanks the AMS editors and reviewers for help and comments.

[1] This view is most polemically portrayed by Mark Dubowitz, "Watching Al-Manar: Violence in the Media," *National Review Online*, no. 17 July (2006). On Islamist television of the Salafi variety, fitting much of this description, see Nath Field and Ahmed Hamam, "Salafi Satellite Tv in Egypt," *Arab Media & Society*, no. 8 (2009).

[2] Hizbullah and al-Manar maintain that they are separate entities, but Hizbullah almost wholly finances the television, and the ties between the two are not seriously disputed. The question of journalistic and professional independence of the station, and goals unique to media (audience share) remain to be investigated.

[3] Assessing how audiences receive and process programs is a complicated and multi-faceted issue; I do not deal with it here but instead depict the media presentation of interaction with other communities on the station.

[4] By non-political I refer to the human-interest programs distinct from news, political talk shows, religious programs, documentaries and spots overtly promoting Hizbullah and its military. These human interest programs form a significant percentage of all programming and air on prime time, including the prized Thursday night spot. To date, there has been scant academic analysis of these programs; writing has focused on overtly political programs, not common concerns, or what some would view as everyday politics. This bias reflects one common in social science. As I argue below, by neglecting this realm, analysts remain ignorant to the future that Hizbullah views for itself and that is projecting to viewers, including its constituency.

[5] This article is the beginning of a larger project on al-Manar's multi-communal public sphere and the influence of political constituencies and audiences in Hizbullah. Al-Manar over the internet can be found at <http://www.almanar.com.lb/NewsSite/ManarLive.aspx>, accessed through the home page of [almanar.com.lb](http://www.almanar.com.lb). Alternative portals also provide access to the station over the web.

[6] Joseph Elie Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program*, Isim Dissertations (Amsterdam: ISIM/Amsterdam University Press, 2006), Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[7] Mona Harb and Reinoud Leenders, "Know Thy Enemy: Hizbullah, 'Terrorism' and the Politics of Perception," *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005).

[8] Walid Charara and Frédéric Domont, *Le Hezbollah : Un Mouvement Islamo-Nationaliste* (Paris: Editions Fayard, 2004), 170.

[9] Hugh Dellios, "With an Eye toward Politics, Hezbollah Recasting Its Image; Savvy Tv Campaign Credited in Group's Battle with Israel," *Chicago Tribune*, 13 April 2000.

[10] Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 59.

[11] For academic accounts of the early al-Manar see Frederic M. Wehrey, "Hizbullah's Psychological Campaign against Israel in South Lebanon," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 13, no. 3 (2002), Ron Schleifer, "Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hezbollah Versus Israel," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 1 (2006).

[12] Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 60.

[13] Robert Fisk, "Television news is secret weapon of the intifada," *The Independent* (London), 2 December 2000.

[14] Avi Jorisch, *Beacon of Hatred: Inside Hizbullah's al-Manar Television*. Washington, DC: Washington Institute for East Policy, 2004. While based on research, Jorisch's work is also directly tied to a political goal, that of banning al-M and lacks an understanding of context. As an example, the lack of context is apparent in the interpretation of a phrase by the station, "Jerusalem, we are coming," as a threat. The line actually comes from a well-known song by the Leban (Christian) singer Fairouz, about religious unity, worshiping in Jerusalem by all religions, and Jerusalem as a city of peace. The viewing audience would know this song and tie the phrase to it. Avi Jorisch, *Beacon of Hatred: Inside Hizbullah's Al-Manar Television* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2004), 67, 85. See Fairouz's song in Arabic at <http://www.fairouz.com/fairouz/special/poem.html#arabic>.

[15] One of the chief programs substantiating the claim that al-Manar is anti-Semitic was a Syrian-made drama that the station said it purchased quickly without viewing the entire series in advance (the Diaspora). The series repeated stereotypical myths about Jews. When this came to light, al-Manar reportedly stopped airing the series. Whether this version of events is true or not is arguably less important than the station's realization and public statement that airing the series was a mistake. Charara and Domont, *Le Hezbollah*, 171.

[16] Avi J. Jorisch, "Al-Manar and the War in Iraq," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* 5, no. 4 (2003), Jorisch, *Beacon of Hatred*, ch. 5.

[17] Caroline Drees, "Manar TV as 'Terrorist,'" www.washingtonpost.com (Reuters), 17 December 2004; "Al-Manar TV to go off Dutch platform," [aljazeera.net](http://www.aljazeera.net), 17 March 2005.

[18] U.S. Department of the Treasury, "U.S. Designates Al-Manar as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Entity; Television Station Is Arm of Hizballah Terrorist Network," ed. Department of the Treasury (2006). Two men were arrested for installing al-Manar in the United States. Pincus, Walter, "New Yorker Arrested for Providing Hezbollah TV Channel," *The Washington Post*, 25 August 2006; p. A10. Available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn>

- [/content/article/2006/08/24/AR2006082401461.html](#). One, a businessman providing access to a wide range of stations including pornography, was sentenced to six years in prison. Larry Neumeister, Associated Press Writer, April 24, 2009, "6 years in prison for airing Hezbollah TV in NYC," posted, among other locations, at <http://www.wtopnews.com/?nid=251&sid=1659031>.
- [19] For example, Daniel J. Wakin, "Hezbollah Seen Making Subtle Changes After War in Iraq," *New York Times*, 11 May 2003.
- [20] Dellios, "With an Eye toward Politics, Hezbollah Recasting Its Image."
- [21] Qasim Qusayr, "Hizbullah Rearranges Its Information Organization to Confront Changes in Lebanon and the Region (in Arabic)," *al-Mustaqbal*, 9 March 2006.
- [22] Daily Star, "Hizbullah's Broadcasting Arms Garner Awards," 12 July 2002.
- [23] Juhayna Khalidiyya, "Is this another step toward Lebanizing al-Manar? "Word to the nation": the opinions of pron personalities regarding the maintenance of the resistance's arms...not its removal (in Arabic)." *al-Safir*, 17 August 200.
- [24] Lebanese Ministry of Information, 24 June 2005, Shameem Rassam, 19 November 2008.
- [25] John Lancaster, "Hezbollah Tunes In On Profits; Party's TV Station Airing U.S. Movies," *Washington Post*, 19 June 2005.
- [26] Madouna Sama'an, "'al-salam 'alaykum wa rahma allah wa barakatuhu' min kaneesa ghazeer waraqa al-tafahum taftah khataan askariyyan amam 'al-manar' fi fatouh kasrawan," *al-Safir*, 4 April 2006.
- [27] Whether this is due solely to Hizbullah's new direction or to a parallel professionalization of the media in its search for an audience has yet to be determined.
- [28] Firmo-Fontan, Victoria. "Power, NGOs, and Lebanese Television: a Case Study of Al-Manar TV and the Hezbollah Women's Association." In *Women and Media in the Middle East: Power through Self-Expression*, edited by Naomi Sal 162-79. London: I.B. Tauris, 2004.
- [29] Over 50 random street interviews were conducted in Lebanon and Jordan on al-Manar in June 2005, in addition to intermittent interviews with Lebanese and other Arabs watching regarding al-Manar in 2006-present.
- [30] Author interviews with Lebanese of Aoun's party.
- [31] Conway, Maura. "Terror TV? An exploration of Hizbullah's al-Manar television." In *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century*, edited by James F. Forest, 401-19. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007.
- [32] Eli Lake, "Israel War Effort Extends Even to Hezbollah Tv," *The Sun*, 2 August 2006.
- [33] Matthias Gebauer, "Broadcasting from the Bunker: Hezbollah's Al-Manar," *Spiegel Online*, no. 8 August (2006).
- [34] "IDF broadcasts Hizbullah's dead on al-Manar," ynetnews.com, 8 August 2006, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3288442,00.html>
- [35] Hasan M. Al-Rizzo, "The Undeclared Cyberspace War between Hezbollah and Israel," *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 1, no. 3 (2008): 400. Marwan Kraidy, "Hizbollywood. Hizbullah's Information War Viewed from Lebanon," The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 17 October 2006, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1426&fuseaction=topics.event_summary&event_id=201758.
- [36] Abu-Fadil, Magda. "Hezbollah TV Claims Credit for Ousting Israelis." IPI Global Journalist, www.globaljournalist.org/archive/Magazine/Al%29Manar-2004q.html, Marvin Kalb and Carol Saivetz, "The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict," *Press/Politics* 12, no. 3 (2007).
- [37] Saad-Ghorayeb, Amal. "People say no." *Al-Ahram Weekly On-line*, 3-9 August 2006, Saad-Ghorayeb, Amal, and Marina Ottaway. "Hezbollah and Its Changing Identities." *Policy Outlook (Democracy & Rule of Law Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace)* 2007.
- [38] For coverage on al-Manar after the assassination of Imad Mughniyah, black ops and guerilla warfare leader in Hizbullah, see Ajemian, Peter. "Resistance beyond time and space: Hezbollah's media campaigns." *Arab Media & Soc* no. 5 (Spring) (2008).
- [39] Estimating viewership is difficult, due to the channel-flipping characteristics of the Arab audience and concomitant lack of reliance on advertising for funding. Paul Cochrane, "Bombs and Broadcasts: Al Manar's Battle to Stay on Air," *Arab Media & Society*, no. February (2007). A Zogby poll puts the viewership of al-Manar at 2% of the Arab world, which translates to about \$10 million. See Pro Publica's Arabic Language Regional Television News comparison chart at <http://www.propublica.org/special/arabic-language-regional-television-news>. Al-Arabiya had 9% and one of the most popular Lebanese stations, LBC, 3%.
- [40] Marwan M. Kraidy, "Arab Media and Us Policy: A Public Diplomacy Reset," in *Policy Analysis Brief* (The Stanley Foundation, 2008), 4.
- [41] Hisham Sharabi, "Arab Satellite Channels and Their Political Impact after the Iraq War," *al-Hayat*, 18 July 2003.
- [42] West Bank and Gaza Presidential Elections, Final Report, European Union Election Observation Mission, 9 January 2005. Available from www.amin.org/eng/uncat/2005/mar/mar002.html.
- [43] Jorisch, *Beacon of Hatred*.

- [44] Cochrane, "Bombs and Broadcasts." Goldman, Dudi, "War soars al-Manar popularity," ynetnews.com, 24 August 2006, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3295190,00.html>;
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- [45] See Pro Publica's Arabic Language Regional Television News comparison chart at <http://www.propublica.org/special/arabic-language-regional-television-news>.
- [46] Petra News Agency, "Winners of the Inquirer Award 2007 Announced," *Open Source Center*, GMP20080302966007 (2 March 2008).
- [47] Assaf David and Oren Barak, "How the New Arab Media Challenges the Arab Militaries: The Case of the War between Israel and Hizbullah in 2006," *The Middle East Institute Policy Brief*, no. 20 (2008).
- [48] Lawrence Pintak, "Reporting a Revolution: The Changing Arab Media Landscape," *Arab Media & Society*, no. February (2007).
- [49] As a religious party, Hizbullah receives tithes from the Shi'a community, which in Islam constitute one-fifth of individual income. Iranian funding of Hizbullah dropped dramatically in the 1990s.
- [50] Pro Publica, Arabic Language Regional Television News comparison chart, op cit.
- [51] Magda Abu-Fadil, "Hezbollah Tv Claims Credit for Ousting Israelis," IPI Global Journalist, www.globaljournalist.org/archive/Magazine/Al%29Manar-2004q.html.
- [52] Avi Jorisch, "Al-Manar: Hizbullah Tv, 24/7," *Middle East Quarterly* XI, no. 1 (2004).
- [53] For examples of recent media campaigns see Peter Ajemian, "Resistance Beyond Time and Space: Hezbollah's Media Campaigns," *Arab Media & Society*, no. 5 (Spring) (2008).
- [54] Interview with Rassam.
- [55] Kraidy, "Arab Media and Us Policy," 4-5.
- [56] On Hizbullah's modernity that is mixed with the practice of piety, see Lara Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). Deeb also highlights the prominent role of women in Hizbullah, corresponding to evidence from al-Manar.
- [57] I have left out the entertainment series, discovery-type programs, games and children's shows.
- [58] French education and speech even at home is characteristic of segments of the Christian community in Lebanon.
- [59] On Lebanon's media sectarianism, see Paul Cochrane, "Are Lebanon's Media Fanning the Flames of Sectarianism?," *Arab Media & Society*, no. May (2007), Nabil Dajani, "The Re-Feudalization of the Public Sphere: Lebanese Television News Coverage and the Lebanese Political Process," *Transnational Broadcasting Studies*, no. 16 (2006).