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The Employment of Generic and Issue-Specific Frames:

Examining Lebanon's October 2019 Uprising

By

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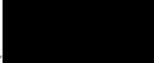
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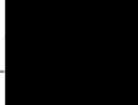
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# The Employment of Generic and Issue-Specific Frames:

## Examining Lebanon's October 2019 Uprising

Sally Farhat

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the employment of frames by local television channels in their coverage of Lebanon's October 2019 uprising. It used mixed methods to examine the employment of both generic frames, which are frames that surpass particular events and can be recognized across diverse subjects (de Vreese, 2002), and issue-specific frames, which are frames that are particular to one event or subject (de Vreese, 2005). Through a qualitative media framing analysis (MFA), the first part of this study examined the way television channels interpreted the protests. The second part used a quantitative content analysis to measure induced frames, examine the difference between anti-protests and pro-protests channels in employing issue-specific and generic frames, and test the relationship between the employment of both frames. Results from the MFA indicated that local television channels mainly used the solidarity frame, head-to-head frame, individualization frame, acknowledgment frame, disruption frame, and the peace through violence frame to interpret the protests. Results from the quantitative content analysis indicated that the political alignment of channels impacted their choices of employing some frames. Anti-protests channels were more likely than the pro-protests channels to employ the attribution of responsibility frame, disruption frame, acknowledgment frame, economic consequences frame and the conflict frame. The pro-protests channels were more likely to employ the solidarity frame. Finally, the study also revealed that there was

a relationship between the employment of generic frames and issue-specific frames: The solidarity frame was less likely to be used in news stories that employ the attribution of responsibility frame, economic consequences frame, and the conflict frame. The disruption frame and head-to-head frame were more likely to be used in news reports that employ the conflict frame, and less likely to be employed in news stories that employ the economic consequences and morality frames. The acknowledgment frame was less likely to be used in news reports that employed the human-interest frame, and more likely in news reports that used the economic consequences frame. Aside from examining the coverage of Lebanon's protests systematically and reliably, which has not been done previously, the significance of this study lies in its ability to find the relationship between issue-specific and generic frames and increase our knowledge of frames and the diverse roles they play when used together. Its significance also lies in its ability to present a framework for a typology of issue-specific frames that could be used to examine other social movements and periods of unrest.

**Keywords:** Framing theory, October 2019 uprising, Media framing analysis, Issue-specific frames, Generic frames

# Table of Contents

<b>I - Chapter One – Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II - Chapter Two – Literature Review .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Background: Lebanon’s Media System .....	4
2.2 News Framing Theory.....	13
2.3 Common Themes in Covering Periods of Unrest .....	20
2.4 Covering Conflicts: The Employment of Frames in the Middle East.....	22
<b>III - Chapter Three – Methodology .....</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1 Media Framing Analysis (MFA).....	29
3.2 Quantitative Content Analysis .....	31
<b>IV - Chapter Four – Results .....</b>	<b>41</b>
4.1 Qualitative results: The Dominating Narratives .....	41
4.2 Quantitative Content Analysis Results .....	45
<b>V - Chapter Five – Discussion .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>VI - Chapter Six – Conclusion .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>VII - References.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>VIII - Appendix 1: Anti-Protests Channels Additional Dates .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>IX - Appendix 2: Codebook.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>X - Appendix 3: MFA Analytical Procedure .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>XI - Appendix 4: One-Way ANOVA Full Results .....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>XII - Appendix 5: Intercoder Reliability .....</b>	<b>103</b>

## List of Tables

Table 1. Chosen dates to sample news reports.....	31
Table 2. The mean difference in employing issue-specific frames across channels.....	47
Table 3. The difference in the employment of frames between anti-protests and pro-protests channels. ....	48
Table 4. Difference between pro-protests and anti-protests channels in employing generic frames. ....	49
Table 5. The relationship between generic and issue-specific frames. ....	52
Table 6. Additional dates from which news reports from anti-protests channels were collected. ....	74
Table 7. The broadcast date and dominating news peg of each news report under study. ....	90
Table 8. Table shows full results for the One-way ANOVA and Games Howell Post-hoc test. ....	100
Table 9. Table shows intercoder reliability, which was run on 20 percent of the sample. ....	103

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

Previous research has extensively examined the employment of frames in covering news stories (Nelson et al., 1997; Kozman, 2017; Kilgo & Harlow, 2019; Askanius & Hartley, 2019; Emmerich, 2020). Frames are the lens through which a particular reality is presented (Chong & Druckman, 2007). The framing process defines a problem, interprets, and evaluates it, and then presents recommendations (Entman, 1993). In some cases, framing also contributes to reinforcing a continuous pattern or routine in covering a particular subject (Gitlin, 1981), and thus, gives meaning to the issue at hand (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

Media coverage tend to change during periods of unrest and the engagement of the media with conflicts is generally illustrated in the choice of frames journalists employ (Miller & Reichert, 2001; Melki & Kozman, 2020a; Melki & Kozman, 2020b). In studying the framing of conflicts, researchers have either examined the employment of generic frames, which are frames that surpass particular events and can be recognized across diverse contexts or case studies (countries and topics) (de Vreese, 2002), or issue-specific frames, which are frames that are particular to one event or subject (de Vreese, 2005). The different approaches to examining frames have complicated the process of identifying them in the media and have resulted in inconsistencies in the choice of conceptual and working definitions (de Vreese, 2005). Accordingly, research results have yielded diverse frames that are specific to a particular conflict, while efforts to reveal how the two types of frames are used together remain timid. Therefore, the purpose of this

study is to fill this gap by using mixed methods to examine the employment of both generic frames and issue-specific frames in the coverage of Lebanon's October 2019 uprising. The study first uses the media framing analysis technique (MFA) to examine the employment of issue-specific frames. It then uses a quantitative content analysis, to quantify the induced issue-specific frames, examine the difference between anti- and pro-protests channels in employing issue-specific and generic frames, and find the relationship between the employment of the two types of frames.

On October 17, 2019, Lebanese from different environments and diverse upbringings rallied to the streets to respond to new tax measures imposed on WhatsApp calls (Melki & Kozman, 2020a). The uprising signified a new chapter in Lebanon's history and allowed for the rise of alternative political groups and agendas (Heller, 2021). The resulting political distributions challenged the country's evolving and changing political divides, which have been historically rooted in Lebanon's sectarian-clientelist system and have had a major influence on Lebanon's media (Hamzeh, 2001; Baumann, 2016; El-Richani, 2021; Heller, 2021). While the country's media system is pluralistic, media outlets are controlled by major political parties and religious groups (Dabbous, 2010; El-Richani, 2021). Accordingly, the uprising led to noticeable changes in media coverage.

The political significance of the uprising and the response of the Lebanese media, which is partisan by nature, thus, allows for examining the employment of frames during periods of unrest in a partisan media environment (Bou-Hamad & Yehya, 2020). Given that television channels were the principal information source for the Lebanese during the uprising (Melki & Kozman, 2020a), this study particularly examines how the dominating

television channels in the country covered the uprising between October 18, the first day of the uprising, and December 19, the day a new prime minister held office.

Given that efforts to study the use of both generic and issue-specific frames together remain timid, the significance of this study lies in its ability to find the relationship between issue-specific and generic frame and increase our knowledge of frames and the diverse roles they play when used together. On a secondary level and through quantifying issue-specific frames, the significance of this study also lies in its ability to present a framework for a typology of issue-specific frames that could be used in other studies that aim to examine framing of periods of unrests and social movements. This framework contributes to limiting researchers' tendencies to induce frames that are unique to one uprising (de Vreese, 2005; Hertog & Mcleod, 2001), which in turn would decrease the fragmentation of the theory and allow for comparison across studies that examine the framing of movements. Accordingly, this would also decrease the exclusivity of issue-specific frames and allow them to be generalized under this particular topic, that is movements. The study also offers a measurement tool (codebook) that could be used to significantly examine the use of induced frames for protest studies. Finally, the significance of this study also lies in its ability to examine the coverage of Lebanon's protests systematically and reliably, which has not been done yet.

# Chapter Two

## Literature Review

While framing remains one of the fastest evolving theories in the media (Weaver, 2007), there are still differences in defining and understanding frames and their effects, which have resulted in inconsistencies in the choice of conceptual and operational definitions (de Vreese, 2005). The first section of this literature review provides an overview of Lebanon's political and media systems and aims to offer a richer understanding of the case study used. The second section delves into the differences in defining and understanding frames. The third section examines how previous studies employed different frames in examining conflicts. The aim of this section is to reveal the importance of framing during periods of unrest and at the same time, expose the overlap across studies that yielded different frames with similar meanings. The fourth section contextualizes framing theory in the coverage of the Arab Spring. The Arab world generally provides a unique opportunity to explore media framing during periods of unrest, given its unique characteristics and the fact that several Arab countries have witnessed uprisings over the past years, including Lebanon (Melki & Kozman, 2020b).

### 2.1 Background: Lebanon's Media System

Lebanon's political economy is entrenched in sectarianism and clientelism (Hamzeh, 2001; Baumann, 2016). This system is constructed on two grounds: 1) Citizens remain reliant on powerful elites to access their basic needs including healthcare and education, among others; and 2) politicians in their turn control the allocation of assets through clientelism (Baumann, 2016). The omnipresence of this sectarian-clientelist

system, led Hamzeh (2001) to argue that it could be most deeply rooted in Lebanon, in comparison to any other country. In all its forms (including zu'ama, patrimonial, militia, Islamist, and party politics), the system continues to survive on the basis of economic, social, and political vulnerabilities, all while creating an illusionary identity and an imaginary sense of belonging to a non-existing community (Hamzeh, 2001).

This same sectarian-clientelist system controls the media in Lebanon. While the country is considered to have the freest media system in the Arab world (Ghareeb, 2000; Battah, 2020), media outlets are controlled by major political parties and religious groups (Dabbous, 2010; El-Richani, 2021). The history of the interlinkages among the media, sectarianism, and clientelism dates back to the civil war. In order to better comprehend these connections, the rest of the sections outlines the different stages broadcast media went through in Lebanon.

### **2.1.1 Television Between Lebanon's Independence and the Beginning of The Civil War**

In 1959 and prior to the Lebanese civil war, the first television channel known as the Compagnie Libanaise de Télévision (CLT) was initiated in Lebanon (El-Richani, 2021). CLT and later Télé Orient, which was launched in 1962, acted as private commercial channels and presented regular programming, allowing them to stand out from other channels in the Middle East (El-Richani, 2021). The launch of these two channels also contributed to modernizing public space, through making political, economic, and cultural topics more accessible (Khazaal, 2018). By 1974, almost 75 percent of families owned a television (Khazaal, 2018). However, although it was not

clearly visible, both these channels were controlled by foreign forces, particularly the French, and served as their propaganda tool in the country (Melki, 2008).

### **2.1.2 Television Between the Civil War and 2005**

By the beginning of the civil war, the French began losing interest in the channels. Both CLT and Télé Orient's financial situations deteriorated, which led the government in 1977 to merge them into Télé Liban (TL) and buy 50 percent of the rebranded television's shares (Melki, 2008; El-Richani, 2021). During that period, the field also became politically unstable, and the government lost control of its own state-run channel, which at the time had two branches (TL1 and TL2) each operating from different geographic areas with different sectarian identities (Khazaaal, 2018). Additionally, the civil war witnessed the rise of several pirate TV channels (El-Richani, 2021). These pirate channels were unregulated, which allowed them to reflect the ideologies of the political or sectarian group they represented (Khazaaal, 2018).

The war reached an end in 1990, after the Ta'if Accord was signed. The accord further fostered sectarian divides in the government "by introducing some reforms to the existing political system through a new power-sharing agreement that gave the Muslims a greater role in the political process" (Ghosn & Khoury, 2011, p. 383). Additionally, while the accord aimed to increase the country's sovereignty by asking foreign forces to depart from the country, the actual implementation of this reform did not happen until later in history (Israeli withdrawal- 2000, Syrian troops withdrawal – 2005) (Ghosn & Khoury, 2011).

Following the civil war, the government attempted to take back its control over the media. Thus in 1994, it issued Audio-Visual Media Law 382, which aimed to decrease the

fragmentation of the press given that 60 television stations operated during the war (Kraidy, 1998; Kraidy, 2012; Khazaal, 2018). Nonetheless, the implementation of this law in 1996 took a political turn and the licensing process favored media institutions that were owned by major political or religious groups: LBCI, a Maronite channel; NBN, a Shiite channel; MTV Lebanon, a Greek Orthodox channel; and Future TV, a Sunni channel owned by Hariri family that was suspended by former Prime Minister Saad Hariri in 2019 due to financial struggles (“Lebanon PM shuts down Future TV channel over funding”, 2019). Additional licenses were later issued to other political channels including Al-Manar; Tele Lumiere; and New TV, which is known today as Al Jadeed (Kraidy, 2012). The distribution of the licenses presented equilibrium on sectarian bases and the government only issued new licenses when a new major political group emerged, as was the case with OTV (Kraidy, 2012).

### **2.1.3 Television After 2005**

Triggered by former Prime Minister and the leader of the Future Movement Rafiq Hariri’s assassination in 2005, a series of demonstrations referred to as the Cedar Revolution led to the rise and domination of two major political blocs in Lebanon. These two blocs reflected and reinforced the local and the regional political tensions and divides (Makdisi, 2015; Humud, 2018). The Saudi-backed bloc, also known as the March 14 coalition, included the Lebanese Forces, the Future Movement, and the Phalange (Kataeb) Party (Humud, 2018). This bloc was anti-Syria and continuously called for an end to the Syrian Regime (Makdisi, 2015; Humud, 2018). The Iranian-backed bloc, also known as the March 8 coalition, included the Free Patriotic Movement, Hezbollah, and Amal Movement (Humud, 2018). This bloc wanted to adopt an agenda that favored Syria

(Makdisi, 2015; Humud, 2018). The Progressive Socialist Party in its turn alternated between the two blocs, contributing to determining which bloc was more in control (Humud, 2018).

Since media outlets, including broadcast media, are controlled by and reflect the ideologies of their owners (El-Richani, 2021), the rise of the two blocs influenced the political leaning and orientation of each channel after 2005:

#### 2.1.3.1 MTV Lebanon

MTV Lebanon was established in 1991 by Gabriel Murr and was one of the first four television channels to earn its license after Lebanon's civil war (Kraidy, 2012). Its shares are distributed mostly among the Murr family members (Melki, 2008). The channel was shut down in 2003 after it was accused of broadcasting on behalf of political candidates (particularly Gabriel Murr, who promoted his campaign) during elections, which is an act that goes against the law (Melki, 2008; Kraidy, 2012; Trombetta, 2018). However, given that other channels also did not comply with this law, some believed that MTV Lebanon's closure was a response to its continuous criticism of the Syrian regime and its shift away from the pro-government ideology it previously supported or followed (Melki, 2008; Trombetta, 2018). The fact that the decision to re-open MTV Lebanon was issued in 2005 after the Syrian troops withdrew from Lebanon, further reinforced these beliefs (El-Richani, 2016). The channel resumed broadcasting in 2009 and has been known for supporting the March 14 alliance (El-Richani, 2016).

#### 2.1.3.2 LBCI

LBCI was launched by the Lebanese Forces in 1985 (Khazaal, 2018), making it the oldest private-owned tv channel in the Arab world (Kraidy, 2012). After 1992, the

channel ended its coalition with the Lebanese Forces (Melki, 2014). Owned by Pierre Daher, the channel changed and shifted its affiliations occasionally and at some point, enjoyed “temporary protection from Saudi investors, most importantly Saudi Prince and media tycoon al-Walid bin Talal” (Melki, 2014, p. 179). Daher was also accused of laying off his staff based on their political affiliation. He later dismissed these accusations, claiming that almost 80% of LBCI journalists and editors (among other staff members) support the Lebanese Forces and are Christians (El-Richani, 2016). Despite the religious and sectarian identity dominating LBCI (Nötzold, 2009, as cited in El-Richani, 2016), its shows are considered pluralistic and it was one of the most viewed stations in the region for several years (Kraidy, 2012; El-Richani, 2016; Trombetta, 2018). After 2005, the channel followed the March 14 alliance but attempted to remain balanced by inviting guests and hiring staff from different political backgrounds (El-Richani, 2016). The channel also received threats from the Syrian regime and was boycotted by Hezbollah for around six months, after it critiqued it on one of its political shows (El-Richani, 2016).

#### 2.1.3.3 Al Jadeed

Al Jadeed was originally established by the communist party, which later faced financial struggles and had to sell its shares to Tahseen Khayyat, businessman and Hariri rival (Melki, 2008; Melki, 2014). The channel, originally New TV, did meet all the law’s requirements but due to political pressure, was not given a license at first and was shut down by the government (El-Richani, 2016). In 2000, however, the decision was revoked, and the channel resumed broadcasting in 2001 (Melki, 2008; El-Richani, 2016). Al Jadeed is known for its populist approach, investigative coverage, leftist reporting, and criticism of Israel (Melki, 2014; Trombetta, 2018). It is an independent channel that supports the

opposition yet hires journalists and staff from different religious and political backgrounds (Melki, 2008). Additionally, although the channel does not have a clear affiliation to a political group, it leans more towards the March 8 coalition (Melki, 2014; El-Richani, 2016). The channel, however, attempts to offer balanced coverage by hosting guests from both political groups (El-Richani, 2016). Unlike other channels, Al Jadeed was also known for its anti-Syrian regime rhetoric, even while Syrian troops were still on Lebanese grounds prior to 2005 (Melki, 2008).

#### 2.1.3.4 Al-Manar

Al-Manar began broadcasting in 1991. It was founded by Hezbollah and operates with the help of Iranian funds (Melki, 2008; Trombetta, 2018). The channel is owned by members of the party and is known for its anti-US rhetoric and strong anti-Israel stance (El-Richani, 2016; Trombetta, 2018). It was banned from broadcasting on Arabsat and Nilesat between 2015 and 2016 as a result of Saudi influence (Trombetta, 2018). The channel has a homogenous staff that supports the March 8 alliance (Nötzold, 2009, as cited in El-Richani, 2016). It also has a strong religious orientation, whereby women for example, are not allowed to appear on-camera if they are not veiled (El-Richani, 2016).

#### 2.1.3.5 NBN

The National Broadcasting Network (NBN) was established by Nabih Berri, the Speaker of the Parliament and the leader of the Amal Movement. It is currently owned by Berri's close associates and family members (El-Richani, 2016). The channel received its license in 1996, which contrary to what the law allows, was before it even started operating (Kraidy, 1998). The channel follows a very similar ideology to that of Al Manar, supports the March 8 coalition, and reflects the pro-Iranian and pro-Syrian regime agendas (El-

Richani, 2016; Trombetta, 2018). Editorial positions are limited to Shittes who are close to or affiliated with Berri (Nötzold, 2009, as cited in El-Richani, 2016). The channel's audience are also generally supporters of the March 8 alliance (El-Richani, 2016).

#### 2.1.3.6 OTV

Orange TV (OTV) is a Christian channel affiliated with President Michel Aoun and the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) (El-Richani, 2016). The government granted the channel its license in 2006. While it claims to host guests from different backgrounds, its staff are in harmony when it comes to their political leanings (El-Richani, 2016). The channel also views its audience as politically partisan (El-Richani, 2016). OTV follows a pro-Iranian agenda and is affiliated with the March 8 alliance (Trombetta, 2018).

#### **2.1.4 Television After 2019**

In October 2019, nation-wide protests erupted in Lebanon as a response to new tax measures imposed on WhatsApp calls (Melki & Kozman, 2020a). The uprising signified a new chapter in Lebanon's history and to a large extent aligned citizens' demands. Protesters were mostly young, private sector employees, students, informal workers, people who don't have private insurance or social security (NSSF), and people with low income (Bou Khater & Majed, n.d.). They called for the resignation of politicians and an end to the sectarian regime and corruption, as well as demanded accountability ("Lebanon Protests Explained", 2020).

The rise of the October 2019 uprising "represented a break with the country's past polarization between the March 14 and March 8 Alliance" (Heller, 2021, para. 18). During the first 3 months of the protests, the country was divided between pro-protests and anti-protests blocs. The pro-protests bloc included groups that are calling for an end to the

sectarian regime and the formation of a secular constitution (“Lebanon Protests Explained”, 2020). This bloc reflected new political thoughts and values that require the formation of new political agendas (Aboul-Nasr, 2020). The bloc also considered the agendas of the March 14 and March 8 alliances irrelevant to the countries’ current economic and social needs (Aboul-Nasr, 2020; “Lebanon: One year after the October protest movement”, 2020). The pro-protest groups, however, did not align in terms of their strategies and visions of change. As such, “their contrasting theories of political change are among the main distinction between them” (Heller, 2021, para. 5). Additionally, these groups were placed in a position where they had to decide whether they are willing to join forces with traditional sectarian parties that attempted to push their agendas forward and re-position themselves as alternatives during the uprising, such as the Kataeb party (Heller, 2021). Many political parties also attempted to gain advantage of the protests by claiming that the demands of the protesters are also theirs (Heller, 2021). In parallel, the international community and donor countries demanded the implementation of necessary reforms, as the economic crisis surfaced and its social repercussions that accompanied the rise of the uprising were later exacerbated by the Beirut Port Blast and COVID-19 (Heller, 2021). The anti-protests bloc, on the other hand, encouraged the maintenance of the current political system. This bloc began taking its shape almost a week after the start of the uprising, when Secretary General of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, called on his supporters to leave protesting areas and claimed that the uprising is a plot organized by Israel and the US (“Lebanon: Timeline of the 2019 Uprising”, 2020). Following this speech, anti-protests groups’ speculations about foreign interventions in the protests increased and accusations that protesters are guided by international agendas began

circulating (“Lebanon: Timeline of the 2019 Uprising”, 2020; Heller, 2021). Additionally, these groups, particularly Amal Movement and Hezbollah supporters, attacked protesting camps and areas on different occasions (“Lebanon: Timeline of the 2019 Uprising”, 2020).

During that time, media coverage noticeably changed. For example, several media outlets began investigating the previous work of almost all parties belonging to the two blocs, accusing them of corruption and blaming them for the country’s economic collapse (Azhari, 2019a; Battah, 2020). The leading political channels were also divided between anti-protests and pro-protests blocs (Melki & Kozman, 2020b). The pro-protests channels included: Al Jadeed, MTV Lebanon, and LBCI. These channels adopted the slogans of the protests. The anti-protests channels included: OTV, NBN, and Al-Manar. These channels attempted to delegitimize protesters and their demands (Melki & Kozman, 2020b). Similarly, audiences’ consumption of news and trust in channels were redefined depending on their own political leanings (pro- or anti-protests) (Melki & Kozman, 2020a). People who supported the protests and were not affiliated to any political party were more likely to follow and trust MTV, Al Jadeed, and LBCI. Audience who did not support the protests and were affiliated to a political party, were more likely to follow and trust OTV, Al Manar, and NBN (Melki & Kozman, 2020a).

## **2.2 News Framing Theory**

The world is shaped by diverse realities that are evoked by the framing of issues, both by the sender and the receiver (Edelman, 1993). Framing theory was first used in communication research in the 70’s by Goffman (1974). He initially examined how frames construct meanings and define social interactions. Goffman (1974) defined frames as the lens through which individuals make sense of a particular subject. Shortly after, the

theory became essential in studying how news stories are produced, disseminated, and understood by audiences (e.g., Gitlin, 1981; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999; Chong & Druckman, 2007). In media studies, framing theory is usually employed to examine either media content or the means through which public opinion is shaped by the chosen frames (de Vreese, 2005). In that sense, the process of framing a story encompasses a communication source and a defined subject. Framing also impacts people's policy processing, attribution of responsibility, and inclinations or preferences (D'Angelo et al., 2019).

The premise of framing theory remains largely broad, given the "immense" conceptual and operational differences in understanding and examining frames (Matthes, 2009, p. 349). This broadness is perceived by some researchers, such as D'Angelo (2018), as significant because "the intellectual challenges involved in identifying frames and in sorting out the mechanisms of news framing effects relate closely to core disciplinary concerns" and therefore, gives researchers a chance to elaborate on the theoretical viewpoints that require advancement (Preface, para. 2). However, opponents of the theory's broadness consider that it results in inconsistencies in the process of conceptualizing and operationalizing frames (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Matthes, 2009).

### **2.2.3 Psychological Versus Sociological Roots of Frames**

Researchers have traced back frames to two main disciplines: Psychology or sociology. Psychologically rooted frames focus on how information is presented, instead of what the content presented or communicated is (Cacciatore et al., 2016). They are usually referred to as equivalency frames (Cacciatore et al., 2016). Researchers who traced

frames to their psychological roots studied, for example, how people make political choices based on risks and gains and how frames can affect these choices (e.g., McDermott, 2004; Druckman & McDermott, 2008). People presented with risky choices were more likely to act risk-averse if the frames highlighted gains, and risk-seeking when the frames highlighted losses (Druckman & McDermott, 2008). The sociological roots, on the other hand, “moves framing outside of the presentation of logically equivalent information and into territory where the selection of one set of facts or arguments over another can be deemed a frame” (Cacciatore et al., 2016, p. 10). Frames traced back to the sociological roots are known as emphasis frames (Cacciatore et al., 2016).

#### **2.2.4 Media Effects Versus Framing Effects**

D’Angelo et al. (2019) considered that the overuse of the theory and its misuse sometimes results in confusing framing effects with different media effects, in particular priming and agenda-setting. Agenda-setting is defined by the level of importance news editors attribute to a particular subject through the process of selecting and presenting news (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Several researchers consider framing very similar, or even identical, to second-level agenda setting and use the two terms interchangeably (e.g., Coleman, 2010). Priming is defined by the criteria used to formulate judgments or make political choices (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

The differences and similarities among the three theories can be examined on three levels: Message creation, message processing, and message effects (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In most cases, confusion happens on the level of message effects. For any of the three theories to generate effect, people must be exposed to a news story that they would later be able to recall (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). However, the difference

among the three theories is the model each adopts and through which it can affect audiences: Priming and agenda-setting affect audiences through the accessibility model, while framing affects people through the applicability model (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, as cited in Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Brewer et al., 2003; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In that sense, agenda-setting and priming can generate effect when they increase individuals' accessibility to a particular subject (Price & Tewksbury, 1997), and framing affects people when their schemas resonate with the news story or in other words, when applicability is achieved (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

### **2.2.5 Narrow Versus Broad Definitions of Frames**

Frames were narrowly defined by several researchers including Entman (1993), who considered that frames encompass the process of selecting a specific angle of a news piece to focus on. Entman (1993) argued that framing defines a problem, interprets and evaluates it, and then presents recommendations. Additionally, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) considered that frames give meaning to the subject at hand. Building on Entman's (1993) definition, Matthes and Kohring (2008) operationalized frames through examining them as a trend or pattern within a story composed of different components. The researchers considered that four elements contribute to building frame clusters: "Problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation" (Matthes & Kohring, 2008, p. 264).

On the other hand, broader definitions aim to examine methods journalists employ to understand and then give meaning to events (journalistic values). Researchers who employed these definitions viewed frames as a story line that gives meaning to events and show connections among them (de Vreese, 2005). Supporters of this broader definition

also consider that frames cannot be reduced to one event, as is suggested by the narrower definitions (de Vreese, 2005). They consider that frames are generally “alternative ways of defining issues, endogenous to the political and social world” (de Vreese, 2005, p. 53).

The differences in defining frames have complicated the process of identifying them in the media and resulted in inconsistencies in the choice of conceptual and working definitions (de Vreese, 2005). In order to study frames, researchers resort to employing one of two methods: Examining news stories without pre-held conceptions to uncover unique frames and examining news stories based on pre-established frames (de Vreese, 2005). The former reveals issue-specific frames, while the latter examines generic frames.

#### 2.2.5.1 Issue-specific frames

These frames can only be found in particular events or subjects (de Vreese, 2005). Examining issue-specific frames permits researchers to investigate a topic with high specificity. While this comes with its advantage, through for example revealing particular trends of an important event, it also has disadvantages. In most cases, researchers establish exclusive frames that are particular to one study (Hertog & McLeod, 2001). This makes it difficult for researchers to generalize, draw comparisons, or even advance the field (Hertog & McLeod, 2001; de Vreese, 2005). This method has also allowed researchers to take an easy path in finding evidence for themes and narratives they hope to discover in the subjects they’re examining (Hertog & McLeod, 2001).

#### 2.2.5.2 Generic frames

Frames that surpass particular events and can be recognized across diverse subjects (de Vreese, 2002). Generic frames are mostly used when examining the coverage of political events or issues, such as elections, or when examining news values and

journalism norms (de Vreese, 2005). Generic frames include the “attribution of responsibility”, “economic consequences”, “human-interest”, “conflict”, and “morality frames” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The attribution of responsibility frame attributes the origins of or solutions to an issue to government officials or a social group. The conflict frame highlights conflicts among people, organizations, or countries. The human-interest frame humanizes the problem and adds a human face to the covered subject. The economic consequences frame highlights the economic consequences of a particular event or issue on a country or particular group within a society. And finally, the morality frame adds a religious/moral angle to the issue being covered (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Other generic frames include thematic and episodic frames, which were developed by Iyengar (1991) to understand how the media affects individuals’ attribution of responsibility. Thematic frames provide a broader idea of an issue, while episodic frames provide a specific understanding of a single topic or problem without highlighting its possible repercussions or social significance (Iyengar, 1991). While studies that examine generic frames generally report more reliability in comparison to those that study issue-specific frames (Matthes, 2009), generic frames also have some shortcomings. According to Chong and Druckman (2007), there still is not a clear definition of how general a frame must be to be considered generic. In their study, the researchers outline for example, that while De Vreese et al. (2001) presented the economic frame as a generic frame, Shen and Edwards (2005) presented it as an issue-specific frame when studying welfare. Additionally, there’s no clear distinction between news values and generic frames (Matthes, 2009).

While both approaches to examining frames are useful and have generated diverse contributions to the field (Kozman, 2017), very few researchers have combined these approaches in an attempt to close the conceptual gap between generic frames and issue-specific frames (Entman, Matthes, & Pellicano 2009; Kozman, 2017). Among those who combined approaches is Kozman (2017), who developed a hybrid measurement tool to examine the employment of issue-specific and generic frames in covering the use of steroids in baseball. This tool was built by combining Matthes and Kohring's (2008) definitions of induced frames and Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) method of examining generic frames. Also, in examining the framing of sports events, Solves et al. (2019) used mixed methods (interviews and content analysis) to assess the framing of the paralympic games by Spanish media. Their results revealed that the content analysis alone was insufficient for formulating a clear understanding of news production, given the knowledge the conducted interviews added to their study (Solves et al., 2019). Researchers who examined protests using combined approaches include Boydston and Glazier (2013) who applied a two-tiered approach that accounts for both issue-specific and generic frames in examining the coverage of the war on terror by newspapers. Their results revealed that applying mixed methods contributes to increasing our knowledge of frames and the process of framing by exposing how frames evolve with the war (Boydston & Glazier, 2013). In examining the framing of Ukraine's 2014 protests and Belarussian 2020 demonstrations, qualitative and quantitative content analyses were also used to provide a richer analysis of the events (Sheppental, 2021). Building on studies that adopted different approaches in examining frames, this study uses mixed methods to increase our understanding of the employment of frames during periods of unrest.

### **2.3 Common Themes in Covering Periods of Unrest**

The media play a direct role in reinforcing power struggle and uneven disputations, particularly during periods of unrest (Cottle, 2006). The engagement of the media with conflicts is illustrated in the news values and choice of frames journalists use and employ to report on or exaggerate periods of unrest (Miller & Reichert, 2001). The more the movement challenges the status quo, the more news outlets resort to employing negative frames (Di Cicco, 2010; Kilgo & Harlow, 2019). In addition to the conflict theme, which frequently dominates the coverage of periods of unrest (e.g. Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005; Schwalbe, 2006; Schwalbe & Dougherty, 2015), previous research revealed other dominating themes in the coverage of protests: The riot theme (e.g., Nelson et al., 1997; Lind & Salo, 2002), the delegitimizing theme (e.g., Lind & Salo, 2002; Askanius & Hartley, 2019); The law-and-order theme (e.g., Adams, 2018), and the unity theme (e.g., Nelson et al., 1997; Adams, 2018).

The riot theme highlights disruptive or violent actions. According to Kilgo and Harlow (2019), this narrative was most commonly employed in the coverage of anti-racism movements by online media, including the Black Lives Matter movement (Emmerich, 2020). This theme was also reflected through the demonization frame, which dominated the coverage of feminism issues and presented feminists as deviants (Lind & Salo, 2002). Additionally, a study on the influence of frames on people's perception of the 90s KKK rally in Ohio used the disruption of public order frame, which refers to movements negatively and presents protesters as deviants (Nelson et al., 1997).

Unlike the riot theme, which serves as a mean to discredit and doubt movements, the unity theme focuses on the demands of protesters and their agendas. In examining the

influence of competing frames on opinion formation when it comes to racial inequality, particularly frames employed by the Black Lives Matter movement and those employed by the US President, Adams (2018) differentiated between two types of unity frames: The in-group unity and unity. The in-group unity was employed in stories where the author addresses the audience as family, while the unity frame was revealed in presidential transcripts and reflected favorability towards former US President Donald Trump's calls for union and his condemnation of attacks against individuals of different race and gender, among others. The unity theme was also used in Nelson et al.'s (1997) study as the free speech frame, which highlights the positives of a protest and encourages free speech.

The delegitimizing theme places responsibility on individuals and aims to delegitimize protesters and their demands. This theme dominated the #MeToo movement particularly through the use of the individual action frame and the delegitimizing frame, which portrayed sexual harassment as a personal issue instead of a societal problem (Askanius & Hartley, 2019). Other frames used in covering women and feminist issues are the personalization and trivialization frame, which focus on the trivial details (such as what women are wearing) in coverage and, thus, also contribute to delegitimizing issues (Lind & Salo, 2002).

Finally, the law-and-order theme highlights the role the government plays in maintaining peace (Adams, 2018). It is reinforced by the law-and-order frame, which focuses on the importance of maintaining peace and gives credit to the government for protecting its nation from violence; the public safety frame, which highlights the role of the government in maintaining peace; and the government responsiveness frame, which

highlights the work the government is doing to respond to people's needs and holds those responsible accountable (Adams, 2018).

In order to understand the themes that were employed in the coverage of Lebanon's 2019 uprising, the first part of this study assesses the use of issue-specific frames through conducting MFA. It also examines whether positive or negative framing was used, which is the last step in MFA.

RQ1a: How did Lebanese television channels interpret the October 2019 uprising?

RQ1b: Did channels use negative or positive frames when reporting on the protests?

Through the quantitative content analysis, a measurement tool is developed for the induced frames and is used to examine the employment of these frames quantitatively by different channels.

RQ2: Which channels significantly differed in their employment of the induced frames while covering Lebanon's 2019 uprising?

## **2.4 Covering Conflicts: The Employment of Frames in the Middle East**

Studies on the employment of frames in the Arab world revealed that some news outlets used similar frames to those employed globally to cover conflicts, such as the human-interest frame and the conflict frame (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), and other frames that are completely different, such as the political frame, public affairs frame, essentialist frame, and social-constructivist frame (Rasul & Asim, 2014; Karyotakis, 2017; Badran & Smets 2018). Therefore, the Arab world and its specific characteristics generally provide a unique opportunity to examine media framing during periods of unrest (Melki & Kozman, 2020b).

International and regional coverage of the Arab spring mostly used the human-interest frame, which means civilians were the focus of these channels. According to Rasul and Asim (2014), US media's coverage of the uprisings were dominated by the human-interest frame. *The News International* (newspaper published in Pakistan), and *Arab News* (newspaper published in Saudi Arabia), also framed protesters positively (Afzal & Harun, 2020). In comparing how five different television channels employed visual frames in covering the Arab Spring, Bruce (2014) revealed that Alhurra, Al Jazeera, BBC Arabic, Al Jazeera English, and Al Arabiya mostly employed the human-interest frame. Following the dominating frame, the political frame was also prevalent in Al Arabiya and Alhurra's coverage, but less likely in BBC Arabic, Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera's coverage (Bruce, 2014). Other frames employed by Western media included: The empathy frame and the winner versus loser frame (Rasul & Asim, 2014).

In examining separate Arab countries, particularly Syria, researchers revealed that the conflict frame was most commonly employed in covering the Syrian war. Cozma and Kozman (2015) revealed that this frame was used by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* to cover the utilization of chemical weapons in Syria in 2013. This frame dominated both the coverage of the civil war and the coverage of the diplomacy efforts post-chemical attacks (Cozma & Kozman, 2015). Thematic frames, which are one of the two types of frames developed by Iyengar (1991), were also used in the coverage (Cozma & Kozman, 2015). Between 2011 and 2012, Greenwood and Jenkins (2015) revealed that the conflict frame was employed more frequently than any other frame by international news outlets. This was illustrated through focusing on the fighters and barely covering the victims. However, Greenwood and Jenkins (2015) also revealed that this frame tends to

either be fortified or lessened depending on the reach of the magazine and its political leaning. Outlets with niche audiences were more likely to portray violence, in comparison to outlets with broader audiences. Additionally, magazines that are said to be more liberal were more likely to employ the conflict frame, in comparison to conservative magazines (Greenwood & Jenkins, 2015). Other frames that were employed in the coverage of the Syrian war were the essentialist frame and the social-constructivist frame (Badran & Smets, 2018). The essentialist frame considers sectarianism as the governing element in political identity and social relationships. In that sense, sectarianism is viewed as the essence of community building and a guide for connecting people and solidifying their needs/demands. In contrast, the social-constructivist frame considers sectarianism as a subjective variable guided by political identity. The decisions made according to the social-constructivist frame are guided by politics instead of religion or sect. Sectarianism in this case is used as a method to increase political gains and hegemony. So, the goal of the sectarian identity frame is not to guide and benefit the group, but to rather serve the interests of politics (Badran & Smets, 2018).

The coverage of the 2003 Iraq war was also dominated by the military conflict frame. In comparing between the coverage of the US and Sweden, Dimitrova and Strömbäck (2005) revealed that US newspapers were more prone to using the military conflict frame, while Swedish newspapers were more likely to employ the anti-war protest and responsibility frames. The conflict frame was more likely to be used by elite newspapers, in comparison to non-elite newspapers, which in turn were more likely to employ the human-interest frame (Carpenter, 2007). The victory frame also emerged in the coverage of the war on the day Saddam Hussein's statue toppled, symbolizing an end to his regime

(Aday et al., 2005). Other frames employed to the visual coverage of the Iraq war included: rescue, conquest, and control frames (Schwalbe, 2006).

The conflict frame was also employed extensively in the coverage of conflicts in other parts of the Middle East, including Egypt (Hamdy & Gomaa, 2012). However, researchers' findings were not consistent when social media or alternative media news outlets were examined (Handy & Gomaa, 2012). Additionally, a comparison among international and regional coverage of the uprising revealed that BBC, Al Jazeera, and *China Daily* most commonly employed the civil unrest frame, a frame dominated by violence, shock, and traumatic experiences and that usually considers the protesting group a unified entity and disregards their cultural backgrounds (Tierney et al., 2006, as cited in Karyotakis, 2017; Makhadmeh, 2014, as cited in Karyotakis, 2017). Other used frames include the public affairs frame, and the economic consequences frame (Karyotakis, 2017).

Beyond the wars in Syria and Iraq and the Egyptian revolution, studies that focused on examining the employment of frames in other Arab countries that witnessed an uprising or periods of unrest remain timid. In covering Bahrain's uprising, the government used the sectarian frame: It presented protesters as Iranian-backed and against the Gulf (Al-Rawi, 2015). The war frame was also used in Al Jazeera's coverage of the first two weeks of Saudi Arabia's military involvement during the protests in Bahrain (Abdul-Nabi, 2015). The same frame was also employed in the coverage of the week following the chemical weapon attack on Damascus during the Syrian conflict (Abdul-Nabi, 2015). In covering the Libyan revolution, Al Jazeera and BBC online news employed the military frame (Ireeri, 2012). In examining the Tunisian revolution, Lim (2013) explained that framing

contributed majorly to the success of the revolution particularly because news outlets were aligned in framing Ali Bouazizi and focused on his “white lies”, all while making sure that the used frame resonated with the population. In the visual reporting of the 2006 Lebanon-Israel war, US news magazines were dominated by the human-interest and conflict frames (Schwalbe & Dougherty, 2015). There was also a significant difference in using frames among Israeli, US, Arab, and Lebanese television channels (Melki, 2014). Israeli and US channels were more likely to support Israeli interests than Arab channels, while the latter were divided: Al Jadeed and Al-Jazeera were more inclined to offer a similar coverage to the Hezbollah-led channel Al Manar, while Future, Al Arabiya, and LBCI were less sympathetic towards Hezbollah (Melki, 2014).

While some of the frames employed in the coverage of the Arab uprisings are unique to the Arab world and were not used in the coverage of movements elsewhere, what seems to be reoccurring is the use of different frames to cover the same event. The differences in framing relate to economic and cultural factors governing the outlet, as well as the different political backgrounds and leanings of each news outlet (Melki, 2014). Therefore, the second part of this study also examines the differences between pro-protests and anti-protests channels in employing frames in the coverage of Lebanon’s 2019 uprising.

RQ3: What is the difference in the frames employed by pro-protests and anti-protests television channels?

Additionally, given that few studies have so far examined the relationship among the use of issue-specific frames and generic frames, this study examines the intersection

between the employment of generic and issue-specific frames with the aim of increasing our knowledge of frames.

RQ4: Which issue-specific frames induced through MFA were more likely to be present in stories that employed the attribution of responsibility frame?

RQ5: Which issue-specific frames induced through MFA were more likely to be present in stories that employed the human-interest frame?

RQ6: Which issue-specific frames induced through MFA were more likely to be present in stories that employed the conflict frame?

RQ7: Which issue-specific frames induced through MFA were more likely to be present in stories that employed the economic-consequences frame?

RQ8: Which issue-specific frames induced through MFA were more likely to be present in stories that employed the morality frame?

# Chapter Three

## Methodology

This study used a concurrent transformative mixed method strategy guided by framing theory to examine how local television channels framed Lebanon's 2019 uprising (Creswell, 2003). Data was collected concurrently, and the integration of the qualitative and quantitative methods happened on the level of analysis and interpretation (Creswell, 2003). The study first conducted a qualitative media framing analysis (MFA) on 15 news reports to analyze how each of the local television channels interpreted the news and to reveal issue-specific frames. After the issue-specific frames were revealed, the study conducted a quantitative content analysis (N=224) to quantify the induced frames, examine the difference between anti- and pro-protests channels in employing issue-specific and generic frames, and find the relationship between the employment of the two types of frames.

Combining both the inductive and deductive approaches allows for bridging the gap in the conceptualization of frames and presents a clearer understanding of the coverage of conflicts (Matthes, 2009; Kozman, 2017). The study draws on Giles and Shaw's (2009) method of inducing themes through MFA and Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) way of measuring frames. After inducing the themes used to interpret Lebanon's protests qualitatively through MFA, this study linked them to overlapping themes used to interpret protests elsewhere and presented issue-specific frames. To quantify these frames, it then created a codebook by building on Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) method of computing frames. The combination of these two approaches offered a framework for a

typology of issue-specific frames that can be used and applied to other protest studies. This typology can also be used to examine relationships between generic frames and issue-specific frames, as this study also did, given that the measurement tool developed for issue-specific frames follows the same criteria used to measure generic frames (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). In that sense, issue-specific frames would help in identifying how an issue was framed and what elements were used (or not) to frame it, while the generic frames would help reveal the way media outlets presented or packaged the topic (Kozman, 2017). The result from combining both approaches is a systematic and reliable measurement tool that can be replicated and used in other protest studies.

The decision to sample news reports from TV newscasts was based on research findings that revealed that people's main source of news during the 2019 uprising were television channels (Melki & Kozman, 2020a). The study examined evening newscasts in particular because the majority (39.8%) of viewers follow news in the evening ("Lebanon: 2016 TV Audience Measurement", 2017). Newscasts were sampled from the five political television channels in Lebanon: MTV Lebanon, OTV, LBCI, Al Jadeed, and Al Manar. The sixth local political television station, NBN, was not included in the study because the channel lost all its 2019 archive as a result of political disagreements.

### **3.1 Media Framing Analysis (MFA)**

This study adopted and applied Giles and Shaw's (2009) media framing analysis (MFA) technique to examine the interpretation of the protests by diverse news outlets and derive issue-specific frames. MFA is a systematic detailed media analysis approach that investigates five key components in a news story: Story identification (the "news peg" or what event or topic triggered the coverage of the subject), the main character in the news

report (who is the main protagonist? Who are the people being quoted or covered?), the reader identification and narrative form (Who/what does the report want audiences to identify with? What are the factors/tools used to tell the story? what do these tools signify?), the language used (choice of words, statements, phrases, nouns and adjective to discuss the main characters or events in the news report), and the generalization feature (how does the news report relate to a phenomenon?) (Giles & Shaw, 2009; Shaw & Giles, 2009). MFA also contributes to understanding whether negative or positive framing was used by each news outlet.

### **3.1.1 Sample**

The first step in MFA is to select the stories that should be examined (Giles & Shaw, 2009). This study examined 15 news reports broadcast on the mentioned five political television channels in Lebanon. The unit of analysis was defined as the first news story broadcasted on three chosen dates. Originally, this study attempted to analyze news reports from three dates: October 18, the first day of the protests; October 29, the day Saad Hariri resigned from his position as Prime Minister; and December 19, the day Hasan Diab was assigned Prime Minister. However, given that some news channels did not broadcast their newscasts on the mentioned dates, another three dates were selected: November 22, Lebanon's Independence Day, which witnessed for the first time in the country's history a civil parade organized by citizens alongside the official parade (Rose, 2019; Azhari, 2019b); December 14, which was recognized by the Human Rights Watch as one of the two most violent days throughout the protests ("Lebanon: Excessive Force Against Protesters", 2019); and December 19, the day Hasan Diab was assigned Prime Minister, which fueled anger among the youths (particularly Future Movement supporters) and led

to demonstrations in Beirut (Al-Khalidi & Osseiran, 2019). Five news stories were examined from November 22, five from December 14, and five from December 19.

### 3.2 Quantitative Content Analysis

The quantitative content analysis was conducted on a disproportionate stratified systematic sample of news reports broadcasted on the evening newscasts of the five local television channels between October 18, the first day of the protests, and December 19, the day Hasan Diab was assigned Prime Minister. The news reports were sampled from 24 dates on which major events took place (table 1).

Table 1. Chosen dates to sample news reports

<b>Date</b>	<b>Significance</b>
October 18, 2019 – October 24, 2019	First week of the protests
October 27, 2019	Protesters form human chain
October 29, 2019	PM Hariri resigns
October 31, 2019	Aoun's first speech addressing protesters
November 1, 2019	Lebanon's banks reopen
November 2, 2019	Demonstrators put pressure and demand the formation of a new government
November 3, 2019	Organized protests to support Aoun
November 5, 2019	Protests gather outside state institutions and army reopens roads
November 7, 2019	Students join protests
November 12, 2019	Death reported in light of the protests
November 13, 2019	Demonstrators head to presidential palace; news outlets cover stories on reported death; Aoun's second speech.
November 17, 2019	1 month after the protests, Melhem Khalaf elected
November 19, 2019	Protesters put pressure to postpone parliament session
November 22, 2019	Independence Day

November 26, 2019	Protesters at Central Bank for 24 hours; clashes between FPM supporters and protesters.
December 14, 2019 December 15, 2019	HRW identified these two days as violent: Security forces used excessive force against protesters
December 19, 2019	Hassan Diab assigned new PM

### 3.2.1 Procedure and Measurement

The first two news reports in the evening newscasts that have at least one reference to the protests were considered the unit of analysis. The unit of analysis was defined as a local news story that covers one aspect of the protests and could be: A follow-up news report, feature story, hard news report (press release or announcement), live coverage, or coverage of a politician’s speech in which the speaker(s) address protesters, their demands, or issues related to the uprising (such as the formation of the government as a response to the demands of protesters). A news report that covers political developments with no clear reference to or mention of the protests was not considered a unit of analysis. In the first step of the sampling process, newscasts broadcasted on the chosen dates were either requested from news channels or identified in their online archive. In the second step, the first two news reports in each newscast with at least one reference to the protests were collected. The collected sample included 174 news reports divided between anti-protests and pro-protests channels. However, given that news reports from pro-protests channels (112) outnumbered those from anti-protests channels (62) and the fact that some news channels, particularly OTV, did not broadcast their newscast on several of the chosen dates, news reports from additional dates were collected from anti-protests channels to make up for the imbalance in the number of news reports corresponding to

each of the two political alignments under study (appendix 1). The total sample included 224 news reports divided equally between anti- (112) and pro-protests channels (112). News reports from MTV Lebanon were collected from the channel's archive and news reports from OTV were collected from both the archive of the channel and the channel's YouTube page (all news reports shared on their YouTube page in the chosen timeframe were collected). News reports from the rest of the channels (LBCI, Al Jadeed, and Al Manar) were collected from their online website. Two coders then coded the news stories. Prior to the coding, they were trained until a reliability coefficient of above 0.7 was achieved for all variables, thus, ensuring coder inter-reliability.

Each news report was coded for: Television station, date of airing, leaning of the news outlet (anti-protests/pro-protests), and issue-specific and generic frames (appendix 2). Given that frames were a combination of different sub-variables (three each), coders coded these sub-variables, which were later computed into frames on SPSS. To assess the internal consistency of the three sub-variables corresponding to each frame, we used Cronbach's Alpha.

### **3.2.2 Measuring Issue-Specific Frames**

This study developed its own codebook to examine the employment of issue-specific frames that were induced through MFA<sup>1</sup>. Each frame is a combination of three sub-variables. Each sub-variable had one corresponding no/yes question that coders answered (no= 0, yes= 1) (appendix 2). The frame was then computed by calculating the mean of the three corresponding questions/sub-variables. Each sub-variable was thus measured on a nominal level, while the frame was measured on a ratio level. The three

questions for each frame were developed based on the MFA and previous literature that also examined periods of unrest and revealed similar dominating themes.

#### 3.2.2.1 Solidarity frame<sup>1</sup>

Based on the MFA and similar themes revealed in the literature review, we conceptualized the solidarity frame as a frame that highlights the unity of protesters. The solidarity frame is similar in meaning to other frames used in the coverage of unrests including the free speech frame and the unity frame (Nelson et al., 1997; Adams, 2018). Previous research identified this as a dominant frame that was reinforced in various themes such as: Presenting protesters as the main character in the news report and highlighting their combined efforts (Nelson et al., 1997; Adams, 2018). The presentation of combined efforts was operationalized as positively showing huge numbers of protesters and reflecting diversity among them in an attempt to reconfirm that the protests include Lebanese from different sects. Coders answered three no/yes questions (0= no, 1=yes) each corresponding to one of the three sub-variables (protesters as main characters, crowds, positive difference). Using these three sub-variables we then computed the frame by calculating their mean ( $M = 1.05$ ,  $SD = 1.109$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .778$ ).

#### 3.2.2.2 Individualization frame<sup>1</sup>

Based on the MFA and similar themes revealed in the literature review, we conceptualized the individualization frame as a frame that limits the consequences of an action to one group or places the blame on one individual or group. The use of this frame highlights a common narrative that was previously used in covering women movements,

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<sup>1</sup> \*These frames were induced through MFA and discussed in the results section as well as in Appendix 3 of this paper.

particularly in portraying sexual harassment as a personal issue instead of a societal problem (Askanius & Hartley, 2019). Previous research identified this theme in news stories that included these elements: The presentation of an issue as personal instead of societal; the attribution of responsibility to a group within society (Askanius & Hartley, 2019). Therefore, to measure this frame, coders answered three no/yes questions (0=no, 1=yes) each corresponding to one of the three sub-variables (villain, call for action, individual problem). We computed the frame by calculating the mean of these three sub-variables ( $M = .39$ ,  $SD = .515$ , Cronbach's alpha = .079). Given the low internal consistency of this frame, it was excluded from this study (below 0.7, which has been referred to by different studies as the acceptable value to indicate internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951; Taber, 2018)).

#### 3.2.2.3 Disruption frame<sup>1</sup>

Based on the MFA and similar themes revealed in the literature review, we conceptualized this frame as one that shows protesters as deviants and highlights violence and disruption caused by the protesting group. This frame relates to previously used themes that were reinforced by different frames, including the disruption of public order frame (Nelson et al., 1997) and the demonization frame (Lind & Salo, 2002). Previous literature identified these similar frames in news stories that included these elements: Protesters as aggressive or deviants, protesters exerting violence, protesters disrupting public/private property (Nelson et al., 1997; Lind & Salo, 2002). We computed the frame by calculating the mean of three sub-variables (protesters main character, protesters violence, protesters thugs) ( $M = .3$ ,  $SD = .732$ , Cronbach's alpha = .737). The sub-variables were assessed using no/yes questions (0=no, 1=yes).

#### 3.2.2.4 Head-to-head frame<sup>1</sup>

Based on the MFA and similar themes revealed in the literature review, we conceptualized the head-to-head frame as a frame that highlights conflicts between protesters and other groups. Previous literature identified similar frames in news stories that highlight conflict between two or more groups and that define the groups involved in the conflict (e.g., Schwalbe, 2006). Initially a third sub-variable was added to assess the presence of this variable (negative comments). However, this third measure was later dropped because it decreased the internal consistency of the questions. The frame was thus computed by calculating the mean of the two sub-variables (conflict, victim/attacker) which were assessed using no/yes questions (0= no, 1=yes) ( $M = .35$ ,  $SD = .638$ , Cronbach's alpha = .605).

#### 3.2.2.5 Acknowledgment frame<sup>1</sup>

Based on the MFA and similar themes revealed in the literature review, we conceptualized the acknowledgment frame as a frame that highlights the government's acknowledgment of people's demands and presents the government as taking responsibility to respond to their needs. This frame is similar in meaning to the government responsiveness frame (Adams, 2018). Previous literature identified this similar theme in news stories that presented the government as the main character and highlighted the work it's doing and its attentiveness to people's demands (Adams, 2018). These three sub-variables (government main character, government solution, government attentiveness) were thus used and measured using no/yes questions (0= no, 1=yes). We then computed the frame by calculating the mean of the three sub-variables ( $M = .75$ ,  $SD = 1.175$ , Cronbach's alpha = .897).

### 3.2.2.6 Peace through violence frame<sup>1</sup>

Based on the MFA and similar themes revealed in the literature review, we conceptualized the peace through violence frame as a frame that presents violence as a mean to control clashes and generate peace. This frame relates to previously used themes that were reinforced by different frames, including the law-and-order frame and the public safety frame (Adams, 2018). Previous literature identified these similar frames in news stories that included these elements: Maintaining peace, giving credit to the government, presenting the government as protecting its nation from violence (Adams, 2018). We then computed the frame by calculating the mean of three sub-variables (violence solution, violent victims, defending violence) ( $M = .08$ ,  $SD = .408$ , Cronbach's alpha = .763). The sub-variables were assessed using no/yes questions (0= no, 1=yes).

### 3.2.3 Measuring Generic Frames

To measure which generic frames were employed in news reports, the study adopted Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) codebook. Coders answered a total of 3 no/yes (no= 0, yes = 1) questions for each of the five generic frames (human-interest, conflict, morality, attribution of responsibility, and economic consequences) (appendix 2). Each frame was then computed by calculating the mean of its three corresponding questions.

#### 3.2.3.1 Attribution of responsibility frame

Building on Semetko and Valkenburg's definition (2000), the attribution of responsibility frame was conceptualized as a frame that attempts to attribute responsibility to a group or the government. Three sub-variables (problem, solution, urgent action) were used and assessed using no/yes questions (0= no, 1=yes) (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

One of the three-sub variables (problem) was then dropped because it decreased the internal consistency of the frame. We then computed the frame by calculating the mean of two sub-variables ( $M = .12$ ,  $SD = .396$ , Cronbach's alpha = .618).

#### 3.2.3.2 Human-interest frame

We conceptualized the human-interest frame as a frame that highlights a human angle and adopts a human face when covering conflicts, which may make a news story more relevant to the audience (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Three sub-variables (human face, adjective, effect on people) were used and measured using no/yes questions (0= no, 1=yes) (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). We then computed the frame by calculating the mean of the three sub-variables ( $M = .24$ ,  $SD = .572$ , Cronbach's alpha = .515).

#### 3.2.3.3 Conflict frame

Building on Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) definition, the conflict frame was conceptualized as a frame that projects a disagreement between at least two parties involved in the protests. Three sub-variables (disagreement, criticism, sides) were used and measured using no/yes questions (0= no, 1=yes) (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). We then computed the frame by calculating the mean of the three sub-variables ( $M = .71$ ,  $SD = .745$ , Cronbach's alpha = .345).

#### 3.2.3.4 Morality frame

We conceptualized the morality frame as a frame that highlights a moral/religious message (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Three sub-variables (moral message, moral

reference, behavioral instructions) were used and measured using no/yes questions (0=no, 1=yes) (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). We then computed the frame by calculating the mean of the three sub-variables ( $M = .05$ ,  $SD = .217$ , Cronbach's alpha = -.031).

### 3.2.3.5 Economic consequences frame

Building on Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) definition, the economic-consequences frame was conceptualized as a frame that focuses on the economic gains and/or losses of the protests. Three sub-variables (gains, costs, effects on economy) were used and measured using no/yes questions (0=no, 1=yes) (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). One of the three-sub variables (gains) was then dropped because it decreased the internal consistency of the frame. We then computed the frame by calculating the mean of the two sub-variables ( $M = .11$ ,  $SD = .387$ , Cronbach's alpha = .643).

Given that the above generic frames' internal consistencies are below 0.7, which has been referred to by different studies as the acceptable value for internal consistency (Taber, 2018), the mentioned scales were dropped and instead, the most representative question from Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) codebook was used for each frame. The corresponding question for the attribution of responsibility frame was: "Does the news report propose that a specific group/party/individual is causing a problem?"; the corresponding question for the human-interest frame was: "Does the news report present a real-life experience or add a 'human face' to the coverage?"; the corresponding question for the conflict frame was: "Does the report show disagreement between individuals/different countries/groups, specifically anti-protests and protesters?"; the corresponding question for the morality frame was: "Does the report make any reference to God or

religious principles?"; the corresponding question for the economic consequences frame was: "Does the report reference the economic results of engaging (or not) in particular actions on the level of the economy?" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

# Chapter Four

## Results

The results section is divided into two parts. In the first part, results from MFA's analytical procedure, which employed five steps (appendix 3), are presented and the derived issue-specific frames are discussed. The second part conducted a quantitative content analysis to: A) quantify the induced issue-specific frames and examine the difference in their employment among the five channels using one-way ANOVA test; B) examine the difference in the employment of issue-specific and generic frames between anti- and pro-protests channels using t-tests and chi-square; and C) examine the relationship between the employment of issue-specific and generic frames using t-tests.

### 4.1 Qualitative results: The Dominating Narratives

#### 4.1.1 Interpretation of the Uprising

RQ1a aims to examine how Lebanese television channels interpreted the October 2019 uprising. To do that, we used the five MFA steps to examine 15 reports broadcasted by five different news channels on three dates (appendix 3). Results from these five steps indicated six dominating themes (refer to appendix 3), which were translated into six frames: 1) Individualization frame; 2) disruption frame; 3) solidarity frame; 4) head-to-head frame; 5) acknowledgment frame; 6) peace through violence frame.

##### 4.1.1.1 The individualization frame

As previously mentioned in the methodology, this frame limits the consequences of an action to one group or places the blame of the failure of a community on one

individual or group. OTV used this frame to blame Hariri for slowing down the process of government formation. This was also reinforced by the Minister of Defense at the time Elias Bou Saab who was quoted in OTV's report. The frame was also used by two pro-protest channels (Al Jadeed and MTV Lebanon) when covering protests organized inside Beirut against the appointment of Diab. Reports from both channels reinforced this frame by stating several times that protesters against Diab are dominated by Hariri supporters and do not necessarily represent the uprising groups. Words used to reinforce this frame included: Indecisiveness, slow, blocking political advancement, Hariri supporters, different from the uprising.

#### 4.1.1.2 The disruption frame

As previously mentioned in the methodology, this frame shows protesters as deviant. It highlights violence and disruption caused by the protesting group. The narrative used to highlight this frame included footage of violent acts. On two of the five channels (anti-protests), protesters were in different cases shown acting aggressively. On Al Manar for example, clashes on December 14 showed an unidentified group throwing rocks at the security forces. Footage used to cover the same day's events on OTV also showed men in black throwing rocks and crowds holding sticks. Words used to reinforce this theme included: Aggressive, attackers. This frame delegitimizes protesters and presents them as the bad guys.

#### 4.1.1.3 The solidarity frame

This frame also dominated the coverage of Lebanon's 2019 uprising. As previously mentioned in the methodology, it highlights the demands of protesters and their persistence. It also represents how they're working together in unity to achieve their needs

and become stronger. It was only used by pro-protest channels. Words used to reinforce this frame included: Strong, persistent, unified, patriotic. For example, on November 22, 2019, LBCI reinforced this frame by showing crowds who come from different backgrounds march together for Lebanon's independence and for a better future. The channel also showed unity through focusing on particular elements of the march: Everyone was holding the Lebanese flag, they were clapping and singing in harmony together. Al Jadeed also reinforced the frame through describing how the expats traveled all the way from different countries to Lebanon in order to protest with citizens. In its turn, MTV Lebanon reinforced this frame by showing a huge number of protesters participating in the march as well as footage of people clapping, singing, and holding the Lebanese flags.

#### 4.1.1.4 The head-to-head frame

As previously mentioned in the methodology, this frame was used to highlight conflicts between two groups. All five channels used this frame. To reinforce this frame, words used in news reports included: Violent, severe, tension, attacks, sudden, war zone. LBCI, MTV Lebanon, and Al Jadeed highlighted the confrontation between security forces and the protesters. It used archive footage of the clashes revealing how the security forces attacked protesters by throwing tear gas and/or attacking protesters. The live coverage also showed the damages the confrontation between the two groups resulted in. Al Manar showed footage of an unidentified group throwing rocks at the security forces. OTV showed the security forces throwing tear gas and dispersing crowds. Another group of men in black were shown throwing rocks.

#### 4.1.1.5 The acknowledgment frame

As previously mentioned in the methodology, this frame highlights that the government understands and supports people's demands and takes responsibility to respond to their needs. This frame was used by the two anti-protest channels and LBCI. OTV used this frame as a reoccurring theme in two out of the three analyzed reports. In the first report, it showed Aoun as someone acting to protect the country by holding those in power (Hariri) accountable. In the second, Diab was represented as the person promising to act and respond to people's demands. Al Manar used this frame when talking about Diab. The reporter reinforced Diab's promises and quoted his neighbors describing him as a person willing to lead change. Finally, LBCI also used this frame when covering Diab's appointment. However, given that LBCI did not give any input on the particular analyzed report (given it was a direct replay of Diab's speech), the channel might have unintentionally acknowledged his promises. The channel could have also added input in reports that followed the unit of analysis and that weren't analyzed. Generally, words and phrases used to reinforce this frame included: Hard worker, believes in demands of the people, supports protesters.

#### 4.1.1.6 The peace through violence frame

As previously mentioned in the methodology, this frame was the last identified and least used frame. This frame was employed by OTV when covering two clashes. In both these clashes the security forces were represented as using force only to create peace, i.e., a force that controls aggressive situations and restores peace by using violence. It was reflected by the contradiction between the language used (which presented the security

forces as in control, restoring calm and peace, dispersing protesters) and the visuals (security forces firing tear gas).

#### **4.1.2 Positive Versus Negative Frames**

RQ1b attempted to examine which channels used positive versus negative frames when reporting on the protests. Pro-protests news reports were more likely to present protesters positively or as victims, while anti-protests news reports either presented protesters negatively or ignored their contributions to that period of time. The focus of the news story also affected the entire narrative and directed it to either being negative or positive. In some cases, attributing responsibility to protesters (like in news report #7 and #8 from OTV) resulted in a negative news story, despite the fact that protesters were not necessarily identified as the villain. In some cases, the pro-protests channels (MTV Lebanon, LBCI, and Al Jadeed) also used negative reporting, particularly when they were covering clashes between the army and protesters. In all these channels, however, protesters were positively presented, while the army was negatively portrayed. Al Manar ignored the political contributions of protesters the most, in comparison to other channels. The channel barely mentioned protesters and chose to focus instead on the political developments that were taking place at the time. When it did mention protesters, the reference came in a negative context. Generally speaking, both anti-protests channels' decision to ignore protesters' contributions, particularly Al Manar, raises questions on how much these channels actually gave credit to the protests and hint that to a large extent protesters and their demands were delegitimized by both channels.

## **4.2 Quantitative Content Analysis Results**

### **4.2.1 The Employment of Issue-Specific Frames Across Channels**

RQ2 attempted to examine the use of the induced frames by different channels in the coverage of Lebanon's 2019 uprising. A one-way ANOVA test was used to examine the differences among channels in the employment of these induced frames, as well as the statistical significance of these differences (Table 2). When a statistically significant difference was achieved, Games Howell test for multiple comparisons (post-hoc test) was used (Table 2). This particular post-hoc test was chosen because homogeneity of variance was not achieved (Hilton & Armstrong, 2006; Lee & Lee, 2018). The one-way ANOVA test revealed a statistically significant difference between channels in the employment of the disruption frame,  $F(4,219) = 3.287, p < .012$ . The Games Howell test was then run and revealed that the mean value of the disruption frame was significantly different between OTV and Al Jadeed and between Al Jadeed and Al Manar. A one-way ANOVA test also revealed a statistically significant difference between channels in the employment of the solidarity frame,  $F(4,219) = 27.533, p < .000$ . The Games Howell test then revealed that the mean value of the solidarity frame was significantly different between LBCI and OTV, LBCI and Al Manar, OTV and Al Jadeed, OTV and MTV, Al Jadeed and Al Manar, and between Al Manar and MTV. Additionally, the one-way ANOVA test revealed a statistically significant difference between channels in the employment of the acknowledgment frame,  $F(4,219) = 7.642, p < .000$ . The Games Howell test for this frame revealed that the mean value of the acknowledgment frame was significantly different between LBCI and Al Manar, between Al Jadeed and Al Manar, and between MTV and Al Manar.

The one-way ANOVA test revealed no statistically significant difference among the different channels in the employment of the head-to-head frame,  $F(4,219) = .369, p = .831$ , and the peace through violence frame,  $F(4,219) = .835, p = .504$  (appendix 4).

Table 2. The mean difference in employing issue-specific frames across channels.

		95% Confidence Interval		
		<i>p</i>	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
<i>Disruption</i>	OTV & Al Jadeed	.031	.0116	.3533
	Al Jadeed & Al Manar	.011	-.2142	-.019
	<hr/>			
<i>Solidarity</i>	$F(4,219) = 3.287, p < .012$			
	LBCI & OTV	.000	.223	.5826
	LBCI & Al Manar	.000	.205	.522
	OTV & Al Jadeed	.000	-.7025	-.3385
	OTV & MTV	.000	-.6781	-.1766
	Al Jadeed & Al Manar	.000	.3199	.6424
	Al Manar & MTV	.000	-.6258	-.1503
<i>Acknowledgment</i>	<hr/>			
	$F(4,219) = 27.533, p < .000$			
	LBCI & Al Manar	.000	-.4703	-.1089
	Al Jadeed & Al Manar	.001	-.499	-.1022
MTV & Al Manar	.001	.0967	.5018	
<hr/>				
$F(4,219) = 7.642, p < .000$				

#### 4.2.2 Employment of Frames According to Political Alignment

RQ3 attempted to examine the difference in the frames employed by pro-protests and anti-protests television channels. A t-test was used to reveal the mean difference between the two groups (Kim, 2015): Political alignment of channels and employment of issue-specific frames (Table 3). The test revealed that there is a significant difference between the use of the solidarity frame by anti-protests channels and pro-protests channels,  $t(212.552) = -10.301, p < .000$ . The test also revealed a significant difference in

the use of the disruption frame by anti- and pro-protests channels,  $t(187.056) = 3.167$ ,  $p < .002$ , and the use of the acknowledgment frame by anti- and pro-protests channels,  $t(192.995) = 5.298$ ,  $p < .000$ . The solidarity frame was more likely to be used by pro-protests channels in comparison to anti-protests. The disruption frame and acknowledgment frame were more likely to be employed by anti-protests channels in comparison to pro-protests channels.

A t-test revealed that there is no significant difference in the employment of the head-to-head frame and the employment of the peace through violence frame between anti- and pro-protests channels.

Table 3. The difference in the employment of frames between anti-protests and pro-protests channels.

	Anti		Pro		t(df)	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Solidarity	.1399	.27083	.5595	.33547	-	<.000
					10.301(212.552)	
Disruption	.1518	.28611	.0506	.18014	3.167(187.056)	<.002
Acknowledgment	.3810	.43578	.1190	.28948	5.298(192.995)	<.000
Head-to-head	.1518	.32075	.1964	.31735	-1.047(222)	.296
Peace through violence	.0387	.15334	.0179	.11701	1.143(207.536)	.254

A chi-square was then used to examine the difference between pro-protests and anti-protests channels in employing the generic frames (Table 4). Results indicated that there is a significant difference between pro-protests and anti-protests channels in employing the attribution of responsibility frame,  $\chi^2(1, N= 224) = 6.96$ ,  $p < .008$ . Anti-protest channels (63.6%) were more likely than pro-protests channels (36.4%) to employ this frame. Results also indicated that there is a significant difference between pro-protests

and anti-protests channels in employing the conflict frame,  $\chi^2(1, N= 224) = 4.073, p<.044$ . Anti-protest channels (63.6%) were more likely than pro-protests channels (36.4%) to employ this frame. And finally, results indicated that there is also a significant difference between pro-protests and anti-protests channels in employing the economic consequences frame,  $\chi^2(1, N= 224) = 4.876, p<.027$ . Anti-protest channels (78.6%) were more likely than pro-protests channels (21.4%) to employ this frame.

A chi-square test examined the relationship between political alignment and employing the human-interest frame. Results indicated that there is no relationship between the two variables,  $\chi^2(1, N= 224) = .419, p = .518$ . Similarly, a chi-square test examined the relationship between political alignment and employing the morality frame. Results indicated that there is no relationship between the two variables,  $\chi^2(1, N= 224) = .116, p = .734$ .

Table 4. Difference between pro-protests and anti-protests channels in employing generic frames.

	<b>Anti-protests (%)</b>	<b>Pro-protests (%)</b>	<b><math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
Attribution of responsibility	63.6%	36.4%	6.96	<.008
Conflict	63.6%	36.4%	4.073	<.044
Economic consequences	78.6%	21.4%	4.876	<.027
Human-interest	40%	60%	.419	.518
Morality	44.4%	55.6%	.116	.734

#### 4.2.3 Relationship Between Generic and Issue-Specific Frames

RQ4 attempted to find the relationship between the induced frames in this study and news stories that used the attribution of responsibility frame versus those that didn't

(Table 5). A t-test was used to reveal the mean difference between the two groups under study: Attribution of responsibility frame and the employment of issue-specific frames (Table 5). The test revealed there is a significant difference in the use of the solidarity frame between news stories that employed the attribution of responsibility frame versus those that didn't,  $t(141.054) = 3.185, p < .002$ . The solidarity frame was less likely to be used when the attribution of responsibility frame was present in the news report. The test also revealed a significant difference in the use of the disruption frame between news stories that employed the attribution of responsibility frame versus those that didn't,  $t(89.495) = -2.233, p < .028$ . The disruption frame was more likely to be used in stories that employed the attribution of responsibility frame.

The test revealed no significant difference in the employment of the head-to-head frame, acknowledgment frame, and the peace through violence frame between news stories that employed the attribution of responsibility frame versus those that didn't.

RQ5 attempted to find the association between stories that employed the human-interest frame versus those that didn't and the induced frames in this study. A t-test (Table 5) revealed there is a significant difference in the use of the acknowledgment frame between news stories that employed the human-interest frame versus those that didn't,  $t(213) = 9.643, p < .000$ . The acknowledgment frame was less likely to be used in news reports that employed the human-interest frame.

The test revealed no significant difference in the employment of the head-to-head frame, disruption frame, solidarity frame, and the peace through violence frame between news stories that employed the human-interest frame versus those that didn't.

RQ6 attempted to find the association between news stories that employed the conflict frame versus those that didn't and the induced frames in this study. A t-test (Table 5) revealed there is a significant difference in the use of the disruption frame between news stories that employed the conflict frame versus those that didn't,  $t(48.557) = -3.994$ ,  $p < .000$ . The disruption frame was more likely to be used in news reports that employed the conflict frame. The test also revealed that there is a significant difference in the use of the head-to-head frame between news stories that employed the conflict frame versus those that didn't,  $t(55.346) = -3.606$ ,  $p < .001$ . The head-to-head frame was more likely to be used in news reports that employed the conflict frame. Finally, the test revealed that there is a significant difference in the use of the solidarity frame between news stories that employed the conflict frame versus those that didn't,  $t(222) = 2.321$ ,  $p < .021$ . The solidarity frame was less likely to be used in news reports that employed the conflict frame.

The test revealed no significant difference in the employment of the peace through violence frame and acknowledgment frame between news stories that employed the conflict frame versus those that didn't.

RQ7 attempted to find the association between the employment of the economic-consequences frame and the induced frames in this study. A t-test (Table 5) revealed there is a significant difference in the use of the acknowledgment frame between news stories that employed the economic consequences versus those that didn't,  $t(222) = -2.252$ ,  $p < .025$ . The acknowledgment frame was more likely to be used in news reports that employed the economic consequences frame. The test also revealed a significant difference in the use of the head-to-head frame,  $t(209) = 8.247$ ,  $p < .000$ ; the solidarity

frame,  $t(16,182) = 3.105, p < .007$ ; and the use of the disruption frame,  $t(29.734) = 2.807, p < .009$  between news stories that employed the economic consequences versus those that didn't. These three frames were less likely to be used in news reports that employed the economic consequences frame.

The test revealed no significant difference in the employment of the peace through violence frame between news stories that employed the economic consequences frame versus those that didn't.

RQ8 attempted to find the association between the employment of the morality and the induced frames in this study. A t-test (Table 5) revealed there is a significant difference in the use of the disruption frame between news stories that employed the morality frame versus those that didn't,  $t(214) = 6.232, p < .000$ . The disruption frame was less likely to be used in news reports that employed the morality frame. The test also revealed that there is a significant difference in the use of the head-to-head frame between news stories that employed the morality frame versus those that didn't,  $t(214) = 8.216, p < .000$ . The head-to-head frame was less likely to be used in news reports that employed the morality frame.

The test revealed no significant difference in the employment of the acknowledgment frame, solidarity frame, and the peace through violence frame between news stories that employed the morality frame versus those that didn't.

Table 5. The relationship between generic and issue-specific frames.

		With frame		Without frame		$t(df)$	$p$
		M	SD	M	SD		
<i>Attribution of</i>	Solidarity	.237	.3243	.396	.378	3.185(141.054)	<.00
		4	1	6	38		

<i>responsibility</i>	Disruption	.166 7	.3107 8	.073 8	.204 77	-2.233(89.495)	<.02 8
	Head-to-head	.181 8	.3117 7	.170 9	.323 06	-.233(222)	.816
	Acknowledgment	.212 1	.3340 3	.265 8	.413 43	1.020(149.466)	.309
	Peace through Violence	.015 2	.0911 8	.033 8	.151 38	.930(222)	.354
	<i>Human-interest</i>	Solidarity	.400 0	.4661 4	.347 4	.365 88	-.439(222)
	Disruption	.133 3	.1721 3	.099 7	.246 90	-.426(222)	.671
	Head-to-head	.150 0	.2415 2	.175 2	.322 68	.244(222)	.808
	Acknowledgment	.000 0	.0000 0	.261 7	.396 98	9.643(213)	<.00 0
	Peace through Violence	.000 0	.0000 0	.029 6	.139 51	.669(222)	.504
<i>conflict</i>	Solidarity	.234 8	.3490 8	.377 8	.370 21	2.321(222)	<.02 1
	Disruption	.280 3	.3590 3	.057 4	.182 51	-3.994(48.557)	<.00 0
	Head-to-head	.352 3	.3824 6	.130 6	.286 39	-3.606(55.346)	<.00 1
	Acknowledgment	.189 4	.3693 5	.264 8	.396 60	1.146(222)	.253
	Peace through Violence	.075 8	.2140 3	.016 7	.107 31	-1.778(48.403)	.082
<i>Morality</i>	Solidarity	.444 4	.5270 5	.345 7	.362 94	-.556(8.321)	.593
	Disruption	.000 0	.0000 0	.105 4	.248 04	6.232(214)	<.00 0
	Head-to-head	.000 0	.0000 0	.181 4	.323 72	8.216(214)	<.00 0
	Acknowledgment	.370 4	.4843 2	.245 0	.387 96	-.941(222)	.348

	Peace through Violence	.000 0	.0000 0	.029 5	.139 20	.633(222)	.527
<i>Economic consequences</i>	Solidarity	.119 0	.2806 3	.365 1	.370 42	3.105(16.182)	<.00 7
	Disruption	.023 8	.0890 9	.106 3	.250 07	2.807(29.734)	<.00 9
	Head-to-head	.000 0	.0000 0	.185 7	.326 33	8.247(209)	<.00 0
	Acknowledgme nt	.476 2	.4662 0	.234 9	.382 84	-2.252(222)	<.02 5
	Peace through Violence	.000 0	.0000 0	.030 2	.140 78	.8(222)	.425

# Chapter Five

## Discussion

This study examined the employment of frames in the coverage of Lebanon's 2019 uprising. The qualitative media framing analysis of 15 news reports and the quantitative content analysis of 224 news reports broadcasted on the five political television channels in Lebanon revealed significant trends and differences in employing frames. Anti-protests channels were overwhelmingly more likely than the pro-protests channels to employ frames that delegitimize protesters and acknowledge the role the government plays in maintaining stability, including the disruption frame, attribution of responsibility frame, acknowledgment frame, economic consequences frame, and the conflict frame. The pro-protests channels were more likely to employ frames that reflect the unity of protesters and increase their legitimacy, including the solidarity frame. In terms of trends, the study revealed similarities between the issue-specific frames used in the coverage of Lebanon's 2019 uprising and those used in other countries that witnessed an uprising. Additionally, the study contributed to increasing our understanding of the use of issue-specific frames and generic frames and how when used together, these two types of frames can add meaning to the issue under study.

The difference between anti- and pro-protests channels in employing frames is consistent with previous literature, which revealed that the use of frames differs among channels depending on economic and cultural factors, as well as the different political backgrounds and leanings of each news outlet (Melki, 2014; Greenwood & Jenkins, 2015). Anti-protests channels' choice of frames reinforces findings from previous studies

that considered that these channels attempted to delegitimize protesters and their demands (Melki & Kozman, 2020b). These channels were politically aligned with groups that wanted to maintain the same political system and considered that the movement challenged them. They thus attempted to conspire about the intentions of protesters and gossip about foreign influences (Lebanon: Timeline of the 2019 Uprising”, 2020; Heller, 2021), which in turn increased their use of negative frames, a common trend other studies also revealed when the movement was considered to challenge the status quo (Smith et al., 2001; Di Cicco, 2010; Kilgo & Harlow, 2019). For pro-protests channels, the choice of frames also reinforced findings from studies that considered that these channels adopted the slogans of the protests (Melki & Kozman, 2020b). However, the particular use of the solidarity frame by these channels (a frame that reflects unity) contradicts with research that revealed that pro-protest groups did not align in terms of their strategies and visions of change (Heller, 2021). This either signifies that the media misjudged the protesting groups or exaggerated their unity in a possible attempt to increase their legitimacy or even misguide audiences’ perceptions of these groups and give them false hope. The possible misuse of the frame reflects the power framing has in exaggerating periods of unrest and defining movements (Miller & Reichert, 2001). However, it is also important to highlight the significance of the employment of this particular frame in Lebanon’s context. While research on movements around the world, including the Black Lives Matter movement, revealed the employment of similar frames manifested in reoccurring themes that also highlight unity (e.g., Nelson et al., 1997; Adams, 2018), news outlets in Arab countries discussed in the literature review of this study were more timid in employing such a positive frame. Lebanon’s choice of employing the solidarity frame, thus, highlights the

freedom the media in Lebanon still enjoys in comparison to any other Arab country where the government in most cases censors and controls media content (Ghareeb, 2000; Battah, 2020). This finding comes at a time when freedom has been drastically decreasing in Lebanon. In fact, since the uprising first started, many journalists were attacked or called for questioning (“Lebanon: Violence against reporters becoming more frequent in Lebanon”, 2021; Majzoub, 2021; “RSF refers violence against Lebanese journalists to UN”, 2022). Finally, the differences in employing frames between anti- and pro-protests channels reinforce audience interaction (following and trust) with the media during the uprising, which was examined in previous studies (Melki & Kozman, 2020a; Melki & Kozman, 2020b). Audiences that supported the protests followed pro-protests channels, which in turn framed protests positively, whereas audiences that were against the protests followed anti-protests channels (Melki & Kozman, 2020a; Melki & Kozman, 2020b), which framed protests negatively.

This study also revealed issue-specific frames through the media framing analysis technique. While the induced frames were supposed to be specific to Lebanon’s case, given the definition of issue-specific frames as being largely exclusive and narrow, they overlapped in meaning with other frames employed in examining the framing of social movements elsewhere (e.g., Nelson et al., 1997; Lind & Salo, 2002; Schwalbe, 2006; Schwalbe & Dougherty, 2015; Adams, 2018; Askanus & Hartley, 2019). This overlap, as well as the statistically significant differences between the employment of issue-specific frames among channels, indicates that the frames induced in this study can be applied to similar contexts, that is social movements and unrests. The overlap also indicates that in the context of framing protests, a common typology of induced protest frames can be used.

This study offers a framework for such a typology through qualitatively inducing frames, linking them to themes used in covering protests elsewhere, and then quantitatively testing them. Future advancements of this typology would contribute to limiting researchers' tendencies to induce frames that are unique to one uprising (de Vreese, 2005; Hertog & Mcleod, 2001), which in turn would decrease the fragmentation of the theory and allow for comparison across studies that examine the framing of movements. Having a unified typology of issue-specific frames for protest studies also advances the definition of issue-specific frames from frames that are particular to one event or topic, to frames that can be generalized across a particular topic (in this case movements). Accordingly, this would decrease the exclusivity of issue-specific frames. The ability to have a common typology for examining issue-specific frames in the context of uprisings also points to the need to further investigate other topics in a possible attempt to test whether or not a common typology of induced frames would work in other contexts.

In addition to offering a framework for a typology of issue-specific frames that could be used and applied to the examination of other protests, this study also highlighted a pivotal role for induced frames that was previously undermined: Reinforcing particular messages or guiding a news story in a particular direction. For example, RQ3 revealed that anti-protests channels were more likely than pro-protests channels to use the attribution of responsibility frame and the disruption frame. RQ4 then revealed that when the attribution of responsibility frame was present, the disruption frame was more likely to be employed. Accordingly, the relationship between the two frames indicates a possible direction for the attribution of responsibility: When anti-protest channels employed this frame, they were also more likely to employ the disruption frame (which presents

protesters as deviants), and thus place responsibility on protesters instead of any other group or the government officials. As another example, RQ3 revealed that there is no significant difference in the employment of the human-interest frame between anti- and pro-protests channels. However, RQ5 revealed that the acknowledgment frame is less likely to be employed in news stories that use the human-interest frame. Accordingly, given that anti-protest channels were more likely to employ the acknowledgment frame, the opportunities they had in giving their stories a human angle were more limited than pro-protest channels, i.e., stories that focused more on government officials and government responsiveness (anti-protests channels) were less likely to include a human-element and highlight the struggles of people. RQ3 revealed that the anti-protest channels were more likely than pro-protests channels to employ the economic-consequences frame. RQ7 then revealed that the acknowledgment frame, which was more likely to be used by anti-protests channels, was more likely to be present in news reports that included the economic-consequences frame. Given that the acknowledgment frame presents the government positively and acknowledges the role it plays in maintaining peace and security, the relationship between the two frames indicates that the government or government officials interviewed or cited in these anti-protests news reports were more likely to link the negative effects on the economy to protesters. Finally, it comes as no surprise that the disruption and head-to-head frame were more likely to be present in stories that employ the conflict frame, given that all three frames aim to highlight clashes between two or more groups. Therefore, issue-specific frames allowed for a better interpretation of the coverage of protests and helped contextualize the generic frames, which were originally developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000).

Finally, and in the context of Lebanon, results from this study reinforces previous findings that considered the uprising led to challenging the polarization between the March 14 and March 8 alliances (Heller, 2021). Additionally, the ability of the media to reflect the agenda of protesters and reinforce their slogans and chants reflect the country's reputation of free media (Ghareeb, 2000; Battah, 2020). However, the long hours of coverage that dominated TV channels in the examined period and the use of positive frames by some channels do not necessary reflect the true nature of the media in Lebanon. It actually remains questionable how far the media, including pro-protests channels, would have gone in supporting protesters. In fact, none of the channels went as far as attacking the political system's fundamentals or supporting the government's collapse (Ahwach & Farhat, 2021). In a high partisan, clientelist, and sectarian political and media environments (Hamzeh, 2001; Dabbous, 2010; Baumann, 2016; El-Richani, 2021), the fall of the regime would have resulted in the collapse of traditional media, which feeds on that same system through being controlled by major political parties or religious groups (Dabbous, 2010; El-Richani, 2021). Therefore, it is of no benefit, but rather of huge risk, for channels to support protesters demands in regard to the fall of the regime. The presentation of pro- versus anti-protests, thus, could be understood as a means to serve political and editorial interests at the time. For channels that followed the pro-protests bloc, their chosen political orientation during the first three months of the protests led to a surge in viewership as well (Melki & Kozman, 2020b). So, while we did witness a shift in narrative, this narrative reflected the evolving political thoughts of traditional political parties that either wanted to delegitimize protesters out of fear of the uprising's growing power or to take advantage of the uprising to advance their political agendas. Some

channels went as far as using protesters' main slogan "all of them means all of them," for their own political advantage and to justify boycotting some politicians they oppose, all while leaving their airtime open for politicians they support. This prompts the question of the role mainstream media in Lebanon played in setting the governing narrative throughout the first three months of the uprising and indicates that the choice of frames, whether positive or negative, was guided by political agendas and interests.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusion**

This study attempted to examine the use of issue-specific and generic frames in the coverage of Lebanon's October 2019 uprising. It first used a qualitative media framing analysis to analyze the use of issue-specific frames by different news outlets and understand how channels with different political leanings interpreted the protests. It then attempted to quantify the induced frames, examine the difference between anti- and pro-protests channels in employing issue-specific and generic frames, and find the relationship between the two through a quantitative content analysis.

The study revealed that television channels differed in their employment of some of the issue-specific and generic frames. Throughout history, Lebanon's media outlets were and continue to be largely controlled by major political parties and religious groups (Dabbous, 2010; Trombetta, 2018; Richani, 2021). Therefore, the difference in the choice of frames is normal and complements the change in news agendas at a time when political leanings were evolving and changing. The inability of the study, however, to reveal differences in the employment of some other frames could indicate that there is a possible intentional use of a homogenous agenda that has the power to define how people process the uprising and its events. In that sense, while these channels did have different agendas than those of anti-protests channels, their objective was not that different from anti-protests channels, which wanted to support the maintenance of the current regime. Alternatively, the lack of difference in the employment of some frames could also indicate that there could have been a difference in the way a frame was used by anti- and pro-

protests channels instead of a difference in the choice of frames employed. From a media and political perspective, future research could attempt to further investigate the power pluralistic media has in directing the narrative, and the role alternative media could play in presenting another side to an uprising. Future research could also examine the way frames are used instead of what frames are employed.

This study also succeeded in revealing possible relationships among issue-specific frames and generic frames, which helped better interpret results, increased our understanding of the coverage of protests, and contextualized the generic frames, which were originally developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Future research should attempt to re-examine the definitions of generic frames and possibly develop an updated typology of protests' frames that are more inclusive of issue-specific frames.

In terms of limitations, this study only examined the first two news reports in the newscast that have at least one mention of the uprising. This limited the type of news stories the study analyzed. On the other hand, this study used a disproportionate stratified systematic sample. While this sample ultimately provided a clear understanding of the major events that took place in the uprising, the smaller events that could have also affected the results if this study were to use a random sample, were left out. Additionally, some smaller events within the uprising were more likely to be covered by anti-protests channels in comparison to pro-protests channels. These events, which were also not examined in this study due to their lesser significance in comparison to other chosen events, could have also contributed to generating more knowledge on how anti-protests channels responded and engaged with the uprising. Finally, this study examined the first three months of the uprising only, when the protests were at their peak. Accordingly, the

issue-specific frames were only tested in this particular period and not when the protests' intensity decreased. Results are, thus, limited to protests in their early moments and do not necessarily reflect the entire uprising. Moreover, this study was conducted on television news reports in a high partisan media environment and a sectarian-clientelist context. Accordingly, future research should attempt to test the induced frames from this study in other contexts and for other media formats.

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## Appendix 1: Anti-Protests Channels Additional Dates

Table 6. Additional dates from which news reports from anti-protests channels were collected.

<b>Channel</b>	<b>Additional Date</b>
Al Manar	October 25, 2019
	October 26, 2019
	October 28, 2019
	October 30, 2019
	November 4, 2019
	November 6, 2019
	November 8, 2019
	November 9, 2019
	November 10, 2019
	November 11, 2019
	November 14, 2019
	November 15, 2019
	November 16, 2019
	November 18, 2019
	November 20, 2019
November 21, 2019	
November 23, 2019	
OTV	October 30, 2019
	November 21, 2019
	December 4, 2019
	December 5, 2019
	December 6, 2019
	December 7, 2019
	December 8, 2019
December 9, 2019	

## Appendix 2: Codebook

### Codebook

This codebook is designed to guide coders in coding news reports. It quantitatively assesses the employment of frames in each news story (unit of analysis). It also examines the use of sources. A news report is defined as a set of verbal and visual elements that when combined, form a continuous story. The news report could be an anchor story (anchor in the newsroom reads a story while footage of the event is broadcasted in the background. Interviews/soundbites are sometimes included. In case the anchor starts reporting on the story before the report starts, coders need to code the anchor's lead into the news story); a stand up (journalist on ground explains what is going on or tells a story. No interviews involved but a Q&A between the reporter and anchor can take place); voice over (the reporter speaks over a set of images/videos. Interviews/soundbites are sometimes included); vox pop (report includes a series of interviews with people without a clear storyline); or a package (a full story with a clear storyline that includes both the voice of the journalist and interviews).

### Story info

#### V01\_Coder ID

The number assigned to the person coding the news reports.

#### V02\_Story ID

A number given to each story for identification.

#### V03\_Television Station

The name of the television station.

1=LBCI

2=OTV

3=Al Jadeed

4= Al Manar

5= MTV Lebanon

**V04\_Political Alignment**

Is the channel pro-protests or anti-protests?

0= Anti-protests

1= pro-protests

**V05\_Broadcast Date**

On what date was this news report broadcast?

0= October 18, 2019

1= October 19, 2019

2= October 20, 2019

3= October 21, 2019

4= October 22, 2019

5= October 23, 2019

6= October 24, 2019

7= October 25, 2019

8= October 26, 2019

9= October 27, 2019

10= October 28, 2019

11= October 29, 2019

12= October 30, 2019

13= October 31, 2019  
14= November 1, 2019  
15= November 2, 2019  
16= November 3, 2019  
17= November 4, 2019  
18= November 5, 2019  
19= November 6, 2019  
20= November 7, 2019  
21= November 8, 2019  
22= November 9, 2019  
23= November 10, 2019  
24= November 11, 2019  
25= November 12, 2019  
26= November 13, 2019  
27= November 14, 2019  
28= November 15, 2019  
29= November 16, 2019  
30= November 17, 2019  
31= November 18, 2019  
32= November 19, 2019  
33= November 20, 2019  
34= November 21, 2019  
35= November 22, 2019

36= November 23, 2019

37= November 26, 2019

38= December 4, 2019

39= December 5, 2019

40= December 6, 2019

41= December 7, 2019

42= December 8, 2019

43= December 9, 2019

44= December 14, 2019

45=December 15, 2019

46= December 19, 2019

#### **V06\_Attribution of Responsibility Frame**

**Note: V06 to V10 are based on Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) proposed codebook.**

#### **V06a\_Problem**

For this variable, answer: does the story propose that a specific group (independent, government, social...) is responsible for a problem? i.e., the story suggests that a specific group is causing the problem or making a problem worse. This could be discussed by the journalist or the interviewed sources.

0=Yes

1=No

#### **V06b\_Solution**

Does the news report discuss possible solution(s) to the presented issue or attribute the solution of a problem to a group? We're looking here at stories that focus on reforms and actions that lead to bettering the society and alleviating the problem, while attributing this solution to the group being held responsible.

0=Yes

1=No

### **V06c\_UrgentAction**

Does the story call for urgent action or urgent adoption of a solution from a specific group? Instead of only stating reforms, this variable suggests that the journalist or interviewed sources also call for action.

0=Yes

1=No

### **V07\_ Human-interest Frame**

#### **V07a\_HumanFace**

Does the news report provide a real-life experience or add a "human face" to the story? The story would lead in with a real-life example or focus on one within the news story using actual people, typically from protesters or citizens. It could proceed to talk about a bigger topic.

0=Yes

1=No

#### **V07b\_Adjectives**

Does the report employ adjectives or use scenes or tone of voice that produce feelings of caring or anger?

0=Yes

1=No

### **V07c\_EffectOnPeople**

Does the story present how citizens can be impacted by the issue/problem/event? For example, a story on COVID-19 lockdown does not fall under this category. But a story in which the reporter focuses on the impact the lockdown will have on taxi drivers (losing their source of income) would fall under this category.

0=Yes

1=No

### **V08\_Conflict Frame**

#### **V08a\_Disagreement**

Does the news report show disagreement between individuals/different countries/groups, specifically anti-protesters (including government officials) and protesters? The disagreement can be verbal or physical. In terms of verbal, cues and aggressive tone fall under this category. The disagreement also does not have to be aggressive (it could simply be a point two parties disagree on (for example roadblocks)).

0=Yes

1=No

#### **V08b\_Criticism**

Do individuals/ parties/ groups/ or different countries critique others? Criticism has to be negative. It is basically when any group judges what others or those in power are saying or doing. Criticism needs to come from an interviewee or a cited source, but not directly from the journalist.

0=Yes

1=No

**V08c\_Sides**

Does the story include the two or many sides involved in the conflict or issue? These two or more sides must have opposing views. In this case, it could be protesters and anti-protesters, or different government officials fighting over a policy or solution related to the protests. The two or more sides must be interviewed or cited.

0=Yes

1=No

**V09\_Morality Frame**

**V09a\_MoralMessages**

Does the news report include any moral message/significance? A moral message is delivered by religious figures/church. It discusses the presented problem or issue through morality and can be considered a form of preaching.

0=Yes

1=No

**V09b\_MoralReferences**

Does the news report make any reference to God or religious principles?

0=Yes

1=No

**V09c\_BehaviorInstructions**

Does the news report discuss/present detailed social instructions to guide people on how to behave? These instructions should be related to morality or God. The story should

include actual instructions or procedure to carry on a behavior and not merely mention the behavior.

0=Yes

1=No

## **V10\_ Economic Consequences Frame**

### **V10a\_FinancialGains**

Does the story cover the financial gains a particular event/action will result in now or in the future? The journalist or interviewees discuss the economic gains specific policies/reforms/actions will result in on the level of the economy, people, or government.

0=Yes

1=No

### **V10b\_Costs**

Does the report cover expenses (loses)? The journalist or interviewees discuss the costs specific economic policies/reforms/actions (either taken on a political level or by actions conducted by other groups, including protesters) will result in on the level of the economy, people, or government.

0=Yes

1=No

### **V10c\_EffectsOnEconomy**

Does the report reference the possible economic results of engaging (or not) in particular actions on the level of the economy? These actions do not have to be economic but would result in economic consequences.

0=Yes

1=No

### **V11\_ Solidarity Frame**

#### **V11 to V16 attempt to quantify the induced issue-specific frames**

##### **V11a\_ProtestersMainCharacter**

This variable assesses whether or not the protesters are positively presented as the main character in the news reports. Protesters are considered the main character in the news report when: The story's intro (lead) focuses on the protesters or covers the activities of protesters positively (whether the activity is a movement on ground, roadblocks, or other possible ways through which they're exerting pressure on the government). For this variable, answer: Are protesters positively presented as the main character in the news report?

0=Yes

1=No

##### **V11b\_Crowds**

Does the visuals and language used in the news report reflect huge crowds in the protests or are used to increase the credibility of the protests? The journalist or the news story would speak about the large number of protesters or visuals would show huge crowds. If the language and scenes contradict, priority must be given to the language used.

0=Yes

1=No

##### **V11c\_PositiveDifferences**

Does the journalist highlight the diversity between protesters? Does it mention they come from different backgrounds? In this case, the journalist would highlight the differences of protesters in a positive context. Through doing this, the journalist aims to say that although they are different, they are standing together and supporting each other.

0=Yes

1=No

### **V12\_Disruption Frame**

#### **V12a\_ProtestersMainCharacter**

This variable assesses whether or not the protesters are negatively presented as the main character in the news reports. It answers: Are protesters negatively presented as the main protagonist in the coverage? Protesters are considered the main character when: The story's intro (lead) focuses on the protesters negatively, or the story covers the activities of protesters negatively (whether the activity is a movement on ground, roadblocks, or other possible ways through which they're exerting pressure on the government).

0=Yes

1=No

#### **V12b\_ProtestersViolence**

This variable assesses the presentation of protesters as violent when dealing with others (in the other's presence or absence). You should answer: Does the story focus on violence exerted by protesters on other actors on ground either through visuals or through words? Violence includes any verbal aggression (such as cursing) or physical aggression (clashes between the police/other groups and protesters). The violence can be

reflected either by visuals (we see visual aggression) or if the journalist describes violence (even if we don't see it).

0=Yes

1=No

### **V12c\_ProtestersThugs**

Does the story focus on the harm the activities or movements of protesters are causing? Meaning, are protesters presented as causing harm to public/private places?

0=Yes

1=No

### **V13\_Head-to-Head Frame**

#### **V13a\_Conflict**

Does the report show conflict (whether verbal or physical) between individuals/parties/groups? The conflict has to be something tangible and not a conflict of interest (for example: people attacking others because they blocked the roads, and not just that two groups are not agreeing on a position regarding roadblocks)

0=Yes

1=No

#### **V13b\_NegativeComments**

Does the story involve one group or a person from one group using negative commentary when talking about another group? The commentary can also be expressed by the journalist, but it must be cited to a group or individual.

0=Yes

1=No

### **V13c\_VictimAttacker**

Is there a victim and attacker highlighted in the news report? Visually, a victim can be anyone who is being physically abused (protesters throwing rocks at police; police attacking protesters; an anti-protest group attacking protesters...). Verbally, attacks can be described by the journalist or an interviewed source.

0=Yes

1=No

### **V14\_ Acknowledgment Frame**

#### **V14a\_GovernmentMainCharacter**

This variable assesses whether or not the government/government officials/politicians are presented as the main character in the news reports (religious figures that contribute to political or governmental matters, will be considered part of the government). It answers: Is the government or government officials or political elites the main characters in the news report? Government/government officials/politicians are considered the main character in the news report when: The story's intro (lead) focuses on them and/or a reform/policy they suggested or action they took; the story covers their events, speeches, issued decisions, policies, reforms or any other activity/action they have done or plan to do.

0=Yes

1=No

#### **V14b\_GovernmentSolution**

Does the story show that the government/government officials/politicians are doing their jobs or exerting effort in saving the country or its people? Does the story suggest that

they are working towards resolving an issue? Does the story cover reform, policies, and other political actions that show solutions or effort?

0=Yes

1=No

#### **V14c\_GovernmentAttentiveness**

Does the story present the government/government officials/politicians as attentive to protesters demands? Does the story cover how the government/government officials/politicians are responding to people's demands? This happens through covering speeches, political discussions, or political events where politicians and members in the government are discussing/dealing with people's proposals and call for actions.

0=Yes

1=No

#### **V15\_ Individualization Frame**

##### **V15a\_Villain**

This variable assesses if the story identifies one group as bad and discusses the role this group is playing at length. The report holds one group or individual, such as the government, protesters, the central bank or a political party, accountable for causing a particular problem or blocking solution. It answers: Is one group identified as the villain in the news story? A villain is any person or group presented as a problem or doing something that harms the country. They're usually blamed for the problem or an issue by an interviewed source or the journalist.

0=Yes

1=No

**V15b\_CallForAction**

Is there a call for action directed at this group after holding them accountable for a problem?

0=Yes

1=No

**V15c\_IndividualProblem**

Is the problem covered in the report limited to a particular social group? Does the report consider that the issue is a group/individual problem and not a societal one?

0=Yes

1=No

**V16\_Peace Through Violence Frame****V16a\_ViolenceSolution**

Is violence (or its use) in the report highlighted as the only solution to a problem or issue?

0=Yes

1=No

**V16b\_ViolentVictims**

Are people using violence presented as victims? Does the journalist defend the use of violence by a particular group by showing that they are victims?

0=Yes

1=No

**V16c\_DefendingViolence**

Do the interviewed sources or the journalist defend violent actions?

0=Yes

1=No

## Appendix 3: MFA Analytical Procedure

### 1.1 Step 1: Identifying the Story

The first step in MFA is to identify the stories we need to analyze. Table 7 highlights the chosen stories, and their dominating news pegs.

Table 7. The broadcast date and dominating news peg of each news report under study.

<b>Television Station</b>	<b>Broadcast Date</b>	<b>Dominating News Peg</b>
LBCI (news report #1)	November 22, 2019	Independence Day
LBCI (news report #2)	December 14, 2019	Clashes between protesters and security forces
LBCI (news report #3)	December 19, 2019	The appointment of Hassan Diab as Prime Minister
Al Manar (news report #4)	November 22, 2019	Independence Day
Al Manar (news report #5)	December 14, 2019	Clashes between security forces and an unidentified group of people
Al Manar (news report #6)	December 19, 2019	The appointment of Diab as PM
OTV (news report #7)	November 22, 2019	Independence Day
OTV (news report #8)	December 14, 2019	Two Clashes: Security forces and protesters; Khandaa al Ghamee and security forces
OTV (news report #9)	December 19, 2019	The appointment of Diab as PM
Al Jadeed (news report #10)	November 22, 2019	Independence Day
Al Jadeed (news report #11)	December 14, 2019	Clashes between protesters and security forces
Al Jadeed (news report #12)	December 19, 2019	Protests against Diab
MTV (news report #13)	November 22, 2019	Independence Day and the reinstalment of the “revolution fist”
MTV (news report #14)	December 14, 2019	Clashes between protesters and security forces

**Step 2: Identifying Character**

**November 22, 2019.** On November 22, news reports #1, #10, and #13 focused on the civil parade. The main characters identified in all three news reports were protesters who shared that this was the first independence where they feel that Lebanon is really independent. Protesters were presented as powerful, persistent, different yet united, peaceful, and lively. News report #13 also identified a villain: The person/group who burnt down the revolution fist. This villain was defeated by the protesters, who managed to raise another fist.

News reports #4 and #7 presented government officials as the main characters. In both reports, the Minister of Defense at the time Elias Bou Saab discussed government formation and negotiations and indirectly blamed Prime Minister Saad Hariri for his indecisiveness and slowness in making decisions when it comes to the formation. Bou Saab was also quoted by the reporter saying that he believes that some are trying to take advantage of the uprising to influence government formation. News report #7 also included snippets from an interview with the Minister of Interior and Municipalities at the time Raya El Hassan, who blamed protesters and responsible parties equally for not being able to reach a common ground (as quoted by OTV) and shared that she did not order any use of violence against peaceful protesters but had to act and open roads. Two other characters were also identified, but not quoted in news report #7: Hariri and President Michel Aoun. The reporter presented Hariri as the reason behind the country's collapse and presented Aoun as the one who always fixes Hariri's mistakes.

**December 14, 2019.** News reports #2, #11 and #14 identified protesters as the main character. In all three news reports, protesters were presented as victims. In news reports #11 and #14 security forces were also presented as a main character. Their presentation, however, was negative (villain). These two news reports also identified a third main character. In both reports, this character was presented as causing disruption (villain). News report #11 kept this character unidentified, while news report #14 identified this character as members of Hezbollah and Amal Movement. In news report #11, citizens were also quoted as observers.

In news report #5 the main characters discussed were the unidentified men who attacked security forces and threw fireworks and rocks from the area between Khandaa al Ghamee and the Ring. These men were identified as the villain. The choice of using Ring as the location to pin this group also highlighted an indirect link to protesters, who used this location as one of many other protesting areas. The report also identified a second character: Security forces.

In news report #8 two events were discussed. The main characters were anti-protesters, protesters, and security forces. The anti-protesters were presented in the first event as aggressive and attempting to reach protest areas and throwing rocks at security forces. One person was also quoted. This person was presented as a resident from Khandaa al Ghamee who observed what happened and said it had nothing to do with the residents. In the second event, the protesters were presented as deviants. In both events, security forces were presented as the group contributing to controlling the situation and decreasing tension.

**December 19, 2019.** The main character in news reports #3, #6 and #9 was Hassan Diab, PM. In all three reports, Diab was praised by the reporter, or given enough airtime to represent himself as an independent candidate willing to work towards achieving people's demands, restoring stability, and fighting the crisis. News report #6 also referred to a group opposing the appointment of Diab yet, described them as small in number and decreased their legitimacy.

The main character in news report #12 and #15 were Hariri supporters who opposed Diab's appointment, considered him an illegitimate representative of the Sunni community, and requested that he resigns from his position as PM.

### **Step 3: Narrative Form and Reader Identification**

The third step in MFA involves identifying the narrative form and reader identification in each report by examining the visuals and the headline (when applicable) on each of the three selected dates.

**November 22, 2019.** The pro-protests channels LBCI, Al Jadeed, and MTV Lebanon (news report #1, #10, and #13 respectively), chose to focus on the civil parade that protesters organized in celebration of Independence Day. All three channels used footage to show huge crowds and the difference among them (different ages, fields...). MTV Lebanon (news report #13) also showed the truck used to lift the revolution fist, which is the symbol of the Lebanese uprising. LBCI (news report #1) was the only channel to use a headline "Independence Civil Parade" (T#1). While prior to 2019, news channels used to cover the official parade on Independence Day, the choice of LBCI and these other channels to prioritize the civil parade at the beginning of the news bulletin and even mention it in the headline (T#1), indicated the recognition of the new rising power in the

country (protesters). The footage used reflected a narrative form that reinforces unity and helps people identify with protesters.

Anti-protest channels on the other hand, OTV and Al Manar (news report #4 and #7 respectively), chose to cover the official Independence Day celebrations that take place yearly. These two reports focused on the timid interaction between PM Hariri and Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri and President Aoun. Aoun on the other hand was shown chatting normally with Berri and participating in the day's events. News report #7 chose to particularly reflect the larger political disputes between Hariri and Aoun at the time. Therefore, OTV's narrative form makes people feel at ease watching Aoun and insecure watching Hariri. News report #3 focused more on Hariri alone, allowing people to negatively identify with him. Interestingly, mentions of protesters and the civil parade in news report #4 and #7 were non-existent or minimal.

**December 14, 2019.** Pro-protests channels LBCI, Al Jadeed, and MTV Lebanon (news reports #2, #11, and #14 respectively) covered the clashes between protesters and the security forces. The three reports alternated between live footage and replay footage. The live footage showed destruction and tear gas. The replay footage showed security forces attacking protesters, tear gas being thrown at protesters, and protesters running away. News report #14 also showed security forces attempting to hit a woman with their sticks. News report #2 showed an ambulance in the background of the reporter, reinforcing that there were injuries. The title of news report #2 "Current Situation in Beirut After Clashes" (T#2) also indicated that the coverage came after the clashes, however destruction remained visually clear. The narrative form makes people see protesters as victims, while perceiving security forces as violent.

Anti-protests channels Al Manar and OTV (news reports #5 and #8 respectively) focused on earlier clashes that happened between an unidentified group and security forces near Khandaa al Ghamee. News report #5 aimed to show this group as aggressive and tried linking them to protesters. The narrative used in news report #5 also considered that residents from Khandaa el Ghamee did not do anything and put the blame on this unknown group. Aside from covering these clashes, news report #8 also discussed the clashes between protesters and security forces. Two groups alongside the security forces were represented: One that is dominated by men wearing black, covering their faces, and throwing rocks; and a second group of peaceful protesters. Security forces on the other hand were shown attacking protesters, throwing tear gas, or attempting to disperse crowds. Based on the visuals, people can identify negatively with men in black, positively with those peacefully standing, and negatively with security forces.

**December 19, 2019.** LBCI (#3), Al Manar (#6) and OTV (#9) focused on Diab's appointment as Prime Minister. News report #3 was a replay of snippets from Diab's speech. The headline "Hassan Diab from Baabda" (T#3) also helps audience identify with Diab. In news report #6, the reporter was smiling while discussing the appointment of the new PM, which reflected the channels and the reporter's approval of his appointment. In his background, a small group of people were shown protesting against Diab's appointment, but the small number decreased their legitimacy. The narrative form helps people identify more positively with Diab and less so with the protesters.

Both Al Jadeed and MTV Lebanon (news reports #12 and #15) focused on the protests against Diab. The majority of those protesting were men chanting for Hariri. The slogans used signified that those protesting are supporters of Hariri and not the October

2019 uprising. News report #15 also showed the tires protesters burned to block roads inside Beirut. These visuals reinforce an unpeaceful scene and anger against the appointment of Diab.

#### **Step 4: Analysis of language categories**

The fourth step in MFA is identifying the language used in each news report.

**November 22, 2019.** Pro-protests news reports #1, #10 and #13 described the event (civil parade) and defined the referenced characters (protesters). To describe the civil parade, the reports used words such as: True independence, dream coming true, civilized country, secular country, new Lebanon, different, special, celebrations, cheerful, revived the uprising, patriotism, historical, unique. The language used to describe those participating in the march included: Different, unified, independent, patriotic, peaceful, lively, strong, persistent. News report #13 also described the revolution fist: Stronger, larger.

Anti-protests news reports #4 and #7 described the official Independence Day celebrations: Symbolic parade, redefined celebrations, limited attendance, official celebration. To describe the current situation in the country, the two news reports used words such as: Uncertain times, difficult period. These difficult times were linked to the uprising, which was considered the cause of instability. To describe Hariri, the reports used: Indecisive, slow, awkward, serious, blocking political advancement. News report #7 also described Aoun and his actions: Saved Hariri, calm, at ease.

**December 14, 2019.** LBCI, Al Jadeed, and MTV Lebanon (news reports #2, #11, and #14 respectively) described the event and defined protesters and security forces. To describe the clashes, the three news reports used: Violent, severe, lasting, tension, attacks,

sudden, war zone. To describe protesters, the news reports used: Peaceful, unarmed, surprised by attacks, injured, were taken into custody. To describe security forces and their attacks, news reports used: Escalated tension, sudden, attackers, violent, injured. Aside from the mentioned groups, news report #14 also referenced Hezbollah and Amal Movement supporters and described them as: Violent, attempted attacks, more than 200, used fireworks and rocks, attempted destruction, have a hidden political agenda, questionable intentions. Additionally, news report #11 considered that an unknown group is causing destruction.

Both news report #5 and #8 described security forces and their actions as: Deployed to protect, preserved calm, controlled the situation, and responded to attacks. News report #5 described an unnamed group: Young men, attackers. News report #8 described two other groups - The protesters and their actions: Crazy, attacking using rocks, oppose the re-appointment of Hariri; and anti-protesters: Anti-protesters, attackers. News report #8 also described the clashes as a war zone.

**December 19, 2019.** LBCI (#3), Al Manar (#6), and OTV (#9) focused on Diab in their coverage. Since news report #3 is a replay of Diab's speech, the language in the report is that of Diab and reflects his own perception of protesters and the current situation in Lebanon. To describe protesters, Diab used words such as: Legitimate, lively, suffering, angry, powerful. To describe the situation, Diab used: Crisis, downfall, corruption. News reports #6 and #9 described Diab as: Friendly, calm, hard worker, believer in people's demands, honorable, respectful, independent. To describe the situation after his appointment, news report #6 used: Calm. To describe those protesting against Diab's appointment, the reporter from news report #6 said: Small group, Hariri supporters, men.

News report #9 also described the day that led to the appointment of Diab as special. The reporter also covered the disputes between political parties and described some as: Strong, hurtful.

News reports #12 and #15 chose to focus on the protests against Diab. To describe the protesters, the reporters used: Crowds, chanting, Hariri supporters, chanting for Taree El Jdide, Taree el Jdide residents. When discussing Diab, news report #12 restated some of the promises Diab made: Will work on forming an active government, will respond to the needs of the people, considers that people's demands during the protests are based on 30 years of struggles.

#### **Step 5: Generalization**

The fifth step in MFA reveals the dominating themes identified in the 15 news reports broadcasted by five different news channels on three dates.

**November 22, 2019.** The dominating theme in news reports #1, #10 and #13 is the strength of protesters and their unity. This theme was reflected through the language used and the visuals. The primary generalization made is that protesters come from different backgrounds but are united.

The dominating theme in news report #4 is individualization. This report points fingers at Hariri and blames him for affecting the future of the country. The act of blaming one person for the current situation and leaving out other groups who could have also contributed to worsening the situation reflect this theme (the problem here is linked to Hariri and not the entire political elite). This theme was also present in news report #7, where blame was placed on Hariri. This report also presented Aoun as the responsible

individual for protecting the country. Therefore, another dominating theme in news report #7 is acknowledgment of power.

**December 14, 2019.** The dominating theme in news reports #2, #11 and #14 is confrontation between two groups (protesters and security forces). While this theme was also present in news reports #5 and #8, both reports were also dominated by the disruption theme, where one group is presented as causing disruption (protesters). News report #8 was also dominated by another third theme which is peace restoration through violence (represented by the language used to describe security forces and their role in calming the situation).

**December 19, 2019.** The dominating theme in news reports #3, #6 and #9 is acknowledgment of government actions. In all three reports, Diab was praised or allowed enough airtime, which increased his legitimacy and acknowledged his role as a new PM.

However, the focus of news reports #12 and #15 on the protests against Diab and their attempt to highlight that one group is against him (Hariri supporters), allowed for the domination of the individualization theme. The two reports clearly stated that the majority of protesters were Hariri supporters and do not necessarily represent all uprising protesters.

These themes were translated into six frames: 1) Individualization frame; 2) disruption frame; 3) solidarity frame; 4) head-to-head frame; 5) acknowledgment frame; 6) peace through violence frame.

## Appendix 4: One-Way ANOVA Full Results

Table 8. Table shows full results for the One-way ANOVA and Games Howell Post-hoc test.

		95% Confidence Interval			
		<i>p</i>	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
<i>Solidarity</i>	LBCI & OTV	.000	.223	.5826	
	LBCI & Al Jadeed	.418	-.3068	.0715	
	LBCI & Al Manar	.000	.205	.522	
	LBCI & MTV	.900	-.2804	.2313	
	OTV & Al Jadeed	.000	-.7025	-.3385	
	OTV & Al Manar	.947	-.1893	.1107	
	OTV & MTV	.000	-.6781	-.1766	
	Al Jadeed & Al Manar	.000	.3199	.6424	
	Al Jadeed & MTV	.840	-.1640	.3502	
	Al Manar & MTV	.000	-.6258	-.1503	
	<i>F</i> (4,219) = 27.533, <i>p</i> <.000				
	<i>Disruption</i>	LBCI & OTV	.156	-.3214	.0325
		LBCI & Al Jadeed	.725	-.0472	.1232
		LBCI & Al Manar	.276	-.1877	.0306
LBCI & MTV		.974	-.1965	.1281	
OTV & Al Jadeed		.031	.0116	.3533	
OTV & Al Manar		.844	-.1169	.2486	
OTV & MTV		.600	-.1047	.3252	
Al Jadeed & Al Manar		.011	-.2142	-.019	

	Al Jadeed & MTV	.667	-.2279	.0835	
	Al Manar & MTV	.944	-.1242	.2130	
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$F(4,219) = 3.287, p < .012$					
<i>Head-to-head</i>	LBCI & OTV	.979	-.1462	.2212	
	LBCI & Al Jadeed	1.00	-.1851	.1917	
	LBCI & Al Manar	.973	-.1248	.1949	
	LBCI & MTV	.984	-.2759	.1894	
	OTV & Al Jadeed	.989	-.2330	.1646	
	OTV & Al Manar	1.00	-.1752	.1703	
	OTV & MTV	.874	-.3212	.1597	
	Al Jadeed & Al Manar	.987	-.1459	.2095	
	Al Jadeed & MTV	.983	-.2905	.1974	
	Al Manar & MTV	.856	-.3030	.1464	
	<hr/>				
	$F(4,219) = .369, p = .835$				
	<i>Acknowledgment</i>	LBCI & OTV	.249	-.3877	.0600
		LBCI & Al Jadeed	1.00	-.1724	.1944
LBCI & Al Manar		.000	-.4703	-.1089	
LBCI & MTV		1.00	-.1785	.1978	
OTV & Al Jadeed		.245	-.0626	.4123	
OTV & Al Manar		.568	-.3616	.1101	
OTV & MTV		.263	-.0670	.4140	
Al Jadeed & Al Manar		.001	-.499	-.1022	
Al Jadeed & MTV		1.00	-.2060	.2033	
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	Al Manar & MTV	.001	.0967	.5018
$F(4,219) = 7.642, p < .0$				
<i>Peace through violence</i>	LBCI & OTV	.986	-.1353	.0937
	LBCI & Al Jadeed	.630	-.0356	.1050
	LBCI & Al Manar	1.00	-.0800	.0844
	LBCI & MTV	.934	-.0564	.1002
	OTV & Al Jadeed	.438	-.0383	.1494
	OTV & Al Manar	.968	-.0794	.1255
	OTV & MTV	.734	-.0568	.1422
	Al Jadeed & Al Manar	.258	-.0770	.0120
	Al Jadeed & MTV	.853	-.0505	.0248
	Al Manar & MTV	.871	-.0372	.0766
$F(4,219) = .835, p = .504$				

## Appendix 5: Intercoder Reliability

Table 9. Table shows intercoder reliability, which was run on 20 percent of the sample.

Variable	Intercoder Reliability (20% of sample)
V06_Problem	0.853
V07_HumanFace	1
V08_Disagreement	0.804
V09_MoralReferences	0.78
V10_EffectsOnEconomy	0.731
V11a_ProtestersMainCharacter	0.866
V11b_Crowds	0.861
V11c_PositiveDifferences	0.783
V12a_ProtestersMainCharacter	0.879
V12b_ProtestersViolence	1
V12c_ProtestersThugs	1
V13a_Conflict	0.947
V13b_NegativeComments	0.879
V13c_VictimAttacker	0.879
V14a_GovernmentMainCharacter	0.947
V14b_GovernmentSolution	0.876
V14c_GovernmentAttentiveness	0.944
V15a_Villain	1
V15b_CallForAction	0.78
V15c_IndividualProblem	no variation
V16a_ViolenceSolution	0.792
V16b_ViolentVictims	1
V16c DefendingViolence	0 <sup>i</sup>

<sup>i</sup> There was only one variation between the two coders when coding V16c\_DefendingViolence. This single variation had discrepancy and according, the IR yielded a result of 0. To respond to the low IR, a larger sample of news reports were coded by the two coders for this variable and the resulting IR increased to 0.797.