

# MEDIA COVERAGE OF DENNIYEH AREA



يُدعم من الاتحاد الأوروبي



# **MAHARAT**

## **MEDIA COVERAGE OF DENNIYEH AREA**

Prepared at Maharat Foundation by:

George Sadaka, PhD

Roy Jreijiri, PhD

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1) Description of the Denniyeh area.....	4
2) Purpose of the study.....	5
3) Role of the media in development.....	6
4) Content of the research.....	7
5) Procedure.....	9
<b>Part I: Position and image of Denniyeh in evening newscasts.....</b>	<b>11</b>
1) TV reports dedicated to Northern Lebanon.....	11
2) TV reports dedicated to Denniyeh area.....	14
3) Distribution of TV news report categories in the North and Proportion of Denniyeh in these reports.....	16
a- Security and Justice: large proportion for Minieh-Denniyeh area.....	16
b- Absence of Denniyeh from all other news categories.....	17
4) Image of Denniyeh in news reports.....	23
5) Synopsis of Part I.....	25
<b>Part II: Position and Image of Denniyeh in Press Articles.....</b>	<b>27</b>
1) Press articles dedicated to Northern Lebanon.....	27
2) Press articles dedicated to Denniyeh area.....	30
3) Distribution of press article news categories in the North and Denniyeh .....	33
a- Security and Justice: Minieh-Denniyeh area different from other small districts.....	33
b- A share for Denniyeh in coverage related to success and capacity building.....	34

c- Absence of Denniyeh from other categories of coverage.....	38
4) Image of Denniyeh in press articles.....	41
a- <i>Al-Mustaqlal</i> : Diversity of quick and short news items.....	41
b- <i>Al-Joumhouriya</i> : Two incidental paragraphs on Denniyeh.....	43
c- <i>Assafir</i> : A thorough article about a security topic.....	44
d- <i>Addiyar</i> : One article and one paragraph taken from the National News Agency.....	45
e- <i>Al-Akhbar</i> and <i>Annahar</i> : no articles on Denniyeh.....	47
5) Synopsis of Part II.....	47
<b>Part III: Denniyeh in the <i>Maraya Al-Chamal</i> Program (Mirrors of the North) and <i>Sada El-Denniyeh</i> (Echo of Denniyeh) Magazine.....</b>	<b>49</b>
1) <i>Maraya Al-Chamal</i> program.....	49
a- Topics of the program.....	49
b- The two reports.....	51
c- Denniyeh's image.....	52
2) <i>Sada El-Denniyeh</i> magazine.....	54
a- Contents of the regional magazine.....	54
b- Evaluation of the regional coverage.....	59
3) Synopsis of Part III.....	61
<b>Conclusions.....</b>	<b>62</b>

# INTRODUCTION

## 1) Description of the Denniyeh Area

Together with the Minieh area, Denniyeh is one of the 26 cazas (districts) of Lebanon. It is located within the mohafazat (province) of North Lebanon which, as well as Minieh-Denniyeh, includes the cazas of Tripoli, Zgharta, Becharreh, Batroun and Koura.

The mohafazat of North Lebanon, together with the mohafazat of Akkar, make up the area known as Northern Lebanon. The mohafazat of North Lebanon has an area of 1,181.00 square kilometers with about 15% of the total Lebanese population and the mohafazat of Akkar has 788.00 square kilometers with about 5% of the Lebanese population.<sup>1</sup>

The Minieh-Denniyeh caza is about 361 square kilometers<sup>2</sup> (30.5% of the North Lebanon mohafazat or 18.3% of the area of Northern Lebanon).<sup>3</sup> It used to be part of the same caza as Tripoli up until 1993, when it became a separate caza through law #272.

According to the “Center of Informatics for Local Development,” in 2004, Minieh-Denniyeh district was inhabited by approximately 105,000 persons, in 51 townships and villages<sup>4</sup> and had 35 municipalities. Although these statistics are somewhat old, what is of interest to us is the proportion of the inhabitants of the Minieh-Denniyeh caza in comparison with the other cazas of the mohafazat (province). According to figures from 2004, this proportion was 19.3%

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<sup>1</sup> Ali Faour (2007): The Lebanon Atlas: The Geography Institution p. 102-110

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 103

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.106

<sup>4</sup> Kamal Feghali (2002) Lebanon’s Encyclopedia: population, cities, townships, villages. Tome 4 Beirut: International Publishers p. 143

and it was 18.67% in 2010.<sup>5</sup> This is ranked second with regard to the number of residents in the North Lebanon mohafazat (province), ahead of Koura, Zgharta, Batroun and Becharreh, though it is preceded only by the caza of Tripoli. Even if we added the population of the province of Akkar, the number of inhabitants of Minieh-Denniyeh remains high (about 14% of the population of the North).

The Minieh-Denniyeh caza is marked by the fact that it includes the two most prominent contradictions in Lebanon: the highest mountain, Qornet al-Sawda at 3,088 meters above sea level, and the deepest valley called Wadi Jahannam<sup>6</sup> (Hell's Valley). It also has a number of tourist and historic areas, the most important of which are Minieh, Syr, Bakhaoun, Baddawi, Bchennata, Btormaz, Sfeirah, among others, according to a Ministry of Tourism publication.<sup>7</sup>

However, the name Denniyeh has been linked to the military confrontations that took place between the Lebanese army and Islamist armed persons in December 1999 and January 2000 in the peaks surrounding this area. These events helped form stereotypes of this area and led to an approach to its issues from a security perspective in the media. This fact also added to its marginalization on multiple levels.

## **2) Problematic Issues and Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to assess the level of media interest in the issues and problems of the Denniyeh area as well as its position in the media agenda in general and in the media agenda of the North in particular, based on the following problematic issues:

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<sup>5</sup> Nazem Nehme (2012).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid p. 299

<sup>7</sup> Lebanese Ministry of Tourism, Promenade in Meinih-Denniyeh Caza (north Lebanon) on the following link:  
<http://mot.gov.lb/Content/uploads/Publication/121023063618341-minieh.pdf>

What is the level of interest shown by the media in Denniyeh issues?

What are the prevailing stereotypes of the area?

We tried to answer these two major questions by:

- Measuring the level of media coverage of the issues of the Denniyeh area in comparison with other areas of the North;
- Defining the issues and problems addressed by the media through their coverage;
- Defining the sources of the coverage and their diversity; and
- Analyzing the stereotypes prevailing in the area.

### **3) Role of the Media in Development**

Media and means of communication are a principal instrument in economic development and revival. Since the 1950s, the United Nations Agencies (such as UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, FAO and others) have been active in implementing development programs and projects in many countries. There is a consensus that media and means of communication play a major role in achieving development at different levels.

The role played by the media and means of communication is not limited to broadcasting news, but it should also actively assist in the implementation of the different general policies. It also is one of the major instruments in sustainable development projects. Since its inception, radio has played various developmental roles such as educating people and publishing health and hygiene information. Television has also played an important role in spreading culture as well as in economic and commercial promotion. It is worth noting here that these media, together with the other media and means of communication, continue to play a major role in the field of social change on political and social levels.

These days, the majority of the campaigns conducted with the purpose of raising awareness, controlling health and hygiene issues, protecting the environment, and participating in the political decision, among others, rely on all types of media and means of communication as they play a major role in the progress and development of society.

On the other hand, media constitute a kind of catalyst in numerous national and regional developmental issues, such as defining a country, a region and their characteristics, promoting tourist awareness and improving the image in the public's memory and confronting stereotypes. This is bound to contribute in improving the social environment on all levels and achieve economic growth and social wellbeing.

United Nations agencies, such as UNICEF, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization, among others, have adopted policies of communication, considering them as principal instruments for development and tools for achieving their objectives.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, this study on how the media deal with the Denniyeh region can shed light on the situation in this area. It can also show the extent of media participation in the development projects, especially the sustainable development in its different aspects.

#### **4) Content of the Research**

##### **a- Monitored Media Programs**

The study covered a variety of topics taken from different types of media:

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<sup>8</sup> "La Communication pour le Developpement. Accroître l'efficacité des Nations Unies." Auteur principal: Elizabeth McCall. (PNUD, UNICEF, OMS, UNESCO, ILO, FAO, ONUSIDA). (p. 12-13).

- The evening newscasts of six television stations: Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International LBCI, Al-Jadid NTV, MTV, Orange Television OTV, Future TV and Al-Manar, as well as the evening news of the government-sponsored station Tele-Liban;
- *Maraya-Al-Chamal* program, aired weekly by Tele-Liban which covers issues of interest to the North; and
- News contents of six national newspapers: *Annahar*, *Assafir*, *Addyar*, *Al-Mustaqlal*, *Al-Akhbar* and *Al-Joumhouriyah*.

Beyond this framework, we also relied on the two following references as an indication of our analytical study:

- A local magazine named *Sada al-Denniyeh*: This is helpful as it sheds light on the interests of the area much more than the national press.
- The *National News Agency*: This allowed us to know the issues and activities related to this area in the local media since the *National News Agency* covers the activities developed in numerous areas, while the national press and TV stations select their coverage according to their editorial preferences.

## **b- Duration and Sample of the Monitoring**

The study was conducted during four weeks as follows: from 7 to 13 February and from 21 to 27 February 2016; then from 6 to 12 March and from 20 to 26 March 2016.

As a result of monitoring the media that we identified for our quantitative analysis during this period, we collected 315 newspaper articles, 171 TV news reports and 47 reports from

*Maraya Al-Chamal* program. These articles and reports covered issues and topics related to the Northern region and they made up the final sample on which we built our quantitative and qualitative analysis for the purpose of finding answers and solutions to the problematic issues.

## 5) Procedure

Based on our findings, we divided the study in three parts according to the media topic that was analyzed:

- In Part I, we focused on analyzing the news reports of the evening newscasts about the Denniyeh area in comparison with reports and newscasts of other Northern areas in the seven selected TV stations. The recording unit (which is a part of the content of our classification) was composed of the TV news report, irrespective of its length. Therefore, these units were classified by the topic they addressed (the topics were distributed among 10 different news categories) and according to the area they covered.<sup>9</sup>

We also took into consideration the classification by importance of the news item as a principal item or an ordinary one. In a final stage, we viewed the qualitative content of the TV reports dedicated to the Denniyeh area.

- In Part II, which addressed the analysis of the contents of the six newspapers, we proceeded the same way as we did with

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<sup>9</sup> Due to the insufficiency of information about the Denniyeh area as a principal topic, we classified any topic mentioning that area, even if it happened casually or secondarily, in the Denniyeh column (this was done with the TV reports as well as with the newspapers articles). This exception was also due to the fact that the main purpose of the study is to observe the image of the area independently of the form. The other exception that we made was separating Denniyeh from Minieh in our general results, although both constitute one single administrative caza. The reason for that was that the core of the study is exclusively the Denniyeh region and not the caza. However, we joined the results of the two areas when comparing them with other cazas.

the analysis of the TV reports. We established a distinction between the news dedicated to the Denniyeh area and those covering the other areas of Northern Lebanon. The recording unit was composed of the article, regardless of its length. These units (articles) were classified according to the topic covered (the topics were distributed among 11 news categories), and according to the area. We also introduced the criterion of the importance of the news item by distinguishing between a prime item, a principal item and an ordinary one. As in the case of TV reports, we analyzed, in a final stage, the qualitative content of the articles dedicated to the Denniyeh area.

- In Part III, we analyzed the reports of the episodes of the *Maraya al-Chamal* program and studied the contents of the magazine *Sada al-Denniyeh*.

In analyzing the program *Maraya al-Chamal*, the report constituted the registration unit and it was classified by news categories (7 categories) which were divided into topics (15 topics). We also distinguished between the reports dedicated to the Denniyeh area and those dedicated to other areas of the North. In analyzing the contents of the magazine *Sada al-Denniyeh*, we separated the topics related to Denniyeh and we studied their proportion to the general contents of the magazine. We also analyzed the extent of their contribution to introducing and presenting Denniyeh.

# **PART I**

## **POSITION AND IMAGE OF DENNIYEH**

### **IN EVENING NEWSCASTS**

#### **1) Television Reports Dedicated to the Northern Region**

During the time of the study, we monitored 171 news reports which were broadcast in evening newscasts of the seven selected television stations and which were related to the Northern region. The subjects of these reports were distributed as follows: 36 reports addressed social issues, 35 were about security and justice topics, 31 were political and partisan, 16 covered various activities and events, 15 were about sport, cultural, entertainment and touristic activities, 14 dealt with building capacities and social society development, 12 were about initiatives and success stories, 6 dealt with health issues, 3 were about refugees and 3 reports covered various incidents (Figure 1).

Distribution of the Monitored TV Report Categories  
Dedicated to the North  
Sample of 171 Reports

Figure 1

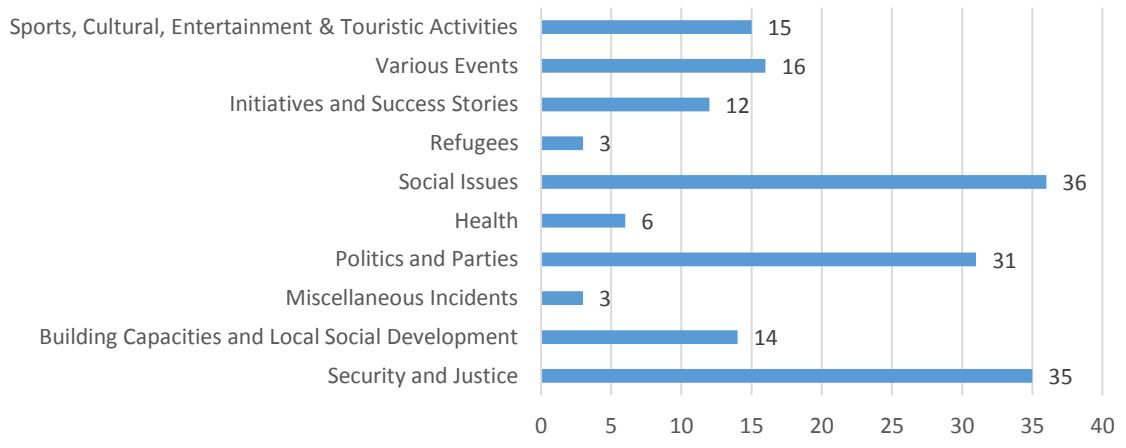
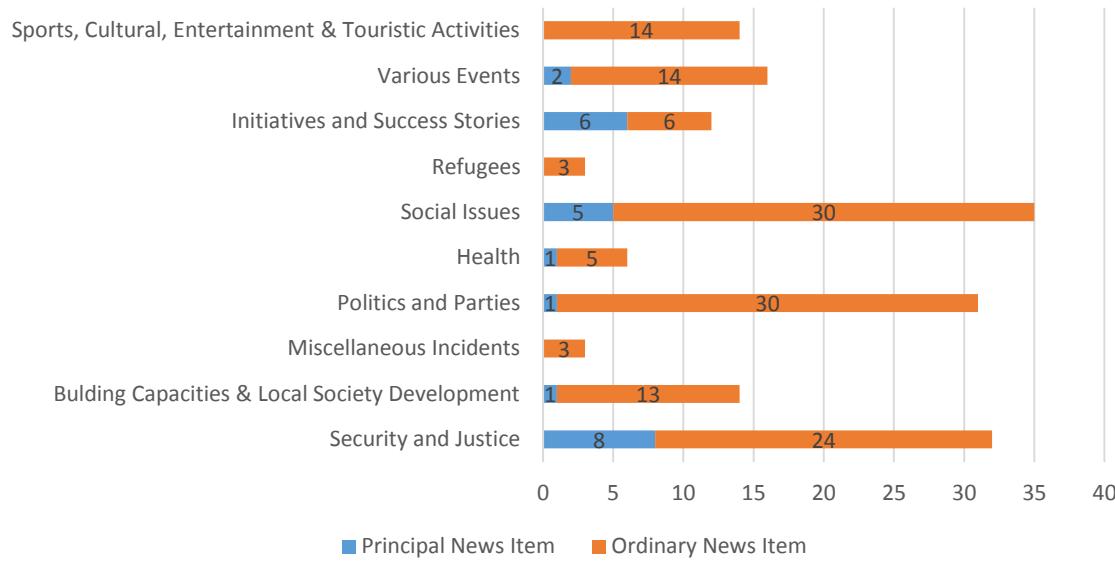


Figure 2 shows the importance given to TV reports dedicated to the Northern region by distinguishing between principal and ordinary news items.<sup>10</sup> The proportion of principal news is 14.6% (25 out of 171 reports). It is worth noting the high proportion of principal news related to security and justice matters (9 out of 25 principal reports approximately). However, what reduces the effect of these figures is a good proportion of principal news items covering various initiatives and success stories (6 reports) and news items covering social issues (5 reports).

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<sup>10</sup> By “principal news item” we mean the item that occupies one of the first three places in the echelon of the newscast. “Ordinary news item” relates to all other news.

Importance of TV News Items Dedicated to the North, by Category  
 Sample of 171 Reports  
 Figure 2

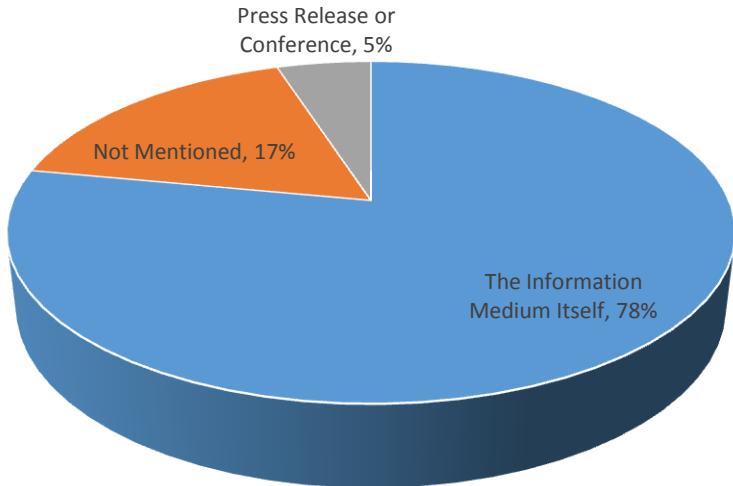


On the other hand, the sources of the reports were as follows: 133 reports (78%) originated from the medium itself, 29 reports (17%) were from unspecified sources, and 9 reports (5%) found their source in press releases or press conferences (Figure 3). This data reflects the presence of the TV media on the Northern scene, since they were the source of more than two thirds of the reports aired about that region. In order to grasp the importance of these figures, we need to compare them with what was dedicated to other regions and mohafazats; however, this is beyond the scope of this study.

Sources of TV News Coverage Dedicated to the North

Sample of 171 Reports

Figure 3



## 2) Television Reports Dedicated to the Denniyeh Area

It is noticeable that out of the 171 reports mentioned above, only 5 were dedicated to the Denniyeh area, which is less than 3% (Figure 4). The topics of these reports were distributed as follows: 3 reports in the security and justice field, one report about social issues and another about a sports activity (Figure 5). The majority of these reports were secondary or ordinary news, except a single one related to a security and justice issue (Figure 6).

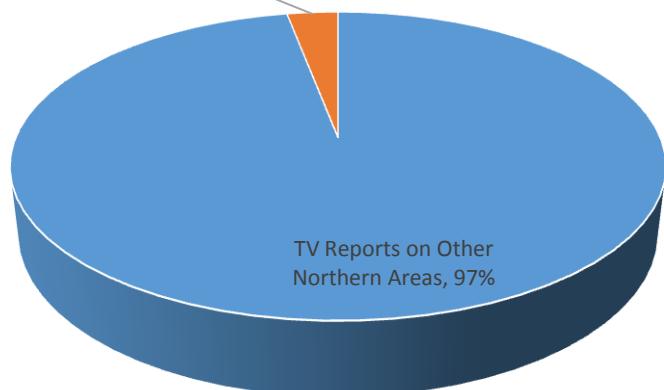
### Proportion of TV Reports Dedicated to Denniyeh Compared to Other Northern Areas

Sample of 171 Reports

Figure 4

TV Reports on  
Denniyeh, 3%

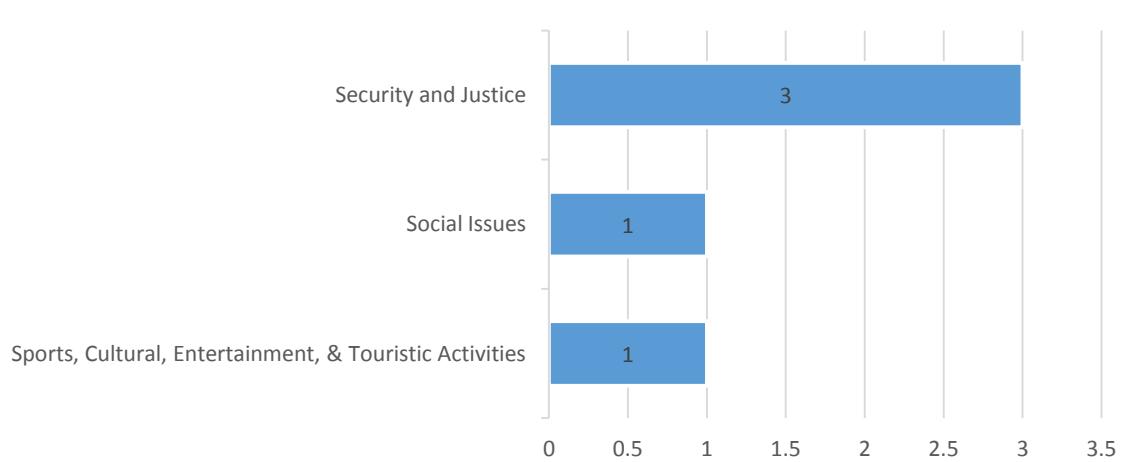
TV Reports on Other  
Northern Areas, 97%



### Distribution of TV Reports Relating to Denniyeh per News Category

Sample of 5 Reports

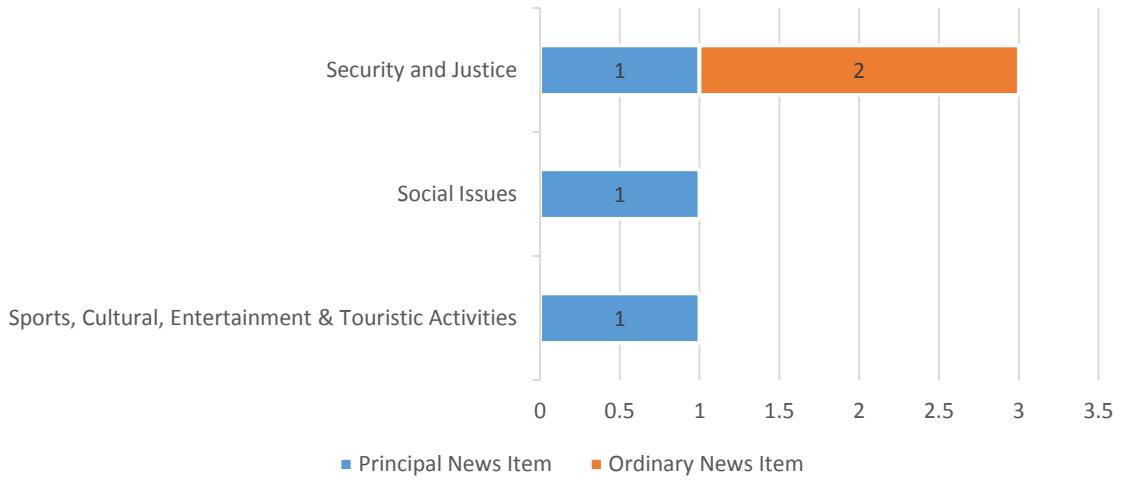
Figure 5



### Importance of TV Reports Dedicated to Denniyeh

Sample of 5 Reports

Figure 6



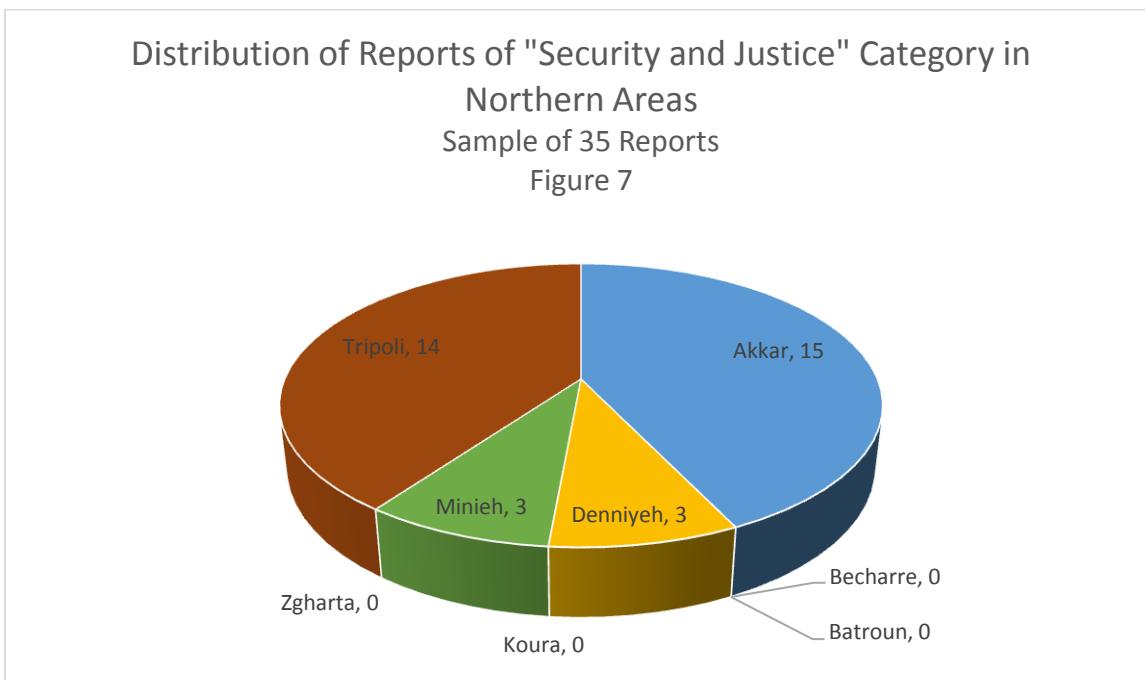
### 3) Distribution of TV Report Categories in Northern Areas and Position of Denniyeh

This section details the distribution of the 10 monitored TV reports in the Northern area in general, and the proportion of representation of the Denniyeh area in each of them.

#### a- Security and Justice: Large proportion for Minieh-Denniyeh

With regard to the "Security and Justice" category, 6 reports are dedicated to the Minieh-Denniyeh caza (3 for Minieh and 3 for Denniyeh). Smaller cazas are completely absent from this category (Figure 7). Also in this category, we see reports only for the caza of Tripoli (14 reports) and the mohafazat of Akkar (15 reports). These figures tend to confirm the stereotype that a link between the Denniyeh area and security issues exists, more so

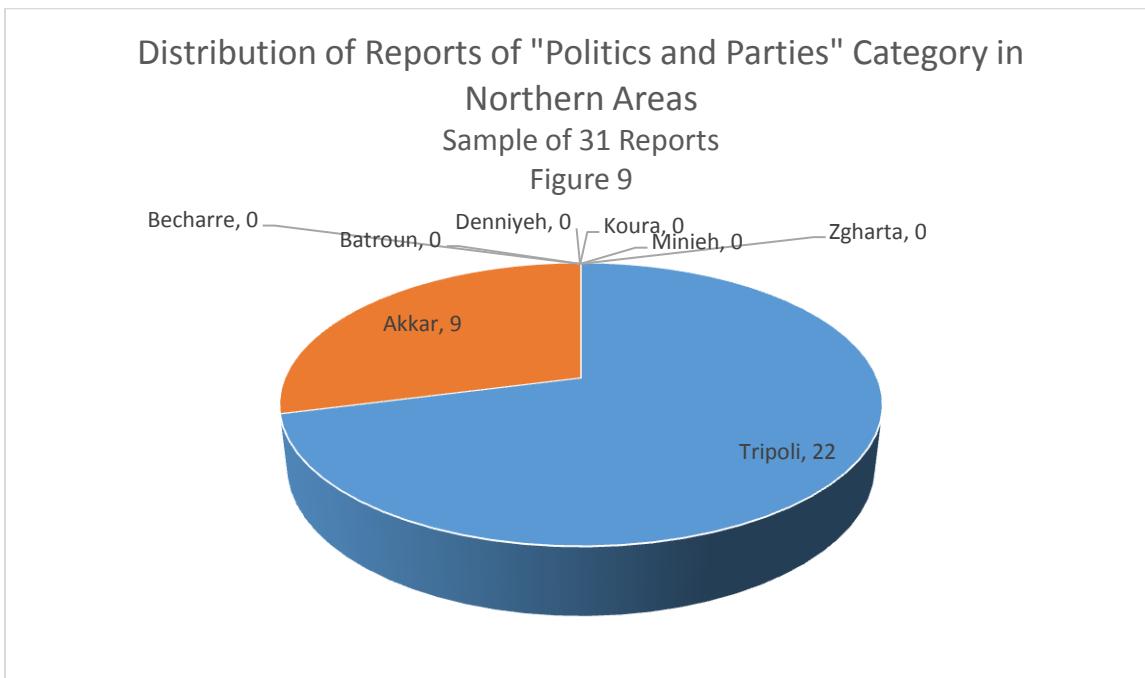
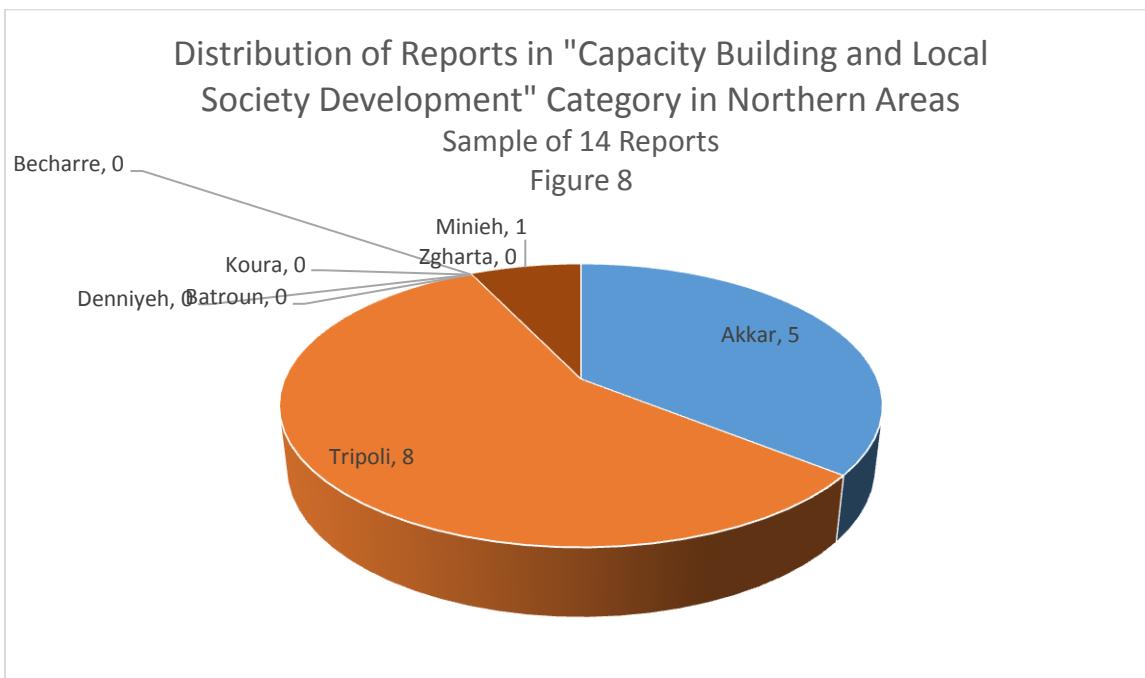
than in comparison to other cazas. In parallel to the large number of reports about security for Tripoli and Akkar, we also see a large number of reports on other topics, as shown in the following paragraphs. This is not the case for the Denniyeh area where three of its five reports are about security issues. This shows that news dealing with Denniyeh are first and foremost about security.



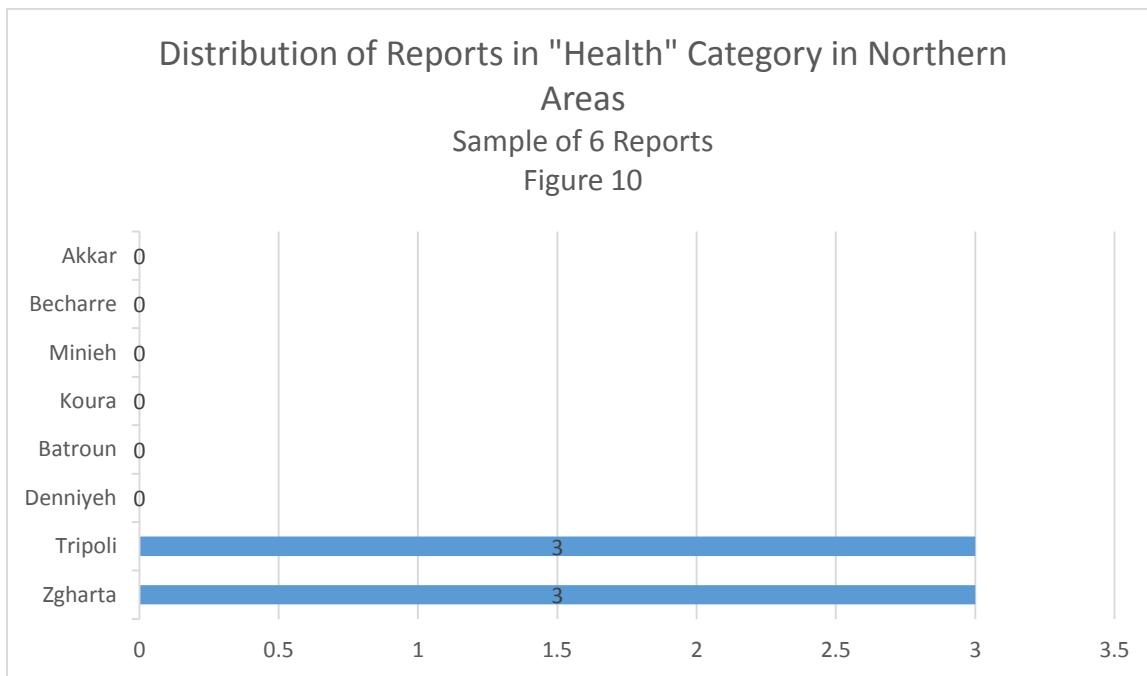
### b- Absence of Denniyeh from All Other News Categories

In contrast with the prevalence of coverage on security issues, the absence of reports about “Capacity Building and Local Society Development” is noticeable in the Denniyeh area as well as in other smaller cazas. One single report in this category is dedicated to the Minieh area, while Tripoli (8) and Akkar (5) share the remaining reports (Figure 8). This fact is also seen in the category “Politics and Parties” which reflects the existence of a certain region on the political map of the country, while the other regions of the North are completely absent from this category whose 31

reports are shared by the Tripoli caza (22) and the Akkar mohafazat (9) as it appears in Figure 9.



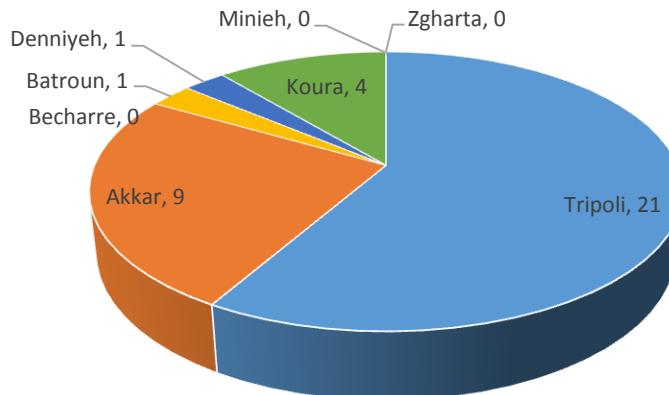
With regard to health issues, the Denniyeh area is, once again, completely absent from this category, which is in line with the paucity of the reports (6). However, we notice here a presence for the caza of Zgharta in three reports and an equal number for the caza of Tripoli (Figure 10).



It is also worth noting the low presence of Denniyeh in the “Social Issues” category (1 report out of a total of 36). The other cazas/small areas of the mohafazat have the same low presence as Dennieh (zero report for Zgharta and Minieh, only one for Denniyeh), except for the caza of Koura for which newscasts dedicated four reports about social issues. On the other hand, Tripoli (21) and Akkar (9) have the highest number of reports in this category (Figure 11).

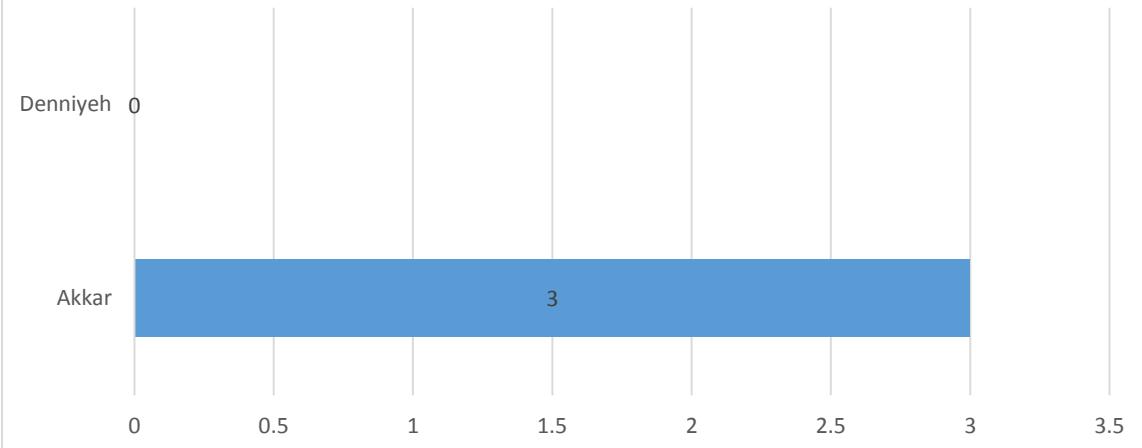
Distribution of Reports in the "Social Issues" Category in  
Northern Areas  
Sample of 36 Reports

Figure 11

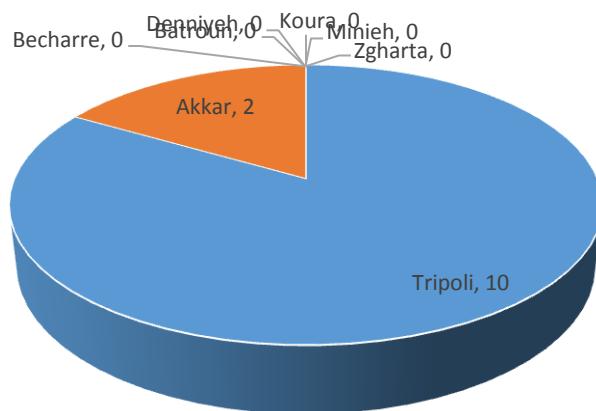


The three reports dealing with the Syrian refugee problem are limited to the mohafazat of Akkar and absent from other areas of the North (Figure 12). Also, in the “Initiatives and Success Stories,” the 12 reports are limited to Akkar (2) and Tripoli (10), as it appears in Figure 13. The same thing applies to the category “Events and Activities” where the 16 reports are dedicated to Tripoli (12 reports) and Akkar (4 reports) with no reports in this category for the other Northern areas (Figure 14).

Distribution of Reports in the "Refugees" Category in  
Northern Areas  
Sample of 3 Reports  
Figure 12



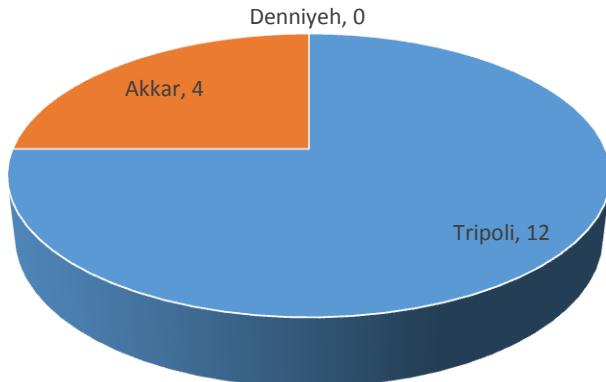
Distribution of Reports in the "Initiatives and Success Stories" in Northern Areas  
Sample of 12 Reports  
Figure 13



Distribution of Reports in the "Events and Activities"  
Category in Northern Areas

Sample of 16 Reports

Figure 14

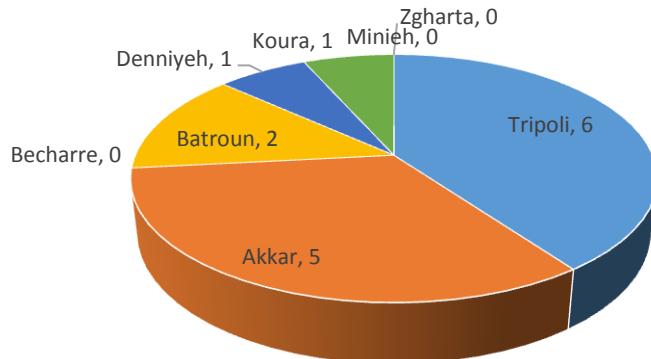


With regard to the last category, relating to sports, culture, entertainment and tourism, the Denniyeh area has a very limited coverage through just one report (out of 15), just like the caza of Koura. We found two reports for the caza of Batroun, while no reports whatsoever were dedicated to the cazas of Becharre, Zgharta, or the Minieh area. At the same time, the proportions of reports in this category, dedicated to Tripoli and Akkar was the highest with 6 and 5 each, respectively (Figure 15).

Distribution of Reports in the "Sports, Cultural,  
Entertainment & Touristic Activities" Category in Northern  
Areas

Sample of 15 Reports

Figure 15



#### 4) Image of Denniyeh in the Five News Reports

Different TV stations aired the five reports related to the Denniyeh area. Al-Jadid TV aired two of these reports while Al-Mustaqlal, LBCI, and OTV aired one report each. It is worth noting that news items about Denniyeh were absent from the newscasts of MTV, Al-Manar and Tele-Liban during the monitoring period.

The LBCI report mentioned Denniyeh from the perspective of its high altitude in comparison with other Lebanese areas where internet satellite dishes have been installed. The reports which aired during the 17 February newscast, seven minutes into the newscast and lasting 160 seconds, revealed that 30% of the internet in Lebanon is not legal. In this respect, the Denniyeh area was mentioned while the newscast reported how “illegal internet companies install internet satellite dishes on high towers in Turkey or Cyprus, and how these dishes are oriented toward certain points in Lebanon such as the Sannine and Zaarour mountains as well as the peaks of Tannourine and Denniyeh.”

The Al-Mustaql report aired during the Sunday 6 March 2016 newscast (in its 37th minute and lasting 70 seconds). It spoke about “inaugurating the paragliding club in Denniyeh in cooperation with the two pilots Omar Singer and George Dib.” The report described this event as an “admirable development.” Showing the two pilots gliding in the skies of the Cyr and Bekaa-Safrine villages with a large crowd watching. The report also showed the founder of the club, Mr. Mohammad Jawad Fatfat explaining how the idea of creating the club emerged, and welcoming the two pilots who confirmed that the area is beautiful and very good for this sport. This area is considered the “most important in Lebanon with regard to its large surfaces and high altitude.”

The OTV report was aired during the 12 March 2016 newscast (in the 25th minute, lasting 125 seconds). This report does not directly address the Denniyeh area. It is about an interview with a citizen from the village of Jdeidit el-Qaitah (in the Akkar caza), who was explaining how he “tried to prevent some young men coming from an enemy village in the Denniyeh caza from disposing of truckloads of garbage ‘believed to be coming from Beirut’ in the dumping ground of his village.” These young men, whom he described as “shabbiha,” started beating him, then they fired rounds of ammunition on his house and they burned his car. He believed that “the government cannot even reach them.”

The first Al-Jadid television report aired during the newscast of Sunday 20 March 2016. The topic of this report constituted the introduction of the newscast until the 11<sup>th</sup> minute. However, it did not address the Denniyeh area exclusively. The issue of illegal internet and its networks in Lebanon “and its breach of the state institutions” is complicated and is present in multiple regions as previously mentioned. However, the role of Denniyeh in the Al-Jadid report is that “equipment was transferred to the peaks of Denniyeh and part of this equipment

connected with Israeli networks.” The report also mentions other areas such as Faqra, Ouyoun Assimane and Zaarour.

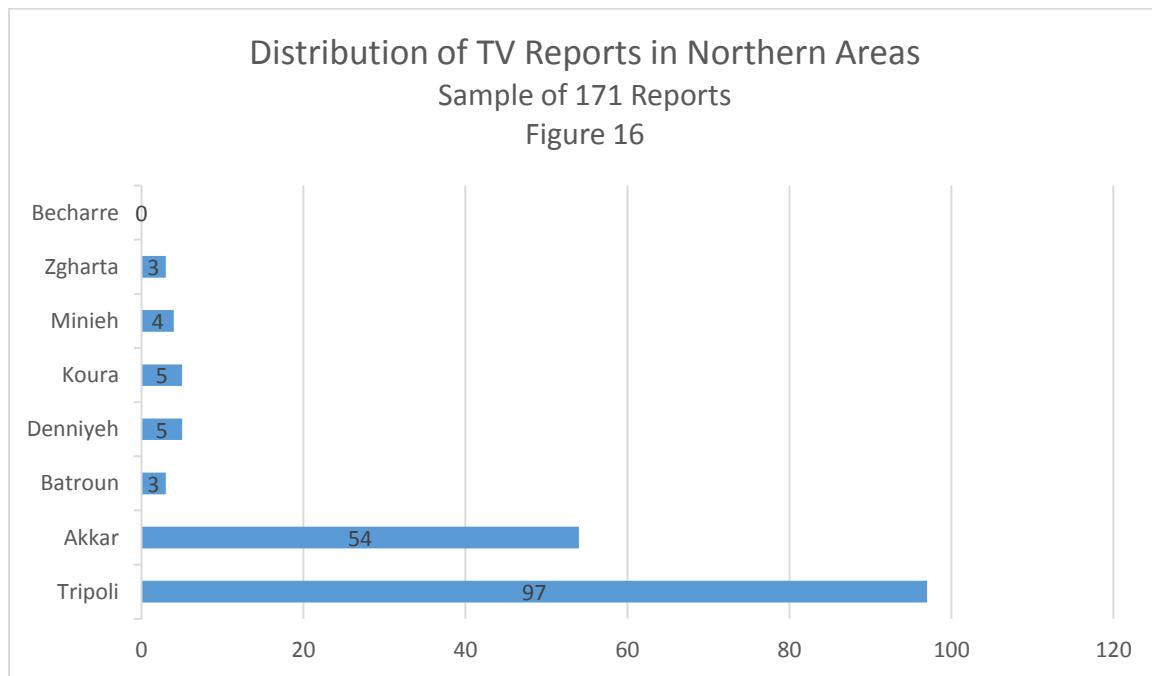
The second Al-Jadid report was aired during the 26 March 2016 newscast (lasting 50 seconds). It dealt with the same topic, but from a judicial angle. While talking about two searches by police, one in Annaya and the other in Denniyeh, the report mentions that in the first one, no illegal internet centers were found, while in the second, one citizen was arrested after acknowledging that his center receives signals from Cyprus.”

## **5) Synopsis of Part I**

It is true that the presence of Denniyeh in the television news reports is very limited (five reports), but this fact is not limited to Denniyeh alone. It is also seen in the other “small” cazas and areas: five reports on Koura, four on Minieh (which makes the total number of reports for the caza of Minieh-Denniyeh 9), three for each of Batroun and Zgharta, while no reports exist for the caza of Becharre. The larger proportion, 97 reports, goes to the caza of Tripoli with the city of Tripoli known as the capital of the North. The mohafazat of Akkar has also a large share with 54 reports as it is shown in figure 16.

This quantitative marginalization also reveals the kind of coverage related to the Denniyeh area. Four of the five reports do not address Denniyeh directly. In three of these reports, the summits of Denniyeh are just a base for installing internet satellite dishes for the transmission of illegal internet to other areas. The fourth report mentions a brawl between some young men from Denniyeh and a citizen from Akkar about discharging truckloads of garbage. In any case,

the image of Denniyeh is indeed negative and linked with purely security and judicial issues. The sole report dedicated to the area and which reflects a positive image of it was aired by the Al-Mustaqlal TV station and it addressed the launching of a paragliding club with the former Prime Minister Saad Hariri offering the land for the club. By the way, Mr. Hariri is the owner of this station.

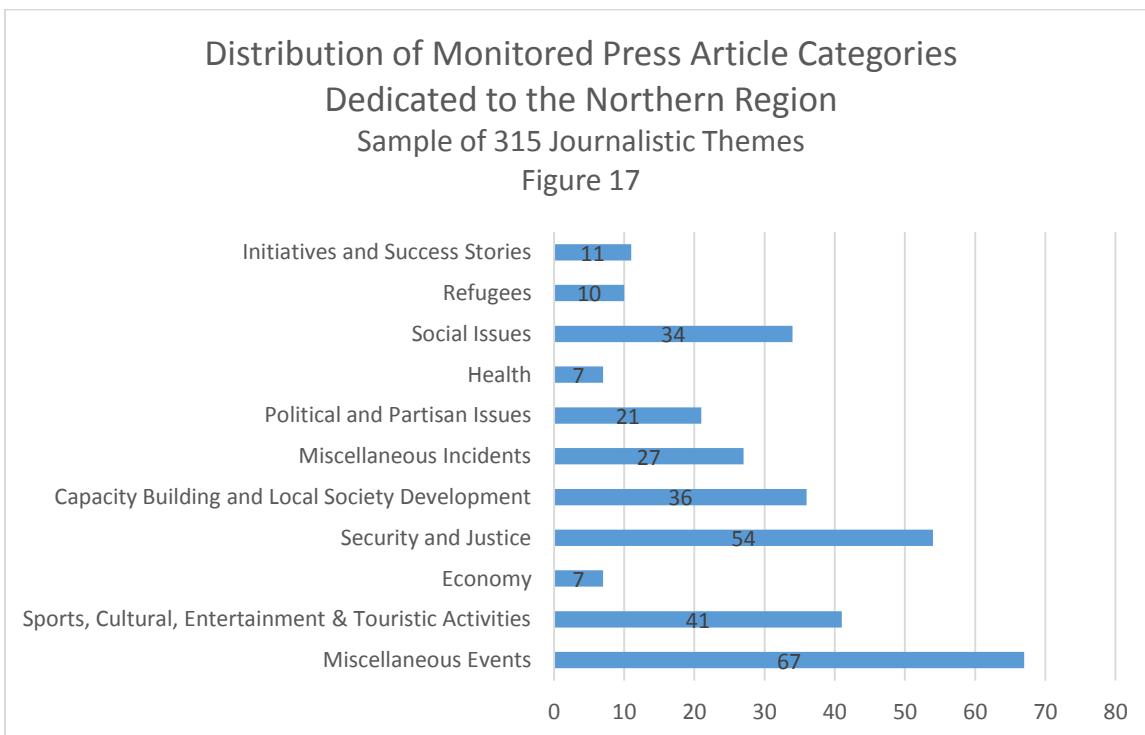


## Part II

### Position and Image of Denniyeh in Newspaper Articles

#### 1) Press Reports Dedicated to Northern Areas

In the second part of this study, we observed the contents of six daily newspapers during our monitoring period (February-March 2016). We looked at 315 journalistic themes that dealt with the regions of the North. They were distributed as follows: 67 articles dedicated to Events and Miscellaneous Activities, 54 articles for Security and Justice Issues, 41 for Sports, Cultural, Entertainment or Touristic Activities, 36 for Capacity Building and Local Society Development, 34 for Social Issues, 27 for Miscellaneous Incidents, 21 for Political and Partisan Issues, 11 for Initiatives and Success Stories, 10 for the Syrian Refugee Problems, as well as 7 articles that dealt with Health Issues and 7 others that dealt with Economic Issues (Figure 17).



Concerning the importance given to the news item with regard to its position, the prime news item was 1% (3 items) of the total, the principal news item was 3.5% (11 items) and the rest (301 out of a total of 315) were considered as ordinary news items.<sup>11</sup>

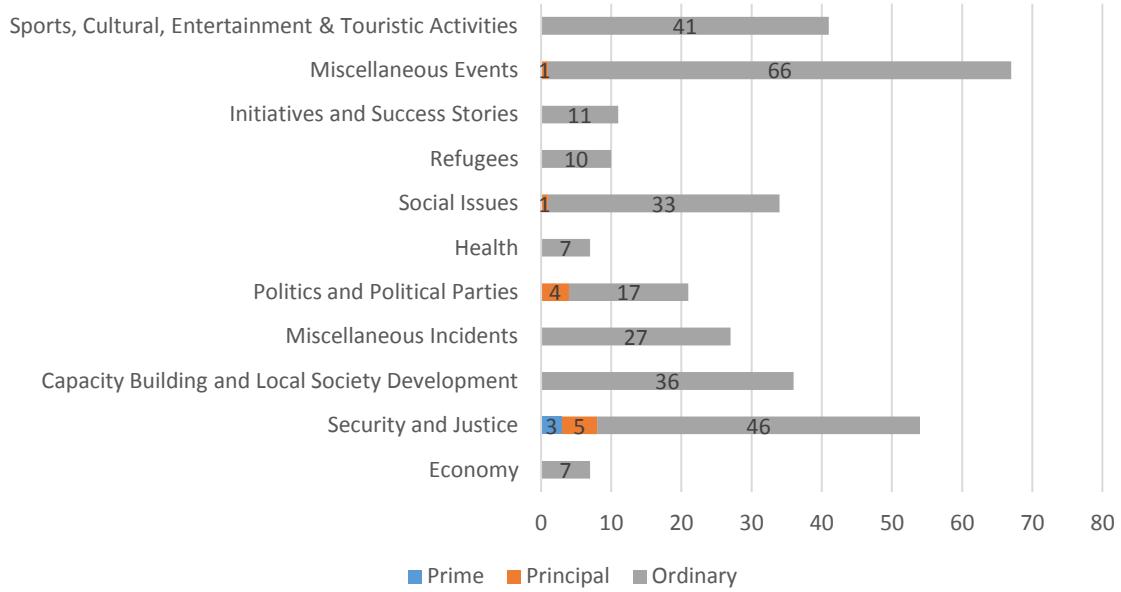
As shown in Figure 18, it is noticeable that the news on the first three pages were related exclusively to justice and security topics. Almost half of the news were also on this very topic (5 out of 11). The rest of the principal news were from the “Politics and Parties” category (4 news items). This is due to the prevalence of the political issues in general in the front pages of national newspapers. We should also add the presence of one principal news item for each of the “Events and Activities” and “Social Issues” categories.

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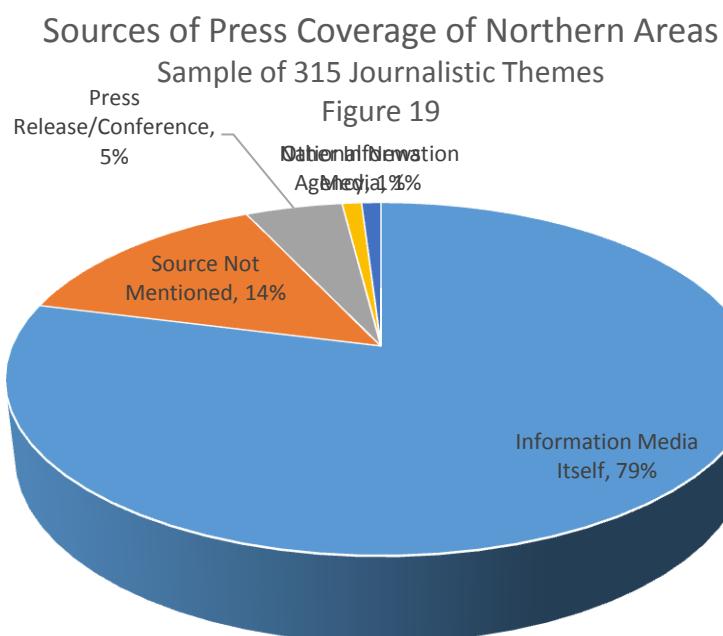
<sup>11</sup> By “prime news item”, we mean the item published on the front page of the newspaper; “principal news item” is the one published on either the second or the third page and “ordinary news item” is the one published on any of the other pages.

Importance of Journalistic News Dedicated to Northern  
Region Distributed by Category  
Sample of 315 Journalistic Themes

Figure 18



On the other hand, the monitored daily newspapers constituted the main source of the news that they dedicated to the Northern areas, which explains the reason for their presence in this region. Out of 315 articles, the newspaper itself was the source of 79% of the news, while the sources of 14% of the news were not mentioned. The rest came from press releases and press conferences (5%), the *National News Agency* (1%) and news taken from other information media (1%) as it appears in Figure 19.



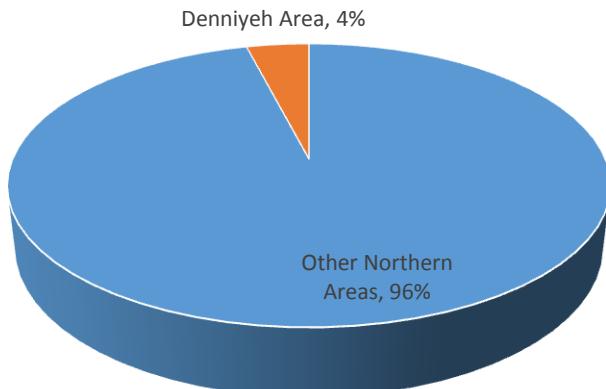
## 2) Newspaper Articles Dedicated to the Denniyeh Area

The number of articles dedicated to the Denniyeh area were no more than 12 articles out of the 315 articles written about the entirety of the Northern areas, which makes it a proportion of 4% as it appears in Figure 20.

Proportion of Newspaper Articles Dedicated to the  
Denniyeh Area Compared to Other Northern Areas

Sample of 315

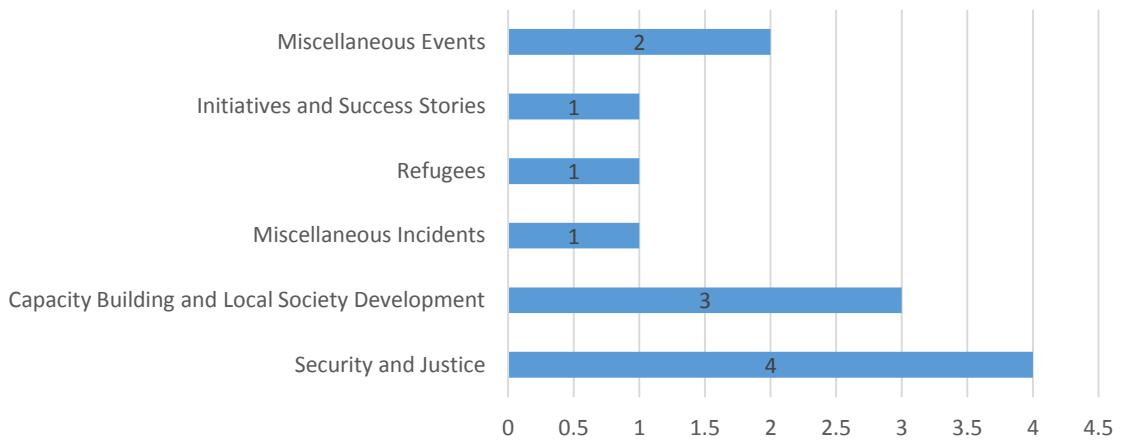
Figure 20



This low proportion confirms the scarce amount of representation of this area in the media, not only visually but in writing as well. It is also worth noting that the majority of articles written about this area (4) relates to justice and security issues.

On the other hand, we find within the group of 12 articles, 4 relating to “Capacity Building and Local Society Development” and “Initiatives and Success Stories.” The remaining articles deal with “Events and Activities” (2), “Refugees” (1) and “Miscellaneous Incidents” as shown in Figure 21.

Distribution of Newspaper Articles Relating to Denniyeh per News Category  
 Sample of 12 Newspaper Subjects  
 Figure 21

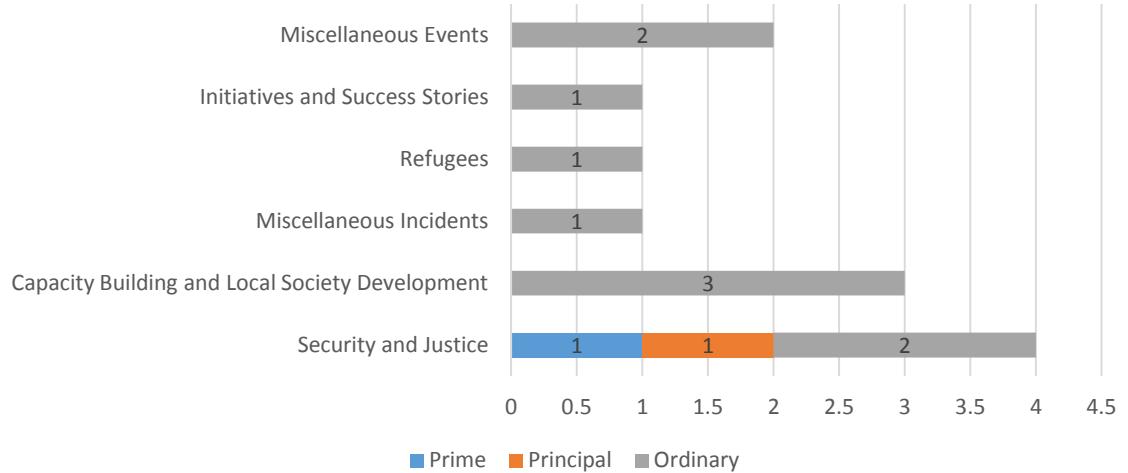


With regard to the position of the news item, the proportion of Denniyeh in prime and principal news is relatively larger than its share of the general news. Out of three principal items for the Northern region, Denniyeh's share is one. However, this presence in the news does not necessarily reflect the reality of the image of Denniyeh, since the prime and principal news items are exclusively linked with the security and justice issues (Figure 22).

### Importance of the Denniyeh News per News Category

Sample of 12 journalistic themes

Figure 22



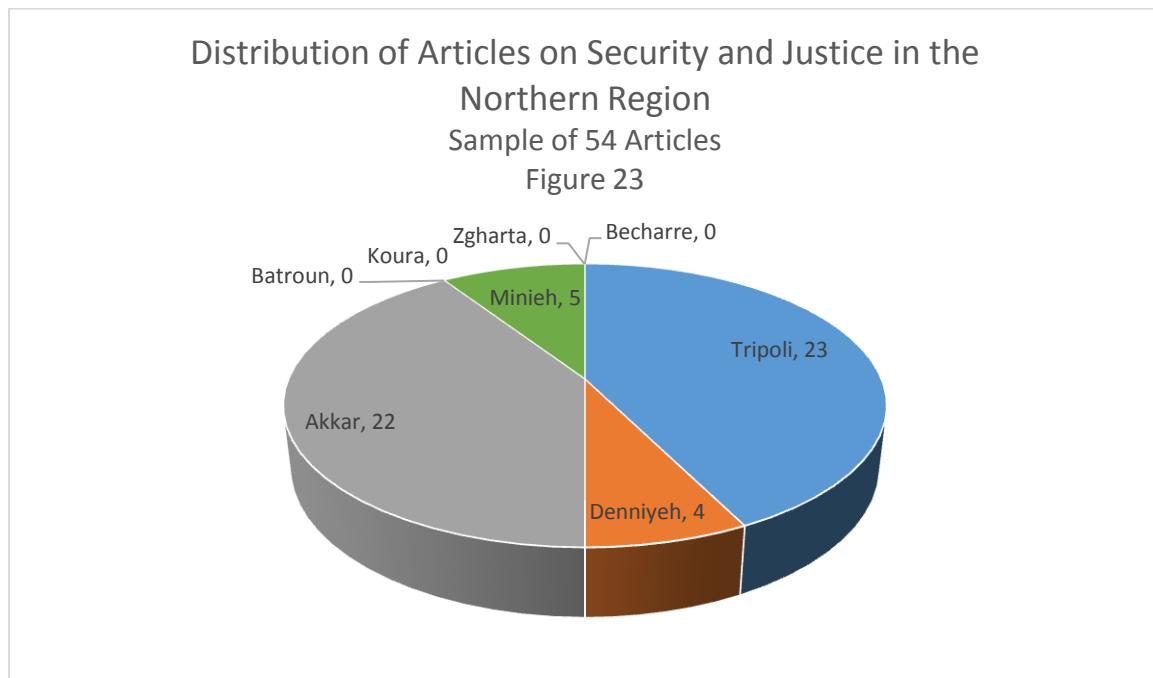
### 3) Distribution of News Article Categories in the North and Position of Denniyeh

In this section, we have studied the distribution of the 10 news reports in the northern region and the share of the Denniyeh area in each of these categories:

#### a- Security and Justice: Minieh-Denniyeh and Absence of the Other Small Cazas

As in the TV reports, the share of the Minieh-Dennieh caza in the newspaper articles is large in the “Security and Justice” category (4 for Denniyeh and 5 for Minieh). We could not even find any article in this category outside the mohafazat of Akkar (22 articles) and the caza of Tripoli (23 articles). Both of Akkar and Tripoli

receive a large share of articles in all categories. This fact reflects the connection of the Denniyeh area to security issues (Figure 23).



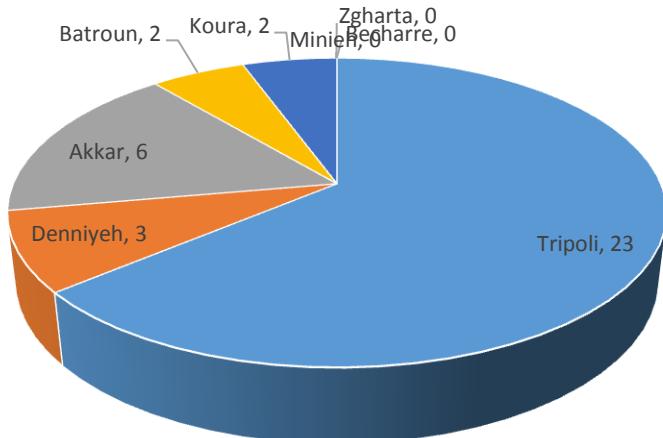
### b- A Share for Denniyeh in Coverage Related to Success and Capacity Building

Despite the high proportion of representation for Denniyeh in “Security and Justice Issues,” this area also has a share of articles on topics such as “Capacity Building and Local Society Development” as well as “Initiatives and Success Stories.” Although the number of articles is small for areas such as Tripoli and Akkar, it is, however, considered good when compared with other cazas and areas as shown in Figures 24 and 25: We have 4 articles for Denniyeh and 3 for Minieh (in the two figures, combined), two articles each for Batroun and Koura and none for Zgharta. The highest share again goes to Tripoli (28 articles) and Akkar (8 articles).

Distribution of Articles in "Capacity Building and Local Society Development" Category in Northern Region

Sample of 11 Articles

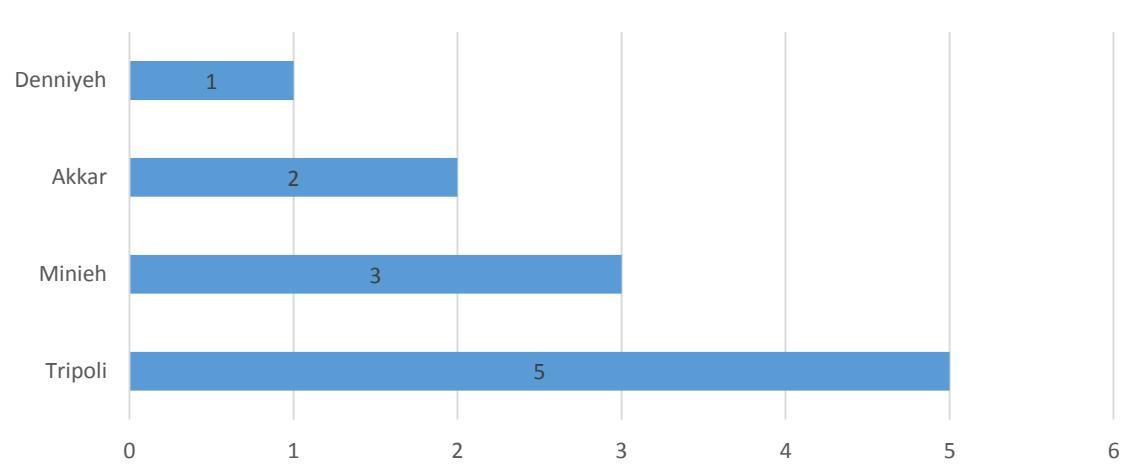
Figure 24



Distribution of Articles in "Initiatives and Success Stories" Category in Northern Region

Sample of 11 Articles

Figure 25

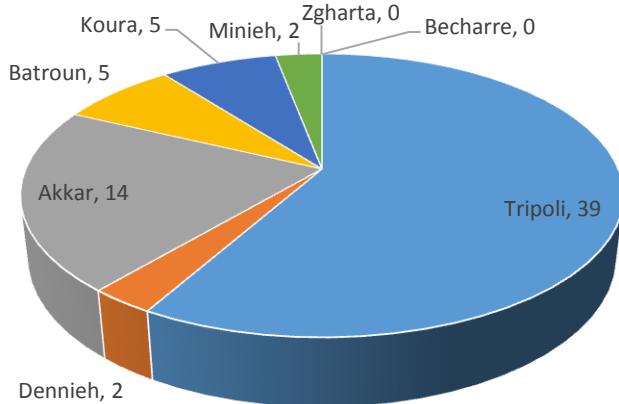


The number of representations of Denniyeh diminishes in the articles related to all kinds of activities. Denniyeh is represented in the local news in only two articles (compared to 78 for Tripoli, 14 for Akkar, 6 for Koura, 5 for Batroun and 3 for Minieh). The

absence of any “Sports, Cultural, Entertainment and Touristic Activities” in these two articles on Denniyeh is noteworthy (Figures 26 and 27).

Distribution of Articles in "Miscellaneous Events" Category  
in Northern Region  
Sample of 67 Articles

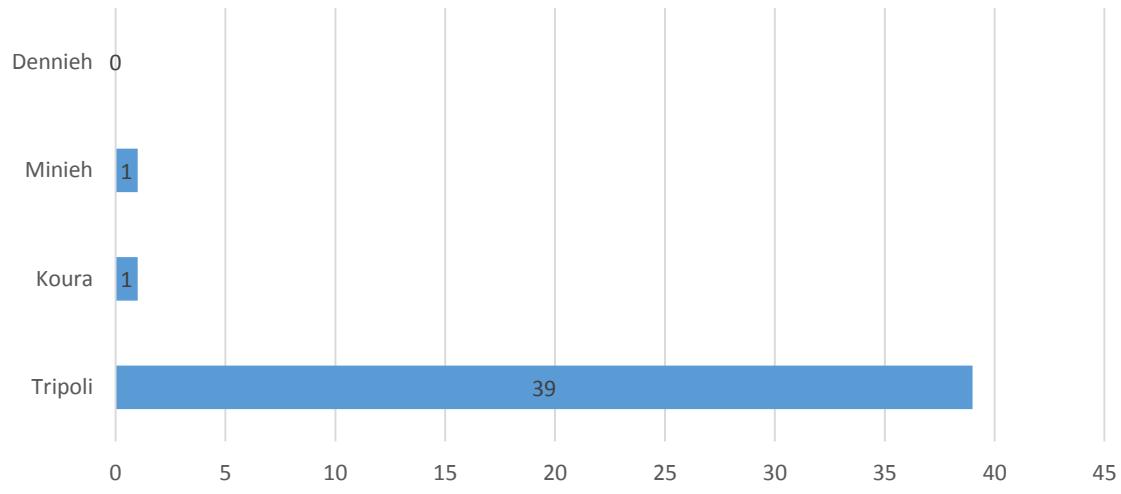
Figure 26



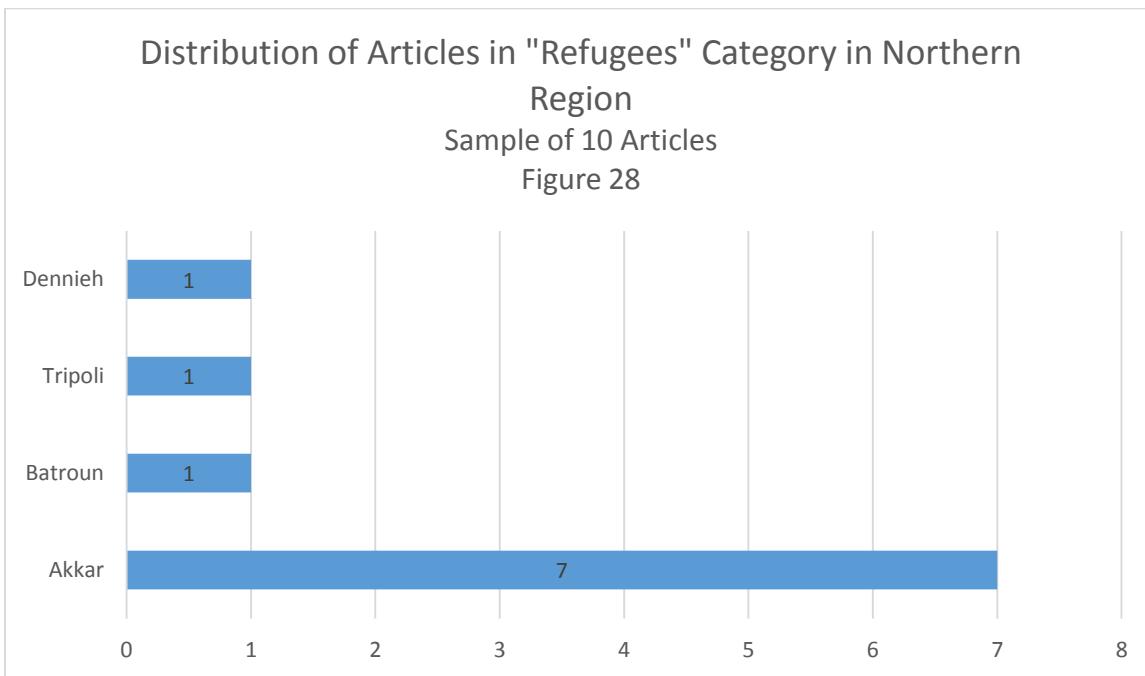
Distribution of Articles in "Sports, Cultural, Entertainment & Touristic Activities" Category in Northern Region

Sample of 41 Articles

Figure 27



In another field, we find just one article dedicated to the Syrian refugees (the number of registered refugees in the north is 256,126<sup>12</sup>) out of 10 articles consecrated to the Northern region on this topic. Most of these articles focused on the refugees in the Akkar mohafazat (7 articles) as shown in Figure 28.

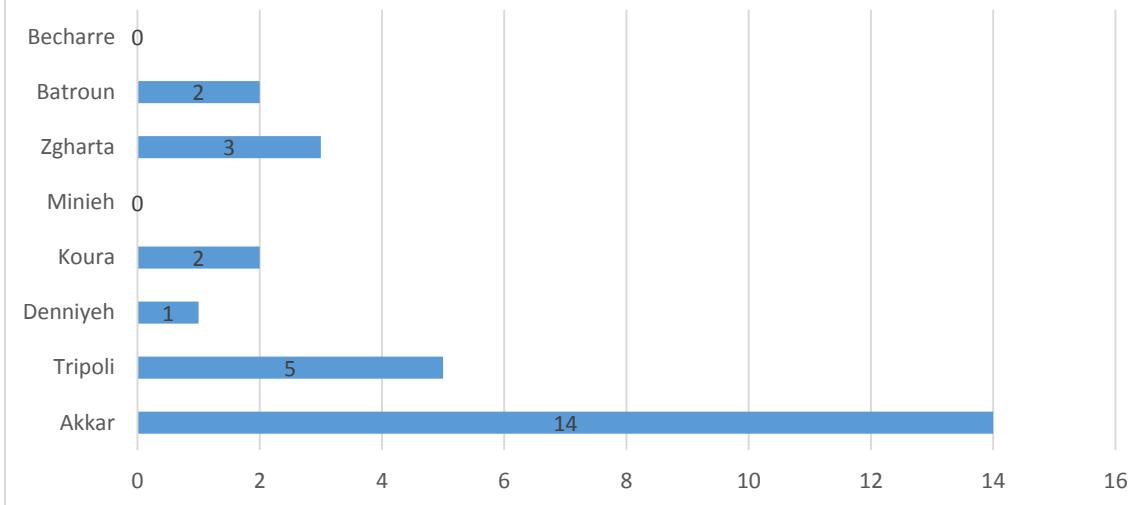


Most of the 27 articles in the “Miscellaneous Incidents” category are for Akkar (14) and Tripoli (5). Just one article in this category is dedicated to Denniyeh while some other cazas have a better share (3 articles for Zgharta, 2 articles for each of Koura and Batroun), as it appears in Figure 29.

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<sup>12</sup> As per the figures of the UNHCR until end of March 2016. Link:  
<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/settlement.php?id=203&country=122&region=87>

Distribution of Articles in "Miscellaneous Incidents"  
 Category in Northern Region  
 Sample of 27 Articles  
 Figure 29



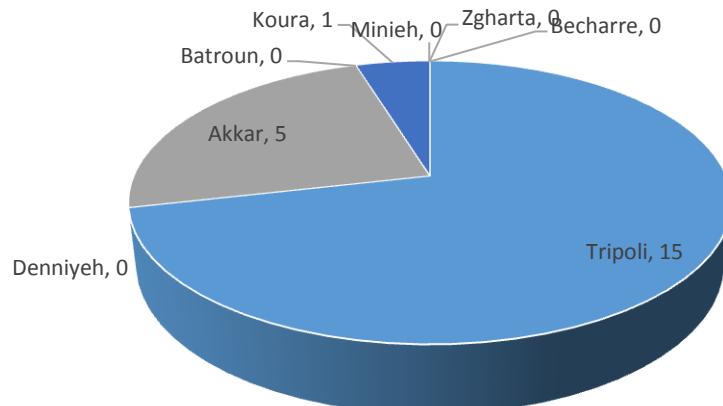
### c- Absence of Denniyeh from Other Categories of Coverage

The limited presence of Denniyeh in a number of news categories is met by a total absence of that area from certain key issues in the following categories: “Social Matters” (a total of 34 articles), “Politics and Parties” (21 articles), “Health” (7 articles), “Economy” (7 articles), on top of the “Sports, Cultural, Entertainment and Touristic Activities” category (41 articles) which has been mentioned previously.

It is worth noting that the share of areas and cazas other than Tripoli and Akkar is very limited as the numbers reveal. For example, in the “Politics and Parties” category, one single article was dedicated to the caza of Koura, while the rest of the articles are on Tripoli with 15 articles and Akkar with 5 (Figure 30).

Distribution of Articles in "Politics and Parties" Category in Northern Region  
 Sample of 21 Articles

Figure 30

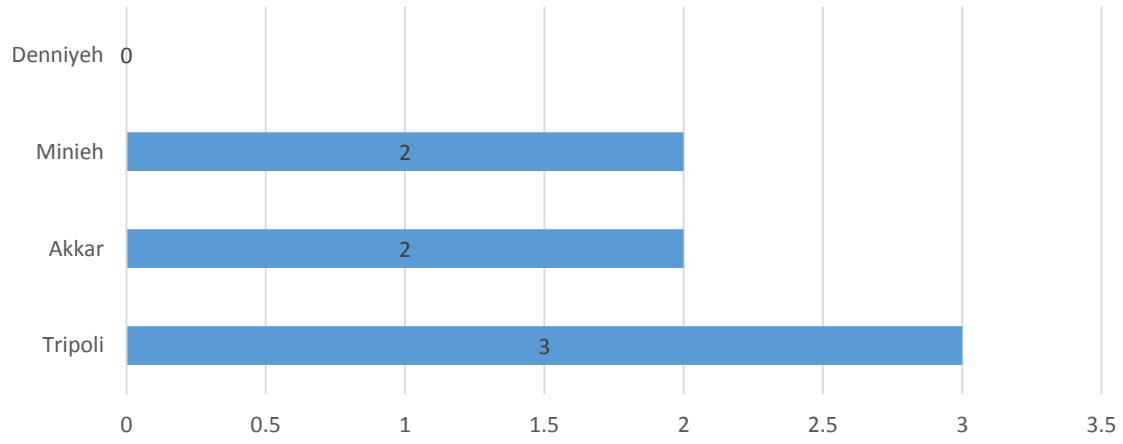


In the “Health” category, there are 2 articles for Minieh, 3 for Tripoli and 2 for Akkar (Figure 31).

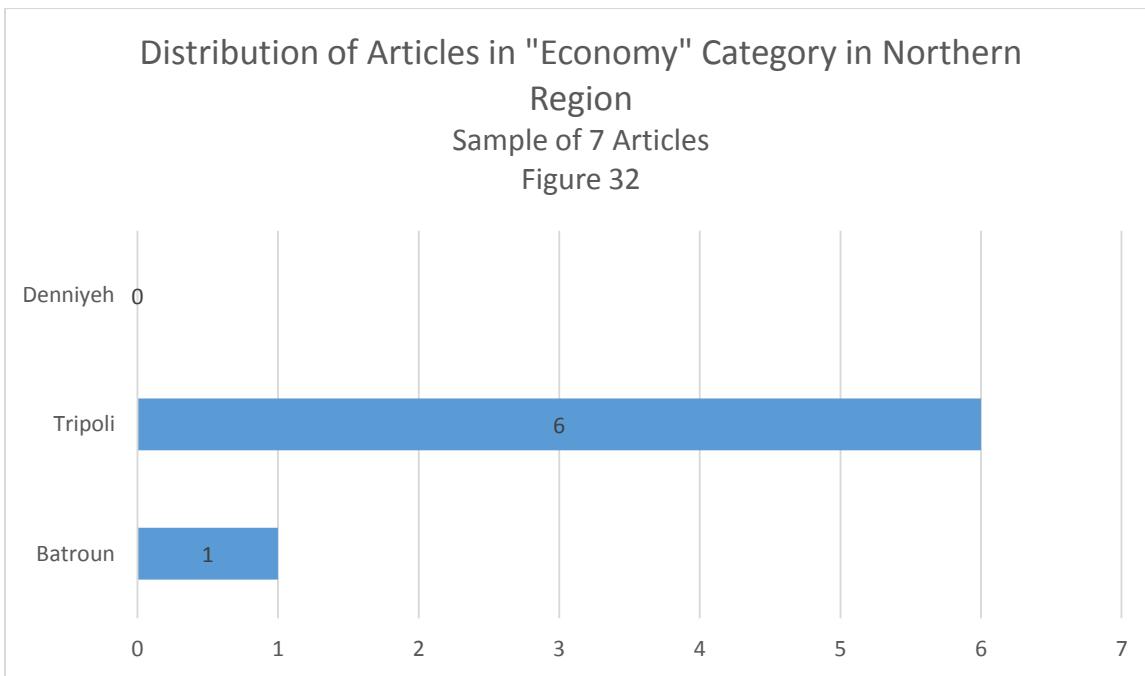
Distribution of Articles in "Health" Category in Northern Region

Sample of 7 Articles

Figure 31



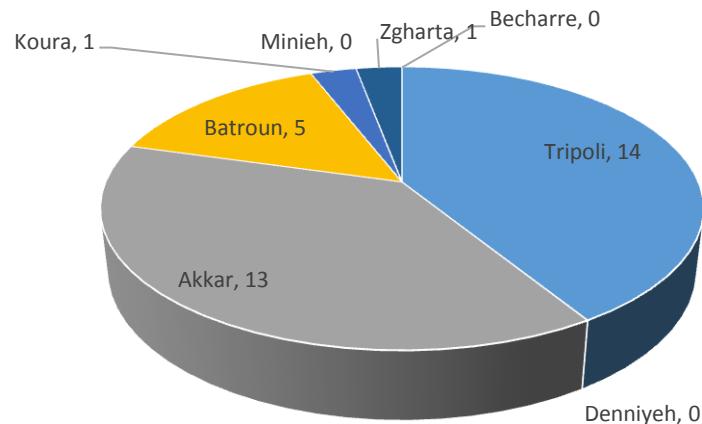
We see the same phenomenon in the “Economy” category whereby there is only one article for the Batroun caza while the six others relate to Tripoli (Figure 32).



However, the most notable absence of Denniyeh was in the “Social Issues” category where we could not find a single article dealing with a social topic in the Minieh-Denniyeh area, despite the relatively high number of articles in this category. Although most of these articles were dedicated to Tripoli (14 articles) and Akkar (13 articles), the same as in the other categories, the smaller cazas were also represented such as Batroun (5 articles) while we saw only one article for each of the cazas of Zgharta and Koura (Figure 33).

Distribution of Articles in "Social Issues" Category in  
Northern Region  
Sample of 34 Articles

Figure 33



#### **4) Image of Denniyeh in Newspaper Articles**

Five newspapers shared the 11 articles about the Denniyeh area. In the *Annahar* newspaper, no articles on this area were published. Denniyeh was the most mentioned in *Al-Mustaqlal* (4 articles), followed by *Al-Joumhouriyah*, then *Assafir* and *Addiyar* (2 articles each) and finally *Al-Akhbar* (1 article).

##### **a- *Al-Mustaqlal*: Diversity of Short News Items**

This newspaper published a variety of news, such as the news brief about the distribution of 875 winter rations to Lebanese and Syrian students in two villages of the Minieh-Denniyeh caza.<sup>13</sup> The title included various news briefs about assistance offered by different sources to migrants in other Lebanese areas.

<sup>13</sup> "Continuation of Distribution of Assistance Items to Migrants," *Al-Mustaqlal*, Monday 22 February 2016, p. 5

The second news item also dealt with Denniyeh while mentioning other areas where coordinating units of the “Al Mustaqbal Movement” organized a signing ceremony on the document “The Arab Consensus” in solidarity with Saudi Arabia and in support of its positions with regard to Iran.<sup>14</sup> This news item also reported statements made by the coordinator of the “Al-Mustaqlal Movement” in Denniyeh and by the president of the Denniyeh Associations Union.

The third news item published in the same issue of the newspaper also mentioned Denniyeh while reporting news on other areas. It talked about the inauguration by the Secretary General of the Qatari Red Crescent Mr. Saleh Al-Muhannadi of the “Assistance Projects in Support of Syrian Refugees in the Central and Western Bekaa,” besides inaugurating, in Syr el-Denniyeh, the “Water Heating Units with Solar Energy for the Migrants, in Cooperation with the Bahraini Red Crescent.” This news item also mentioned the participation of Mr. Al-Muhannadi in “awareness activity about how to avoid the risks of fires, storms, snow and floods, in the ‘Project to Limit Risks’ implemented in participation with the Lebanese Red Cross and targeting 20 camps and 10,400 beneficiaries.”<sup>15</sup>

The fourth news item was the only one dealing exclusively with the Denniyeh area (as shown in the title). The source of this news was *Al-Mustaqlal*.<sup>16</sup> This item was on an agricultural topic about the appearance of sandal worms in the pinewoods near the villages of Sfeira, Bakhaoun, Hakl-el-Azimeh, Assoun and Aimar

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<sup>14</sup> “Lebanon declares its solidarity with the Kingdom and confirms the Arab commitment to the overwhelming rejection of the offense to Saudi Arabia and insistence on Lebanon’s Arabism. Large participation for the signature of the document “Arab Consensus” in different areas, *Al-Mustaqlal* 26 February 2016, p.5

<sup>15</sup> Assistance Projects of “Qatari Crescent.” *Al-Mustaqlal*, Friday 26 February 2016, p. 7

<sup>16</sup> “Sandal worms invade the woods of Denniyeh,” *Al-Mustaqlal*, Saturday 27 February 2016, p.8

whereby the citizens... called on the concerned authorities... to treat this epidemic. The newspaper consulted experts on this topic.

### **b- *Al-Joumhouriyah*: Two Incidental Paragraphs on Denniyeh**

This newspaper published two articles on Denniyeh. The first one was exclusively on security issues. It occasionally mentioned the area while talking about other areas. Under the title “The Army Anticipated a Security Catastrophe in Tripoli,”<sup>17</sup> after dismantling two explosive devices in the capital of the North, the article developed, in its last paragraph, how the Information Division of the Security General Directorate carried out “four raids in Denniyeh, Minieh and Deir Amar after receiving information and monitoring operations of a group in touch with a terrorist organization.” It also mentioned the transfer of detained people to Beirut for investigation.

The second news item is merely a small paragraph included with miscellaneous news in the column “Economic Monitor,” and copied briefly from another news item published by the *National News Agency*. This paragraph mentions that six municipalities in Denniyeh “have signed a Memorandum of Understanding about cooperation in governance and the program of the activities in the North Mohafazat society.” It also states that the project “is supported and financed by the European Union and it aims to encourage the local communities in peacefully resolving conflicts and implementing common projects.”<sup>18</sup>

### **c- *Assafir*: An Extensive Article about Security**

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<sup>17</sup> *Al-Joumhouriyah* Monday 8 February 2016, p. 10

<sup>18</sup> “The Economic Monitor”, *Al-Joumhouriyah*, Saturday 12 March 2016, p.12

Two articles were published in this newspaper. These articles were principal ones from the perspective of dealing exclusively with that area and they were both published in the same issue of the newspaper. The first article was purely about security and written by Lina Fakhreddine.<sup>19</sup> In this article, the author explains Daesh's plan to establish an emirate in Denniyeh, with Ahmad Salim Mikati at its helm. She mentions the "pre-emptive strike" conducted by the Army Intelligence on 23 October 2014 and she mentions, based on what Mikati acknowledged during the military investigation, his connection with the "extremist organization." Through this narrative, Denniyeh appears to be the security soft underbelly in the North since "Abou Ayoub Al-Iraqi" had his eye on this area, hoping to establish a security square in it where there would not be any presence of Lebanese security agencies and in preparation for declaring the Emirate. The author also presented more details about this Emirate that would have included Bakhaoun, Assoun, Syr-el-Denniyeh and Bekaa-Safrine before the Mikati groups would connect Qalamoun with the Lebanese coast and raise the black flags declaring allegiance to "Abou Bakr Al-Baghdadi." Additionally, she provided details about the transfer of weapons from "Tripoli to Denniyeh" where the capital of the North, especially Bab-el-Tebbaneh, appears as an area under the control of armed groups.

The second article falls under the "Capacity Building and Local Society Development" category. It deals with the topic of widening the Nahr-el-Bared Dam and was written by Najla Hammoud.<sup>20</sup> The author sheds a light on the plan adopted by the Ministry of Energy and Water through the North Lebanon Water

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<sup>19</sup> Lina Fakhreddine, "How Daesh Planned to Take Control of Denniyeh?" *Assafir*, Saturday 13 February 2016, p.3

<sup>20</sup> Najla Hammoud: "Akkar, Widening Al-Bared Dam Does Not Include the Canals." *Assafir*, Saturday 13 February 2016, p.5

Authority. This plan entails “widening the basin and therefore increasing the quantity of reserve water for irrigation and electrical power generation. This would augment the potential for investing in agriculture and tourism in this area.” The benefit of this plan is not limited to the villages and townships of the Minieh-Denniyeh caza (especially Minieh), but it also reaches to the mohafazat of Akkar on which the author focuses (as the title of the article shows). Therefore, the volume dedicated to the Denniyeh area in the *Assafir* article is very limited while the article expands in detailing the problems of the infrastructure in this area, especially the irrigation canals of the Al-Bared river as well as other factors which turned the project from “a blessing to a curse as the canals overflow and flood the arable lands and the roads in winter. The waters also flood the neighboring houses and cause a disaster in the area. They also constitute a sort of trap for kids as they cause tens of victims who unfortunately fall in the canals.”

#### **d- *Addiyar*: An Article and a Paragraph from the *National News Agency***

The two articles from this newspaper also deal with Denniyeh in a casual way. The first news item, taken from the *National News Agency* mentions, in just one paragraph (the news of the Agency is developed in four paragraphs), the visit of a delegation of Denniyeh municipalities to Turkey to participate in the annual conference of the United Cities and Local Governments-Middle East and West Asia. The news item concluded that the delegation “held a meeting with the Secretary General of the organization and officials of the Turkish Development Agency “TIKA” at the

invitation of the Istanbul municipalities where cooperation avenues between the two parties were discussed.”<sup>21</sup>

The second news item dealt mostly with a movement of the Saida dignitaries “in the aftermath of the increase of the number of garbage trucks entering the city and the transformation of most of its coast into garbage dumps and muddy waters” (the title does not mention Denniyeh).<sup>22</sup> This presentation is followed by a paragraph on the area of Baawerta in the Aley caza and another paragraph on the township of Hamat in the Batroun caza, both of them also about the garbage crisis. The last paragraph of the article mentions the scientific seminar held by the “Youth for Dialogue” association in Denniyeh in cooperation with the municipality of Cyr and the “Cultural Forum” in Denniyeh. The seminar was about the dangers of garbage pollution and the importance of sorting the garbage at the source, in the framework of a campaign titled “Don’t Look for a Solution, the Solution is Recycling” (A play on words in Arabic. Note of the translation). This campaign was financed by the “Mercy Corps” organization. Although the news item was not an independent item, it was completely copied from the principal source, the *National News Agency*, which also mentioned the speeches made by the participants in the seminar.

#### e- *Al-Akhbar* and *Annahar*: No Articles on Denniyeh

In the *Al-Akhbar* newspaper, there was only one article that mentioned the area of Denniyeh. It was a general topic related to

<sup>21</sup> “Union of Denniyeh Municipalities:” Widening the Al-Bared Dam Does not Include the Canals,” *Assafir*, Saturday 13 February 2016, p.9

<sup>22</sup> Saida dignitaries apprehend the “ghost” of another garbage mountain: Garbage should not enter the city until a clear national plan is adopted, *Addiyar* Tuesday 22 March 2016, p.9

the illegal internet and it was authored by the newspaper itself. This topic occupied the second page of the Wednesday 9 March 2016 issue of the paper with a title on the front page.<sup>23</sup> The story revolves around some “unknown persons” who installed a number of internet satellite dishes to receive internet signals from “unknown” sources in the mountains of Denniyeh and Batroun; they were selling this service to citizens outside of the official and legal framework of the communications sector. The timing of raising this matter coincided with the start of the security and judicial steps following a press conference held by the chairman of the Information and Communications Parliamentary Committee and the Minister of Communications. Denniyeh was only mentioned here because the satellites for receiving the internet signals were installed on its summits and on the peaks of Tannourine in the Batroun.

On the other hand, there is a total lack of articles about Denniyeh in the *Annahar* newspaper during the four weeks of the study.

## 5) Synopsis of Part II

As with the television reports, most of the newspaper articles are about the caza of Tripoli (173) and the mohafazat of Akkar (85). These are by far more numerous than those on the caza of Minieh-Denniyeh with 25 articles, 12 for Denniyeh and 13 for Minieh. This low proportion of articles dedicated to Denniyeh applies also to the other cazas as it appears in Figure 34, showing 16 articles for Batroun, 12 for Koura, 4 for Zgharta and none for Becharre.

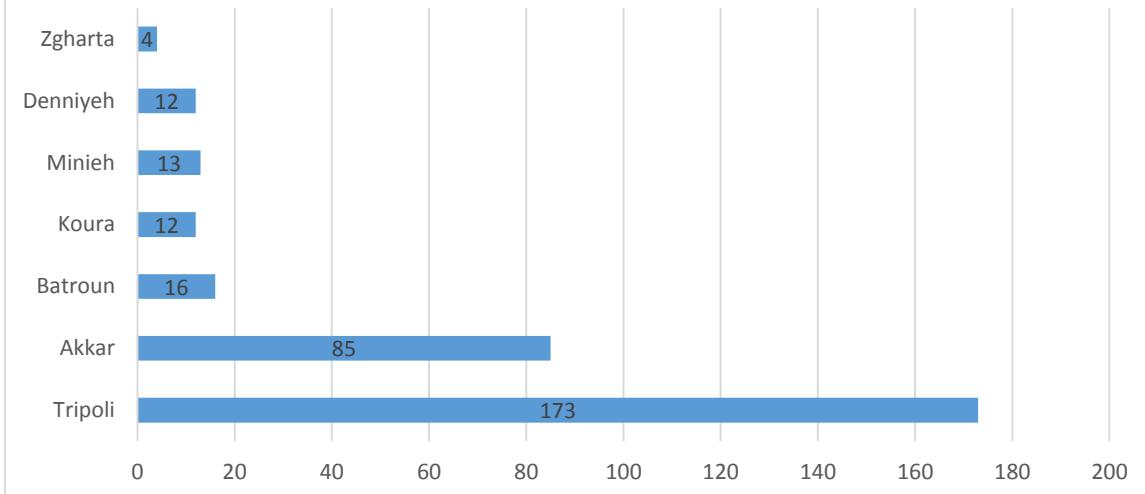
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<sup>23</sup> “Who is Behind the Shady Internet Companies? ‘Unknown Antennas’ in the Peaks of Dennieh and Batroun, and Concerns of an Israeli Hacking.” *Al-Akhbar*, Wednesday 9 March 2016, p. 2-3

### Distribution of Newspaper Articles in Northern Region

Sample of 315 Articles

Figure 34



Beside the low quantitative presence, most of the news on Denniyeh are occasional, the region itself not constituting the main subject or the principal topic of the article. Out of 12 articles, 10 mentioned Denniyeh as a secondary topic or while talking about other areas. There were only 2 articles where Denniyeh was the main topic. The first one was about an agricultural subject and the other was exclusively about security, directly connected with the stereotype that shows Denniyeh as a hotbed for armed groups (in any case, four of the 12 articles were related to topics of a security and justice character).

## PART III

## **DENNIYEH IN THE MARAYA AL-CHAMAL PROGRAM AND THE SADA-AL-DENNIYEH MAGAZINE**

In this third and last part of our study, we analyze the media coverage in the regional media by studying the contents of the reports in the *Maraya-al-Chamal* program. This weekly program, which focuses on the issues of the Northern region, is broadcast by Tele-Liban every Sunday at 8:30pm. The one-and-a-half hour program is produced and presented by Mr. Mounzer Merehbi. The monitoring period was expanded to eight weeks instead of four, from 6 February until 27 March 2016, having thus monitored eight episodes.

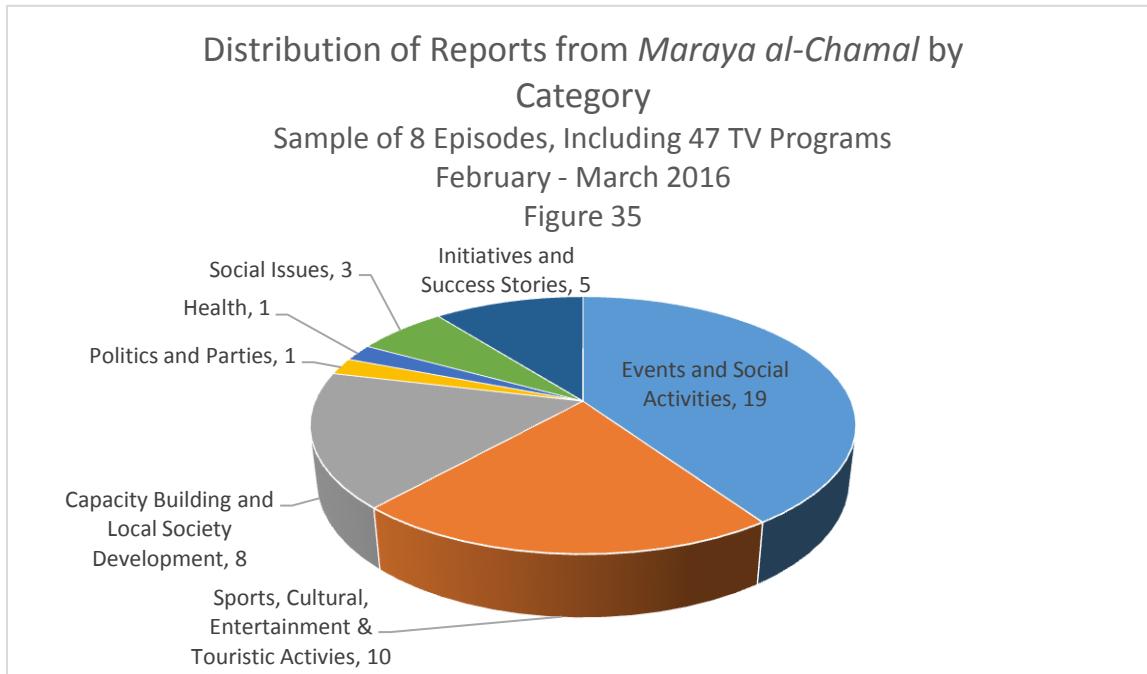
We have also studied the magazine *Sada al-Denniyeh* which is a monthly magazine whose owner and Director General is the Consul Saeed Mahmoud Trad, and its chief editor is Dr. Riad Osman. This magazine presents itself as a “monthly developmental, social, cultural and diversified magazine.” We have monitored three issues of this magazine coinciding with the period of our study: January, February and March 2016.

### **1- The *Maraya-al-Chamal* Program**

#### **a- Topics of the Program**

The episodes of this program included 47 reports (an average of 6 reports per episode). The topics of these reports were distributed into the following categories: 19 reports dealt with “Events and Social Activities,” 10 reports shed light on “Sports, Cultural, Entertainment and Touristic Activities,” 8 reports focused on “Capacity Building and Local Development” issues, 5 reports were

about “Initiatives and Success Stories,” 3 reports dealt with “Social Issues,” one special report was dedicated to a health problem and one was dedicated to a “Political-Partisan” issue (Figure 35).



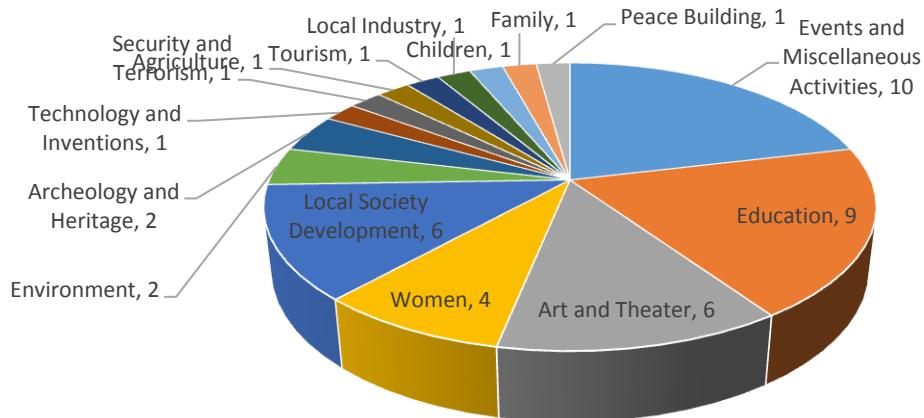
The episodes of the program were marked by the diversity of the topics as it appears in Figure 36. However, most of these episodes dealt with “Events and Miscellaneous Activities” (10 reports) as well as with educational matters (9 reports) and miscellaneous topics: cultural, social, environmental, entertainment, tourism, industrial and agricultural. The proportion of political topics was minimal (one single report). This fact increased the probability for areas with low coverage, such as Denniyeh and smaller cazas, to receive more attention in the reports.

### Distribution of Topics of Reports from *Maraya Al-Chamal*

Sample of 8 Episodes, Including 47 TV Reports

February - March 2016

Figure 36



### b- The Two Reports of the Program Dedicated to Denniyeh

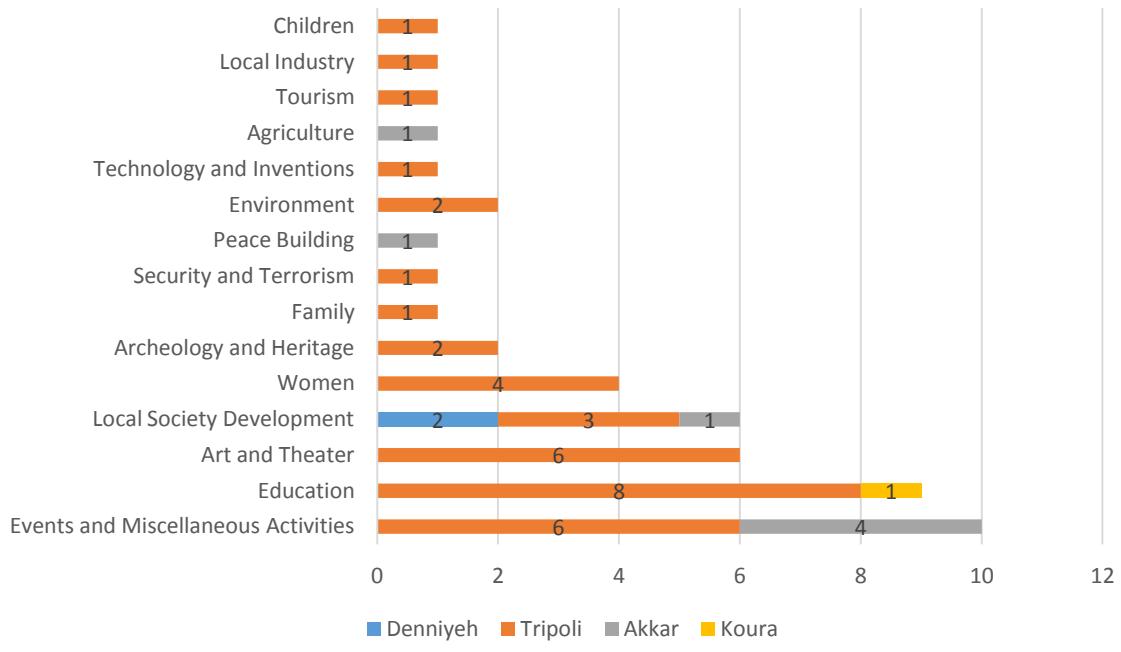
Out of 47 reports included in *Maraya al-Chamal*, the share of the Denniyeh area was only 2 reports (in the category “Local Society Development). Koura was the subject of just one report and Akkar had 7. The largest share went to Tripoli with 37 reports (Figure 37).

## Distribution of Topics of Reports from *Maraya Al-Chamal* by Area

Sample of 8 Episodes, Including 47 TV Reports

February - March 2016

Figure 37



These results do not diverge from the general trend that we noticed in the news reports and the newspaper articles. While Tripoli “monopolized” the largest part of the media coverage followed by Akkar, the other areas of the North were almost absent from the media agenda.

### c- Image of Denniyeh in the two Reports of the Program

The first report dedicated to the Denniyeh area (lasting 7 minutes and 15 seconds) was broadcast during *Maraya al-Chamal* on Sunday 21 February 2016. The host of the program Mr. Munzer Merehbi started the report using the title of the meeting that was held by the Engineers Syndicate in Tripoli: “The Bright Side of

Denniyeh.” That meeting was convened by the group “Dennawiyyoun” (people of Denniyeh) in cooperation with the education committee of the Engineers Syndicate of Tripoli and the Union of Denniyeh Municipalities. The report mentioned the exhibition that took place during that meeting, which “represents the civilized image of the best places in the Denniyeh area.” It also presented excerpts of speeches made by the Caimacam (governor) of Denniyeh Ms. Roula El-Bayeh and the head of the engineers syndicate Mr. Marius El-Beayni.

Ms. El-Bayeh underlined the importance of launching the cycle of development “despite deprivation at all levels, in a serious attempt resulting from the need to achieve the highest degree of development.” In his presentation, Mr. El-Beayni mentioned the “isolation” that led to separation “among the Lebanese” and generated an “ignorance of numerous regions at the heart of Lebanon,” in a veiled hint to Denniyeh. The report also played parts of a Lebanese song with pictures of the most important landmarks of the area, displaying the slogan: “Green Denniyeh, the area of peace and security, welcomes you.” The report ended with short dialogues between participants (El-Bayeh and El-Beayni, the head of the Union of Denniyeh municipalities Mr. Mohammed Saadiyeh, and the agricultural engineer Ms. Myrna Chahine). The speeches mentioned the “richness of the caza in natural resources” while its capabilities are limited and the state is far away.” They also underlined the role of the municipalities and their union in the development process which is still “in its initial stages,” and they shed light on the future projects such as “the environmental map of Denniyeh” as a “developmental, environmental and cultural project.”

The second report, which lasted five minutes, was aired on 28 February 2016. It also shed light, in a positive way, on the activity in the Denniyeh area. The host of the program started the report by talking about “great surprises that the Denniyeh Union of Municipalities got us accustomed to.” This “important” activity and movement was embodied by the signing of a cooperation agreement between the Denniyeh Union of Municipalities and the Faculty of Engineering in the Lebanese University, “under the patronage and in the presence of the President of the University Dr. Adnan El-Sayyed Hussein and political and social dignitaries.” The interview that the host of the program conducted with the head of the Denniyeh Union of Municipalities, Mr. Mohammed Saadiyeh, illustrated the other activities undertaken by the Union in the region. There was also a detailed explanation of the content of the agreement in its developmental dimension. The report also presented scenes of the event and excerpts of interviews with the President of the University, the Member of Parliament Mr. Ahmed Fatfat who described the agreement as a “developmental achievement,” and the Member of Parliament Mr. Qassem Hachem who spoke about this “avant-garde initiative to display the civilized image of Denniyeh,” which is “clinging to the homeland” and “far away from the terrorism that some people try to apply to Denniyeh.” The report closed with a few words by former Member of Parliament Mr. Assaad Harmouche who saw in the agreement “a quality leap toward breaking the chain of deprivation of this area which is known as a source of thought and knowledge.”

## **2- *Sada al-Denniyeh* Magazine**

The study selected a regional media institution dedicated to the Denniyeh area, as such an institution is supposed to shed light on the important issues of the area much more than the national press would. So it examined the content of the *Sada al-Denniyeh* magazine. The three issues of the magazine that coincided with the period of our monitoring of the coverage in the national media were studied (January, February and March 2016).<sup>24</sup>

### **a) Contents of the Regional Magazine**

From reading the topics dedicated to Denniyeh in this regional magazine, we can see that it is a cultural and social magazine in general, dealing with various cultural issues (literature, poetry and different publications), educational issues (learning, school programs), health and medical matters (nutrition, plants, cuisine), religious matters (association of the Birthday of the Prophet and Christmas) and historic subjects.

The topics that deal specifically with the Denniyeh area are rather limited compared to other topics as it appears from the following table (Figure 38):

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<sup>24</sup> Issue #13 was studied in its paper format, but issues 14 and 15 were studied in their digital formats. They can be viewed at:

<http://www.sadadaniyeh.com/home/home.php?magnumber=2>

<http://www.sadadaniyeh.com/home/home.php?magnumber=3>

That is why there are no page numbers for the topics in these 2 issues as they do not appear in the digital format

**Figure 38: Contents of the “Sada al-Denniyeh” Magazine**

Issue	Number of Topics	Topics about Denniyeh	Denniyeh Topics with National Dimension
January	36	10	2
February	42	6	2
March	39	6	3

It appears that the majority of the topics dealing with Denniyeh are of no interest to the national media because they are regional matters that are not interesting to the readers of other regions. We will now examine the topics relative to Denniyeh in the three monitored issues:

- January Issue

This was issue Number 13 and there were 36 topics mentioned, of which only 10 dealt with Denniyeh and raised the following issues:

- An investigation about: “Haql Al-Azeemah is a distinct and different village” (p. 18-25);
- “Municipalities in Denniyeh are Part of Lebanon’s History” (p. 26-28);
- “Juniper Reservation in Denniyeh is a National Necessity to Consolidate the Concept of Environmental Tourism” (p. 29);
- “Garbage Treatment in Denniyeh, Primitive Methods and Endangered Resources” (p. 30-31);

- “A Century of Struggle to Obtain Administrative and Political Independence and a Deliberate Coordination to Dissolve the Legal Entity of Denniyeh” (p. 32-34);
- “Offering the Service of Women Empowerment in the Social Welfare Institutions and in the Denniyeh Society for Welfare and Development” (p. 51);
- “The Union of Denniyeh Municipalities Honors Bishop George Abou-Jawdeh” (p. 56);
- “The Union of Denniyeh Municipalities Participates in a Seminar Titled ‘The Challenges of Municipal Action’” (p. 57);
- “The Union of Denniyeh Municipalities Signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Mercy Corps Organization, Maharat Foundation and Peace Labs” (p. 57); and
- “The Youth Sports Club in Syr El-Denniyeh Honors the Players and the Club Champions” (p. 58).

Two of these topics could be considered of national interest: the Juniper reservation and garbage treatment.

- February Issue

This is issue Number 14 and it includes 42 topics, 6 of which dealt with the Denniyeh matters:

- First Director in “Qammamine” to retire;
- The Union of Denniyeh Municipalities Honors El-Bayeh;
- The Union of Denniyeh Municipalities Honors Former Member of Parliament, Mr. Assaad Harmouche, on the Occasion of his Election as Chairman of the Political Committee of the Jamaa Islamiyah;
- Houses and Land of Bqarsouna Village Experience Landslides;

- The Secondary Government School of Syr; and
- Hawwara, the Deserted and Inhabited Village.

In the February issue, there are two topics of national interest: “Houses and Land of Bqarsouna Village Experience Landslides” and “The Honoring of Former MP Mr. Assaad Harmouche by the Union of Denniyeh Municipalities on the Occasion of his Election as Chairman of the Political Committee of the Jamaa Islamiyah.”

- March Issue

There were 39 topics in this issue, 6 of which were about Denniyeh:

- The Village of Kharnoub, the Silent Memory;
- Signing of a Cooperation Agreement between the Union of Denniyeh Municipalities and the Faculty of Engineering in the Lebanese University;
- Syrian Migration to Denniyeh, is it a Burden on the Area or will it Contribute in its Development?
- Lighting (Comment on a Previous Article);
- Social Welfare in the Denniyeh Society for Welfare and Development; and
- Denniyeh, a Guest of the Engineers Syndicate

In the March issue of the magazine, three topics could be considered of national interest: “Signing of a Cooperation Agreement Between the Union of Denniyeh Municipalities and the Faculty of Engineering in the Lebanese University”, “Syrian Migration to Denniyeh, is it a Burden on the Area or will it Contribute in its Development?” and “Denniyeh, a Guest of the Engineers Syndicate.”

## **b) Evaluation of the Regional Coverage**

The stereotype of Denniyeh, especially the security aspect, is not present in the *Sada Denniyeh* magazine. This is not surprising since the purpose of the magazine is to introduce Denniyeh to the readers, present and promote it. However, the positive image of Denniyeh that the magazine is supposed to offer is seldom there. Even the proportion of topics dedicated to Denniyeh is generally very limited compared to the general topics of the magazine (Figure 38) and it does not represent, in the February issue for example, more than one in seven.

Furthermore, the topics selected on Denniyeh are not, for the majority, of a national dimension; this fact does not incite the interest of media persons and readers from outside that area, and it does not put Denniyeh on a national spectrum. Topics such as the Juniper reservation could encourage tourism to the area, and the Syrian refugee topic and its repercussions on the region could generate economic and social discussions at the national level. It could have been possible to shed light on the injustice that befalls this area which would urge the authorities and civil society to try to correct it, such as what happened for the village of Bqarsouna, whose houses and land are subject to mudslides, as reported in the February issue of the magazine.

Most of the topics related to Denniyeh could be classified as public relations, which does not necessarily serve the area and is not part of the developmental information. This kind of coverage indicates two facts:

First: The absence of the concept of developmental information and the lack of use of the regional media as a principal tool in presenting the problems of the area, its needs and the demands of its people.

Second: The absence of important events in the area as well as the absence of large scale projects.

This means that the contents of the magazine confirm the trend followed by the television stations and the national press coverage with regard to the marginalization of this area.

It is to be noted here that Denniyeh is rich with matters that need to be displayed specifically in the field of development that could positively reflect on the economy of that area. The main role of this magazine could be to shed light on the area, on its characteristics and its very rich natural and historic sites, but the Lebanese public does not know them. The stereotype of Denniyeh can only be changed through these types of campaigns.

How many Lebanese know, for instance, the village of Ayoun Al-Samak in the Denniyeh caza? This village is characterized by its green nature, flowing rivers, waterfalls and beautiful views. It also has a 50,000 square meter lake. How many know the village of Sfaira, which has Roman temples that date back more than 2,000 years and is second only to Baalbeck in terms of importance? Who knows the citadel of Bakhaoun or the tower of Fakhreddine dating back to 1618 and many other historic monuments such as what exists in the Syr-al-Denniyeh, Katran, Daraya and Nemrayn villages? Additionally, Denniyeh has the greatest proportion of cedar forests in Lebanon: The Jourd Marbein forest, Jourd El-Ijas forest and Al-Zawareeb forest, among others.

### c) Synopsis of Part III

There is no doubt that the *Maraya Al-Chamal* program does not reflect fairly the image of the Northern regions with regard to its proportion of media coverage and the distribution of other information matters. In fact, the focus is put almost exclusively on Tripoli, followed by the Akkar mohafazat, in a less important measure, while the other areas are almost completely absent.

The same thing applies to the *Sada Al-Denniyeh* magazine, which is in fact supposed to put Denniyeh on the tourist map and present the area. It should also be a forum for development which contributes in breaking the prevalent stereotype of Denniyeh.

Surely, *Maraya Al-Chamal* and *Sada Al-Denniyeh* both play a positive role but there is still a lot more to be done. However, the regional marginalization is not limited to Denniyeh, but it also includes the rest of the cazas and the northern areas.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

After studying the qualitative and quantitative coverage of the Denniyeh area in the television stations and the daily newspapers from February to March 2016, we can make a number of deductions that would allow us to answer the problematic questions we put forth at the beginning of this study:

### **a- Extent of the Interest Shown to the Denniyeh Area**

The Denniyeh area seems to be absent from the occupation of the Lebanese media of any kind. This was evident in the television coverage which dedicated no more than 5 reports to Denniyeh out of 171 that dealt with the North.

The same could be said about the paper press where Denniyeh's share was no more than 12 articles out of a total of 315 articles about the North.

The centralization system implemented in Lebanon explains how local television stations cover events taking place in different regions and their importance. This, in fact, results in a clear marginalization of the issues and problems of remote areas. We therefore clearly notice that 14% of the population in the North – who are the inhabitants of the Minieh-Denniyeh caza- reside in 18.3% of the geographical area of this caza. They barely receive 4% of the media coverage dedicated to the northern regions, while the largest proportion goes to the capital of the North, Tripoli. The proportion for Denniyeh is further reduced if we count only the information matters that cover Denniyeh as a principal subject.

## **b- Stereotypes of Denniyeh**

The image of disturbance and disorder clings to the Denniyeh area since the majority of television coverage of the news about this area deals with security issues. Additionally, a good part of the articles of the paper press focused on this aspect. At the same time, news about social, cultural and other types of activities that can shed a light on another aspect of this region are non-existent.

This security and justice approach constitutes the absolute majority of the information matters that mention Denniyeh, which appears as an outlaw area and outside the control of the state. No distinction is made between its remote peaks and the rest of its villages and townships. Furthermore, dealing with any security issue is always done in a general framework, which further increases the negative image of the area and its people. During our monitoring period, Denniyeh had its share in the issues of the illegal internet, the garbage and the fundamentalist groups aiming to establish an emirate in this region which always appears as the soft underbelly of the North with regard to security.

## **c- Weakness of the Regional Media**

Regional media could have attenuated this negative image of the Denniyeh area because it is closer to the citizens' problems and issues and more capable of shedding light on the numerous characteristics of this area, which is endowed with rich archeology, heritage and nature. However, regional media (of the North) did not pay special attention to this area and fill the gap made by the general national media. It was apparent from the *Maraya al-Chamal* television program and the *Sada al-Denniyeh* magazine that the Denniyeh area does not receive enough attention even from this media and that the subjects dedicated to Denniyeh are secondary. There is an absence from this media on the

topics that could receive some national attention or on those that could shed light on the problems of the area and try to contribute in finding solutions to them. Therefore, it is safe to say that regional media did not succeed in changing the negative image of Denniyeh despite some positive coverage.

The analysis of media coverage of the issues of the Denniyeh area confirm the marginalization of this area. First of all, it is a media marginalization due to the fact that the area does not receive the attention it deserves. Its needs and social situation are absent from the information agenda beside the fact that there is no coverage of its numerous and diverse characteristics.

Moreover, media coverage shows a marginalization of the area from the part of the different authorities; economic and construction projects as well as political activities are completely absent.

Therefore, rectifying the image of Denniyeh and striving to launch developmental projects require efforts from all concerned parties: national media, regional media, civil society organizations and general authorities.

#### **d- Absence of the Media's Developmental Role**

This study showed that the role the media could play as a catalyst in launching regional development projects, especially in the Denniyeh area, was absent.

Accumulated studies and hands-on experiences have shown that “the starting point in developmental media does not lay in creating new ideas or making promises, but in reporting the needs and requirements of the people. This means that communication models, based on transmitting news that do not relate to the immediate interests of

people are bound to fail. Participation resides in determining the needs and in developing a vision for the individuals and groups, and this is in fact the main point of departure for the developmental media. The residents of the area must themselves determine what their problems and vision are in order to find ways of interaction and participation at all levels.”<sup>25</sup>

UNESCO has determined the appropriate environment for developmental media, according to a certain number of rules, including:

- A free media system, which should also be independent and diversified with media responsible toward their public, thus allowing open dialogue and discussion.
- A transparent governance based on responsibility. This should encourage general discussion.
- Accessibility of the public to the media and to the means of communication, allowing all groups to participate in decision making and in discussions related to development projects.<sup>26</sup>

Based on these principles on developmental media, it is clear that Lebanese media is in no way close to playing this role in the Denniyeh area. It also appears that the voice of the people of Denniyeh is totally absent from all kinds of national and regional media. Any discussion about this area, its needs and situation that would be recommended by the principles of developmental media is nonexistent in the monitored media. Additionally, any effort by the media to shed light on the area, improve its image and promote its characteristics is also completely

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<sup>25</sup> “La communication participative pour le développement.” Sous la direction de Guy Bessette. Centre de Recherches pour le Développement International.” Ottawa 2006

<sup>26</sup> “La communication pour le développement. Accroître l’efficacité des Nations Unies.” Auteur principal: Elizabeth McCall. (PNUD, UNICEF, OMS, UNESCO, ILO, FAO, ONUSIDA) 2010 (p. 24)

absent. All this, despite the fact that Lebanese media enjoy broad freedoms and enjoy a rich diversity allowing it to play this role. In fact, national media (newspapers and television) principally promote a negative image of Denniyeh at a time when the voices of the people of Denniyeh are absent and any expression of its needs and the real orientations of its people are absent as well.

From these results, we can safely deduce that the area of Denniyeh is the victim of negative media coverage and of the absence of media dealing with its issues and problems in order to achieve the development that it needs.