

Media Uses and Polarization

During the 2026 Israeli War on Lebanon



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Study Link:

www.areacore.org/research/war-on-lebanon

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Executive Summary

The study explores media uses during the 2026 Israeli war on Lebanon. It aims to examine the media platforms and news sources Lebanese prioritize and trust during wars and their political attitudes toward the conflict. The purpose is to understand the role of media in contributing to political polarization. The study uses a cross-sectional nationally representative survey with a sample size of 1,000 participants and a $\pm 3.1\%$ margin of error (See Methodology).

Media Uses and Trust in News Sources (Details Section A)

- **Primacy of Mobile, Social Media, and WhatsApp, Retreat of TV:** We examined the media technologies and news sources used for the war news. For the first time since we started media uses surveys in 2013, television fell behind, while mobile phones, social media, especially WhatsApp, emerged as top sources and platforms for war news, while radio almost disappeared.
 - ⇒ **Mobile versus TV versus Radio:** To access the war news, 73% of people used mobile phones, 63% used television sets, and 2% used radio.
 - ⇒ **Social Media and WhatsApp versus TV:** For main news platforms, 59% relied on WhatsApp, 41% relied on other social media, and only 38% relied on television.
 - ⇒ **Trusting TV vs Social Media:** Audiences trusted social media and television almost equally (31% vs 29%), while trust in WhatsApp news came in third place (16%).
 - ⇒ **Top TV Channels:** Al-Jadeed came in first place as a television news source for the war (42%), followed by MTV (28%), Al Jazeera (18%), and LBCI (15%).
 - ⇒ **Top Social Media:** Within social media platforms, WhatsApp channels had the largest audience (61%), followed by Facebook (38%), Instagram (17%) and TikTok (15%).
- **Many Follow, Most Don't Post:** We examined how much people follow the war news and post/share about it on social media. Although the majority (50%) followed the news *continuously* or *very closely*, the vast majority (82%) never posted or shared about it on social media.
 - ⇒ For the very few who posted and shared, the majority used WhatsApp (53%), followed by Facebook (22%), Instagram (14%), and TikTok (7%).
- **Comparing Media Uses Across Age Groups:** The findings confirm a generational split.
 - ⇒ **Age and Media Technology:** Younger audiences were more likely to get the war news from WhatsApp and social media, while older audiences tended to get it from television.
 - ⇒ **Age and Social Media:** Within social media, younger audiences were more likely to follow news on WhatsApp and Instagram, while older audiences tended to use Facebook.
 - ⇒ **The Young Do Post:** The Youngest audiences (<25) were the most likely to post or share news about the war on social media, while the oldest (>54) were the least likely to do so.

Political Attitudes Toward the War and Polarization (Details Section B)

- **Despite Divisions, Israel Remains the Enemy:** We examined political attitudes by asking participants to rate whether they agree or disagree with statements about the war, including statements about enmity toward Israel, the USA, and Iran; about diplomacy versus armed resistance as paths to liberation; whether they support a peace agreement with Israel or destroying Israel; and whether they believe liberating Palestine is their duty.
 - ⇒ **Enmity toward Israel versus USA versus Iran:** The vast majority (87%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that “Israel is my enemy,” followed by a majority (51%) who felt the USA is their enemy, and slightly over a third (38%) felt the same toward Iran.
 - ⇒ **Diplomacy vs Armed Resistance:** The majority (54%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that “diplomacy is the only way to liberate Lebanon,” while a third (35%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that “armed resistance is the only way to liberate Lebanon.”
 - ⇒ **War and Peace:** A majority (51%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that “we must destroy Israel,” while a third (34%) felt the same toward “signing a peace agreement with Israel.”
 - ⇒ **Liberating Palestine:** Almost a majority (47%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that “liberating Palestine is our duty,” while over a third (39%) believed that “we have nothing to do with liberating Palestine.”

Comparing Political Attitudes Across Media and Religion (Details Sections C and D)

- **Political Attitudes Across Media Channels:** We compared the political attitudes across the television channels by calculating the average score for each channel's audience (values closer to 5 reflect agreement while values closer to 1 reflect disagreement with the political statements).
 - ⇒ **Enmity Toward Israel Constant, Fluctuates for USA, Iran:** Enmity toward Israel is high for all audiences (4.7/5) but slightly dips for MTV and LBCI audiences (4.4/5). For the USA, enmity fluctuates but remains high overall (3.5/5), with a dip for Al Hadath, OTV, and MTV audiences (3.0-3.2/5) and a jump for Al Manar and Al Mayadeen audiences (4.0-4.4/5). For Iran, enmity fluctuates more but remains low overall (2.8/5), with spikes for Al Arabiya, MTV, and Al Hadath audiences (3.6-3.8/5) and dips for NBN, Al Manar and Al Mayadeen audiences (1.6-2.0/5).
 - ⇒ **Diplomacy vs Armed Resistance:** Audiences of Al Hadath, MTV, Al Arabiya, LBCI, OTV, Al Jazeera and Al Jadeed are more likely to agree with diplomacy and disagree with armed resistance, and vice versa for those of Al Mayadeen, NBN and Al Manar.
 - ⇒ **War and Peace:** Audiences of Al Hadath, MTV, LBCI, and Al Arabiya are more likely to agree with the peace accord and disagree with destroying Israel, while audiences of Al Jazeera, Al Jadeed, Al Mayadeen, OTV, NBN and Al Manar have the opposite attitudes.
 - ⇒ **Liberating Palestine:** Audiences of MTV, LBCI and Al Hadath are more likely to disagree that liberating Palestine is their duty and more likely to agree that they have nothing to do with liberating Palestine, while those of Al Arabiya, Al Jadeed, Al Jazeera, Al Mayadeen, NBN and Al Manar reflect opposite attitudes.
- **Political Attitudes Across Religions:** We compared the political attitudes across religions, particularly Sunnis, Shia, and Christians.
 - ⇒ **Enmity Toward Israel Constant, Fluctuates for USA, Iran:** Enmity toward Israel remains high across all religions, hitting peak with Shia (4.8/5) and Sunnis (4.7/5) and dipping slightly with Christians (4.2/5). Enmity toward the USA also remains relatively high across all religions and dips with Christians (3.9 Shia, 3.6 Sunnis, 2.9 Christians). However, enmity toward Iran dips considerably among Shia (1.8) and increases among Sunnis (3.3) and Christians (4.0), although for Sunnis it remains lower than their enmity toward the USA and Israel. Similarly, Christian enmity is higher toward Israel than Iran.
 - ⇒ **Christian and Sunni Diplomacy vs Shia Armed Resistance:** Shia audiences are more likely to disagree with diplomacy and agree with armed resistance, while Sunni and Christian audiences are more likely to reflect the opposite attitudes.
 - ⇒ **Sunni and Shia War vs Christian Peace:** Sunni and Shia audiences are less likely to agree with a peace agreement and more likely to agree with destroying Israel, while Christian audiences reflect opposite attitudes.
 - ⇒ **A Three-Way Split on Liberating Palestine:** Sunnis are more likely to agree that liberating Palestine is their duty and less likely to agree that they have nothing to do with liberating Palestine, while Christians reflect the opposite attitudes, and Shia tend to equally agree with both statements.
- **TV Audiences and Religion:** We analyzed the religious make up of each TV channel's Lebanese audience and examined their diversity.
 - ⇒ **Channel's Sectarian Identity:** Most channels' audiences reflect a sectarian identity.
 - **Majority Sunni Channels:** Al Arabiya (61%), Al Hadath (56%), Al Jadeed (52%), and Al Jazeera (51%) had predominantly Sunni viewers during the war.
 - **Majority Shia Channels:** NBN (63%) and Al Mayadeen (56%) had predominantly Shia viewers during the 2026 Israeli war on Lebanon.
 - **Majority Christian Channels:** LBCI (49%), MTV (46%) and OTV (42%) had predominantly Christian viewers during the 2026 Israeli war on Lebanon.
 - ⇒ **Curious Channels:** Although Al Manar is Hezbollah's official channel, only one-third of its viewers were Shia (33%), and an almost equal percentage of views were Sunni (29%).
 - ⇒ **Audience Diversity:** Al Manar and OTV had the most diverse viewers from a religious composition stance, while NBN, Al Arabiya, Al Hadath and MTV had the least diverse audiences during the 2026 Israeli war on Lebanon.

Comparing Political Attitudes Across Income and Age (Details Sections E and F)

- **Political Attitudes Across Income Levels:** We compared the political attitudes between those of low to middle income (<\$2,000) and those of high income (≥\$2,000), and found major differences between them across all political attitudes.
 - ⇒ **Israel and USA vs Iran – Rich vs Poor:** Although attitudes of enmity toward Israel remained high for both income levels, it dipped among high income audiences (4.1/5) compared to low/middle income audiences (4.7/5). Similarly, enmity toward the USA dipped significantly among high income audiences (2.4/5) and increased among the low/middle income viewers (3.6/5). In contrast, enmity toward Iran dipped for the low/middle income (3.0/5) and increased among high income audiences (3.4/5).
 - ⇒ **Rich Diplomacy vs Poor Armed Resistance:** High income audiences were more likely to agree with diplomacy and less likely to agree with armed resistance, while low/middle income audiences reflected the opposite attitudes.
 - ⇒ **The Rich Want Peace, The Poor Want War:** Low/middle income audiences are less likely to agree with a peace accord with Israel and more likely to agree with destroying Israel, while those of high income reflected the opposite attitudes.
 - ⇒ **Liberating Palestine:** low/middle income audiences were more likely to agree that liberating Palestine is their duty and less likely to agree that they have nothing to do with liberating Palestine, while high income viewers carried the opposite attitudes.
- **Political Attitudes Across Age Groups:** We compared the political attitudes across age groups and found major differences between them across all political attitudes and media uses.
 - ⇒ **Israel and USA vs Iran – Old vs Young:** Enmity toward Israel is constantly high across all age groups (4.5-4.7). However, the youngest audiences (<25) carried considerably higher enmity levels toward the USA (3.9) compared to the older audiences (3.3-3.6). In contrast, the younger groups harbored less enmity toward Iran (2.8-2.9) compared to the older audiences (3.0-3.3).
 - ⇒ **Old Diplomacy vs Young Armed Resistance:** The young are less likely to agree with diplomacy as the only path to liberate Lebanon and more likely to agree with armed resistance as the only path, compared to old audiences, who had the opposite attitudes.
 - ⇒ **The Wrath of Youth vs the Elderly's Peace:** The younger audiences were, the less likely they were to agree with a peace agreement with Israel, and the more likely they were to agree with destroying Israel, and vice versa.
 - ⇒ **Liberating Palestine:** Younger generations are more likely to view that liberating Palestine is their duty and less likely to agree that they have nothing to do with liberating Palestine, compared to the older generations who tended to agree with the opposite.

Analyzing Polarization in Lebanese Society (Section G)

To understand polarization in Lebanese society, we analyzed the audiences based on their political attitudes, religions and income levels, combined. Three distinct groups emerged:

- **Group 1: Sunni-Christian middle class, anti resistance, pro peace, maybe pro Palestine.** This group is mainly Christian and Sunni, has middle to high income, is relatively opposed to armed resistance and to destroying Israel, and strongly supportive of diplomacy and a peace agreement.
- **Group 2: Christian (and some Shia) upper class, resistance and peace are both fine, but I don't care for Palestine.** This group is mainly Christian along with some Shia, has high income, is not keen on destroying Israel, strongly disagrees that liberating Palestine is their duty. Some in this groups support a peace agreement with Israel but also some support armed resistance against Israel.
- **Group 3: Diverse pro resistance, no diplomacy, no peace, no Israel, and free Palestine.** This group includes all religions and income levels, believes Israel is their enemy and should be destroyed, and supports armed resistance and that liberating Palestine is their duty. The group is opposed to diplomacy and to a peace agreement.

Detailed Findings

The findings are divided into six sections. The first two sections present the overall results for media uses and political attitudes, respectively. The third section compares the political attitudes across different TV audiences, while the fourth section compares the political attitudes across religious groups, in addition to analyzing the religious composition of each TV channel and its diversity. Section five compares the political attitudes across income levels, and section six compares them across age groups, in addition to providing social media trends across age groups.

Section A: Trends in Media Uses During the 2026 War

This section presents the overall trends in media uses during the 2026 war.

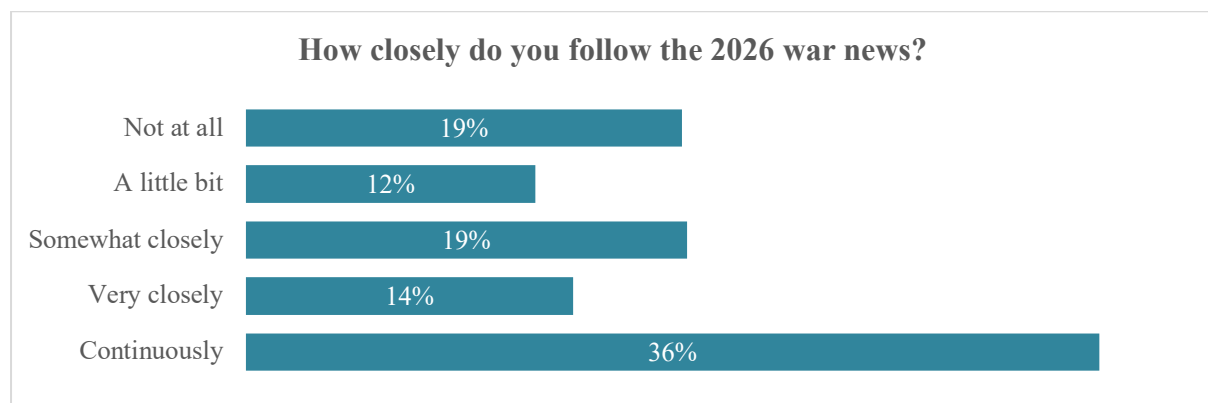


Figure 1: Following the 2026 war news

Figure 1 shows that half the participants (50%) follow the war news either continuously or very closely, while a third (31%) follow it a little bit or somewhat closely. A fifth (19%) do not follow the 2026 war news at all.

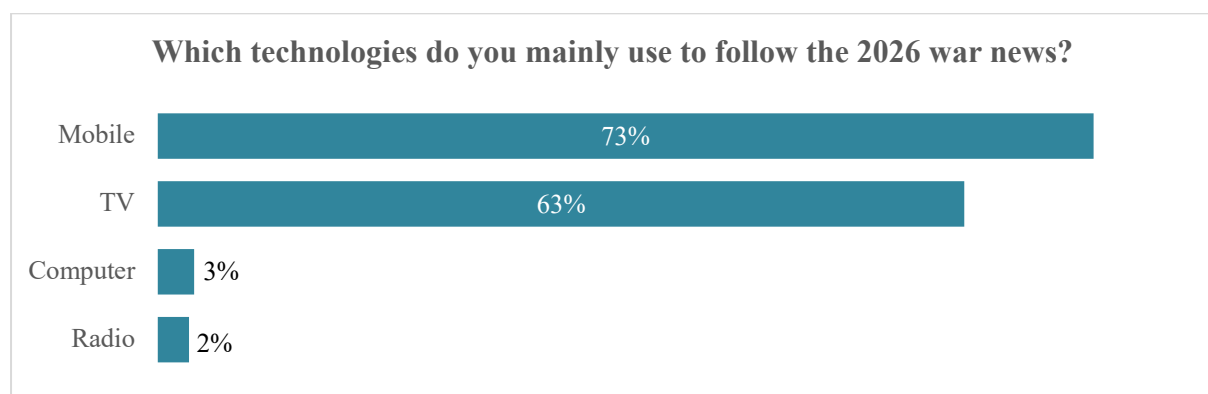


Figure 2: Media technologies used to follow news about the 2026 war

Figure 2 shows that mobile outpaces television by 10% when it comes to the media technologies audiences mainly use to follow the war news, while computers and radio lag significantly behind, barely capturing 5% of the audience (combined).

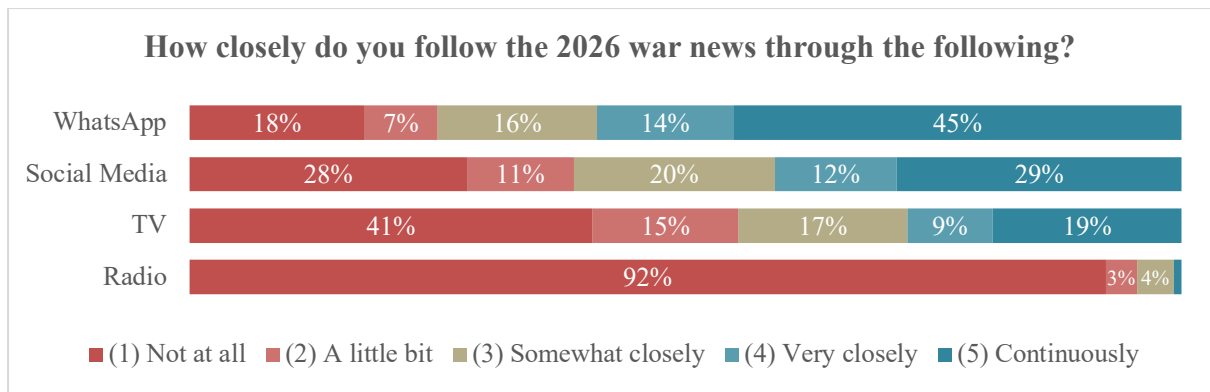


Figure 3: Following news about the 2026 war via specific media

Figure 3 shows that WhatsApp is by far the number one source of news for the 2026 war, followed by social media, while television significantly lagged behind, and radio registered a negligible 1%. Indeed, 59% of audiences said they follow WhatsApp channels and groups *very closely* or *continuously*, while 41% said the same for social media, and 38% for television.

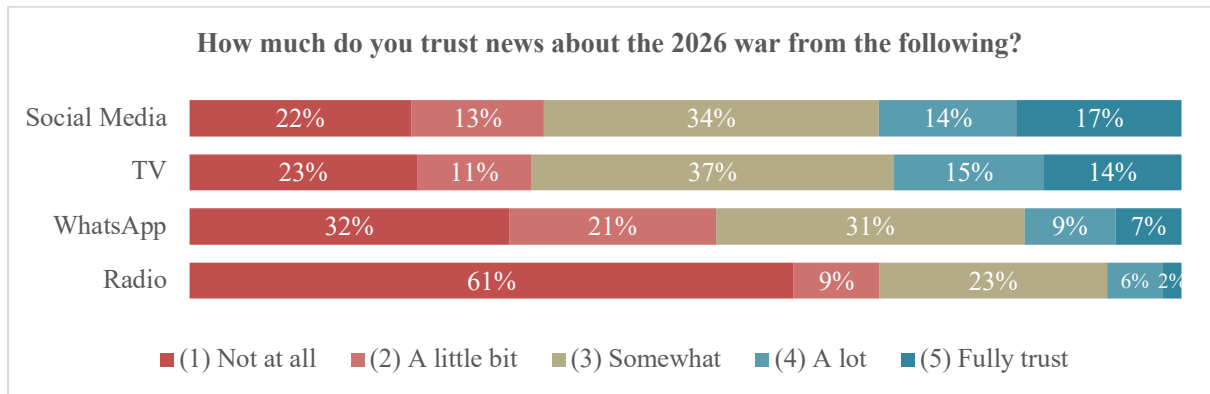


Figure 4: Trusting news about the 2026 war from specific media

Figure 4 shows that audiences trusted (*fully* or *a lot*) social media (31%) and television (29%) almost at the same level, while WhatsApp came in third place (16% trusted it *a lot* or *fully*). Only 8% trusted radio at that level.

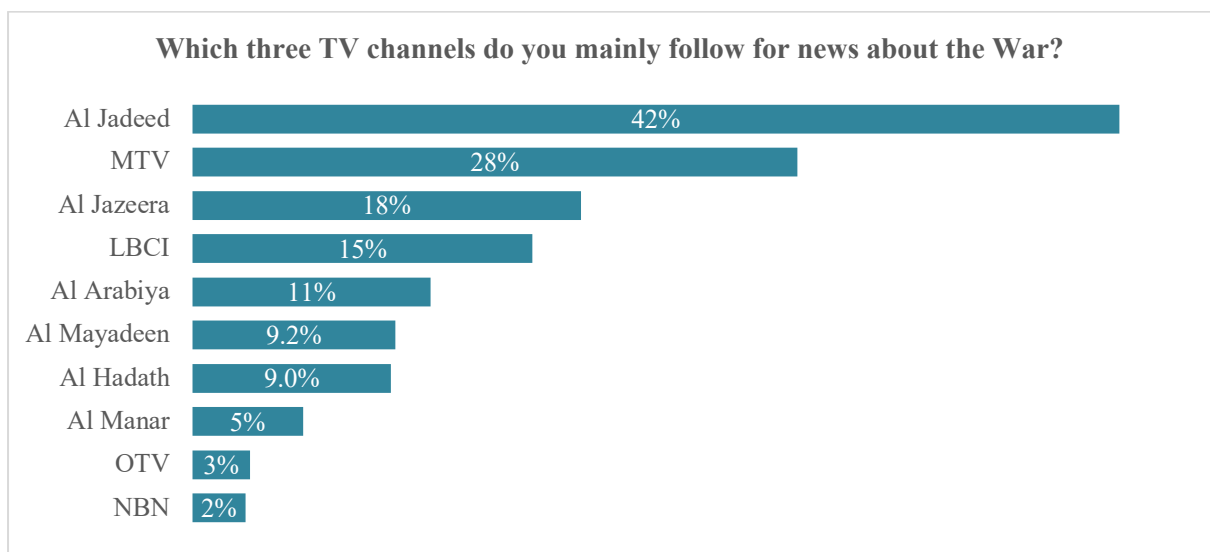


Figure 5: The main three TV channels followed for news about the 2026 war

Figure 5 shows that Al Jadeed, MTV and Al Jazeera were the top three TV channels during the war, although TV has significantly dropped compared to other media. Audiences picked the main three channels they followed without the researcher mentioning their names.

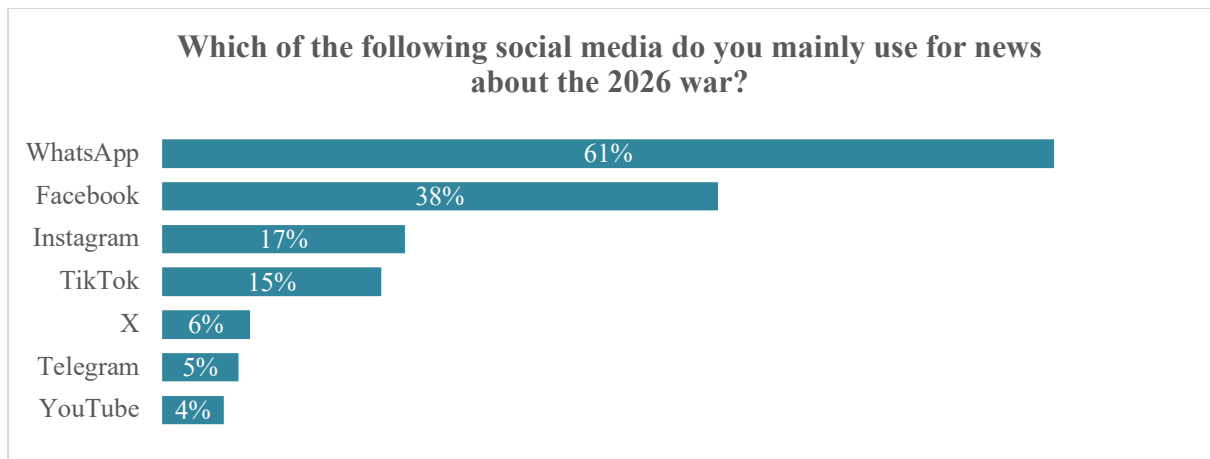


Figure 6: Top social media platforms used to follow news about the 2026 war

Figure 6 shows that WhatsApp news channels and groups outpaced all other social media platforms, followed by Facebook. Instagram and TikTok almost tied for third place, while X, Telegram and YouTube lagged behind.

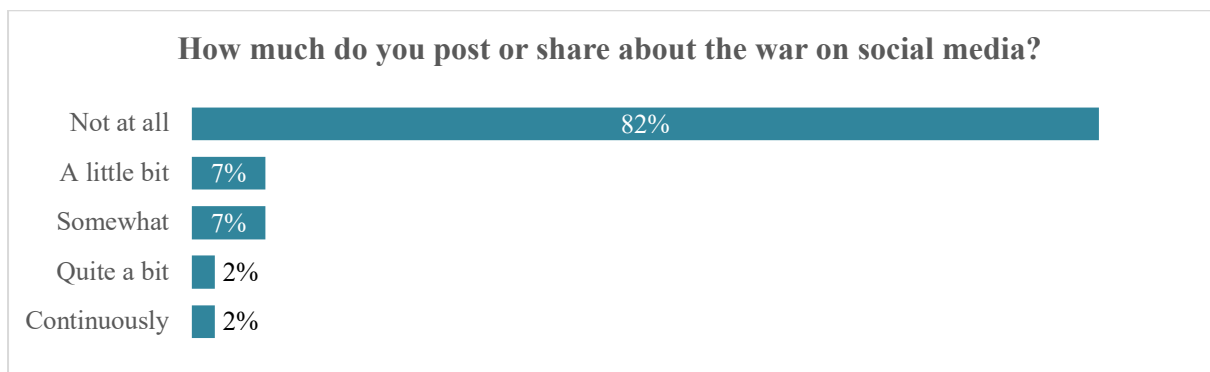


Figure 7: Social media posting and sharing about the 2026 war

Figure 7 shows that the vast majority of audiences (82%) never post or share about the 2026 war on social media, while only 4% post and share *continuously* or *quite a bit*.

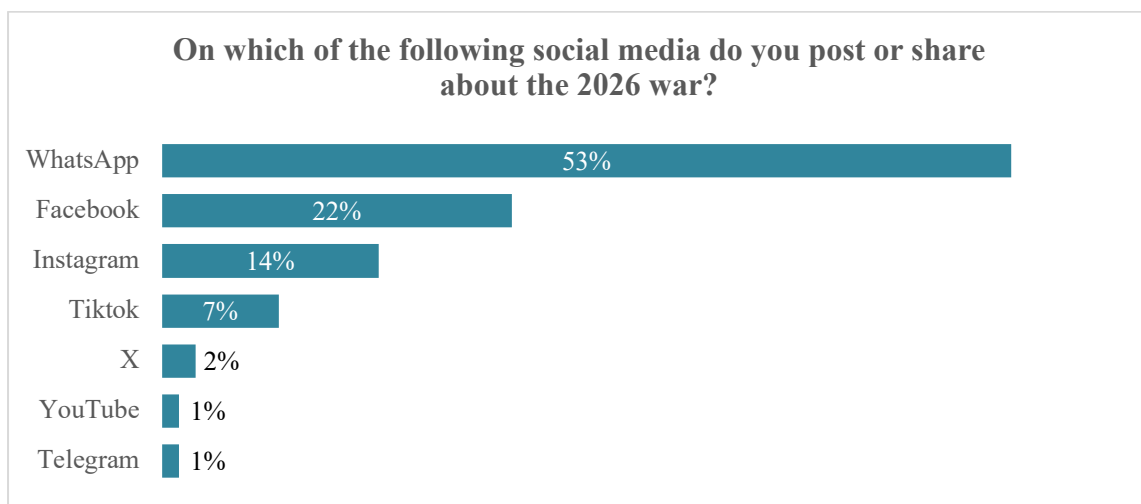


Figure 8: Social media posting and sharing trends

Figure 8 shows that WhatsApp again came in first place for posting or sharing news about the 2026 war, followed distantly by Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, while X, YouTube and Telegram registered less than 5% of the audience, combined. However, as shown in the previous figure, the vast majority of audiences never post on social media. So, the results barely represent 18% of audiences.

Section B: Political Attitudes During the 2026 War

We asked audiences about their political attitudes toward divisive matters during the war. We intentionally selected radical statement to capture polarization and division in society. The study aimed to measure political attitude, which is more enduring and stable and often influences behavior and is less influenced by the media, rather than political opinions, which tends to be more fleeting, volatile, and more influenced by the media.

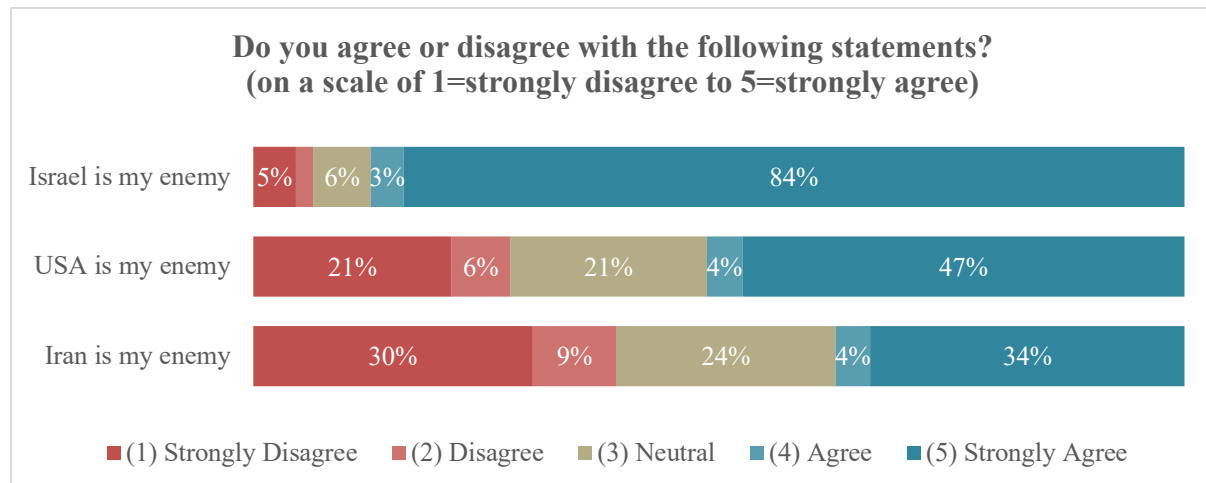


Figure 9: Attitudes of enmity toward Israel, USA and Iran

Figure 9 shows that the vast majority of Lebanese (87%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that Israel is their enemy, while 51% *agree* or *strongly agree* that the US is their enemy, and 38% *agree* or *strongly agree* that Iran is their enemy. In contrast, only 8% *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that Israel is their enemy, 27% feel the same toward the USA, and 39% feel the same toward Iran.

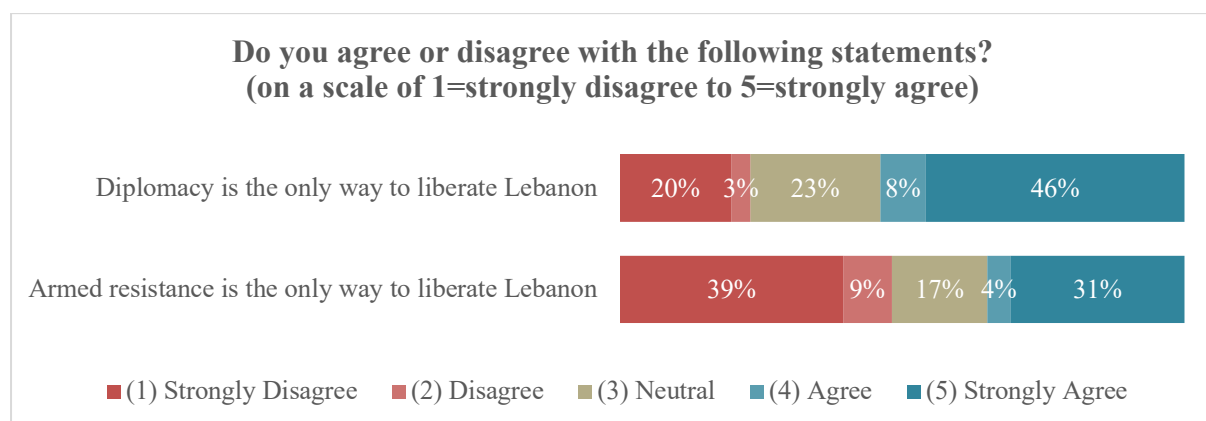


Figure 10: Attitudes toward diplomacy versus armed resistance

Figure 10 shows 54% *agree* or *strongly agree* that diplomacy is the only way to liberate Lebanon, while 35% feel the same toward armed resistance. In contrast, 23% *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with diplomacy, and 48% feel the same toward armed resistance.

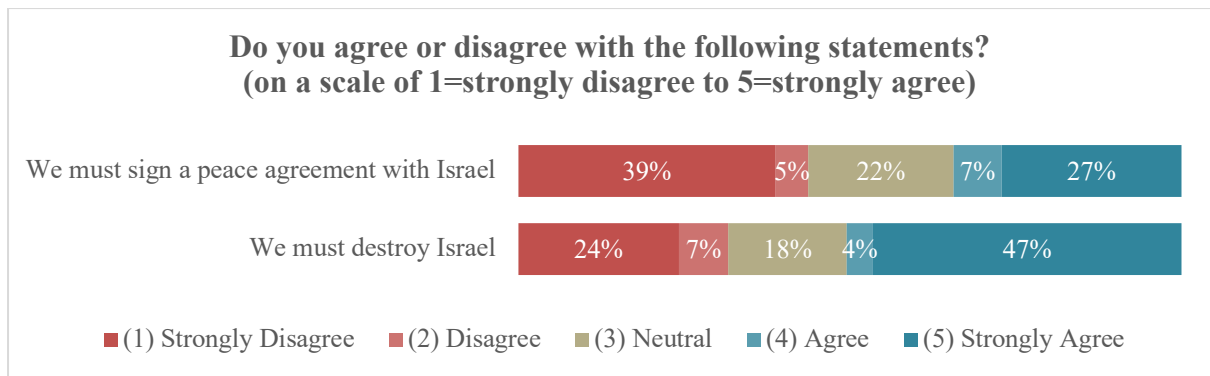


Figure 11: Attitudes toward peace accord with Israel versus destroying Israel

Figure 11 shows that 34% *agree* or *strongly agree* that Lebanon should sign a peace agreement with Israel, while 51% feel the same toward destroying Israel. In contrast, 44% *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with the peace agreement, while 31% feel the same toward destroying Israel.

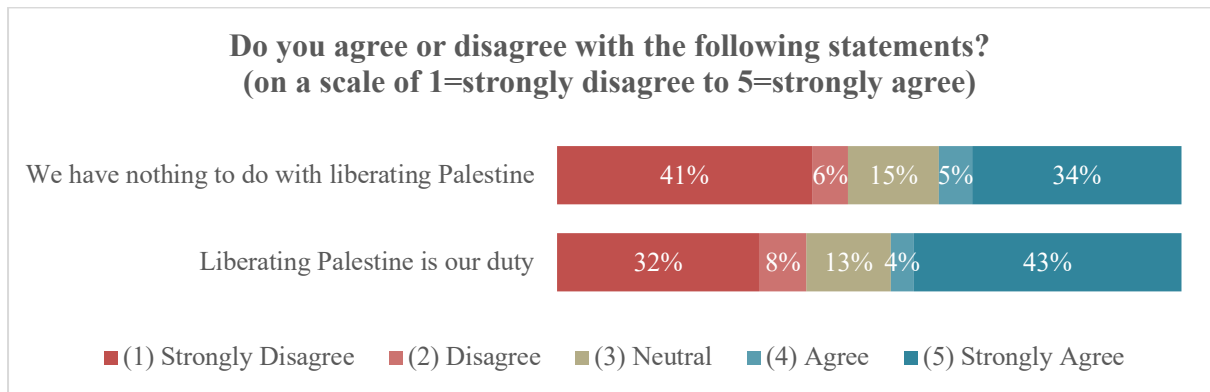


Figure 12: Attitudes toward the liberation of Palestine

Figure 12 shows that 47% of Lebanese *agree* or *strongly agree* that liberating Palestine is their duty, while 39% *agree* or *strongly agree* that they have nothing to do with liberating Palestine. In contrast, 40% *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that liberating Palestine is their duty, while 47% *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that they have nothing to do with liberating Palestine.

Section C: Political Attitudes According to TV Audiences

This section compares the previously presented political attitudes across the TV channels people mainly follow for news about the 2026 war. All scores are averages based on a 5-point scale.

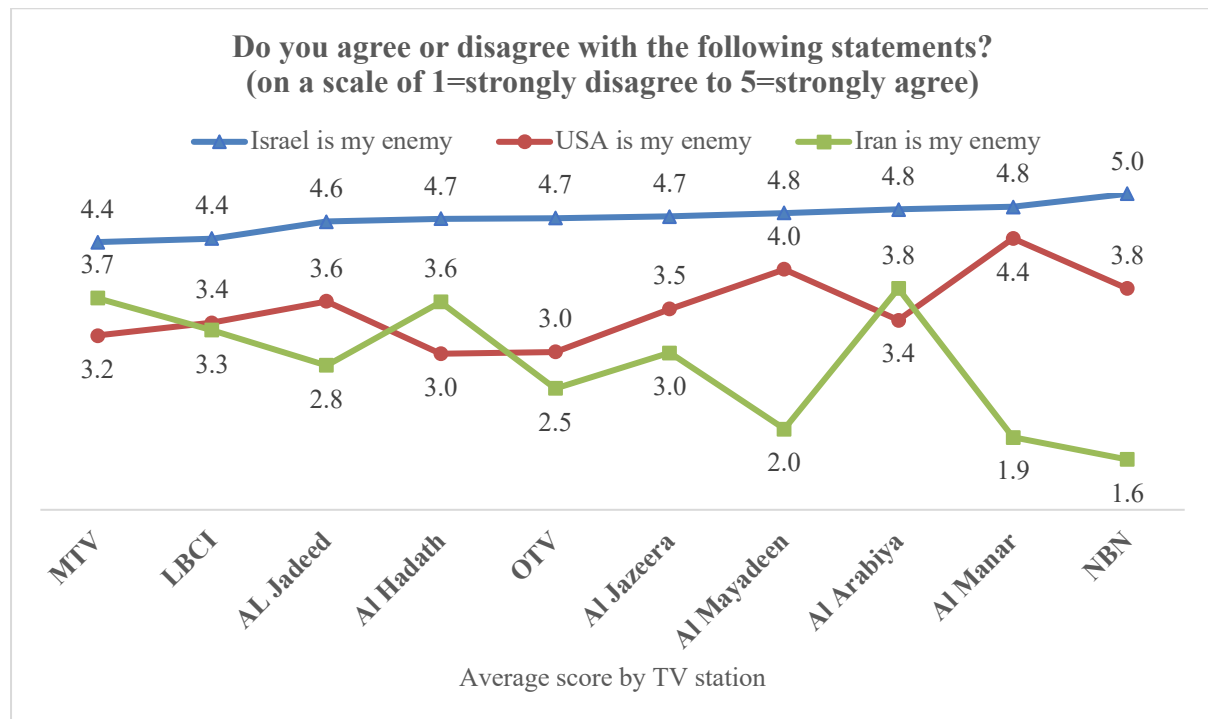


Figure 13: Political attitudes across TV channels watched during the 2026 war

Figure 13 shows attitudes of enmity toward Israel remain high across all TV audiences but tend to be slightly lower with MTV and LBCI. While attitudes of enmity toward the USA vary considerably from one channel to another but remain high overall, with audiences of Al Hadath, OTV, and MTV registering the lowest levels (3.0-3.2/5) and audiences of Al Manar and Al Mayadeen registering the highest (4.0-4.4/5). Attitudes of enmity toward Iran fluctuate more significantly but remain lower in general, with audiences of Al Arabiya, MTV, and Al Hadath registering the highest levels of enmity (3.6-3.8/5), and audiences of NBN, Al Manar and Al Mayadeen registering the lowest (1.6-2.0/5).

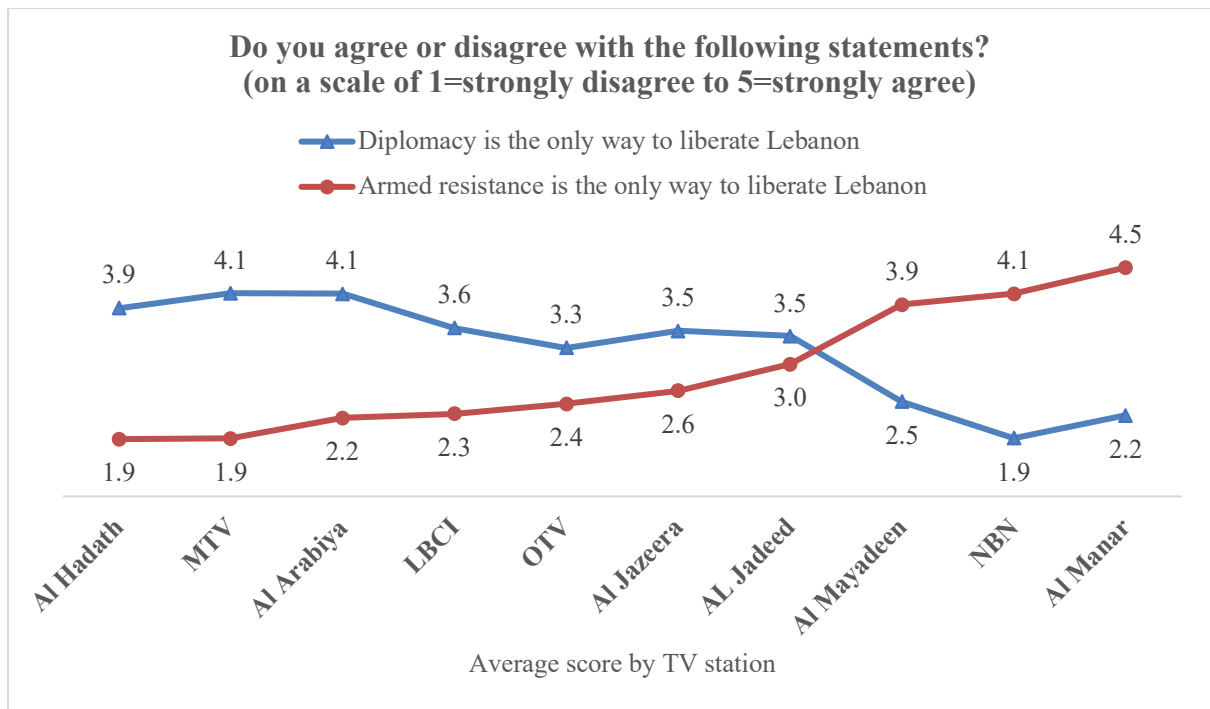


Figure 14: Political attitudes across TV channels watched during the 2026 war

Figure 14 shows two groups of audiences. While those who follow Al Hadath, MTV, Al Arabiya, LBCI, OTV, Al Jazeera and Al Jadeed are more likely to agree with diplomacy as the only way to liberate Lebanon and disagree with armed resistance, audiences of Al Mayadeen, NBN and Al Manar reflect the exact opposite tendencies.

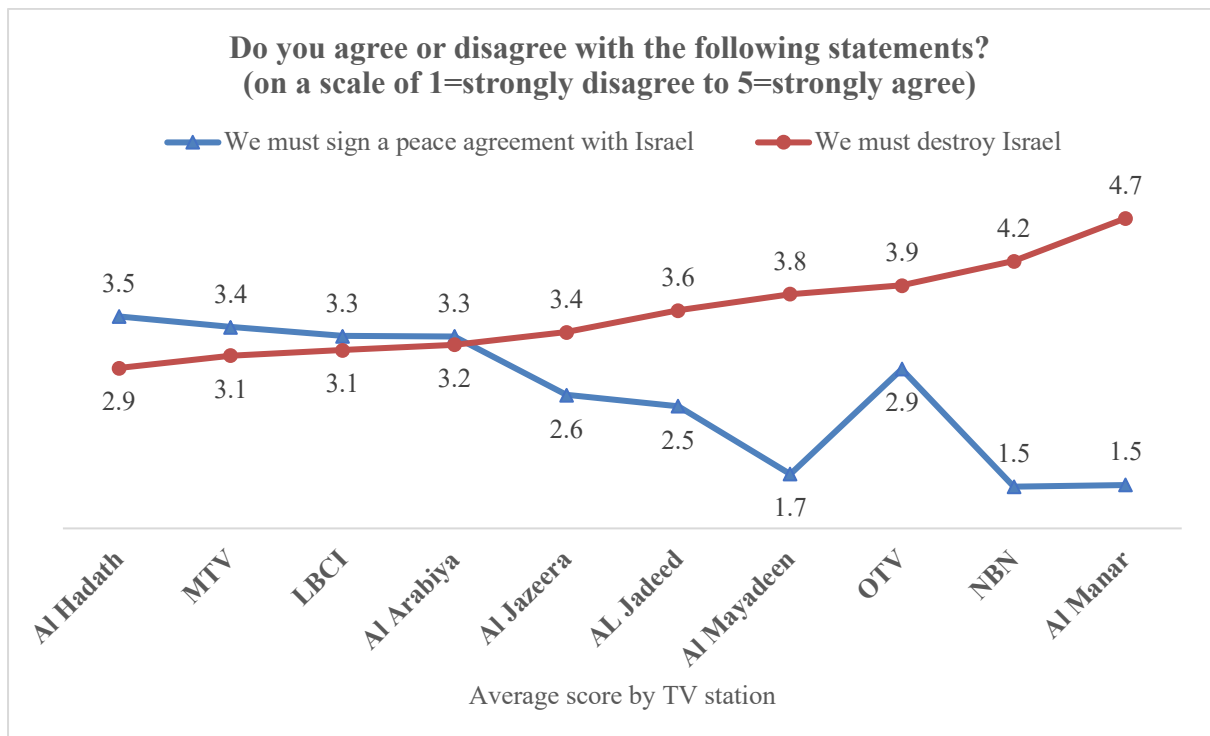


Figure 15: Political attitudes across TV channels watched during the 2026 war

Figure 15 also shows a clear split between two audiences. While those who follow Al Hadath, MTV, LBCI, and Al Arabiya are more likely to agree with signing a peace agreement with Israel and disagreeing with destroying Israel (although the differences are slight), audiences of Al Jazeera, Al Jadeed, Al Mayadeen, OTV, NBN and Al Manar carry opposite tendencies and are more likely to agree with destroying Israel and disagree with the peace accord.

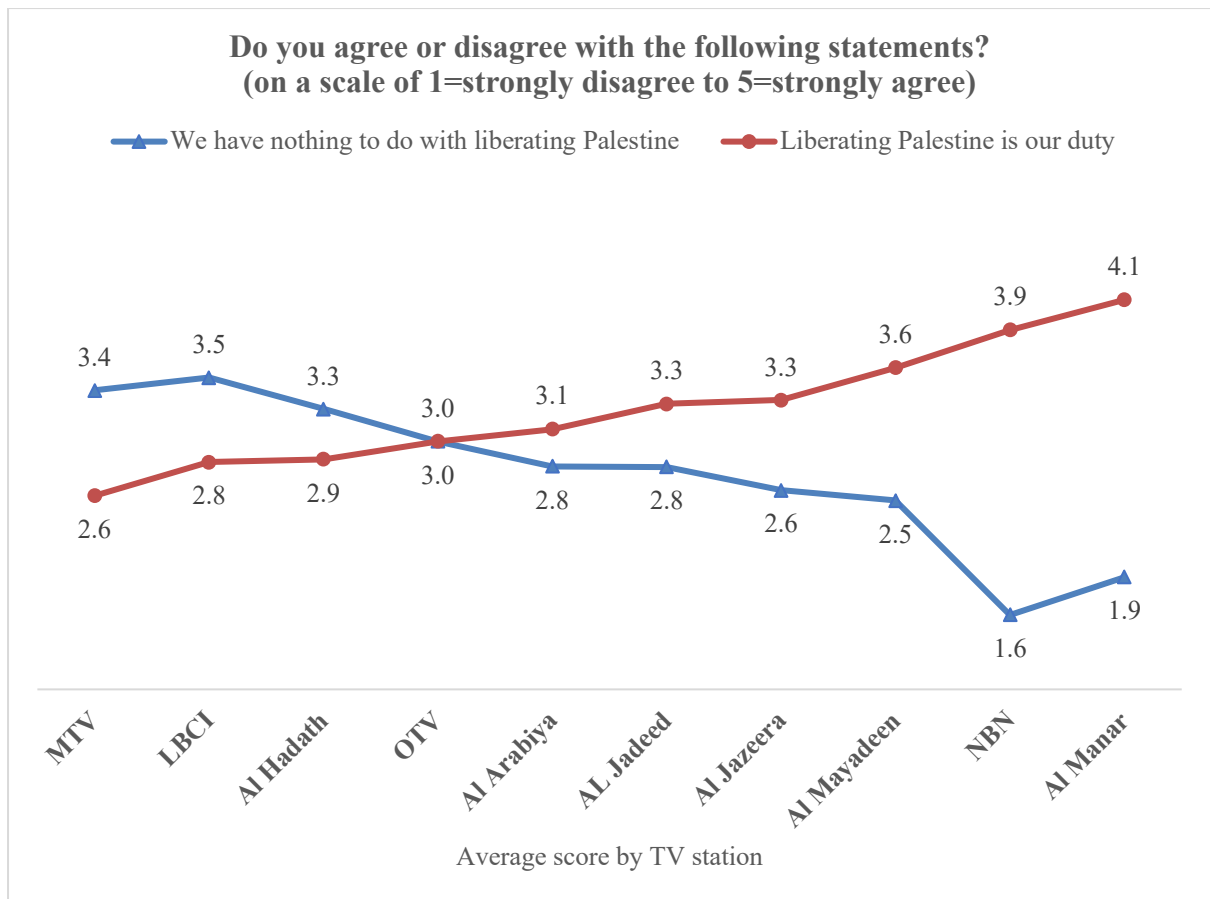


Figure 16: Political attitudes across TV channels watched during the 2026 war

Consistently, Figure 16 shows a similar split between audiences. While those that follow MTV, LBCI and Al Hadath are more likely to disagree that liberating Palestine is their duty and more likely to agree that they have nothing to do with liberating Palestine, audiences of Al Arabiya, Al Jadeed, Al Jazeera, Al Mayadeen, NBN and Al Manar carry opposite tendencies. OTV audiences tend to lead toward neutrality on both statements.

Section D: Political Attitudes According to Religion and Media Uses

This section compares the same political attitudes across religion and maps the religious composition and sectarian diversity of each TV station's audience during the 2026 Israeli war on Lebanon. Due to the small numbers in other groups and Druze audiences, we combined them together and kept them in the charts, although their values are not sufficiently robust to validly interpret.

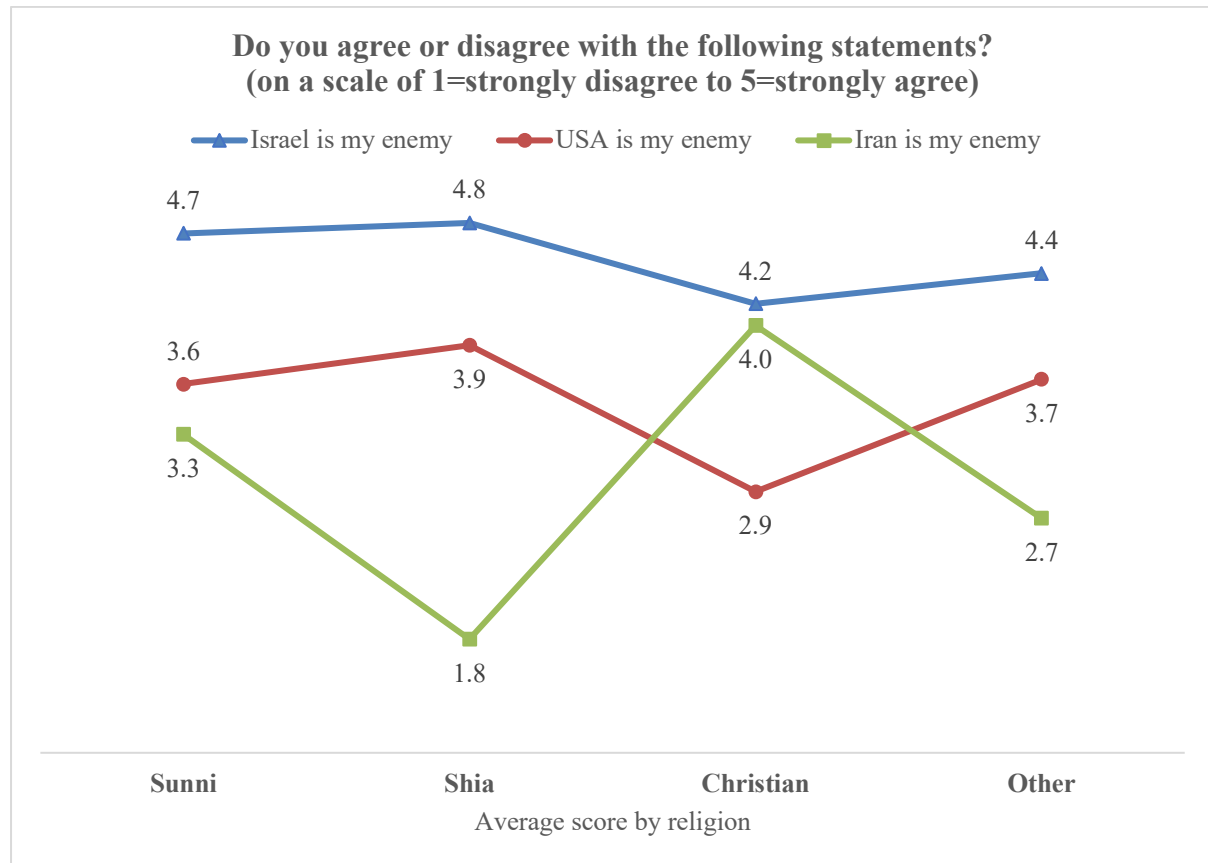


Figure 17: Political attitudes across religions

Figure 17 shows that enmity toward Israel remains high across all religious groups and dips slightly among Christian audiences. Similarly, enmity toward the USA remains relatively high across all religions and dips among Christians, while enmity toward Iran dips considerably among Shia Muslim audiences and increases among Sunni Muslim and Christian audiences, although it remains lower for Sunnis than their enmity toward the USA and Israel. Similarly, Christian audience's enmity toward Israel is higher than that toward Iran.

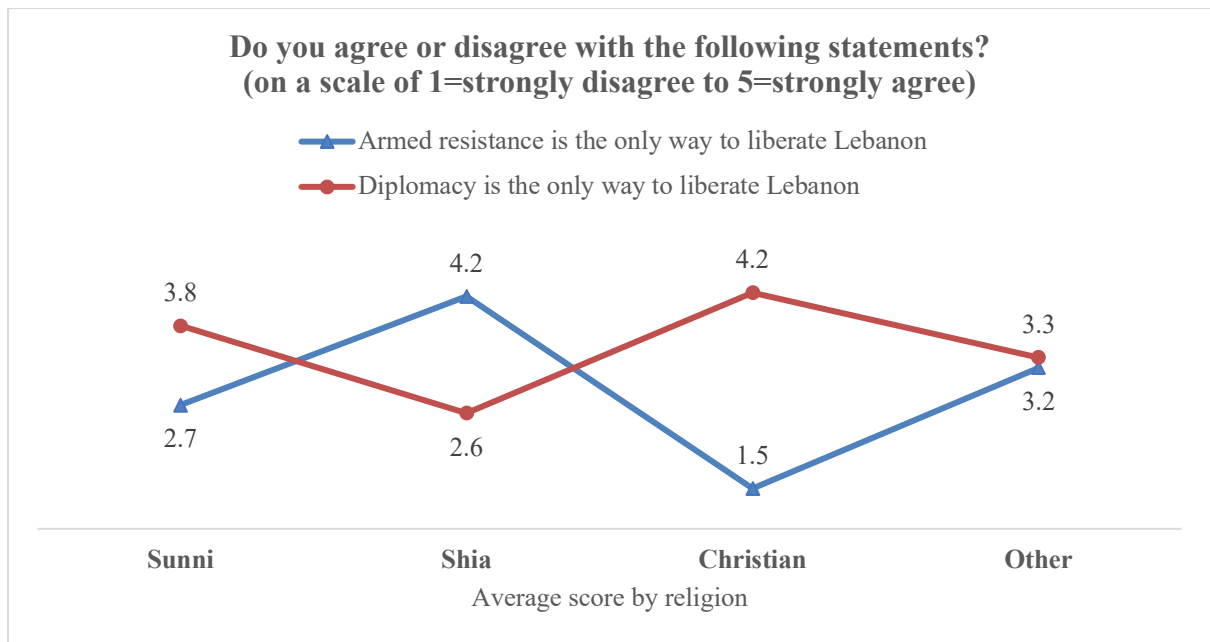


Figure 18: Political attitudes across religions

Figure 18 shows a split between Shia Muslim audiences, on one hand, and Sunni Muslim and Christian audiences, on the other hand: While Shia audiences are more likely to disagree that diplomacy is the only way to liberate Lebanon and agree that armed resistance is the only way to liberate Lebanon, Sunni and Christian audiences reflect the opposite tendencies, although the difference among Christians is larger than that among Sunnis.

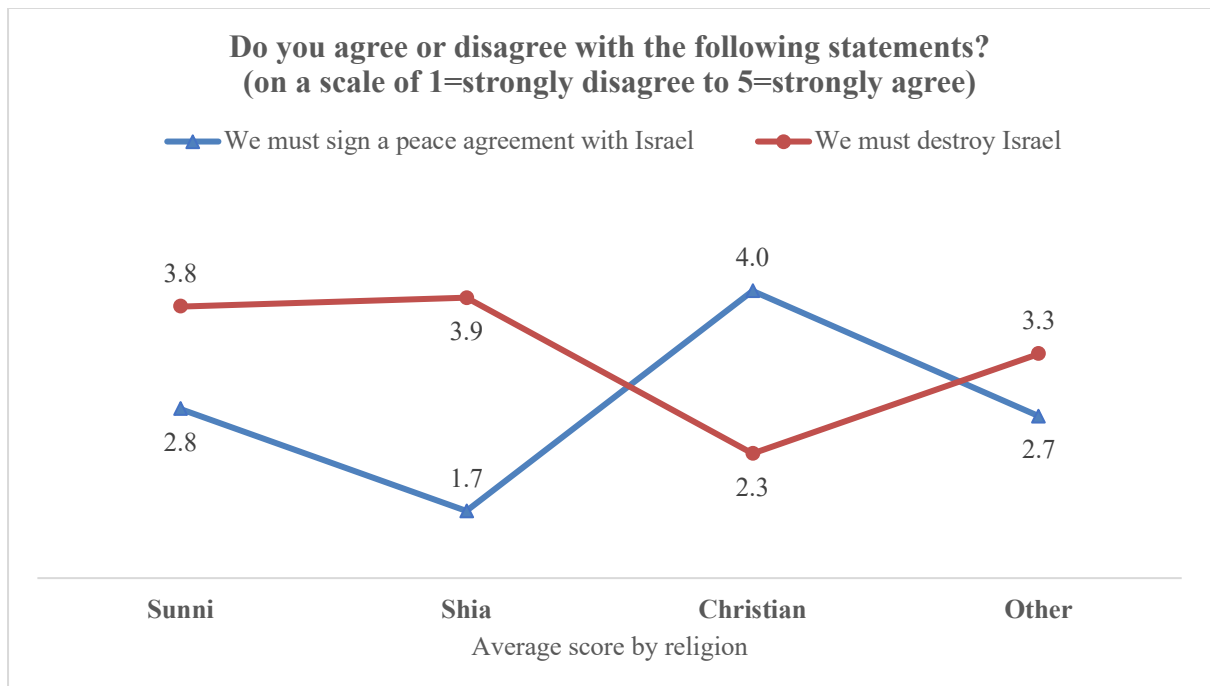


Figure 19: Political attitudes across religions

Figure 19 shows a different split between audiences: This time Shia and Sunni audiences are in one group, while Christians are in the other. Sunni and especially Shia audiences are less likely to agree with signing a peace agreement with Israel and both are equally more likely to agree with destroying Israel, while Christian audiences carry opposite tendencies.

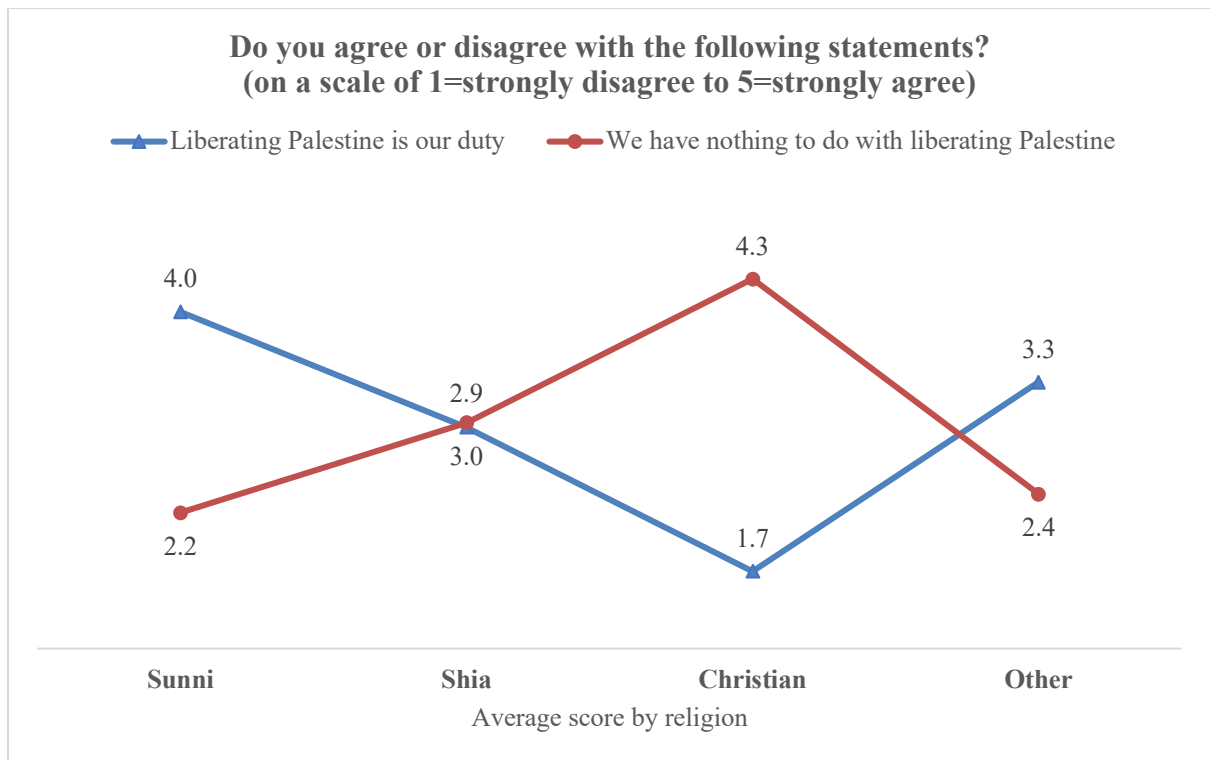


Figure 20: Political attitudes across religions

Figure 20 shows a three-way divide, as Sunni audiences are more likely to agree that liberating Palestine is their duty and less likely to agree that they have nothing to do with liberating Palestine, while Christian audiences reflect opposite tendencies. As for Shia audiences, they tend to lean towards neutrality on both statements.

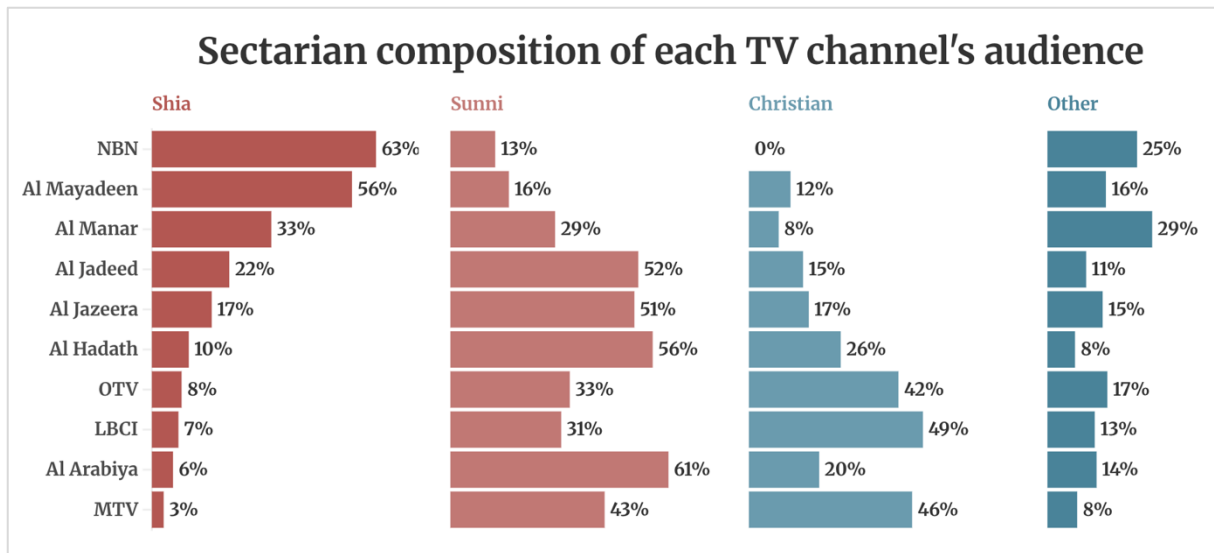


Figure 21: TV channel audiences based on religion

Figure 21 shows the sectarian make up of each TV channel’s Lebanese audience, while Figure 22 below ranks the diversity of each channel’s Lebanese audience.

Al Arabiya (61%), Al Hadath (56%), Al Jadeed (52%), and Al Jazeera (51%) tend to have majority Sunni audiences, while NBN (63%) and Al Mayadeen (56%) tend to have majority Shia audiences. LBCI (49%) and MTV (46%) followed by OTV (42%) have significantly large Christian audiences. Interestingly, MTV also has a considerable Sunni audience (43%), and Al Hadath captures a significant Christian audience (26%), while Al Manar only has one-third of its audience Shia (33%) and an almost equal size of Sunni (29%).

In addition, Al Manar and OTV tend to have the most diverse audiences from a religious composition stance, while NBN, Al Arabiya, Al Hadath and MTV tend to have the least diverse audiences. The score of diversity is based on calculating the standard deviation of proportions of audiences. The more equally distributed the religious groups (i.e. the less variation between their proportions), the more diverse and the lower the value of the standard deviation (Figure 22). In other words, channels that have one large sectarian composition scored poorly on diversity.

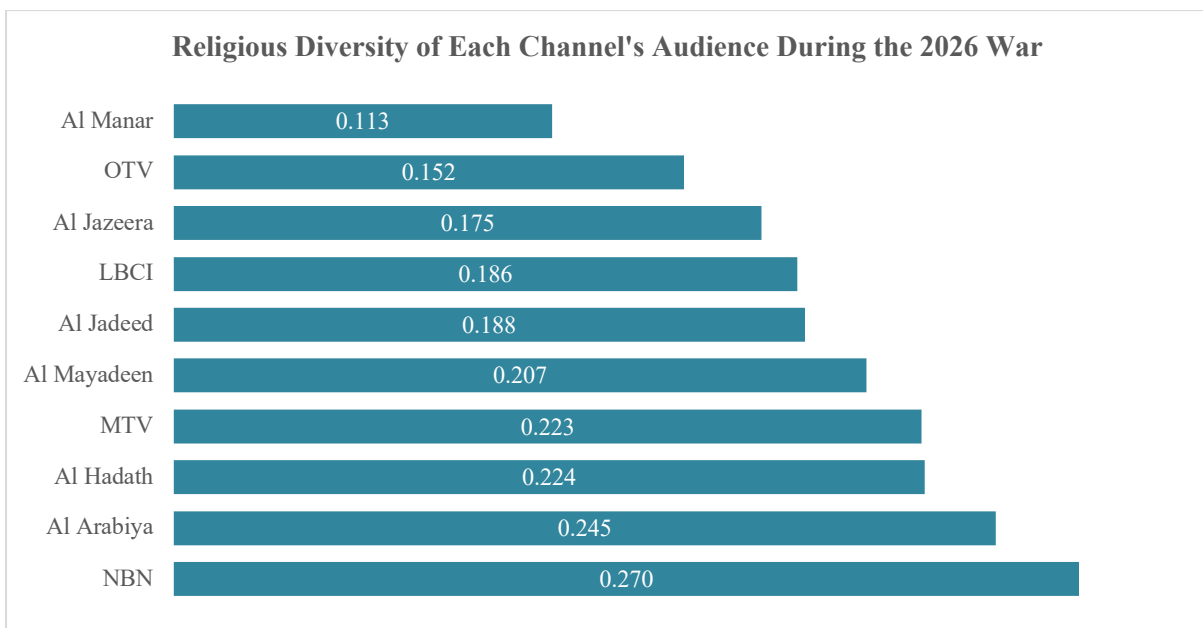


Figure 22: Audience diversity of each TV channel (low value = more diverse)

Section E: Political Attitudes According to Income Level

This section compares the same political attitudes across two income levels: low to middle income (< \$2,000/month) and high income (≥ \$2,000/month).

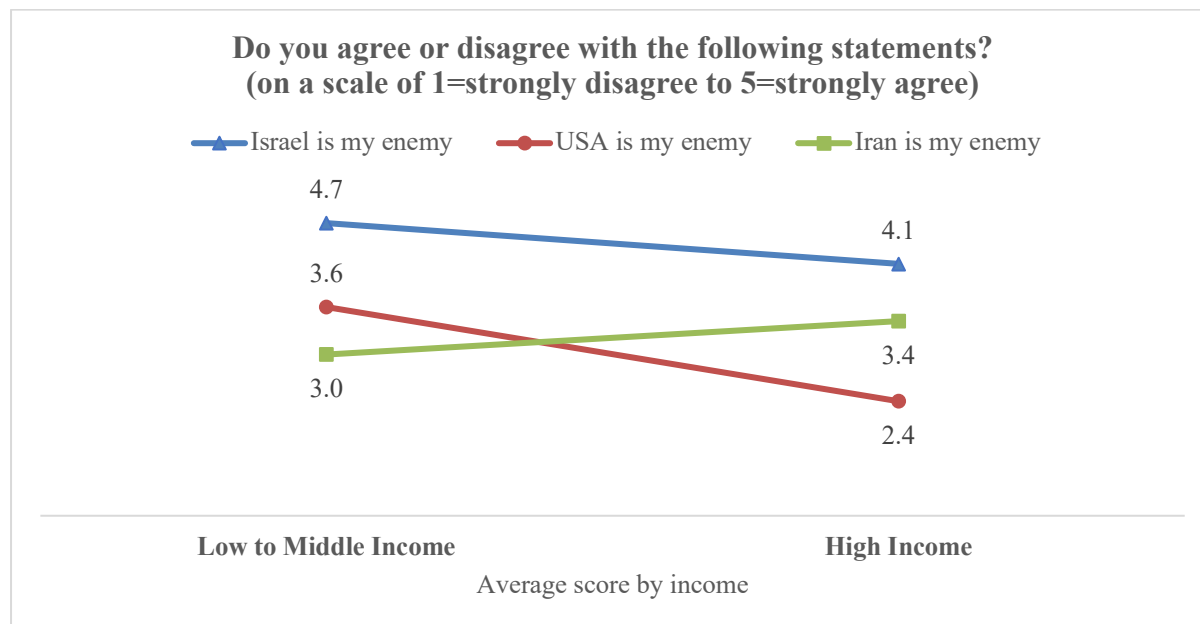


Figure 23: Political attitudes across income levels

Figure 23 shows that although attitudes of enmity toward Israel remain high for both groups, it dips significantly among high income audiences (4.1/5) compared to low to middle income audiences (4.7/5). Similarly, enmity toward the USA dips significantly among high income audiences (2.4/5), while it increases among low to middle income audiences (3.6/5). In contrast, enmity toward Iran dips among low to middle income audiences (3.0/5) and increases among high income audiences (3.4/5).

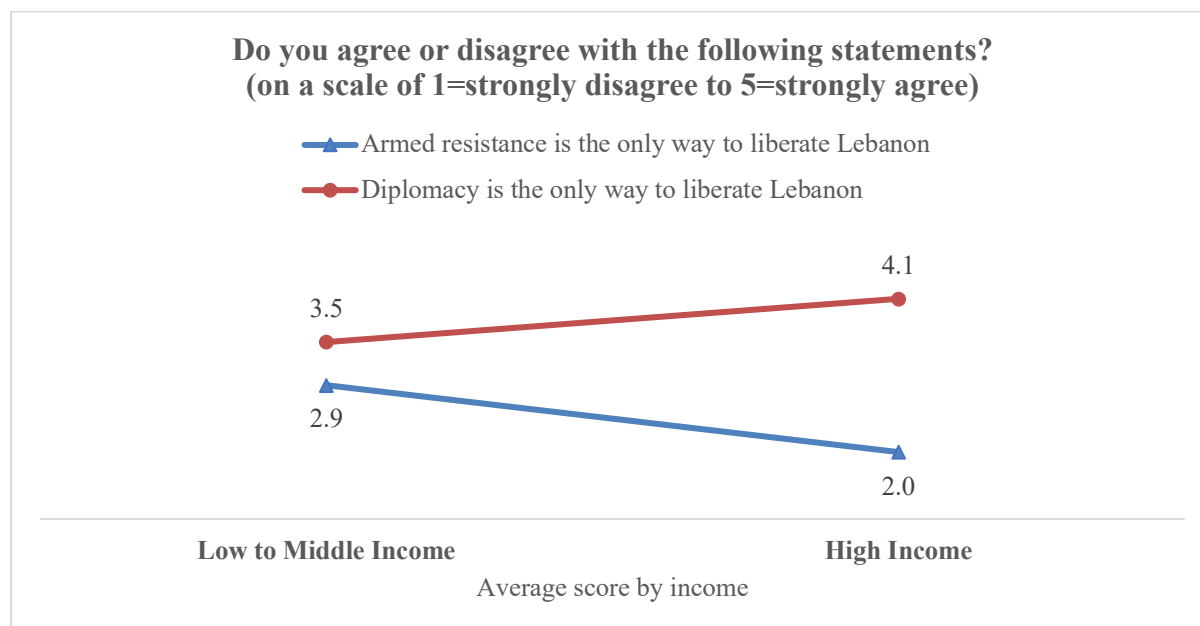


Figure 24: Political attitudes across income levels

Figure 24 also shows a widening gap between the two income groups. While high income audiences are more likely to agree that diplomacy is the only way to liberate Lebanon (4.1/5) and disagree that armed resistance is the only way to liberate Lebanon (2.0/5), low to middle income audiences have the opposite tendencies (3.5/5 and 2.9/5, respectively).

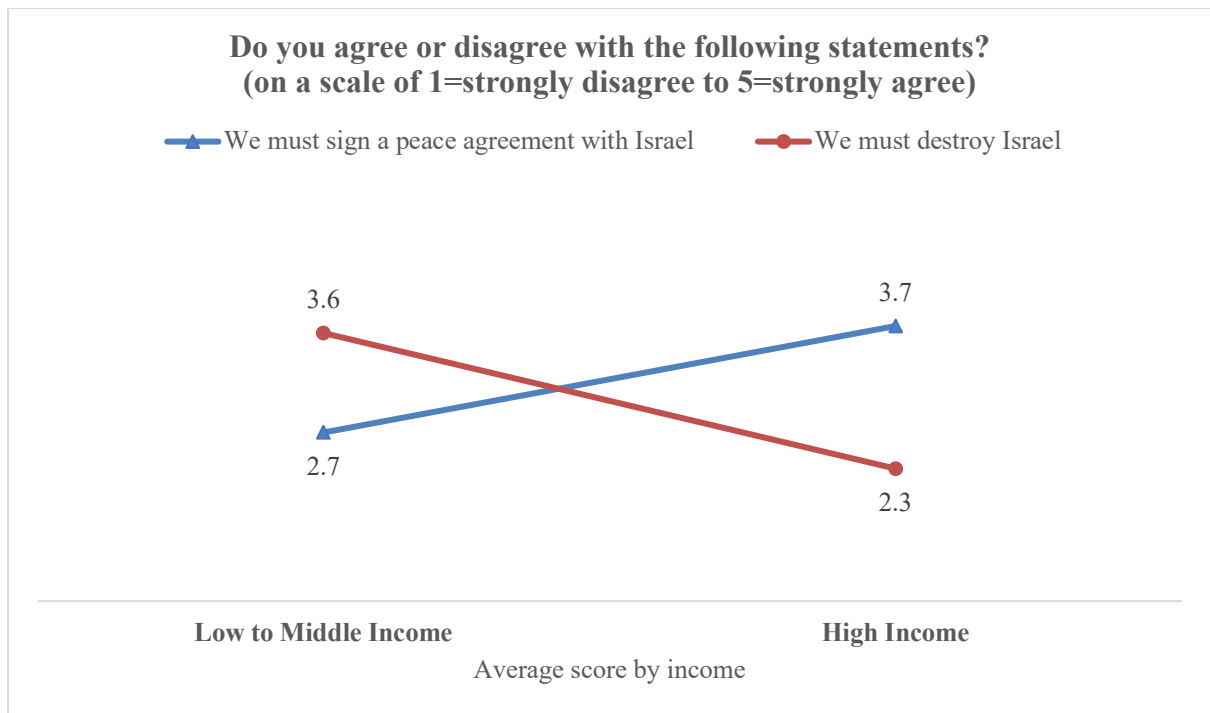


Figure 25: Political attitudes across income levels

Similarly, Figure 25 shows a gap between the two income groups. Low to middle income audiences are less likely to agree with signing a peace agreement with Israel (2.7/5) and more likely to agree with destroying Israel (3.6/5), while high income audiences carry opposite tendencies (2.3/5 and 3.7/5, respectively).

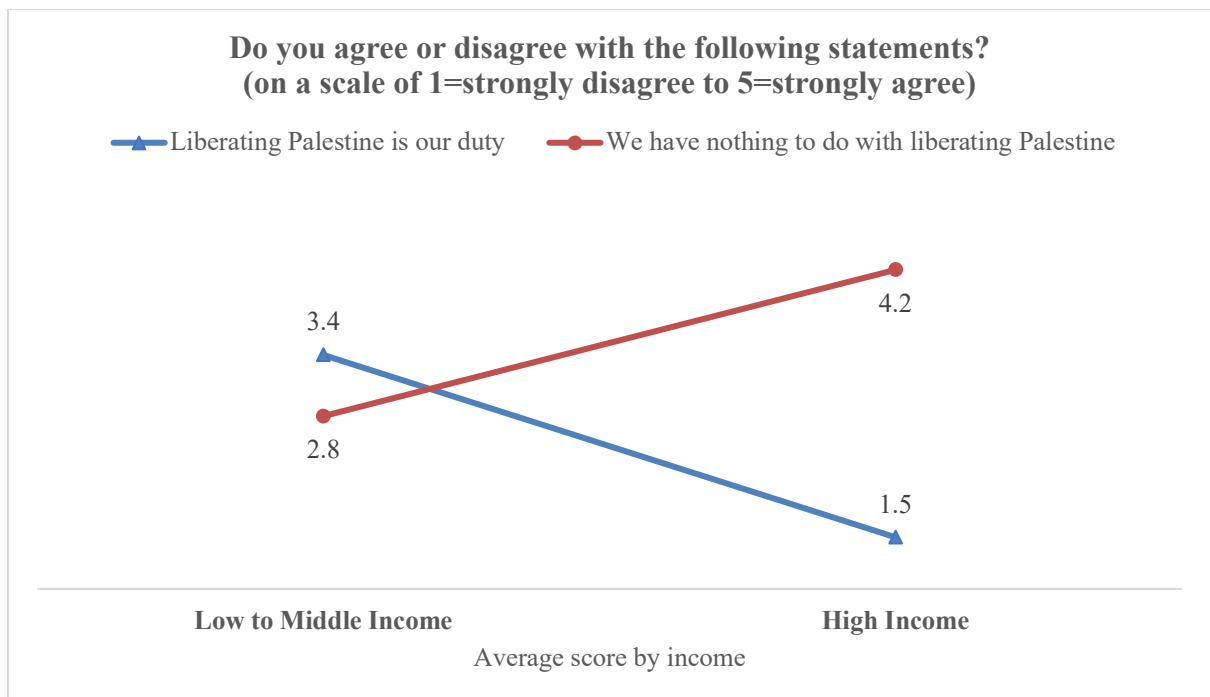


Figure 26: Political attitudes across income levels

Figure 26 again shows low to middle income audiences are more likely to agree that liberating Palestine is their duty (3.4/5) and less likely to agree that they have nothing to do with liberating Palestine (2.8/5), while low-income audiences carry the opposite tendencies (1.5/5 and 4.2/5, respectively).

Section F: Political Attitudes And Social Media Trends By Age Group

This section compares the political attitudes across age groups.

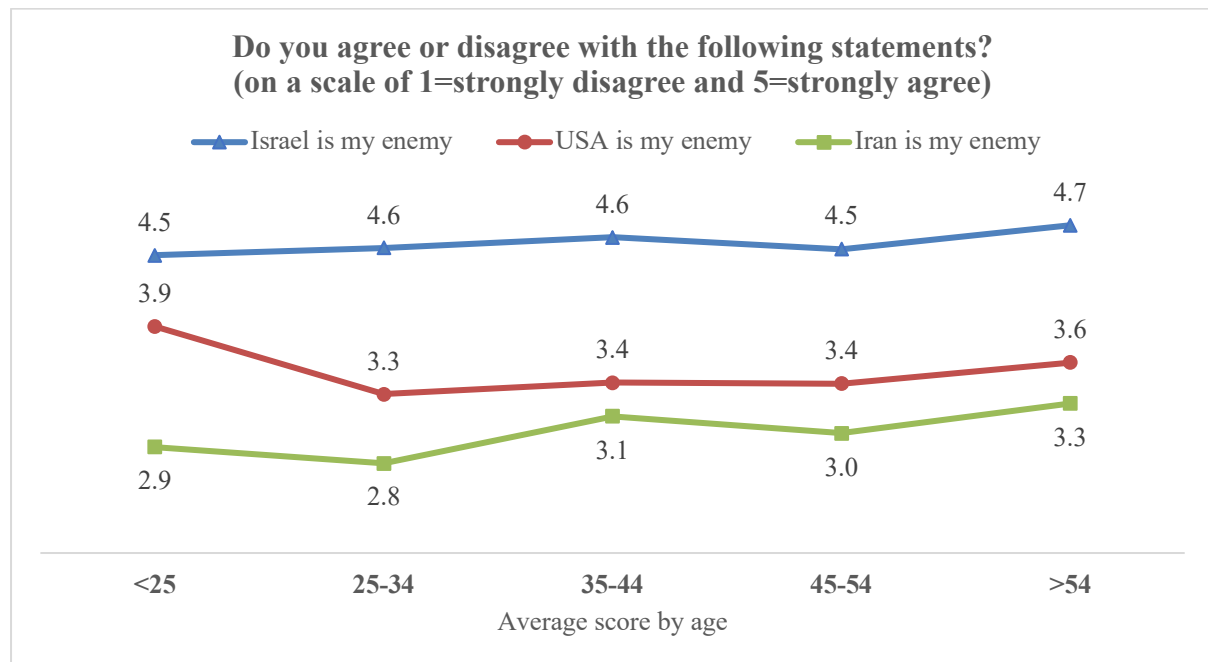


Figure 27: Political attitudes across age groups

Figure 27 shows that enmity toward Israel is constantly high across all age groups (4.5-4.7), while the youngest age group (<25) carries considerably more enmity toward the USA (3.9) compared to the other age groups (3.3-3.6). In contrast, the two younger age groups harbor slightly less enmity toward Iran (2.8-2.9) compared to the older age groups (3.0-3.3).

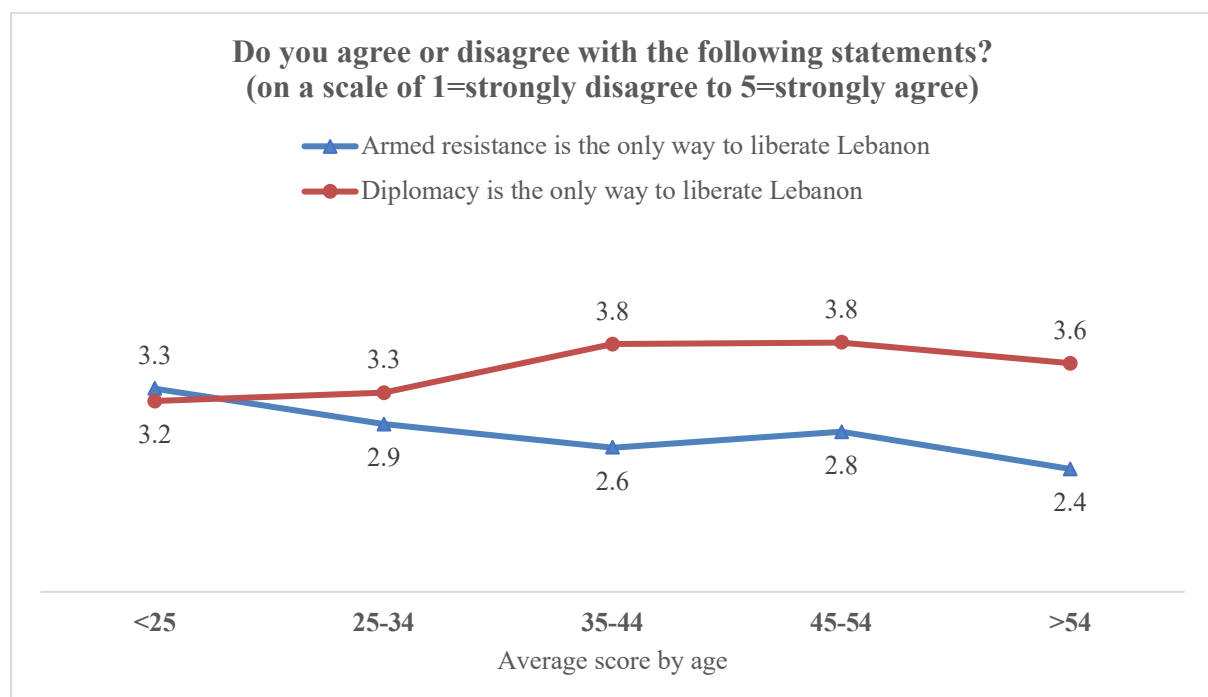


Figure 28: Political attitudes across age groups

Figure 28 shows a widening generational gap across age groups. Younger audiences, especially those less than 35, are less likely to agree that diplomacy is the only way to liberate Lebanon (3.2-3.3/5) and more likely to agree that armed resistance is the only way to liberate Lebanon (2.9-3.3/5), compared to the older generations (3.6-3.8/5 and 2.4-2.8/5, respectively).

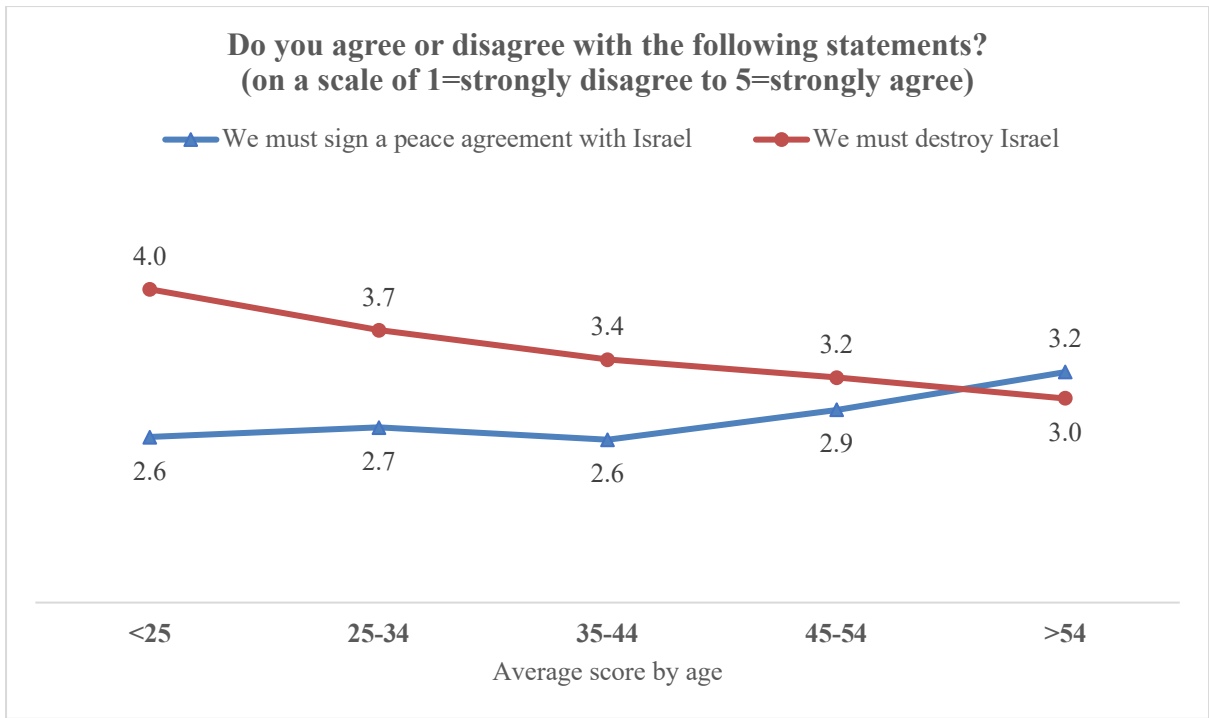


Figure 29: Political attitudes across age groups

Figure 29 shows another generational gap, where the younger the audiences are, the less likely they are to agree with signing a peace agreement with Israel and the more likely they are to agree with destroying Israel.

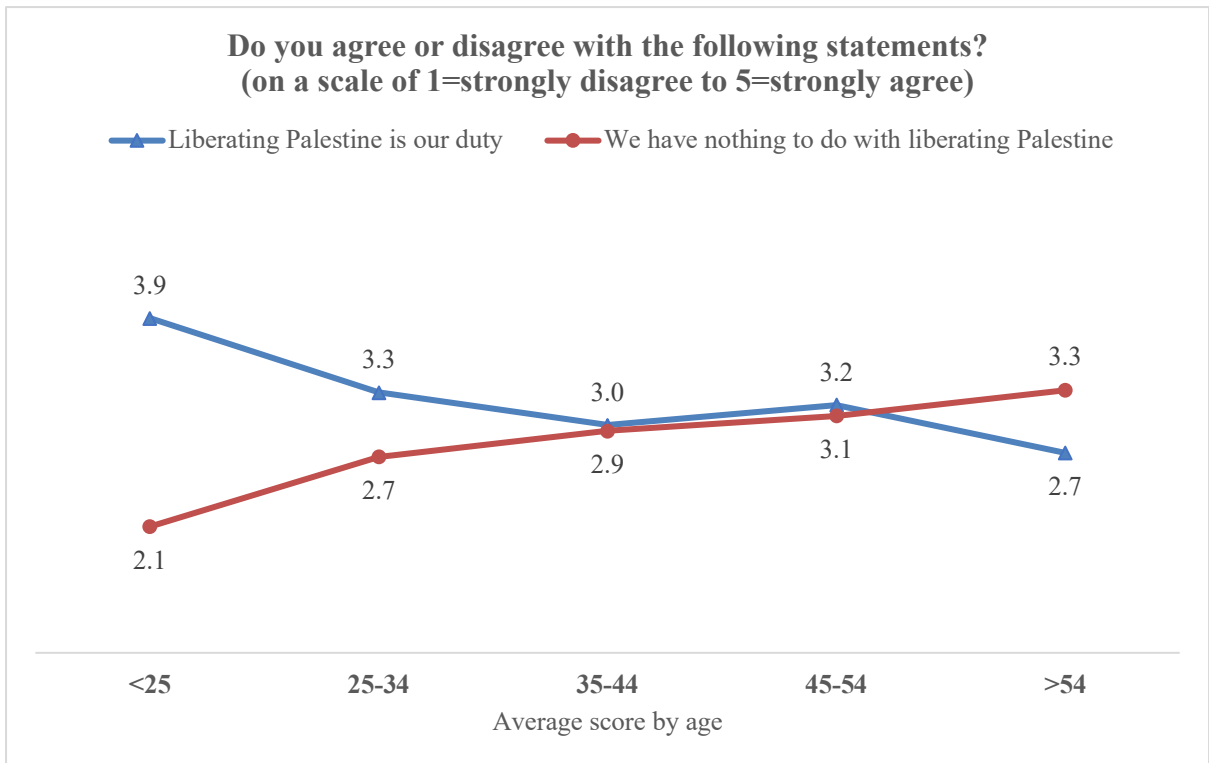


Figure 30: Political attitudes across age groups

Figure 30 similarly shows younger generations, especially those younger than 35, are more likely to agree that liberating Palestine is their duty (3.3-3.9/5) and less likely to agree that they have nothing to do with liberating Palestine (2.1-2.7/5), compared to the older generations.

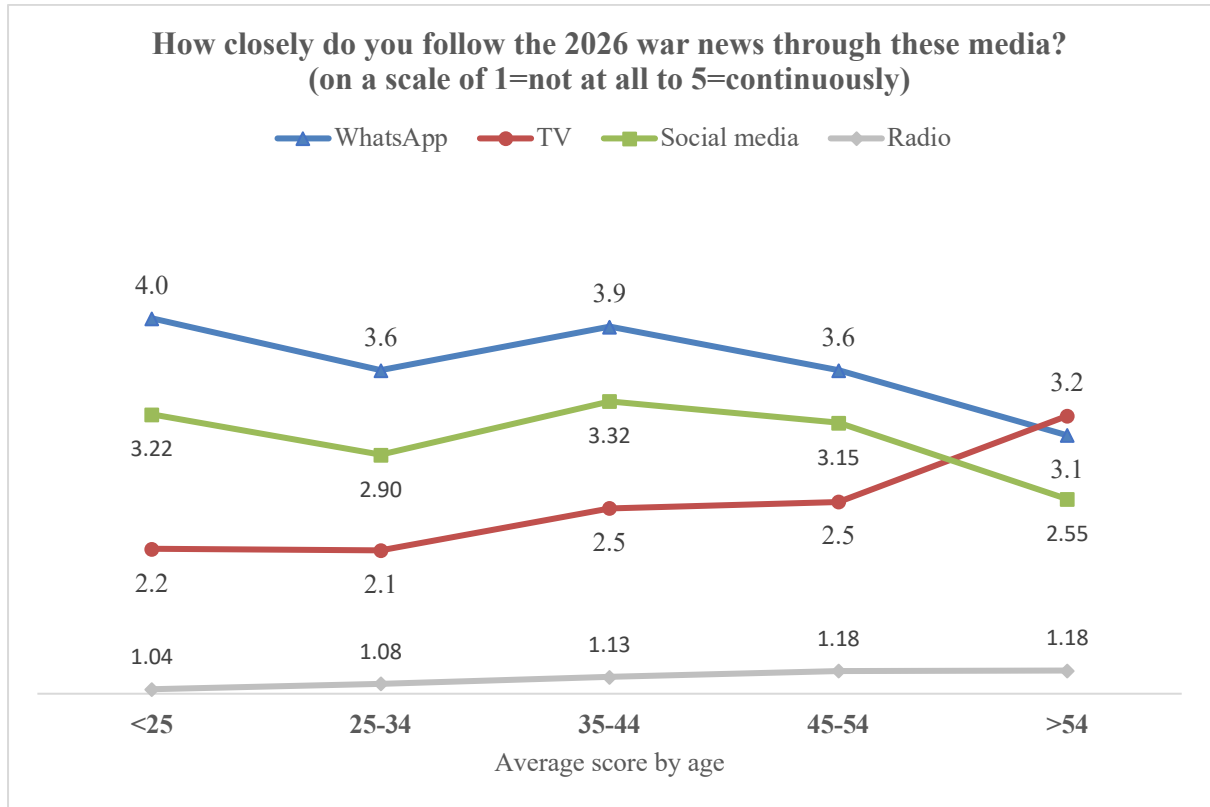


Figure 31: News sources across age groups

In addition, Figure 31 shows that younger audiences are more likely to use WhatsApp and social media for war news, especially the age groups under 25 and those 35-44 years old. In contrast, the older the audiences, the more likely they are to follow the war news on television, especially those above 54 years old. When it comes to radio, older generations, are only slightly more likely to use it for war news, but barely any audiences use radio, in general.

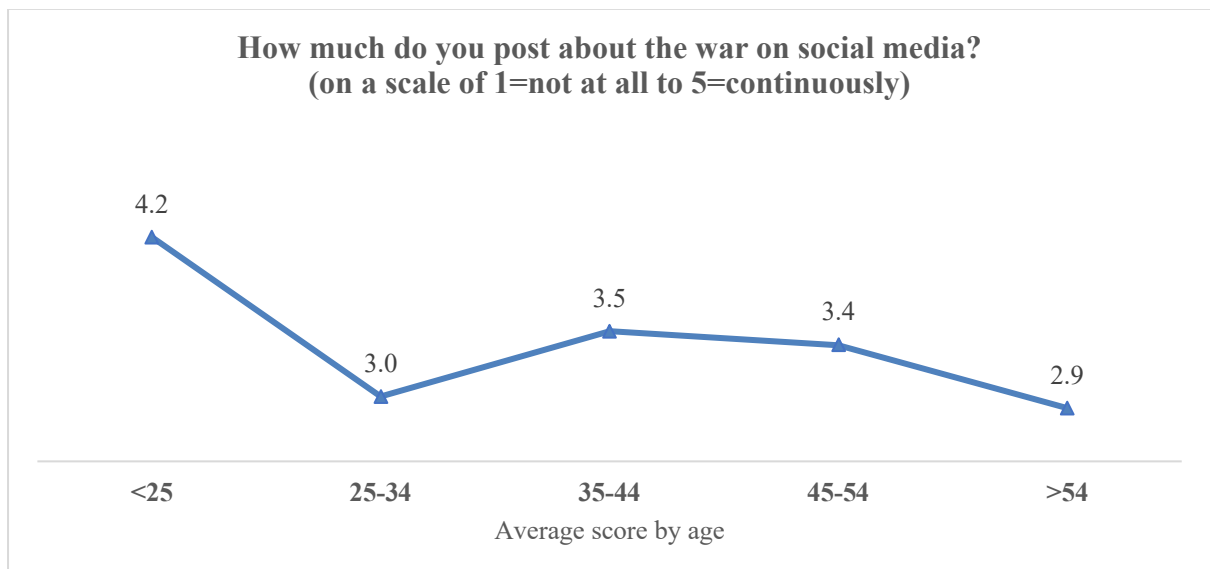


Figure 32: Social media posting and sharing across age groups

Figure 32 shows that the youngest age group (less than 25) are the highest contributors to social media news, while those in the age group 25-34 and the oldest age group (older than 54) are the least likely to post or share about the war on social media.

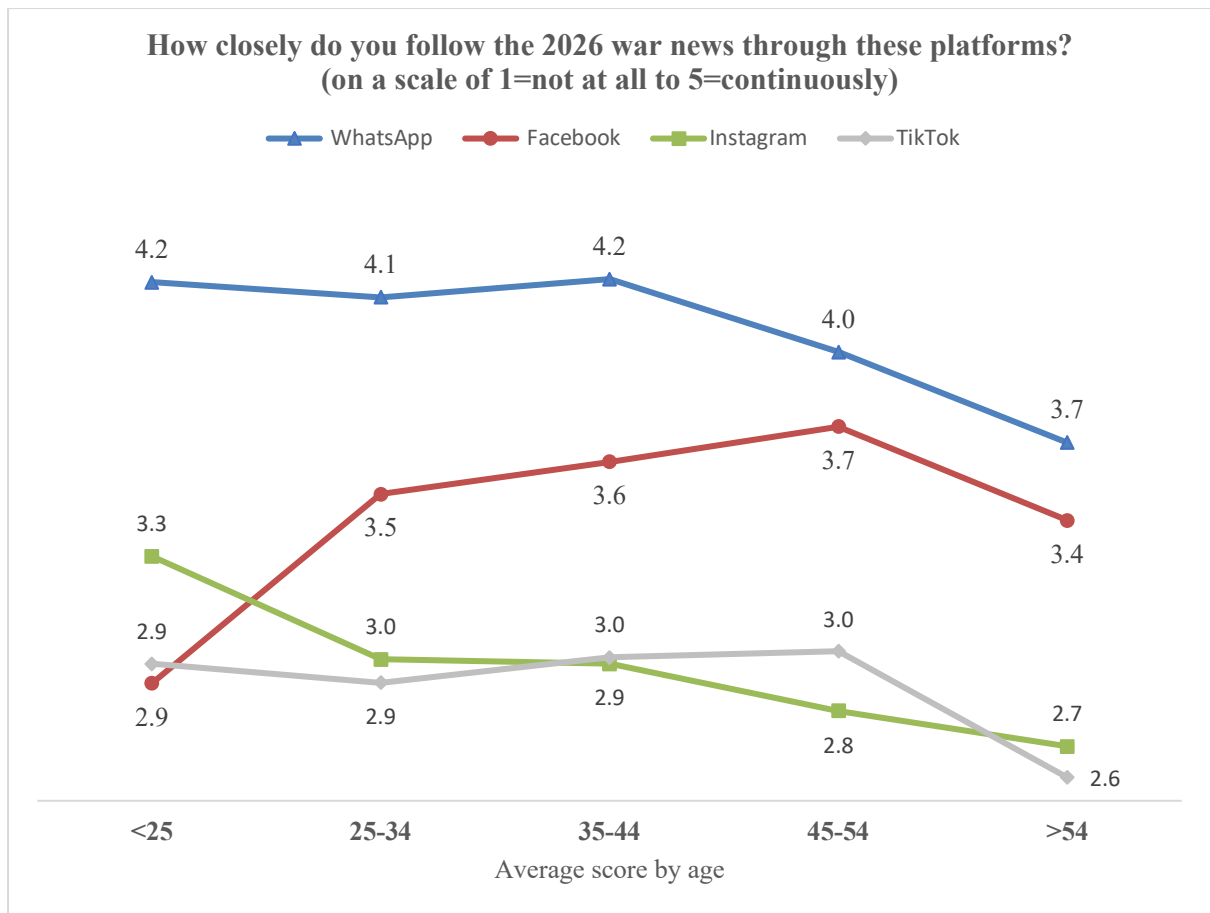


Figure 33: The most popular social media by age group

Figure 33 shows distinct age trends when it comes to following the war news on specific social media platforms. WhatsApp and Instagram show a similar trend, with younger generations more likely than the older generations to use them for war news, while Facebook presents the opposite trend, with younger generations, especially those less than 25, less likely than the older generations to use it for war news. TikTok is almost constant across all age groups, except those above 54, where it dips considerably.

Section G: Audience Characteristics and Polarization

In an attempt to better understand polarization within Lebanese society, we analyzed the audiences based on their political attitudes, their religions, and their income levels using Factorial Analysis (PCA, Varimax Rotation, KMO = 0.75, Bartlett's $p=0.0$, Cumulative Variance = 63%).

Characteristics	Groups		
	1	2	3
Sunni	0.37	-0.78	
Shia	-0.87		
Christian	0.45	0.67	
Income	0.34	0.59	
Israel is my enemy			0.77
Armed resistance is the only way to liberate Lebanon	-0.76		0.23
We must destroy Israel	-0.25	-0.34	0.63
Liberating Palestine is our duty		-0.62	0.56
Diplomacy is the only way to liberate Lebanon	0.53		-0.51
We must sign a peace agreement with Israel	0.57	0.23	-0.47
We have nothing to do with liberating Palestine		0.63	-0.40

Table 1: Characteristics of audiences based on factorial analysis

Table 1 reveals three distinct groups. We labelled each group in the headline to help understand its characteristics.

Group 1: Sunni-Christian middle class, anti resistance, pro peace camp, maybe pro Palestine

This group tends to be made up of Christians and Sunnis but very few Shia. It tends to have a middle to high income, is strongly opposed to armed resistance and is somewhat opposed to destroying Israel, but strongly supportive of diplomacy as a way to liberate Lebanon and to signing a peace agreement with Israel. This group includes people who believe Israel is their enemy and those who don't, and it includes those who believe liberating Palestine is their duty and those who don't.

Group 2: Christian (and some Shia) upper class, resistance and peace are fine, but I don't care for Palestine

This group is mainly made up of Christians and some Shia, but very few Sunnis. The group has high income, is not very keen on destroying Israel, a matter they share with group 1. They tend to strongly disagree that liberating Palestine is their duty, are somewhat supportive of a peace agreement with Israel, but the group includes people supportive and opposed to diplomacy, as well as people supportive and opposed to armed resistance. Like group 1, this groups also includes people who believe Israel is their enemy and those who don't.

Group 3: Diverse pro resistance, no diplomacy, no peace, no Israel, and a free Palestine

This group is made up of all religions and all income levels. They strongly believe that Israel is their enemy and are supportive of armed resistance and strongly believe that they should destroy Israel and that liberating Palestine is their duty. The group is strongly opposed to diplomacy as the only way to liberate Lebanon and to a peace agreement with Israel.

Methodology

The study uses a cross-sectional nationally representative researcher-administered phone survey. An overall sample size of 1,000 participants was calculated based on a population of 6 million, a 95% confidence level, and a $\pm 3.1\%$ margin of error. The study adopted a proportional random sampling technique based on all possible mobile phone numbers in Lebanon. After acquiring all possible number ranges from the Lebanese Ministry of Telecommunication, we developed a sampling frame based on the groups of numbers and calculated the proportion for each group. Then a proportional random sample of numbers was selected from each group of numbers using the website randomizer.org. Ten trained researchers conducted the phone surveys under the primary investigator's supervision. The questionnaire included 45 questions and generated 90 variables. It was developed and conducted in Arabic. Before the interview, researchers acquired participants' consent based on IRB regulations. Some respondents who accepted to participate but did not complete more than 50% of the questionnaire were removed from the final dataset. The final response rate was 49.8%. The study used SPSS 30 to conduct frequency distributions and other descriptive statistics, in addition to the chi-square test of independence as an inferential test of significance, as well as t-Tests, and ANOVAs for comparing means. Excel and Flourish were used to develop charts and tables.

The sample was made up of 53.5% males and 46.5% females. Table 2 shows the age distribution of participants, and Table 3 shows their income distribution. In addition, 54.3% were currently unemployed, while 16.1% were employed part time, and 29.7% held full time jobs. Moreover, 29.6% of respondents were displaced during the war (21.4% were still displaced at the time of the survey, while 8.2% got temporarily displaced but returned home).

Age	%
18-24	15.9%
25-34	19.7%
35-44	23.8%
45-54	20.7%
55-64	8.3%
65+	11.6%

Table 2: Age distribution

Income	%
<\$300	41.9%
\$300-\$500	23.5%
\$501-\$1,000	19.5%
\$1,001-\$2,000	8.7%
\$2,001-\$3,000	3.5%
>\$3,000	2.9%

Table 3: Income distribution

As for education, 16.2% completed elementary school or less, 25.9% completed middle school, 22.8% completed high school, and 35.1% completed a university degree. Table 4 shows where participants were residing before the war started on March 2, 2026. Table 5 shows the distribution of participants by religion. Data collection ran April 14-18, 2026.

Governorate	%
Mount Lebanon	24.2%
Bekaa	10.3%
Baalbek-Hermel	4.2%
North	22.1%
Akkar	5.1%
South	12.0%
Nabatiyeh	4.4%
Beirut	15.8%
Abroad	1.9%

Table 4: Geographic distribution

Religion	%
Sunni	46.4%
Christian	22.1%
Shia	19.9%
Druze	4.9%
Other	6.8%

Table 5: Religious distribution

The study faced several limitations, including the obvious difficulty of reaching people living in war zones and experiencing the indiscriminate Israeli bombardment, which led to underrepresentation of people from Shia Muslim backgrounds and those from South Lebanon and Nabatiyeh, while Sunni Muslims and people from Beirut were overrepresented.

About the Study

This study is part of the ongoing Media and War program of the Institute of Media Research and Training (IMRT) at the Lebanese American University (LAU). The Media and War program conducts research on media uses during war, protests and conflict, News framing of war and conflict, and mediated terrorism.

Institute of Media Research and Training

The Institute of Media Research and Training (IMRT) at the Lebanese American University is an interdisciplinary center for media research, training, production and advocacy. It aims to produce and transmit scientific knowledge and media content that examines how media and digital communication systems shape and are shaped by local and regional politics, economics, and cultures; to develop media literacy curricula and programs and offer academic and professional training that advances media education in the region; and to advocate for ethical, professional, and equitable communication laws and practices and a free media environment. The institute builds on media literacy theory that aims to empower citizens with creative and critical thinking skills and digital competencies that help them become civically engaged global citizens capable of innovatively harnessing the power of media technologies to advance human rights, peace, and social justice.

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