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The Image of Syrian Refugees in the Lebanese Press: Case of *Al-Akhbar* Newspaper

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Abstract. This paper investigates how Syrian refugees are portrayed in the Lebanese press, namely in Al-Akhbar Newspaper.

Although there are existing studies that focus on the media representation of Syrian refugees, they allot significant attention to negative images of Syrian refugees presented by a number of Lebanese media outlets. In addition, there is a dearth of studies that scrutinise positive representation of Syrian refugees in the Lebanese press.

Owing to these problems, this paper bridges the gap in the current literature through paying further attention to the positive media representation of Syrian refugees in the Lebanese press taking the case of Al-Akhbar Newspaper.

In answering the question: how Al-Akhbar depicts Syrian refugees who fled to Lebanon, this paper analyses samples of articles published in Al-Akhbar to highlight the discourse of this Newspaper relating to Syrian refugees. The paper draws on qualitative analysis to arrive at its conclusion.

The findings of the paper are significant because they reveal journalistic practices and agenda towards one of the serious issues in Lebanon which suffers from political

turmoil and severe economic crisis. As this paper distinguishes between what it calls antagonist and protagonist discourses in reporting Syrian refugees in the Lebanese press, it recommends paying further attention to the protagonist discourse because it reflects good journalistic practice.

Keywords: Al-Akhbar Newspaper; Images of Syrian Refugees; Framing; Media Representation, Lebanese Press

Introduction

The study of a media discourse of the Lebanese press in order to reveal how it represents Syrian refugees in Lebanon reflects both the antagonist and the protagonist reporting of this national cause, which it is considered a regional and a global issue at the same time.

Although this paper takes Al-Akhbar Newspaper as a case study, it highlights the Lebanese press reporting on Syrian refugees in Lebanon in general. This highlight sheds the light on how the Lebanese press is divided in its reporting of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, and ultimately it serves the aim of this paper that focuses on the protagonist coverage of Al-Akhbar Newspaper. Focusing on the protagonist reporting by Al-Akhbar Newspaper, this paper intends to call attention to the nature of this Newspaper>s journalistic practice that refrains from any racist discourse and emphasises the humanitarian nature of Syrian refugees cause, as it will be shown in this paper.

There are studies that have pointed to the negative representation of Syrian refugees in the Lebanese media outlets (e.g. Sadaka, Nader & Mikhael 2015). However, these studies neither pointed to good journalistic practice nor to the positive representation of Syrian refugees in the Lebanese press. Furthermore, the existing studies do not distinguish between protagonist and antagonist discourses of the Lebanese press regarding how they portray the image of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. As a result, there is another problem related to the dearth of studies about the positive representation of Syrian refugees in the Lebanese press.

Owing to these gaps, this paper categorises the positive media representation as protagonist and the negative media representation as antagonist. In this vein, it focuses on positive media representation through analysing the image of Syrian refugees in Al-Akhbar Newspaper.

The objectives taken to answer the paper>s question and hence to achieve its aim are as follows,

- Searching the existing literature about the issue of Syrian refugees in Lebanon to contextualise this study
- Reviewing the existing literature about the representation of Syrian refugees in the Lebanese media outlets
- Selecting purposive samples of news> items and reports from Al-Akhbar Newspaper about Syrian refugees in Lebanon to analyse them.

Background

As noted earlier, the understanding of the historical bilateral relations between Lebanon and Syria is significant to contextualise the topic of this paper. On February 14, 2005, the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri was assassinated in the heart of the Lebanese capital, Beirut. This event was a historical juncture in what concerns the bilateral relations between Lebanon and Syria. The reason is that it led to an international pressure on Damascus to withdraw its troops from Lebanon in March of the same year, and it led domestically to a political division, represented by the March 8 coalition and the March 14 coalition. The March 8 coalition included the Lebanese political parties that respect Syria and its government, and they expressed this respect in a massive demonstration in Beirut on March 8, 2005. March 14 coalition, on the other hand, includes the Lebanese political parties that oppose Syria and its government and consider it behind the assassination of Mr. Hariri, because the Syrian troops were influential in Lebanon at the time. This opposition was portrayed in a massive demonstration that took place in Beirut on March 14, 2005 (Osoegawa 2015).

Prior to this historical juncture, troops from the Syrian Arab Army (the formal name of the Syrian army), supported by the Arab League, entered Lebanon in 1976 nearly a year after the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war on April 13, 1975. The main mission of the Syrian troops, under the umbrella of the Arab Deterrent Force, was to help the Lebanese government restore its sovereignty (Osoegawa 2015).

Later on, the Syrian government played a significant role in what came to be known as the Taif Agreement in 1989. This Agreement was the result of negotiations among the Lebanese political parties hosted by Saudi Arabia in the city of Taif, under the umbrella of the Arab League, in order to reach a deal that puts an end to the Lebanese civil war (Krayem 1997).

The post-Taif Lebanese governments till 2005 were pro-Syrian, and both countries established the Lebanese-Syrian Higher Council as a result of the Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination of 1991 (Geukjian 2017). This Treaty, as its articles assert, allows the free movement of citizens between both countries without any restrictions. Thus, diplomatic relations between both countries and the opening of embassies in Damascus and Beirut in 2009 did not impose restrictions on the movement of the Syrian citizens into Lebanon and vice versa (Jörum 2014). However, the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri had a huge impact on the Lebanese political scene, and hence a negative impact on the Syrians in Lebanon. Shortly after the assassination of Mr. Hariri, a number of attacks against the Syrian workers in Lebanon were recorded (Mortada 2011). At the same time, the outbreak of the Syrian war was an opportunity for the March 14 Alliance to support the Syrian opposition (Salloukh 2017).

Due to the massive influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon, there were rising Lebanese calls to return them to their country. These calls and the image of Syrian refugees were reflected in the media discourse of the Lebanese media outlets.

Literature Review

The eruption of the upheavals in Syria in 2011 and their consequences in the following years led to an influx of Syrian refugees who fled their homeland to neighboring countries, mainly Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey (Chatty 2017). In Lebanon, there are mainly two communities of Syrian refugees: those who fled their homes to save their lives and those who fled their homes because they are against the Syrian government and label themselves as activists (Geha & Talhouk 2018).

As per the Lebanese government, Syrian refugees arrived in Lebanon in two ways: legally and illegally (Janmyr 2016). As the Syrian upheavals began on March 25, 2011, the first wave of Syrian refugees who fled to Lebanon was on April 28, 2011 (Kabbanji & Kabbanji 2018). According to the numbers issued by the United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), in just around two years, more than 2500 Syrian refugees were entering Lebanon daily (Mudallali 2013).

Eventually, the number soared to reach 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon (Cherri, González & Delgado 2016), and approximately 900000 of them are not registered by the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (Refaat & Mohanna 2013).

In less than five year since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis, Lebanon registered the highest density of refugees in 2016, because it «has just over 200 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants» (Shellito 2016). According to a report by the United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees in March 2015, «one in four persons in Lebanon is displaced from Syria» (UNHCR 2015). As a result of these massive numbers, in December 2014, Lebanon's General Security Directorate imposed restrictions on the Syrians who wanted to enter Lebanon - legally - in order to prevent them from seeking asylum in the country (Shellito 2016). Moreover, many initiatives encouraging the voluntary return of Syrian refugees were launched, mainly by Lebanon's General Security Directorate and Lebanese Hezbollah (Geha & Talhouk 2018). According to an article published in the official magazine of Lebanon's General Security Directorate in January 2020, it has been recorded that 341873 Syrian refu

gees returned voluntarily from Lebanon to their homeland and 88303 resettled in a third country (Chahine 2020).

Taking into consideration the undue economic and financial suffering in Lebanon, the issue of the refugees represents massive challenges to the Lebanese community. As a result, the Lebanese press has shed light on this crisis by detailing its consequences on Lebanon as observed in the relevant discourse of the major newspapers in the country.¹

Upon reviewing the media discourse of the Lebanese press for this paper, it can be argued that there are two main media discourses adopted towards Syrian refugees: an antagonist discourse that describes them as a burden on Lebanon highlighting any crime committed by a member of them and calling for the return of refugees to their country or any other third country, and a protagonist discourse that insists on respecting the human rights of refugees in Lebanon in all cases. Thus, this paper categorises the positive representation as protagonist and the negative representation as antagonist.

In addition to these media discourses and the complexity of the political Lebanese scene, it is clear that the political discourse is in favour of the return of Syrian refugees to their homeland. However, the political parties who are under the umbrella of March 8 Alliance and the Free Patriotic Movement are calling for coordination with the Syrian government to ensure the return of Syrian refugees to their country. On the other hand, the political parties of March 14 Alliance are calling for the voluntary return of the refugees in Lebanon to Syria without any sort of communication with the Syrian government on the matter (Geha & Talhouk 2018).

In a quantitative study conducted in 2015 on the representation of the Syrian (and Palestinian) refugees in the news coverage of the different Lebanese media outlets, the authors pay special attention to the

The major newspapers are: An-Nahar; As-Safir (ceased by the end of 2016); Al-Akhbar; Ad-Diyar; Al-Joumhouria; Al-Liwaa, Al-Binaa; Al-Anwar (ceased its print edition in October 2018); Al-Sharq; Al-Balad (ceased in July 2018); and Al-Mostaqbal (ceased its print edition in February 2019). According to its website, Al-Akhbar defines itself as close to the leftists.

identification of the degree of the hatred discourse (Sadaka, Nader & Mikhael 2015). The same authors have concluded that «the Syrian displacement issue that emerged in Lebanon is predominant in the media coverages, given the social, political and security issues that the Syrian displacement raises» (ibid p. 38). However, the antagonist reporting is related to the security issues and «the competition between the Syrian labour force and the Lebanese workers» (ibid).²

In a study about the image of Syrian refugees in the Western media, Alhayek (2016) argues that the «Syrian refugees are largely represented as desperately poor people risking their lives to find a new home in the West» (p. 10). Thus, the same author calls for humanising the issue of Syrian refugees in the Western media, mainly in the United States of America «which generally portrayed Syrians as dangerous strangers to be kept out of the country» (ibid p. 9).

In a similar vein, a quantitative study about the coverage of Syrian refugee crisis in three media outlets in three Syrian neighbouring countries Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon found that the press coverage have focussed on the security issues, the economic and the political subjects (Alsridi & Ziani 2019). Notably, this study lacks two main elements. Firstly, it has focused on a new Lebanese website «Ya-Sour» without paying attention to key Lebanese newspapers. Secondly, it has missed contextualisation and conducting discourse analysis due to the scope and strategy it adopted.

The understanding of how the Lebanese press depicts the image of Syrian refugees can be labeled as a part of cultural studies because it focuses on representation and the relevant issues. Hall (2013), who has focused on studying media representation in cultural studies, argues that media representation plays a significant role in propagating the same or a similar meaning decoded by the users (readers; listeners and viewers) within the same culture.

The Palestinian refugees started arriving in Lebanon after 1948 (Knudsen 2009). Due to the outbreak of Syrian upheavals, a number of Palestinian refugees fled Syria to Lebanon (Shellito 2016).

Hall (2013) argues that meaning is forged by representation. By definition, representation is how to depict the self or the other through a discourse. This representation, whether it is for ethnicity, gender, nationality, ideology or religion, may occur through different mediums including the press, and hence it is usually intertwined with media representation.

Drawing on this understanding, it can be argued that the representation of Syrian refugees in the Lebanese press is a representation through a media discourse which depicts images of people from a neighbouring country fled to Lebanon after the eruption of the war in their country.

In this context, framing is considered a key factor in the process of representation, and hence the formation of the media discourse, because framing «refers to the selection and salience of particular aspects of an issue rather than to the issue itself» (Entman cited in Scheufele 1999, p. 107).

Methods

As noted earlier, the representation of an issue by a media outlet reflects not only an editorial agenda, but also the political agenda of the media outlet>s owner(s) and its sponsors (Gemi, Ulasiuk & Triandafyllidou 2013; Pardue 2010). In this regard, the analysis of the discourse of a media outlet about a certain issue enables understanding how it is represented. Notably, this paper considers the discourse of Al-Akhbar newspaper on how it depicts Syrian refugees «a mass noun», not a «count noun». Owing to the nature of analysis to answer the paper>s question, the strategy used in this paper is qualitative. This strategy aligns with the method used. In analysing the media discourse, the main focus is on its macro- and microstructure not only to explain the hidden meaning, but also to identify that discourse (Fairclough 1995). As this paper considers the media discourse of Al-Akhbar Newspaper as a mass noun, it identifies its general characteristics because it reveals the nature of the journalistic practice towards the issue of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Thus, the samples selected for analysis do not aim to generalise the findings. They intend to provide an adequate understanding of the media discourse, and in the case of this paper, an analysis of the media discourse of Al-Akhbar newspaper regarding Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

The data collected from the Lebanese press including Al-Akhbar Newspaper date back to the period between May 2011 and September 2019. The reason for the selection of these samples is related to two historical junctures. Firstly, the start of sampling, which is from May 2011, relates to the beginning of the influx of Syrian refugees towards Lebanon after the eruption of the war in Syria. Secondly, the end of sampling, which is September 2019, precedes shortly the political upheavals and economic crisis which started in October 2019.

In this vein, this purposive sample, in which 12 articles are selected from Al-Akhbar Newspaper for this paper, allows an in-depth analysis of the image of Syrian refugees in the Lebanese press, mainly in Al-Akhbar. Having delineated this point, this sampling category with the design adopted in the paper, the case study design, aligns with the qualitative research strategy.

The analysis of a media discourse pays attention to the context in order to present the meaning embedded in the identified discourse (Fairclough 1995). As this paper is concerned with the image of Syrian refugees in Al-Akhbar Newspaper, it has focused on the main themes of the news> items and reports of the samples selected and it has also paid attention to analyse the meaning of the main term <displaced> because its usage reflects the agenda of Al-Akhbar Newspaper and serves in understanding its media discourse relating to Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

The language of the articles selected for analysis is Arabic and there are limitations if translating these articles into English in terms of presenting the original meaning intended by the authors. Furthermore, the unity of these articles in terms of genre does not exist because these articles are mixed up between news stories, reports and embedded with editorial opinion. Thus, the aim of the analysis in this paper, as noted earlier, is not to delve deeply in the analysis of the microstructure of the

noted discourse in terms of linguistics, grammar and syntactic structure. However, this paper has paid attention to the main themes of the samples selected for analysis and translated them from Arabic into English in good faith.

In order to be methodologically rigorous, this paper adopts criterion sampling technique because it sets predetermined criteria in the sampling process and this is relevant to qualitative research strategy and purposive sampling (Suri 2011).

In this regard, the predetermined criteria set in this paper is the selection of samples based on their categories. The samples selected will be categorised based on their main themes: political, economic and social, taking into account in the analysis their domestic and international dimensions.

This paper assumes that there is no neutrality in the dictionary of the Lebanese press in publishing news stories and reports on Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Each private media outlet has an editorial agenda intertwined with a political agenda because it is owned or supported by a political party or parties (El Hage 2018). As noted earlier in the review of literature and due to their dichotomised partisan affiliation of Lebanese media (ibid), there are Lebanese media outlets which are antagonistic in their coverage of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon and depicts their actions negatively (Sadaka, Nader & Mikhael 2015). Contrary to this antagonist coverage, this paper assumes that there is protagonist coverage of Syrian refugees in Lebanon by a number of media outlets including Al-Akhbar Newspaper.

Drawing on the presumption that the issue of Syrian refugees in Lebanon is a national cause, and a domestic issue subject to political partisan debate, as observed earlier, it can be argued that there is no neutrality in the Lebanese media coverage of the cause of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon and their stories.

Findings

Contrary to the findings from previous studies (e.g. Alsridi & Ziani 2019; Sadaka, Nader & Mikhael 2015), this paper found that the positive media representation of Syrian refugees aims to enhance the protagonist media discourse, and hence to present to the audience the stories that are relevant to Syrian refugees and the Lebanese citizens at the same time. For example, when the Newspaper publishes stories about international attempts to settle Syrian refugees in Lebanon, as it can be observed in Table 1, it frames them as a conspiracy that concerns both Syrians and Lebanese and thus they have to face it.

In the process of analysis of the news> items and reports after categorising the samples selected into three categories (political, economic and social), this paper pays attention to how Al-Akhbar Newspaper depicts the image of Syrian refugees: political image, economic image, and social image. However, each of these categories, as it can be shown in Table 1, may have local or global dimensions.

Politically, the Lebanese press, including Al-Akhbar Newspaper, is generally labelling Syrian refugees in Lebanon as displaced (the displaced person is called in Arabic *Nazih* and its plural is *Nazihon*). This term was adopted by the Lebanese government as of 2012 to describe the legal status quo of the Syrians who fled to Lebanon (Janmyr 2016).

Although this labeling, as a result, may deny the right of the fleeing Syrians to benefit from the status of refugees according to the international law because the term displaced is usually used for those who flee to safe areas within their own country (Janmyr 2017), it actually reflects the Lebanese political discourse. As the Christian citizens in Lebanon, a multi-confessional country, are turning into a minority, the major concern of the majority of Lebanese politicians is the continuity of the Syrian crisis and the rise of the international calls to enable Syrian refugees in Lebanon to have some rights, which might extend their stay for a long period of time. In this vein, the impact is not only economic or political, but it can also be demographic due to the possibility of granting refugees in Lebanon the Lebanese citizenship under

Table 1. Content's Categorisation of Al-Akhbar Coverage of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

Category	Political	Economic	Social
Domesti-	1- The responsibil-	1- Pointing that	1-Denouncing the
cally	ity of the Lebanese	there is clear nega-	racist discourse and
	government to deal	tive impact on the	actions against Syrian
	effectively with	Lebanese weak	refugees (Hawi 2017);
	the issue of Syrian	economy (Wehbi	2- Shedding the focus
	refugees on its ter-	2015);	light on the problems
	ritories (Alqosaifi	2- Nearly 9 billion	of the forgotten com-
	2013);	US dollars pumped	munities of Syrian
	2- Adopting appar-	into Lebanon as a	refugees in Lebanon
	ently the Lebanese	result of Syrian refu-	(Farfour 2017);
	government labeling	gees crisis between	3- Warning from
	of Syrian refugees as	2013 and 2018	long-term integration
	displaced (Alqosaifi	(Farfour 2019);	and its negative con-
	2016)	3- Syrian refugees	sequences (Alqosaifi
		in Lebanon are	2017)
		languishing in debts	
		("Displaced Syrians	
		[in Lebanon] are in	
		debt" 2015)	
Internatio-	Warning from the	Warning against at-	Expressing concerns
nally	international at-	tempts of the Unit-	from the use of some
	tempts led by the	ed States to support	communities of Syrian
	United States for the	Lebanon financially	refugees in Lebanon
	settlement of Syrian	if the latter agree on	by regional and in-
	refugees in Lebanon	the settlement of	ternational powers to
	(Alamin 2018)	refugees ("Pompeo	disturb the country's
		threatens Lebanon:	stability (Alqazi 2019)
		displaced Syrians	
		in Lebanon will	
		not return to their	
		country" 2019)	

the pressure of the global powers. Thus, these constitute a real concern to the vast majority of Lebanese citizens, mainly Christians (Geha & Talhouk 2018). It is true that there are Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and they are officially labeled as refugees, but the Lebanese Constitution amended in 1990 by the then Lebanese Parliament states clearly in its lead the inability of granting the Lebanese citizenship to the aforementioned refugees (Janmyr 2017).

Due to the deteriorated Lebanese economy, it has been observed that the issue of settling Syrian refugees in Lebanon is serious, and hence Al-Akhbar Newspaper can be considered as a watchdog press that warns against any international attempts and financial temptations to settle Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Economically, as Table 1 shows, the samples selected from Al-Akhbar Newspaper did not depict Syrian refugees as a major threat to the Lebanese economy, nor did they, at any point, link them to the deterioration of the Lebanese economy. Instead, according to the Newspaper, Syrian refugees in Lebanon may constitute a positive impact on the Lebanese economy in the short term. Nevertheless, the Newspaper has published reports that expect negative consequences in future on the deteriorated Lebanese economy.

Socially, Al-Akhbar Newspaper did not portray Syrian refugees in Lebanon negatively. As it is shown in Table 1, the Newspaper sheds light on the social and educational issues of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Notably, the Newspaper rings the bell through publishing news stories about the external attempts for integrating Syrian refugees in the Lebanese society because these attempts will lead to resettle Syrian refugees permanently in Lebanon.

Although Al-Akhbar>s reporting of Syrian refugees in Lebanon paid attention to the negative consequences of the refugees> issue on the Lebanese political, economic and social status quo, as noted earlier, it has not negatively represented Syrian refugees. As it has illuminated the humanitarian face in its reporting, as observed in the samples of news> items and reports selected for analysis for this paper, Al-Akhbar News-

paper positively frames Syrian refugees in Lebanon and this reflects its journalistic agenda. This agenda reflects Al-Akhbar>s fair and balanced reporting of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, and hence it does not blame Syrian refugees for the economic and financial crises in Lebanon.

These findings reveal that Al-Akhbar Newspaper depicts Syrian refugees in two ways: it presents a salient humanitarian image of Syrian refugees in Lebanon in an objective manner, and hence it checks what can be considered as facts about them, and it also presents them as a growing community in Lebanon that might be exploited, when necessary, by foreign powers in order to achieve political agendas. Drawing on these findings, and as noted earlier regarding the Lebanese press that reflects political dichotomisation, this paper confirms that the notion of neutrality does not exist in reporting Syrian refugees in Al-Akhbar Newspaper, and hence this Newspaper humanises the cause of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon through shedding the focus light on the humanitarian issues that matter those refugees and takes into consideration the Lebanese national interests at the same time.

Although there is no neutrality in the coverage of the political news stories, including the coverage of the news stories of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon, in the Lebanese press, it is crucial for the Lebanese press in general to be protagonist, as Al-Akhbar Newspaper does, in its reporting the humanitarian stories, and hence to avoid hatred and racist discourse.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the image of Syrian refugees in the Lebanese press, taking Al-Akhbar Newspaper and its protagonist coverage of the humanitarian aspect of the issue of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon as a case study. It has been contextualised through providing a contextual background and presenting the relevant literature to allow the understanding of its topic. In this vein, this paper has answered the question postulated, and hence it achieved its aim. It has presented how Al-Akhbar Newspaper depicts the image of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Practically, the analysis of the media discourse of Al-Akhbar Newspaper identified the journalistic practice which usually reflects its editorial agenda.

Theoretically, this paper has selected the news stories and reports which concern both Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees and which they forge a positive image of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. This selection and the salience of such news stories and reports is at the core of framing that shapes theoretically the media discourse of Al-Akhbar Newspaper.

Contrary to the antagonist media discourse of a number of Lebanese media outlets which depict the negatively Syrian refugees in Lebanon, as observed in the study about racism in the Lebanese media and the representation of Syrian refugees in the news coverage (Sadaka, Nader & Mikhael 2015), this paper has considered that the media discourse of Al-Akhbar Newspaper is protagonist in its reporting Syrian refugees and their humanitarian cause. Thus, the media should report issues accurately, in a balanced and fair manner. Although the Al-Akhbar Newspaper does not highlight the negative impact of Syrian refugees in Lebanon whether on the environment or the deteriorated economy, it plays its journalistic role under the umbrella of the fourth estate press ringing the bell to any foreign-suspicious-attempt or agenda to exploit the issue of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Thus, the reporting on Syrian refugees has taken into consideration the social and national security of the country. This journalistic social responsibility is crucial in the peace-building process that promotes the humanitarian aspect of the crisis instead of fueling the discourse of hatred and inciting racism. These findings stress on the significance of the positive role of journalism in presenting a rational and tolerant discourse, which, in its turn, will be in favor of a healthy intercultural communication. As the issue of Syrian refugees in Lebanon is a national matter, this paper recommends that the Lebanese press, whichever its political affiliation, should pay more attention to the humanitarian side of this issue while not neglecting the Lebanese national interests.

Thus, it is highly recommended for the Lebanese press to agree on a joint charter or a pact on how to present Syrian refugees in Lebanon and their issue in a manner that does not discriminate against them.

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