



Kingdom of the Netherlands



Women in Lebanon's 2018 Legislative Elections

Monitoring the Media During the Electoral Campaign from a Gender Perspective

“Executive Summary”

Women Empowered for Leadership



First: General Scope of the Study

1- Aim of the Study

In a country that boasts diversity and the respect of freedoms, especially the freedom of the press, and being a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it only makes sense to examine how women's participation in the 2018 legislative elections was handled as one of the issues that can contribute to the advancement of society at large on a legal, sociocultural and media level. It's a pressing matter especially since women's role in society is becoming increasingly important year after year around the world due to all its economic, social and cultural implications.

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- How did the media deal with the issue of female candidates in the recent legislative elections in Lebanon?
- Did female candidates get their right to express themselves in the media?
- What kind of messages did the media transmit during the electoral campaign in terms of dealing with the issue of female candidates and female voters?
- How much does the media engagement correspond to the concept of gender? To what extent can the media motivate and contribute to the promotion of equality?
- How can the media affect the inclusion of the concept of quota as an introduction to enforce the participation of women in leadership and the establishment of this effective participation?
- And, in general: has the media played the role it is supposed to play in a democratic system, by being the link between the candidate and the voter, and by working on building an aware public opinion out of which political authorities emerge?

2- Sample of the Study

To examine how the media dealt with women during the electoral campaign, the study relied on monitoring media contents as follows:

- Monitoring 8 TV stations from March 6 to May 4 (Télé Liban, MTV, OTV, NBN, LBCI, Future TV, Al Jadeed and Al-Manar).
- Monitoring 6 newspapers during the same period (An-Nahar, Al-Mustaqbal, Al Joumhouria, Al Akhbar, L'Orient le Jour and The Daily Star).
- Monitoring the above-mentioned TV stations during the electoral silence, i.e. from midnight of Friday-Saturday (May 4-5).
- Monitoring via social media the accounts of female and male candidates on Facebook and Twitter from April 6 to May 6.

3- Methodology

To answer the problem, the study examined television and press coverage of female candidates as of the end of the candidacy application period, i.e. from March 6 to May 4. The study also examined the female candidates' social media accounts, checking their profile pictures, photos and videos related to women posted by female and male candidates, as well as the female candidates' slogans. Furthermore, the study examined female and male candidates' posts on Facebook and Twitter in order to cover everything women-related in this electoral campaign. Hence, the study focused on:

- The size and type of press and television coverage and the distribution of coverage rates between male candidates and female candidates
- The rate of female candidates' direct access out of the overall coverage
- The size of press interviews
- The space allocated to female candidates in news bulletins and talk shows
- The rate of press stories where women were the main topic and the rate of the news space where female candidates were the first story compared to male candidates
- Press coverage of positions in favor of female candidates' political participation and their equality with their male counterparts in terms of assuming public responsibilities
- How female candidates used social media, namely Facebook and Twitter, by examining the posts, their distribution and types, as well as the types of interactive media in their own posts

4-Women's Representation in Parliament in Lebanon

Lebanese women have the right to vote and stand for a seat in parliament since 1953 and yet, only 17 women have been elected to the parliament so far. Lebanon was ranked 185 out of 193 countries after the 2009 elections where the percentage of women in parliament was 3.1%. However, after the 2018 elections, it progressed to 184 with 4.6%.

To prevent the marginalization of Lebanese women and to help them advance in political life, the European Union launched the program for Promoting Social Justice in Lebanon. The political scene in Lebanon has also witnessed many debates about the women's quota without it ever being adopted.

A “quota” which essentially means “allocation” is a means to prevent the weak or lack of representation of women in political life due to their exclusion and marginalization. When the 189 participating nations have agreed to implement a quota system at the 1995 Beijing Conference during the Fourth World Conference on Women, the proposal was a minimum 30% representation of women in Parliament to be gradually increased until it is automatically abolished when fair representation is achieved. But after 23 years, those countries haven't made progress with the implementation of the quota system on the basis of affirmative action and calls are still being made in Lebanon and around the world to achieve it.

Second: The Media Coverage of the Female Candidates' Campaign

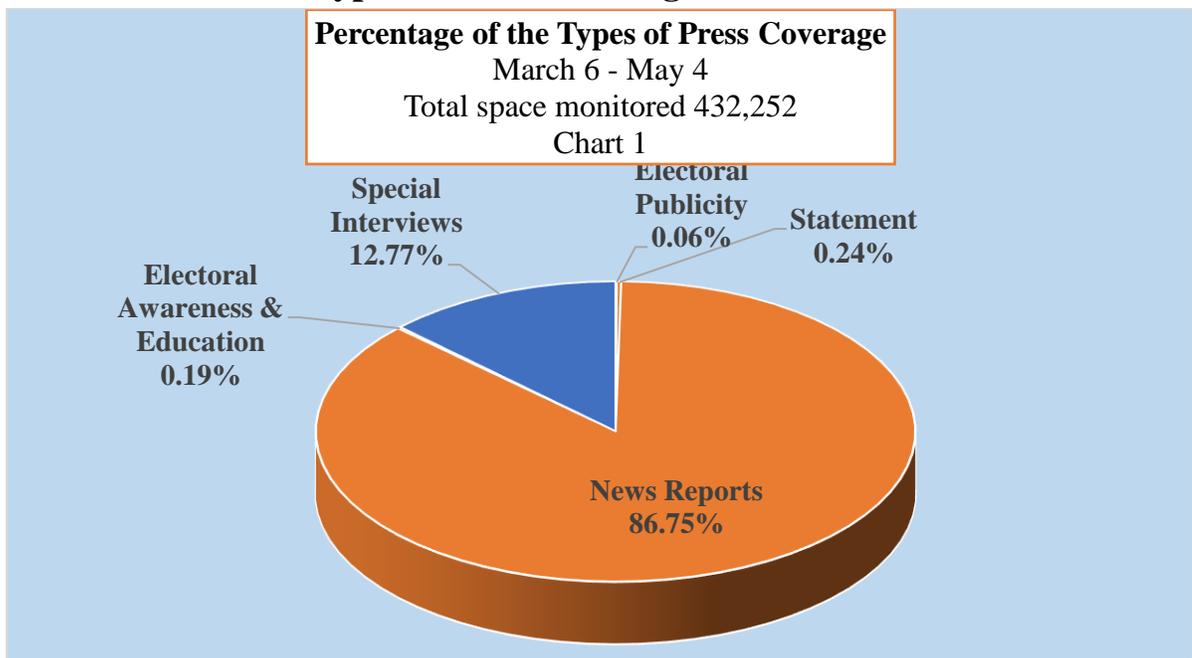
The study monitored the media coverage for about two months, from March 6 to May 4, 2018: Distribution of the press coverage space of various topics, the size of the news coverage, the size of press interviews, the male vs. female candidates' press coverage rates, and the rate of female candidates' direct access out of the overall coverage. It also reports on the press coverage of positions in favor of female candidates' political participation and their equality with their male counterparts in terms of assuming public responsibilities, etc.

It also includes the distribution of the overall time allocated to the type of television coverage, the topics of television coverage, the female vs. male candidate time slots of news reports, the rate of female candidates' direct access

out of the overall television coverage, the rate of coverage that female candidates received directly out of the overall coverage of all candidates, the distribution of the space allocated to female candidates in talk shows and interviews according to political leanings, coverage of the different parties on private TV stations, and the space allocated by private TV stations to independent candidates including those on the major parties' lists, etc.

I: In the Written Press

1- Distribution of the Types of Press Coverage



Most press coverages came in the form of news reports at 86.75% of the total space monitored, followed by special interviews with a wide gap at 12.77%, then at close and almost nonexistent rates: statements, awareness and education, and electoral publicity (ranging between 0.24% and 0.06%).

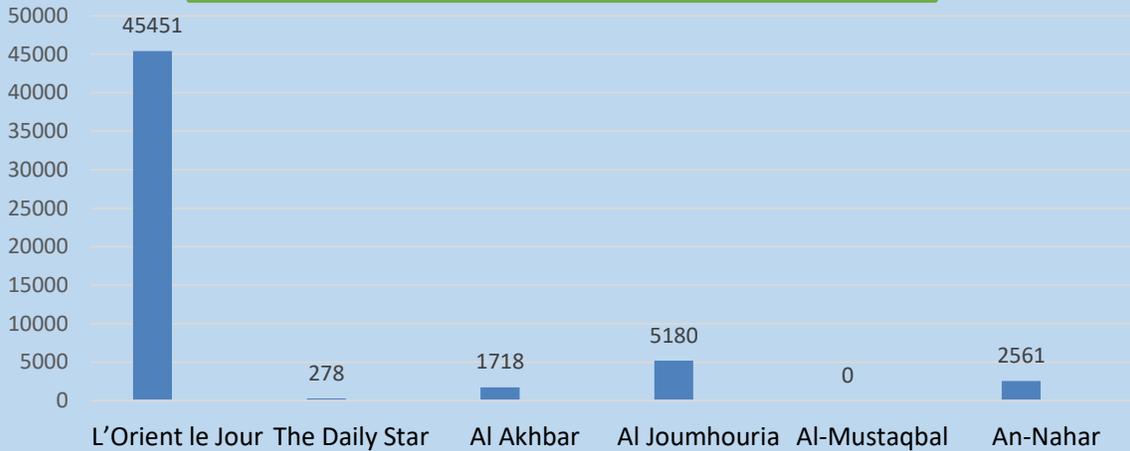
2- Size of Press Interviews in the Monitored Newspapers

Size of Press Interviews in the Monitored Newspapers during the Electoral Campaign

Total space 55,188 cm²

March 6 - May 4

Chart 2



L'Orient le Jour had the highest percentage of interviews at 82.35%. They asked male and female candidates the same questions, plus the question of whether or not they were deputies before. They were followed by Al Joumhouria 9.38%, An-Nahar 4.64%, Al Akhbar 3.11% and The Daily Star 0.50%. While it came first in news coverage, Al-Mustaqbal published zero interviews during the monitored period.

3- Male vs. Female Candidates' Press Coverage

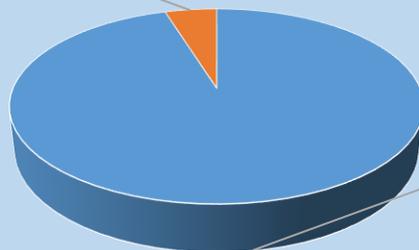
Male vs. Female Candidates' Press Coverage Rates

March 6 - May 4

Total space monitored 432,252 cm²

Chart 3

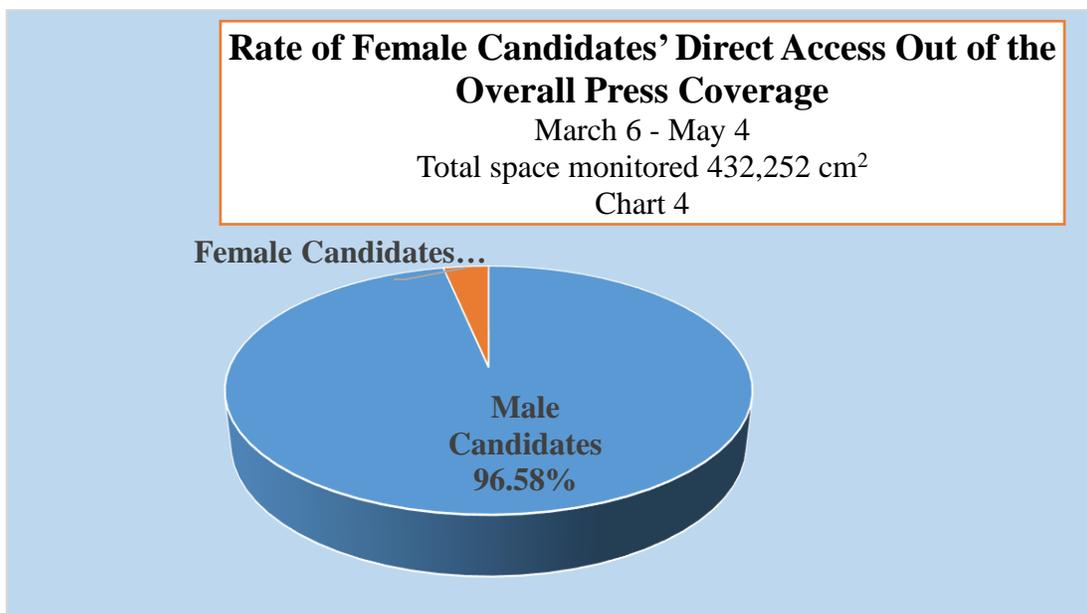
Press Coverage for Female Candidates
5%



Press Coverage for Male Candidates
95%

The overall coverage space in the monitored newspapers was 432,252 cm². The share of press coverage for female candidates was 20,830 cm² (or about 5%) compared to 411,422 cm² for male candidates (or about 95%).

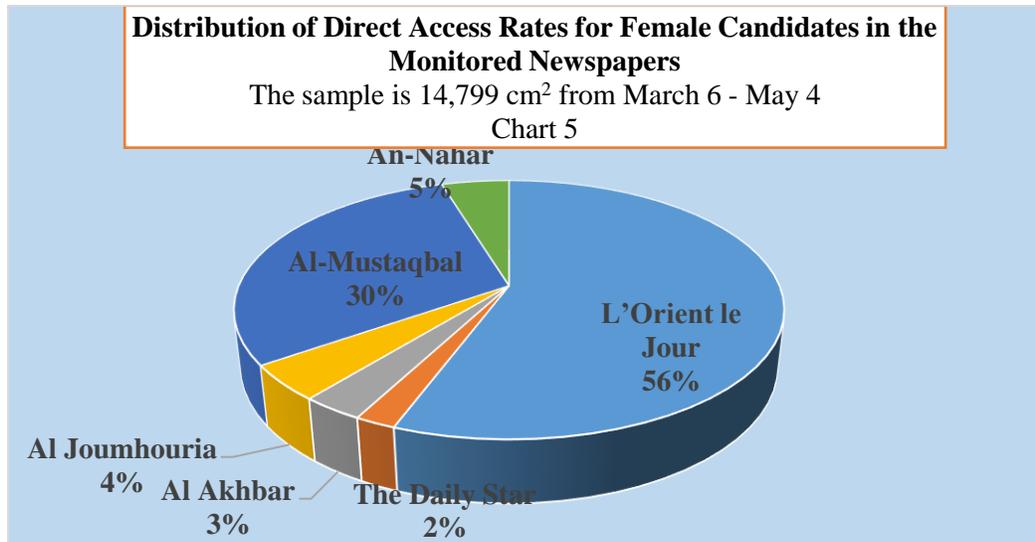
4- Female Candidates' Overall Direct Access



Direct access means direct speech or the literal text of the female candidates' statements through press coverage (direct statement). A mere 3.4% was recorded for the female candidates out the total coverage.

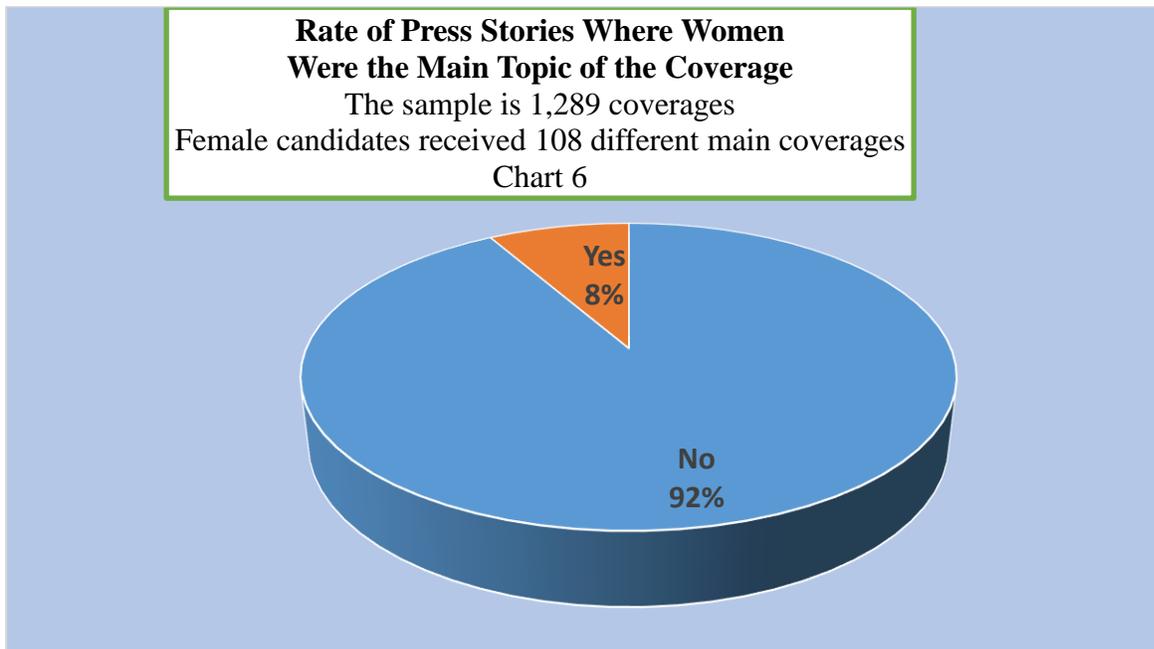
The distribution of the direct access rates for female candidates among the various topics of the press coverage shows that the highest and almost total percentage was for electoral campaigns (92.13%) while the rate was 0% for topics such as security, the environment, Social Security, infrastructure, employment and awareness.

5- Direct Access Rates for Female Candidates in the Monitored Newspapers



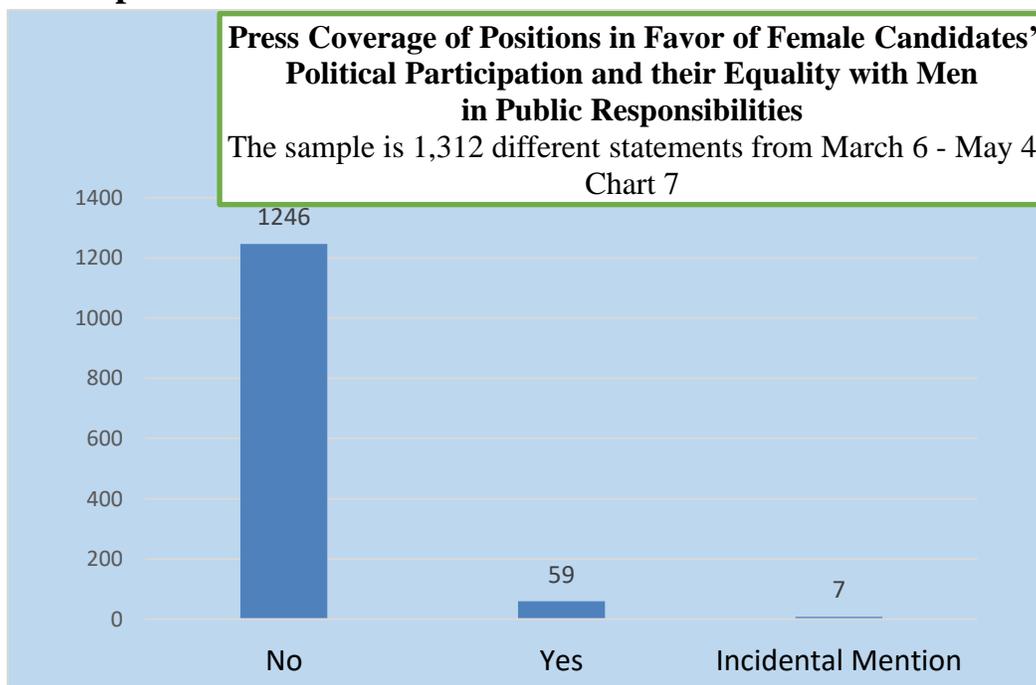
L'Orient le Jour had the highest percentage of providing direct access for female candidates at 56%, followed by Al-Mustaqbal at 30%, then very low and close rates recorded by An-Nahar 5%, Al Joumhouria 4% and Al Akhbar 3%. L'Orient le Jour alone accounts for more than half of the total percentage of overall access compared to the rest of the newspapers combined.

6- Press Stories Where Women Were the Main Topic of the Coverage



Women's presence was insignificant in press stories as a main topic of coverage and barely reached 8%.

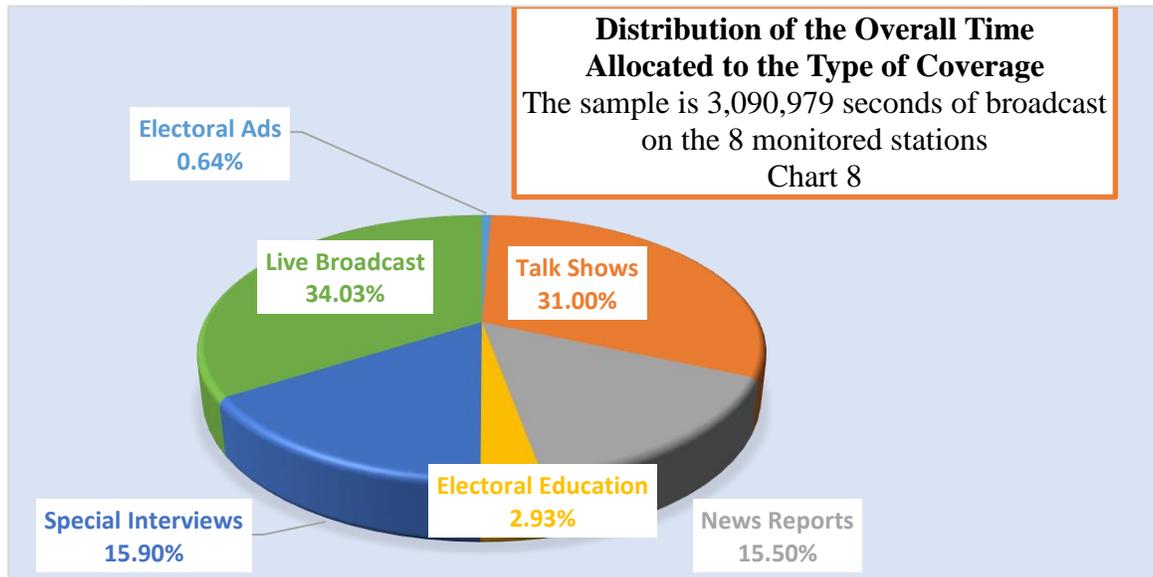
7- Press Coverage of Positions in Favor of Female Candidates' Political Participation



The chart shows that 94.96% of monitored positions didn't address the topic of female candidates' political participation and their equality with their male counterparts in terms of assuming public responsibilities, as opposed to 4.49% of positions that were in favor of it and discussed it as a main topic.

II: On Television

1- Coverage on TV Stations



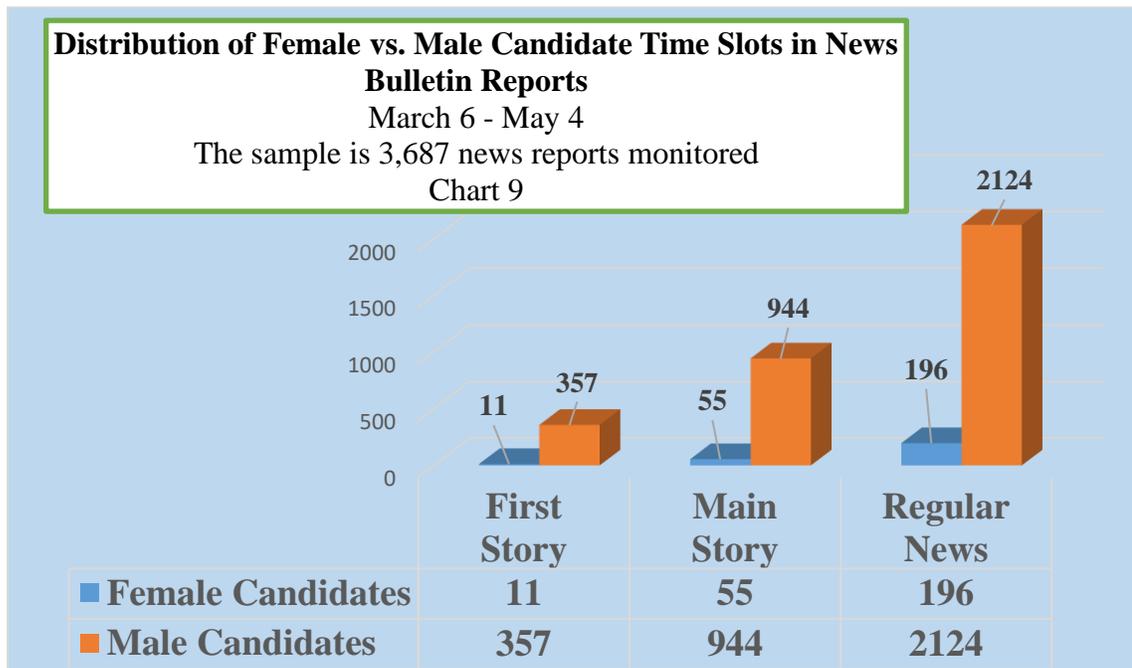
The time rates according to the type of coverage were closely divided between live broadcast 34.03% and talk shows 31% on one hand, and between special interviews 15.9% and news reports 15.5% on the other. The time rate for electoral education was negligible at 2.9%. Talk shows and live broadcast together accounted for slightly over half of the total overall time. Interestingly, much of male candidates' on-screen appearances and TV coverages of their activities was paid, as part of their electoral publicity, but the media doesn't show that. Therefore, viewers couldn't distinguish between free and paid coverage.

2- Topics of TV Coverage over the Overall Monitored Space

Television coverage of electoral campaigns (for two months) reached 79.50% of the overall coverage. The monitoring revealed that 12% of coverage was about the different candidates doing their ministerial, parliamentary or general activities

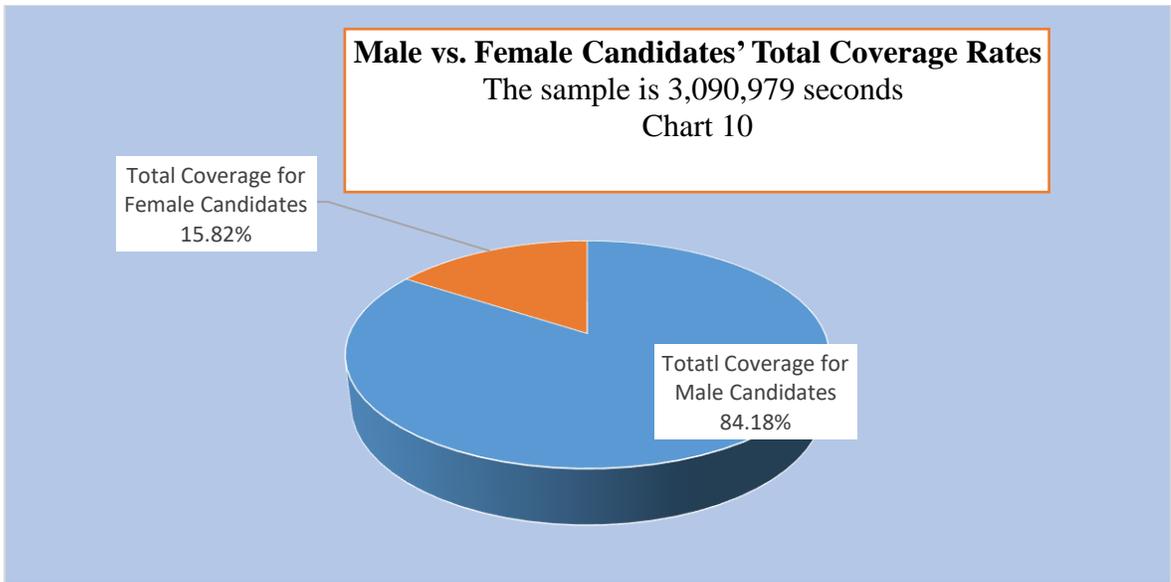
through conferences and workshops. In other words, no more than 2% of candidates benefited from a 12% overall television coverage which was supposed to benefit 592 candidates belonging to the different lists, only because of their government jobs and their positions in the public political life.

3- Distribution of Female vs. Male Candidate Time Slots in News Bulletin Reports



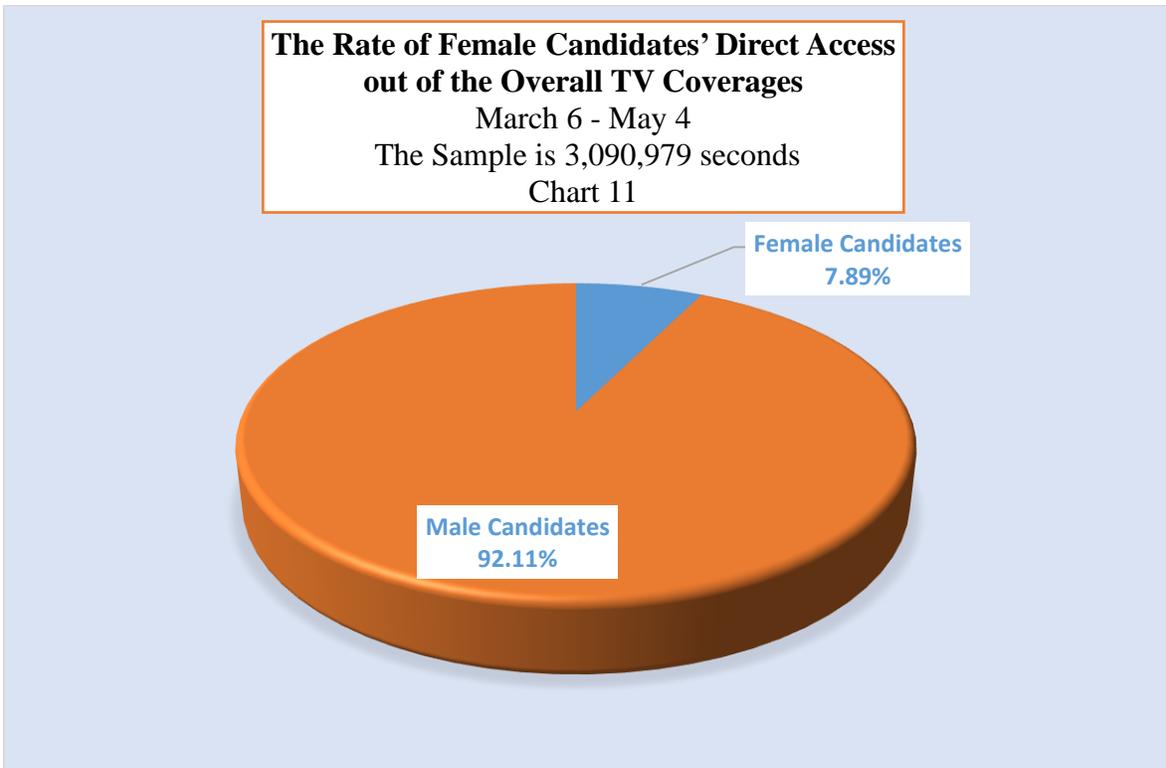
Out of 3,687 different news reports, female candidates benefited from 11 instances of coverage as first news, or 0.3%, compared to 357 instances for male candidates, or 9.7%. The percentage of regular news reports was 57.60% for male candidates and 5.31% for female candidates. The disparity between female and male candidates was evident in all the time slots of news reports.

4- Male vs. Female Candidates' Coverage Rates



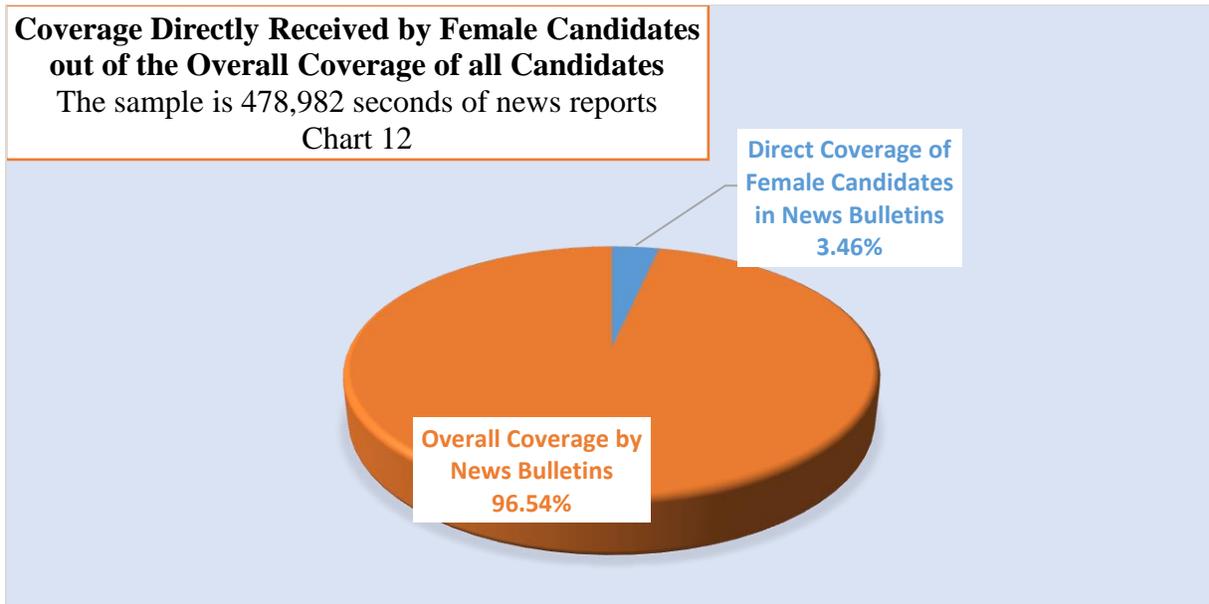
The total coverage between Male and female candidates was in favor of men who had 84.1% as opposed to women 15.8%.

5- The Rate of Female Candidates' Direct Access out of the Overall TV Coverages



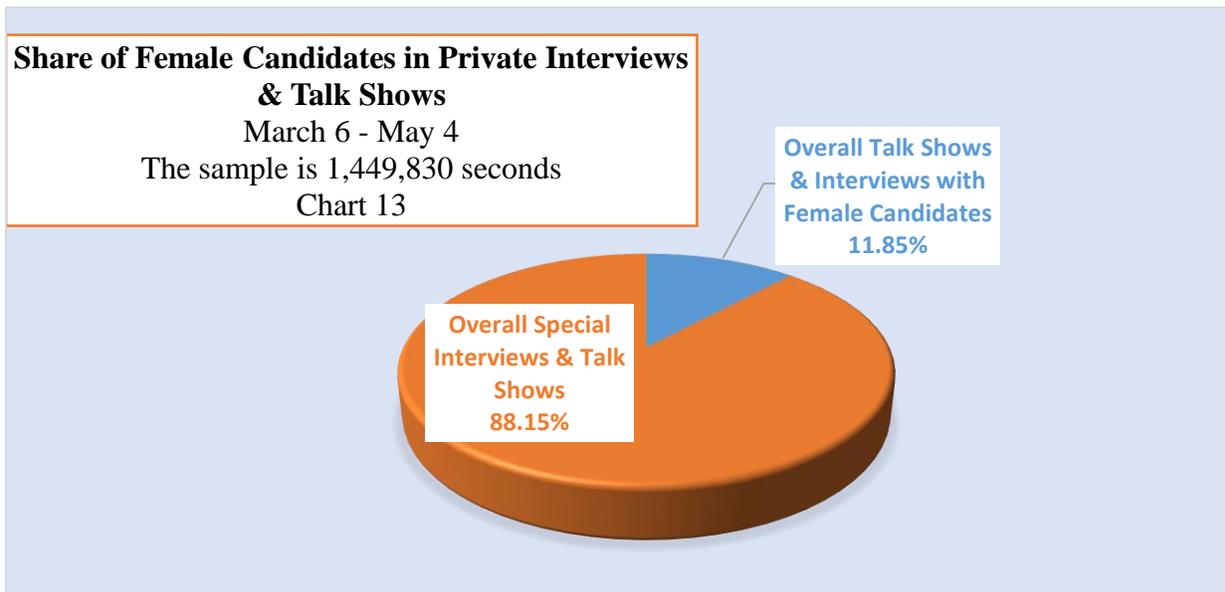
Female candidates' direct access out of the overall television coverages was 7.89%, a very small percentage compared to the space given to male candidates. This means that female candidates didn't have an adequate opportunity to directly address public opinion through a medium that is highly important and a cornerstone for electoral campaigns.

6- Coverage Directly Received by Female Candidates Compared to the Overall Coverage of all Candidates



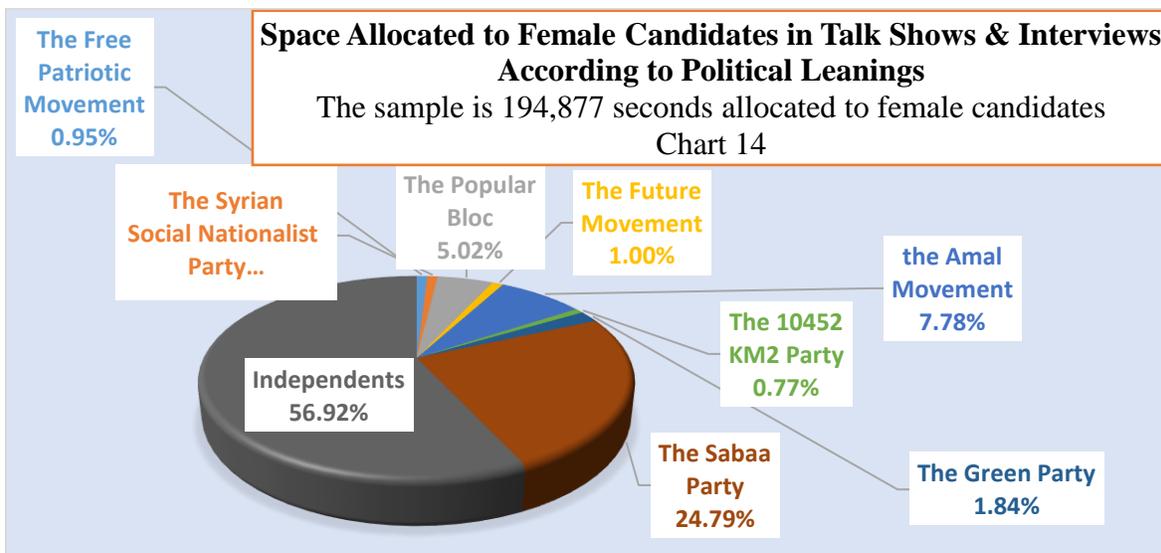
The direct coverage of female candidates in news bulletins was 3.46% out of the overall coverage of all candidates. The previous chart already showed the female candidates' direct access out of the overall television coverages, which was 7.89%. These percentages reflect the small space acquired by female candidates in the central means used for electoral campaigns, i.e. television, and in its main segment, i.e. the news bulletin.

7- Share of Female Candidates in Private Interviews and Talk Shows



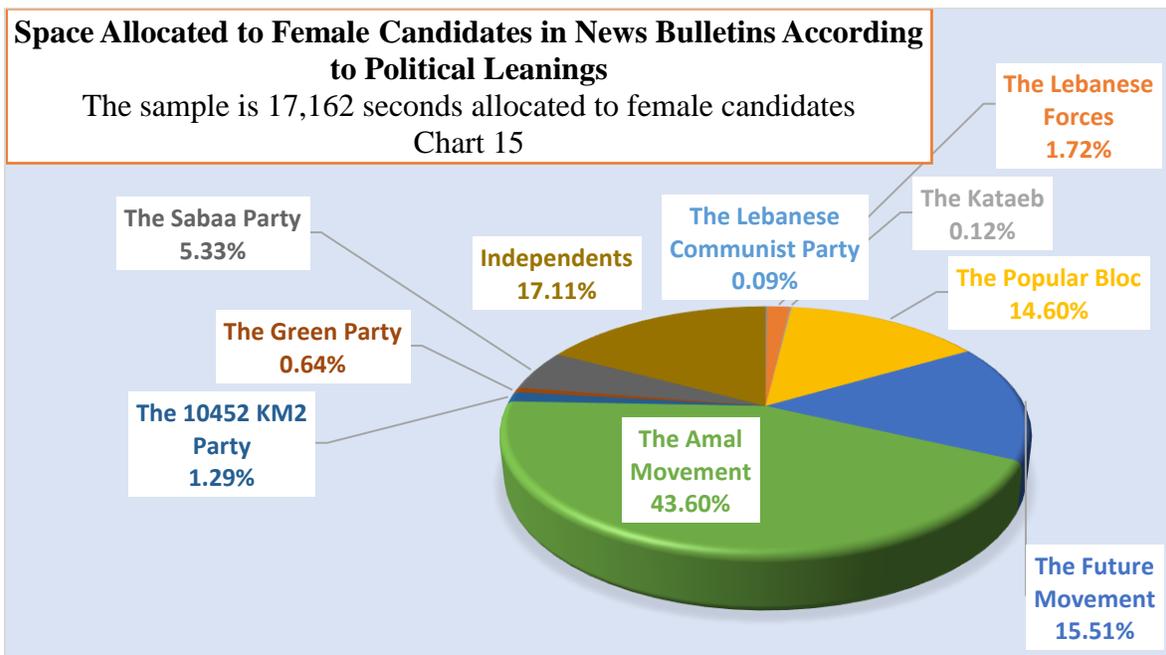
The share of female candidates in private interviews and talk shows was a low 11.85%, but it was still higher than the 3.46% of direct coverage they received in news bulletins.

8- Space Allocated to Female Candidates in Talk Shows and Interviews According to Political Leanings



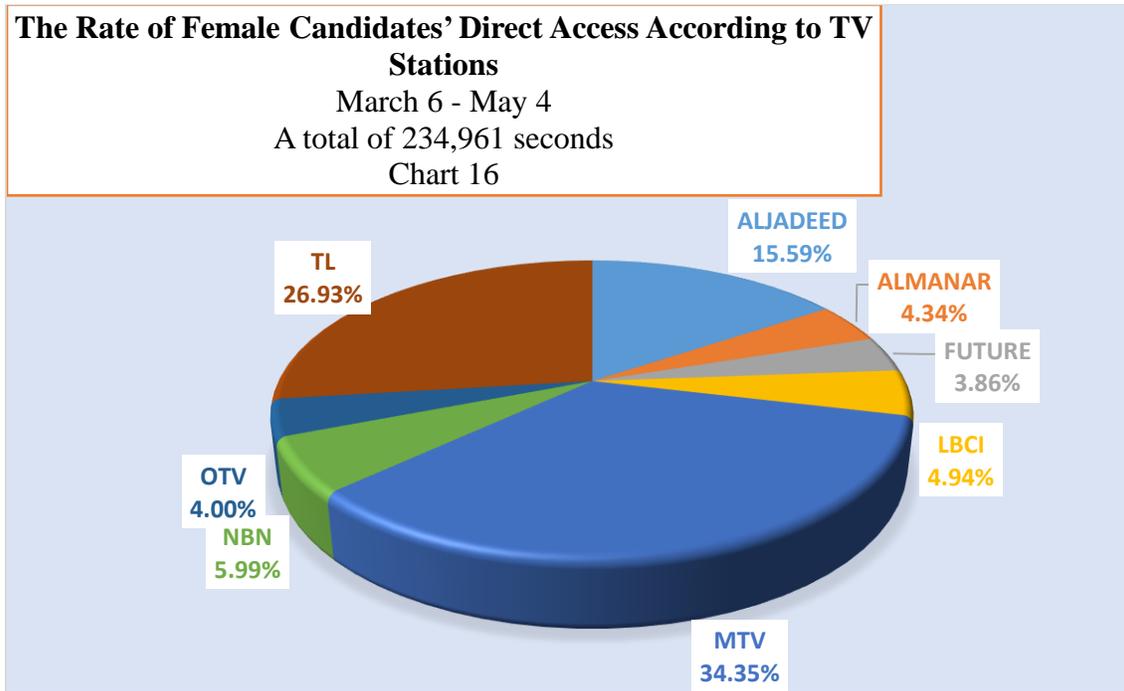
Independent women received the highest percentage of television coverage 55.53% in talk shows and special interviews on various private TV stations and Télé Liban, followed by 24.79% for the Sabaa Party female candidates, and the rest was divided among the other parties' female candidates.

9- Space Allocated to Female Candidates in News Bulletins According to Political Leanings



The Amal Movement female candidate received the highest percentage of allocated space in news bulletins 43.60%, followed by independent female candidates 17.11%, the Future Movement female candidates 15.51% and the Popular Bloc female candidate 14.60%. The remaining percentages, ranging between 5% and 0%, were divided among the other political leanings. Interestingly, the Amal Movement nominated one female candidate who took up nearly half of the public space.

10- The Rate of Female Candidates' Direct Access According to TV Stations



Female Candidates' Direct Access was 34.3% on MTV, followed by 26.9% on Télé Liban and by 15.5% on Al Jadeed. These three TV stations made up 76% combined while the remaining percentages were 5.9% on NBN, 4.9% on LBCI, 4.3% on Al-Manar, 4% on OTV and 3.8% on Future TV.

11- Space Allocated to Political Parties on Private TV Stations

The coverage of the different parties on private TV stations reflects the size of the ruling and active political forces. The Future Movement was in the lead with the highest coverage 22.2%, closely followed by the Free Patriotic Movement 21%, while Kulluna Watani received a coverage rate of 5.8%, a very low percentage compared to the coverage received by the traditional parties combined.

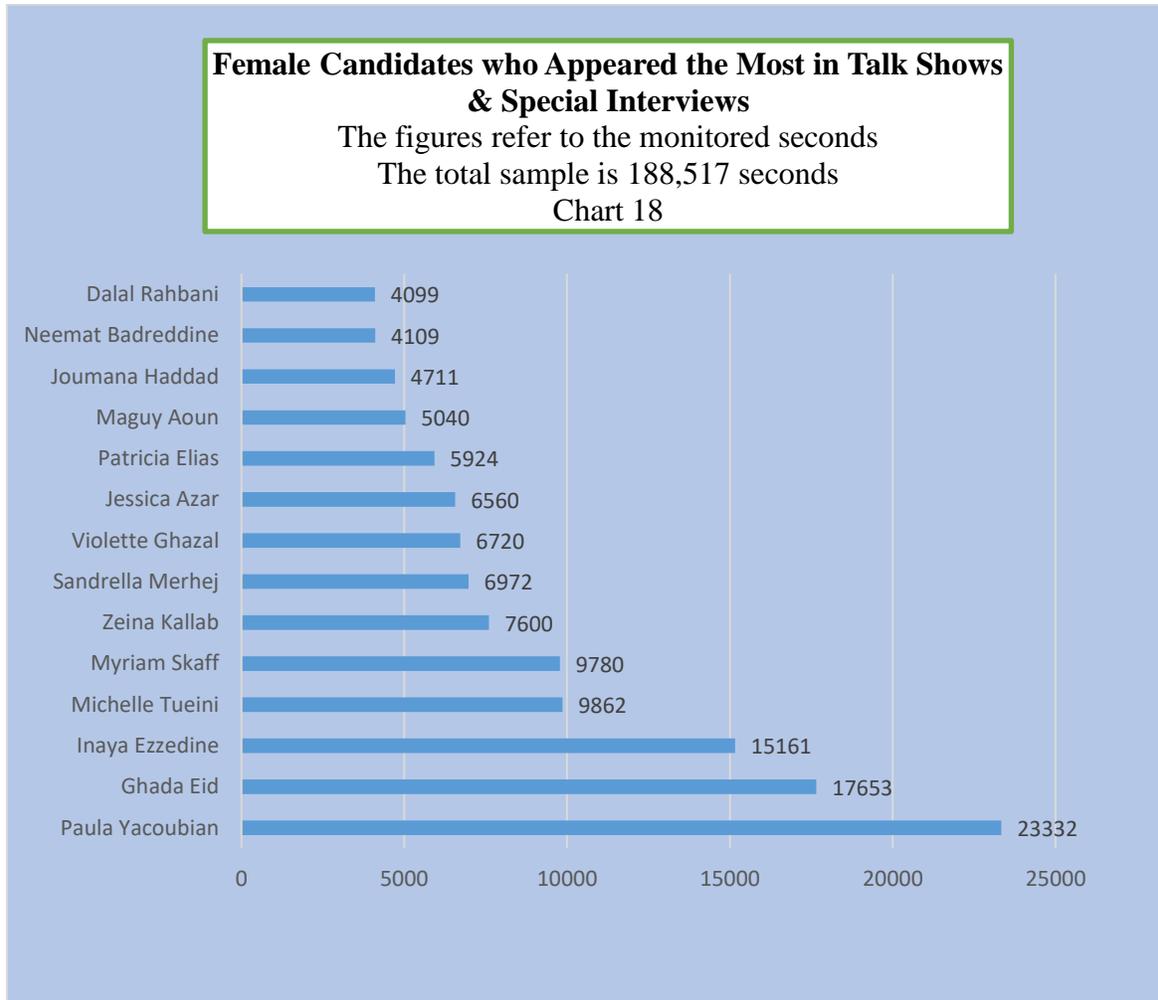
The following table shows the space occupied by each political party on TV stations according to their overall share in the coverages.

	Kulluna Watani	The Amal Movement	Hezbollah	The Free Patriotic Movement	The Future Movement	The Lebanese Forces	The Progressive Socialist Party	The Kataeb Party
MTV	40.8	4.1	0.3	16.6	10.7	75	49.2	64.2
LBCI	22	3.2	0.2	9.1	6.8	4	9.6	6.5
OTV	6	3.4	0.7	52.9	6.1	6	1.6	3.5
Manar	3.2	26.3	58.8	4.5	2.7	2	2.5	0.2
NBN	0	55.1	25.5	1.8	5.1	1	6.5	1.5
Al Jadeed	27.1	6.2	13.7	11.6	12.1	8	23.3	23.5
Future TV	0.6	1.3	0.6	3.2	56.3	4	7.1	0.3

- The largest space allocated to Kulluna Watani on private TV stations was on MTV 40.8% followed, with a large gap, by Al Jadeed and LBCI 22%. The two were similarly followed with a large gap by OTV 6% and Al-Manar 3.2%. Future TV had the lowest percentage 0.6%.
- As expected, the space allocated to the Amal Movement was 55.1% on NBN, followed by Al-Manar 26.3%, then the remaining stations led by Al Jadeed with 6.2%.
- The space allocated to Hezbollah was, also as expected, 58.8% on Al-Manar, followed by NBN 25.5%.
- The space allocated to the Free Patriotic Movement was 52.9% on OTV, as expected.
- The space allocated to the Future Movement was 56.3% on Future TV.
- The space allocated to the Lebanese Forces was 75% on MTV and ranged between 8% and 1% on the other stations.
- The space allocated to the Progressive Socialist Party was 49.2% on MTV, followed by Al Jadeed 23.4% then the remaining stations. OTV had the lowest percentage 1.6%.
- The space allocated to the Kataeb Party was the largest on MTV 64.2% followed by Al Jadeed 23.5%.

These figures show the targeted and promotional uses of private TV stations and the inability of citizens to rely on them to follow the electoral campaigns and the candidates' programs.

12- Female Candidates who Appeared the Most in Talk Shows and Special Interviews



Female candidates who appeared the most in **talk shows and special interviews** were Paula Yacoubian 12.3%, followed by Ghada Eid 9.3%, Inaya Ezzedine 8%, Michelle Tueini 5.2%, Myriam Skaff 5.1%, and lower rates for Neemat Badreddine 2.1% and Dalal Rahbani 2.1%.

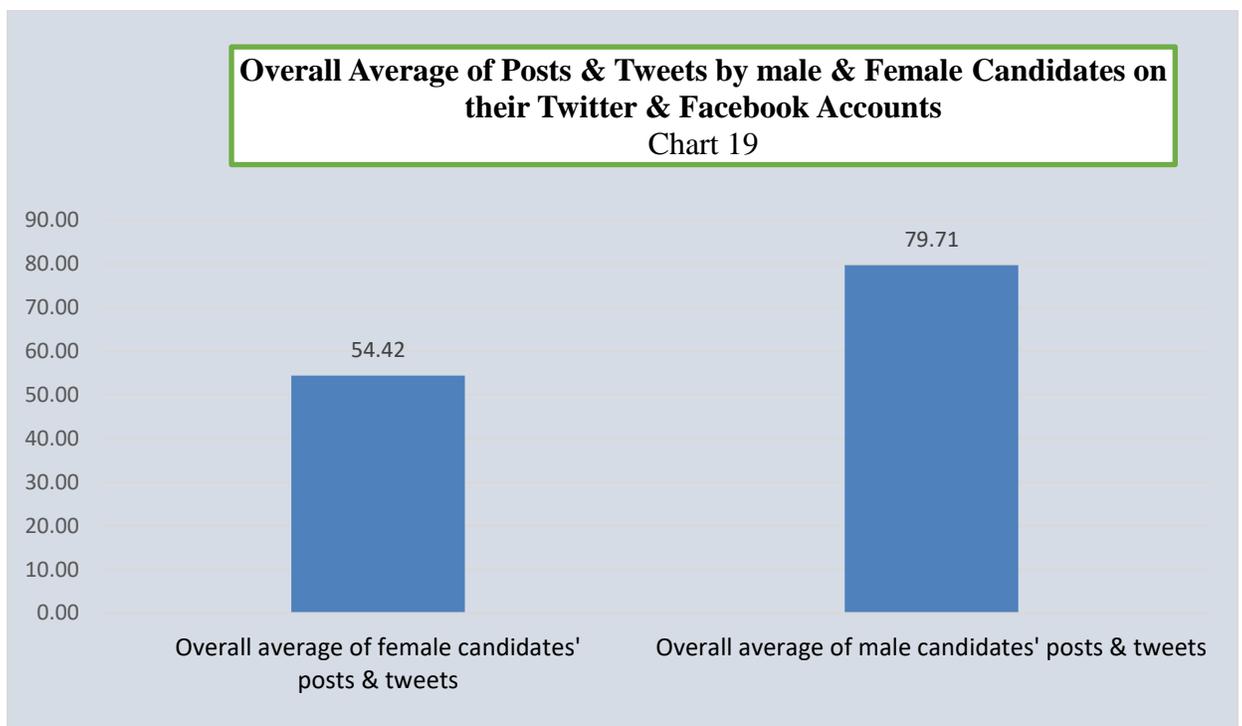
In **news reports**, the most prominent female candidate was Inaya Ezzedine 43.7%, followed with a large gap by Myriam Skaff 14.6%, then Bahia Hariri 13.5%, followed with another large gap by Paula Yacoubian 3.9%. Joumana Haddad scored 3.22%, Rola Tabsh 1.99% and Sethrida Geagea 1.7%. The lowest percentage was for candidate Nada Gharib 0.6%.

In the live broadcast of electoral campaigns, the most prominent female candidates were Myriam Skaff, followed by Inaya Ezzedine with a 240-seconds (or 4 minutes) difference, then Sethrida Geagea with a 2,397-seconds (or 39.95 minutes) difference from Skaff.

Among the female candidates **who appeared the most in the overall TV coverages**, Inaya Ezzedine is in the lead with a small difference between her and Paula Yacoubian, followed by Ghada Eid and Myriam Skaff with an insignificant difference between the two.

III: On Social Media

1- Male and Females Candidates' Tweets and Facebook Posts



Male candidates seem to be more active on Facebook and Twitter, with an average of 79.7 posts and tweets per candidate, compared to 54.4 for each female candidate, with a 25.29-point difference.

Interestingly, female candidates posted and tweeted (on Facebook and Twitter) more announcements about electoral activities 4.5% than their male counterparts

1%, and posted more about their electoral programs 5.7% than their male counterparts 2.6%.

Paradoxically, the number of posts about women's political participation was higher among male candidates at 3%, compared with 1.7% for female candidates. The topic of electoral awareness and education received 2.8% on both sides.

2- Distribution of Post Topics on Female Candidates' Facebook and Twitter Accounts

Concerning the topics of posts on Facebook, electoral publicity came in first at 29.2% followed by electoral activities at 24.3%. As for posts on political criticism, they were at 17% for male candidates and at 8.9% for female candidates.

Female candidates' tweets also show that electoral publicity was leading with 20.2% and that women's political participation was last with 0.4%. The topic of electoral awareness and education was also almost nonexistent at 0.5%.

Third: The Results

1- Male Domination

- Concerning the media coverage of the electoral campaign from a gender perspective, there was a significant disparity in the distribution of press coverage between male and female candidates in favor of men of course, at a rate of 95% for men and 5% for women. On television, female candidates' share in interviews and talk shows was about 12%. In the news, it didn't exceed 3.5 %.
- The monitoring showed that female candidates' direct access was 3.42% in newspapers and 7.89% on television as a total average in all programs, a rate that dropped to 3.46% in news bulletins.
- In news bulletins: out of 3,687 different news reports, female candidates benefited from 11 coverages as a first story compared to 357 for male candidates, i.e. 0.3% of the total coverage versus 9.7% for male candidates. The direct coverage of female candidates in news bulletins was 3.46% out of the overall coverage of all candidates.

- The space occupied by female candidates as a first story in TV news was almost nonexistent 0.87% compared to the space dedicated to male candidates 99.13%.
- Press coverage of electoral education and awareness was almost nonexistent with an overall rate of 0.19%. It performed slightly better on television but the rate was still a negligible 2.93%. In private interviews and talk shows, the coverage was slightly better for female candidates reaching 11.85% higher than the direct coverage 3.4% or the space they occupied as a first story 8%.

2- Women's Social Representations

In light of this data—the figures and their connotations—and based on the terminology used in the media coverage, it seems that the mechanism of the social discourse toward women is still dominated by antiquated representations of women and men. These representations were clearly and directly reflected in the percentage of positions that didn't express support to female candidates' political participation and their equality with men in assuming public responsibilities 94.96%, as opposed to 4.49% of supportive positions.

3- The Erased Role

Direct coverage gives women a chance to express themselves and speak for themselves. During the electoral campaign, the study showed that women weren't given enough space to be persuasive by directly addressing the public in general, and the voters in particular, with their own words. Silencing the other is a silent violent act.

For the access content, i.e. the topics that the female candidates discussed, it was mostly the electoral campaign 92.13%. The study showed an almost nonexistent mention of topics related to legislation, public policies, economy, security, infrastructure, pensions, etc. This indicates that women are primarily preoccupied with their own electoral campaigns, haven't yet been able to handle these topics in depth in order to discuss them, haven't had the opportunity to do so—thus sticking to promoting—and/or they weren't given the chance to discuss them.

The rate of female candidates' access according to the coverage topic out of the total press coverage was: miscellaneous activities and positions 5.38%, electoral campaigns 4.4%, human rights 1.24%, legislation and public policies 0.94%, while the other topics were almost at 0%.

On television, the three stations MTV 34.3%, Télé Liban 26.9% and Al Jadeed 15.5% combined made up 76% of direct access for the female candidates, while the remaining percentages ranged between 5.9% for NBN, 4.9% for LBCI, 4.3% for Al-Manar, 4% for OTV and 3.8% for Future TV. Here, Télé Liban played a significant role in allowing female candidates to directly address the public, as well as providing a prominent space to male and female independent candidates.

4- Using Social Media Platforms

Female candidates also used social media to access the voters. But here too, they talked about and promoted the electoral campaign while male candidates were primarily focused on establishing their political positions. And male candidates even outperformed their female counterparts in discussing the topic of women's candidacy. Being more powerful in the political equation, mentioning women's candidacy in their discourse is an added credit to the values they're promoting, which in turn reinforces their image as male democratic candidates who are open to equality.

Male candidates used social media more than female candidates but it should be noted that female candidates used social media for electoral publicity to compensate for their absence in the traditional media outlets.

5- Electoral Education

In general, electoral campaigns scored the highest share in the distribution of coverage topics, as expected, at 71.66%, while awareness and education scored the lowest rate of 0.3%.

The low insignificant rate for electoral education in the press and on television wouldn't have been important if the citizens had adequate knowledge of the

democratic culture, the electoral work, the electoral mechanism and especially of the new Election Law.

Fourth: Summaries

- The high number of female candidates indicates that the elections are no longer limited to a few women who want to run but it's now a matter that's important to a larger segment of citizens.
- A large number of female candidates are college graduates of various specialties and working in various professions: some are activists in NGOs, others are famous media personalities, and they all want to play a leading role in society.
- The figures showed a significant disparity in the distribution of coverage rates between female and male candidates in the newspapers—in favor of male candidates, of course—at a rate of 95% for men and 5% for women. On television, the rates were 3.5 % on the news and 11.85% in interviews and talk shows.
- Women's absence in the coverage wasn't limited to the low rate of appearance. The study showed that women were also rarely featured as a main topic of coverage in press stories, barely making up 8%.
- In general, electoral campaigns scored the highest share in the distribution of coverage topics, as expected, at 71.66%, while awareness and education scored the lowest rate of 0.3%. Electoral awareness and education could have paved the way for a culture of gender equity acceptance.
- The direct coverage of female candidates in news bulletins was 3.46% out of the overall coverage of all candidates 96.5%. This means that women aren't a top event and that the news bulletin imposed a certain reality in some way which didn't help in getting women's voices heard so that people can have faith in them and their abilities, and consequently vote for them.
- The share of female candidates in private interviews and talk shows was 11.85%, and it's mostly thanks to the percentage of direct coverage or the space they occupied as a first story. It should be noted here that interviews relatively made up for the lack of coverage in news bulletins but the rate is still low.
- Télé Liban was by far the biggest contributor in raising the percentage of coverage in talk shows and special interviews with a rate of 77.2% for

independent female candidates. The rate for TV stations combined was 55.53% compared to 24.79% for female candidates from the Sabaa Party, while the rest was divided among the other parties' female candidates. As for private TV stations, they offered a space that amounts to 46.7%.

- For electoral education, the percentage was insignificant and almost nonexistent in newspapers and television, with an overall rate of 0.19% in newspapers and a slightly better but still negligible 2.93% on television. In the distribution of overall rates of posts and tweets by male and female candidates, the topic of electoral awareness and education received 2.8% on both sides.
- Offering a space for independents and civil society on Télé Liban and private stations—even if the rates were disproportionate, especially on overtly partisan stations, which is normal—is still considered a way in to help give increasingly more space to women as diversity begins to break through the rigid traditional scene, albeit slowly.

Fifth: Recommendations

- The need to adopt a women's quota for a while to boost people's confidence in women, in the public sphere in general and in politics specifically.
- The need to implement the laws related to the electoral media and advertising, especially equal appearance and the establishment of effective mechanisms to provide this equal balance between female and male candidates, mainly in the private media sector. This would provide female candidates with a fair share in the media coverage which takes into consideration their right to reach the public. It would also ensure that media access is no longer controlled by money or political dependency.
- The need for private media to seek, as part of their social responsibility, to provide fair, impartial and balanced election coverage to all candidates, for even though they're commercial companies, they inherently provide a public service.
- The need to use the available mechanisms for claims and complaints to access the media, provided by the current law, so that candidates can demand that the media and the Election Supervisory Authority give them access to the media on similar terms as their competitors.

- The need for the Election Supervisory Authority to determine a spending ceiling for paid election publicity and ad spaces, which would increase the female candidates' chances to appear in free spaces.
- The need for the different parties to support female candidates and the need to complete the work at the executive authority level, i.e. women's participation in government through portfolios that are not limited to education and social affairs.
- To increase women's presence in the media coverage, they need to be in the picture, making them the news as well as men in politics and public affairs. The media should make the effort to dedicate a fair space for women as actors in society in general and in politics in particular, as experts in economy and everything related to the state because that would reflect interest in women's role and reinforce confidence in them.
- The need to implement educational programs on gender and achieving justice on that basis, so that the recipients and voters—both women and men—see what human rights are and how gender equality is both a duty and a democratic value.
- The need to enlighten the public opinion and this involves the state, the laws, the political parties, education and the media so that the discourse about “Lebanon's freedom” and “diversity that's in its DNA” isn't just words with a different reality.
- Updating the law of political party organization based on the rule of democracy, which would allow women to do their part for a broader start in political life.
- Women should also do their part within their political parties and get involved in all fields of public affairs with all its political, syndicalist, intellectual, social and health aspects so that they can fully play their role.
- Women also need to endeavor and prove their ability and competence. They're required to put in twice the effort required of men or new male candidates or first-time male winners. It's “the longest war” but their struggles would help advance society. They need to work on developing political and media communication strategies to go along with their public appearance beyond the electoral campaign period.