



## **Women in News and Political Talk Shows**

This study aims at analyzing the Lebanese media status in terms of women participation in producing media content, participation in news making and influencing the public opinion through political talk shows and news bulletins, in various Lebanese TV stations.

### **1- Research Material**

The research material consisted of news evening bulletin of 5 TV stations: AlManar, AlJadeed, AlMoustaqbal, MTV, and LBC, in addition to political talk shows in 6 TV stations: AlManar, AlJadeed, AlMoustaqbal, MTV, LBC, and OTV.

#### **a. The 6 Political Talk Shows**

The study analyzed the size of women participation and their role in public debate about varied issues whether political, economic, or social through monitoring political talk shows broadcasted on 6 Lebanese TV stations at peak time throughout the week days. The detailed research material that the study was based upon included current issues, political and security issues in Lebanon and the region, the danger of religious atonement and how can be faced, the issue of minorities in the region, and other social issues like the issue of tenants and series of ranks and salaries, the issue of public health and food safety, immigrant, educational and human rights issues like the new traffic law, Women's International Day, and various highlights on Lebanese innovators.



These programs share similar layout that divides each episode into different segments and different guests who discuss mainly current issues, in addition to relevant issues related to economy, health, society, and development. These programs host leading politicians in private exclusive interviews. These programs are interactive and engage the audience through direct phone calls or interactions on social media. Some use online surveys to gather the opinion of the audience on certain issues. They have different paces of broadcast; they use reports that highlight the debate issue to pave the way about the issues raised. They are live programs and last around one and a half hour, the program “Hadis al Sa’a” sometimes last for more than two hours (“Kalam Annas” episode on 12/3/2015 lasted for 151 minutes, “Bi Mawdouíya” episode on 18/3/2015 lasted 137 minutes including advertising breaks).

#### b. Evening news bulletins

In addition to the status of women participation in political talk shows, the study also highlights the role of women in news making, and making their voice heard through their participation in developing news reports or the raised issues. The evening news bulletins are characterized with their long introductions that reflect the editorial affiliation of the media outlet. The international and regional events are significantly highlighted in the news bulletins in addition to local regional issues that come often as priority. The news bulletins are [resented by two or more persons joined by other presenters for specific sections like economy, sports, and



weather. News bulletins are directly supervised by news editor in chief, and according to the law, every news section or political talk show should have a managing director. Editors and reporters participate in developing the reports that are presented during the bulletin.

### c. Period and sample of the study

The monitoring period was during March 2015. The sample of the research included the first four episodes of the political talk shows of the monitored TV stations starting March 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. A total of 4 full episodes for each of the 6 monitored TV station, thus the sample consisted of 24 episodes. It is important to note that some TV stations have more than one political talk show like AlManar and OTV, the study selected “Hadis Al Sa’a” from the AlManar and “Faker Martein” from OTV without any specific criteria. As for the second sample of the study, it consisted of four evening bulletins for every TV station that were randomly selected during the monitoring period that took place between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2015. The monitoring team analyzed the first five prominent coverage of each selected news bulletin, where the total sample consisted of 100 news coverage of varied issues.

## **2- The Methodology**

The methodology used in the analysis of data consisted of qualitative and quantitative indicators to answer the research hypothesis. These indicators tackled, in the political talk shows, the name and gender of the



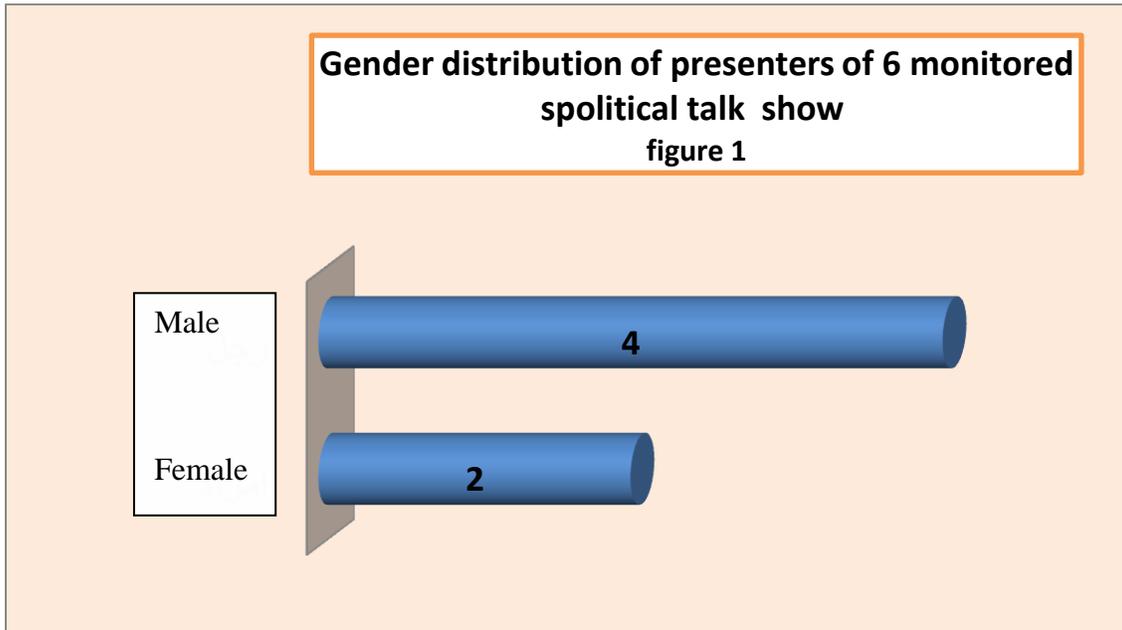
presenter, the preparation team, the guests and their role in discussing the raised issues, and their distribution among the 6 talk shows. As for the news bulletins, additional indicators were used related to people subject of coverage like commentators, analysts, main spokespersons, and those who are subject of coverage whether they were inside or outside the studio, and to what extent the reports tackled women issues, or legislations and public policies related to women's rights and gender equality.

The analysis includes how people are portrayed and introduced, and the way their issues are presented.

The major research questions of this study were: how women participate in news making and influencing public opinion during coverage? Does coverage focus on group of women or to particular women as essential element? Does coverage tackle issues affecting women? Are males and females promoted or challenged in various news coverage and talk shows? Does the media story highlight clearly issues related to equality and gender differences? To what extent the coverage challenge gender stereotypes?

## **Second: The Presence of Women in Public Life through Political Talk Shows:**

### **a- Women as presenters of political talk shows**

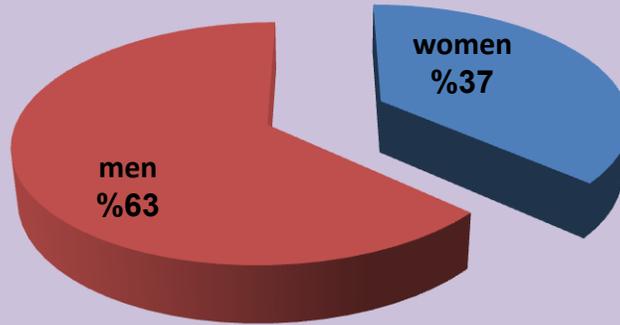


The research sample included weekly evening political talk shows broadcasted on the 6 monitored TV channels, and this selection aimed at measuring the opportunities given for woman to be present at peak time and to prove herself as political talk show presenter able to facilitate the discussions and raise current issues with the guests. These programs are not devoid of acute discussions and biased media. Men are still dominant in presenting the majority of evening political talk shows. The numbers in figure 1 show that men present 4 talk shows while women present only 2.



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Gender distribution of participation in presenting, preparing, producing and implementing the 6 monitored political talk shows  
figure 3

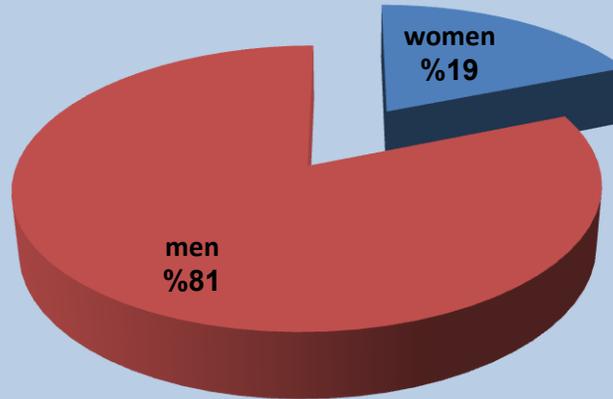


The presenter of the program is assisted by a team that contributes directly in the production and preparation of layout and content. This production contribution is distributed according to different roles done by reporters, writers, producers, and directors.

The monitoring and evaluation of the role of 41 persons whom they worked in the 6 programs showed, as seen in the above two tables 3 and 4 that 63% of the workers are men and 37% are women.



gender distribution of technical participation in political talk shows  
figure 5



As for the technical part, the presence of men is dominant, according to figure 4, 22 men work in photography, 23 men for sound, and 19 men for image and lighting thus a total of 64 men with total absence of women in these positions. On the other hand, numbers show a significant presence of women in archiving and graphics.

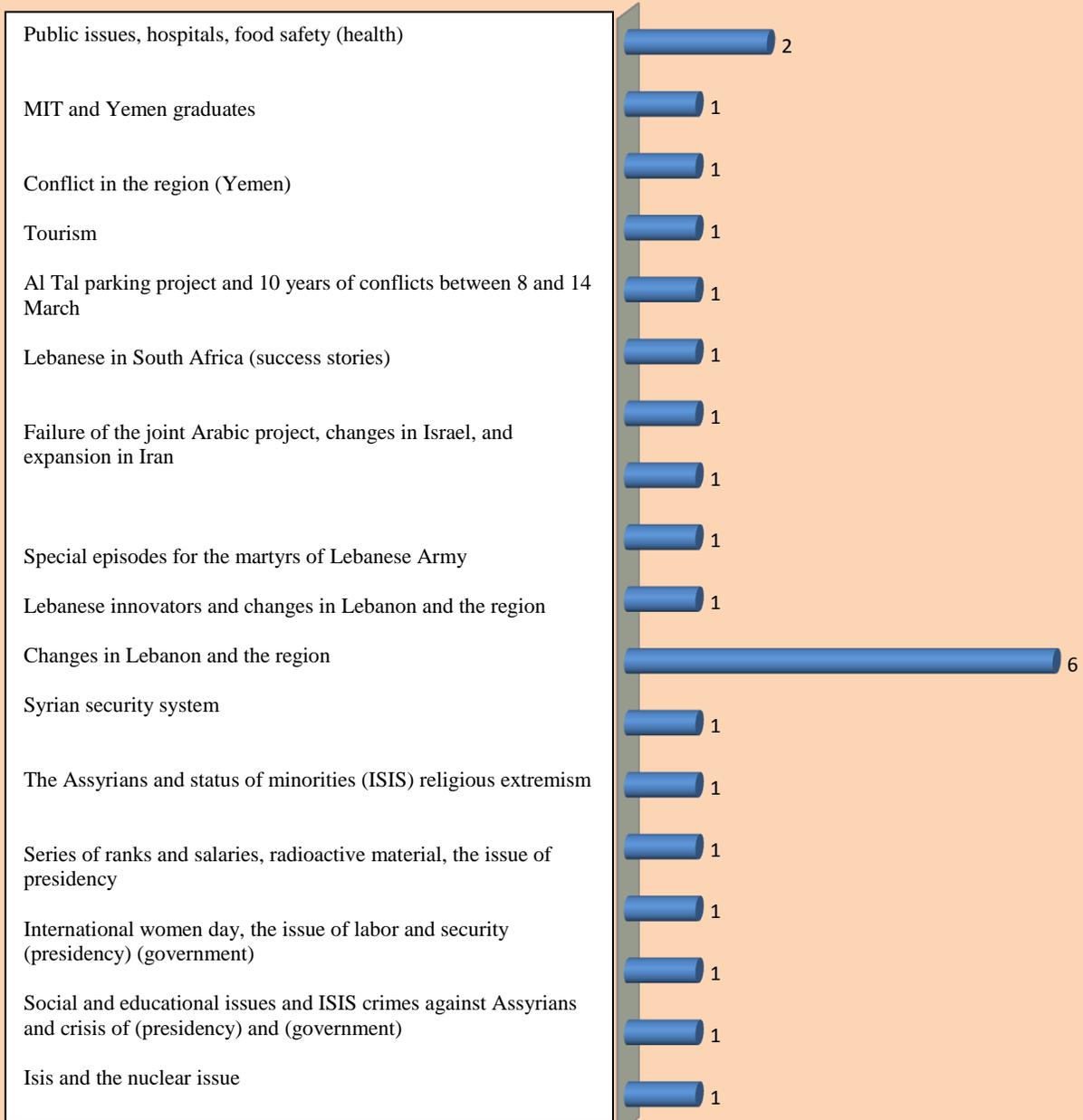
Women technical participation in production as distributed in figure 4, and through monitoring the role of 106 people working in the field, figure 5 shows that 81% of them are males and only 19% are female.



#### **d- Women as guests in political talk shows**

It is important first to highlight the issues that were raised during the monitoring period of the 6 political talk shows during March 2015 as summarized in the following table:

**Main issues raised during weekly political talk shows  
March 2015  
Figure 6**



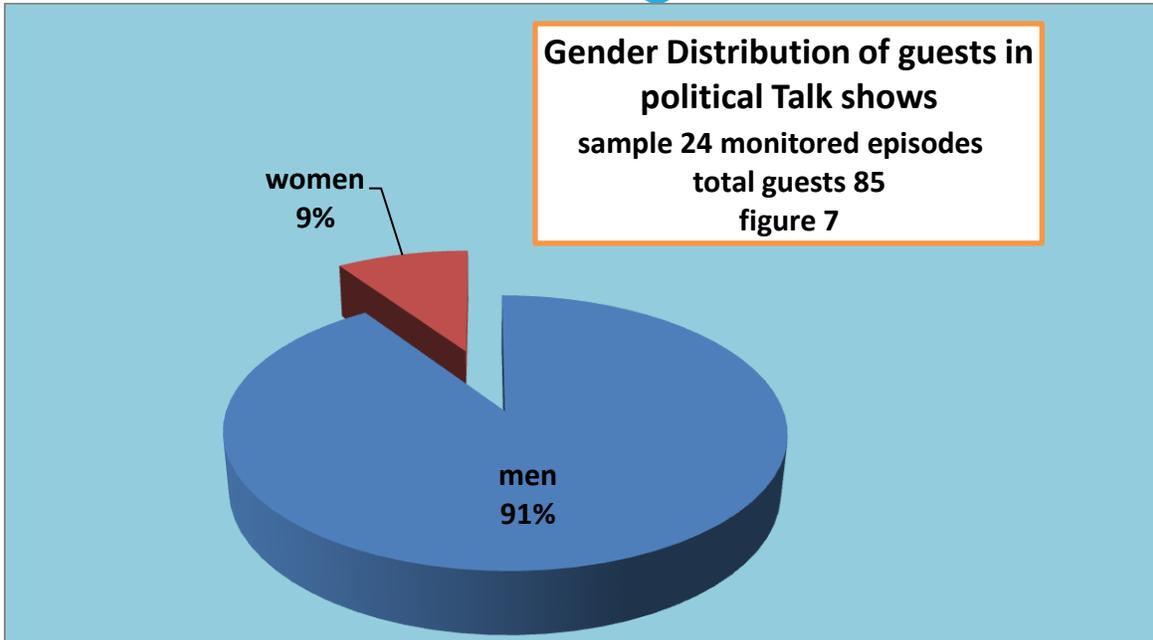
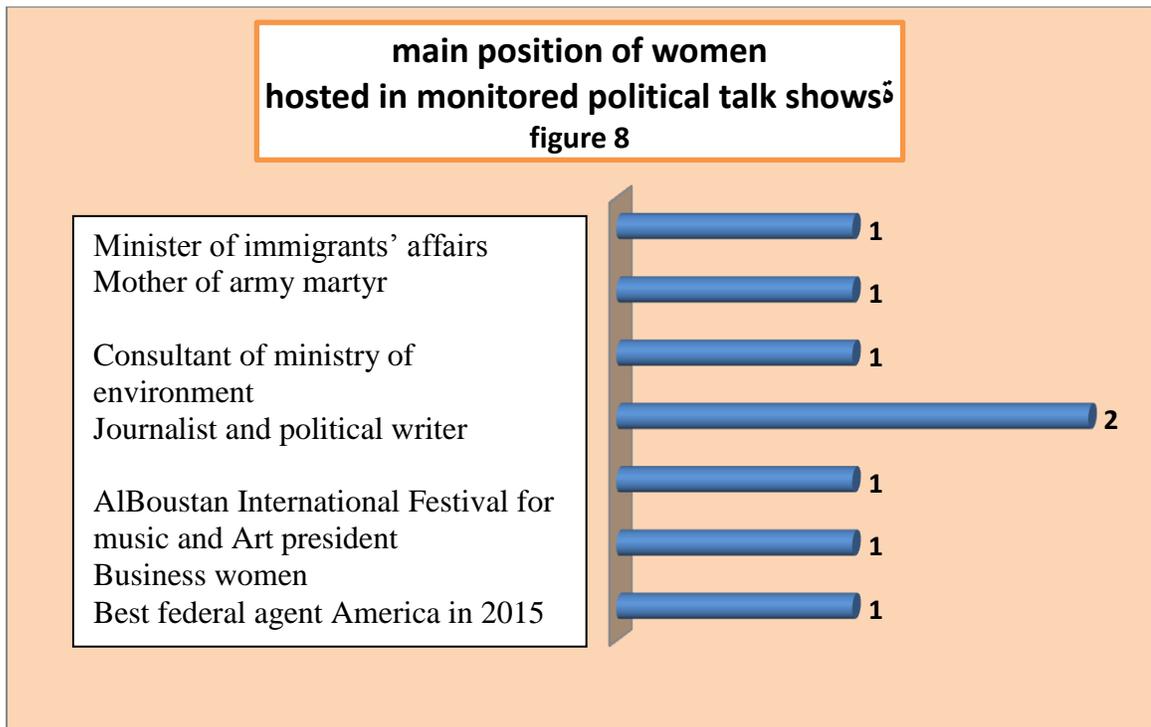


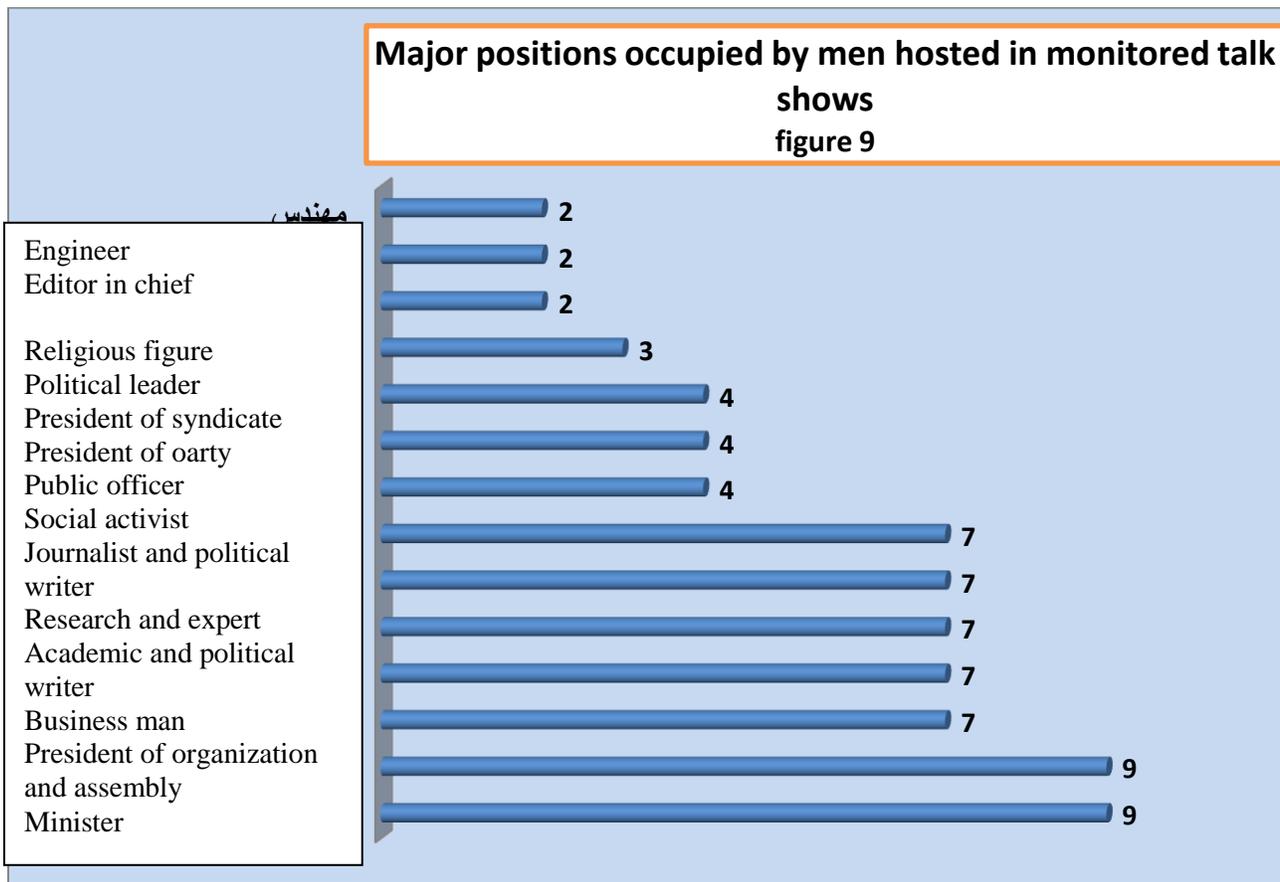
Figure 7 shows the percentage of women participation as guest in political talk shows; 8 women were hosted in the monitored programs and 77 men speakers.

**e- Position of women hosted in monitored political talk shows**



The current study was based on several indicators to analyze women’s presence in the monitored media programs; one of these indicators is to define the position of hosted women. The more these positions are diversified the more the gender gap decrease in media and its role in challenging gender stereotypes and reaching gender equality that is based on equal participation of women and men without any discrimination in the public debate about all the political, economic, social and human rights issues.

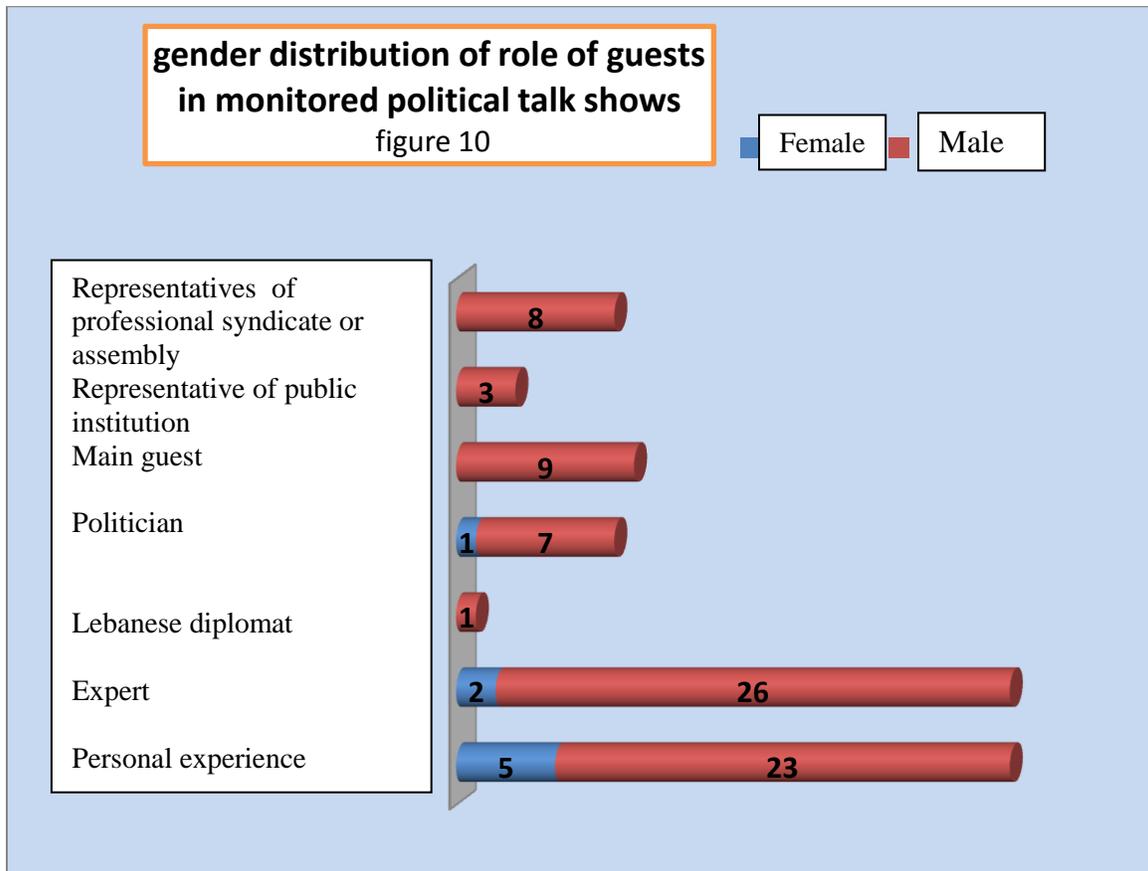
Figure 8 shows diversity of positions occupied by women that were hosted in the 6 monitored talk shows. Nevertheless the small number of participating women limited the diversity in comparison with the position occupied by hosted men in these programs as shown in figure 9.



It is important to note that the numbers in figure 9 includes repetition for example the same minister was hosted in more than one program.

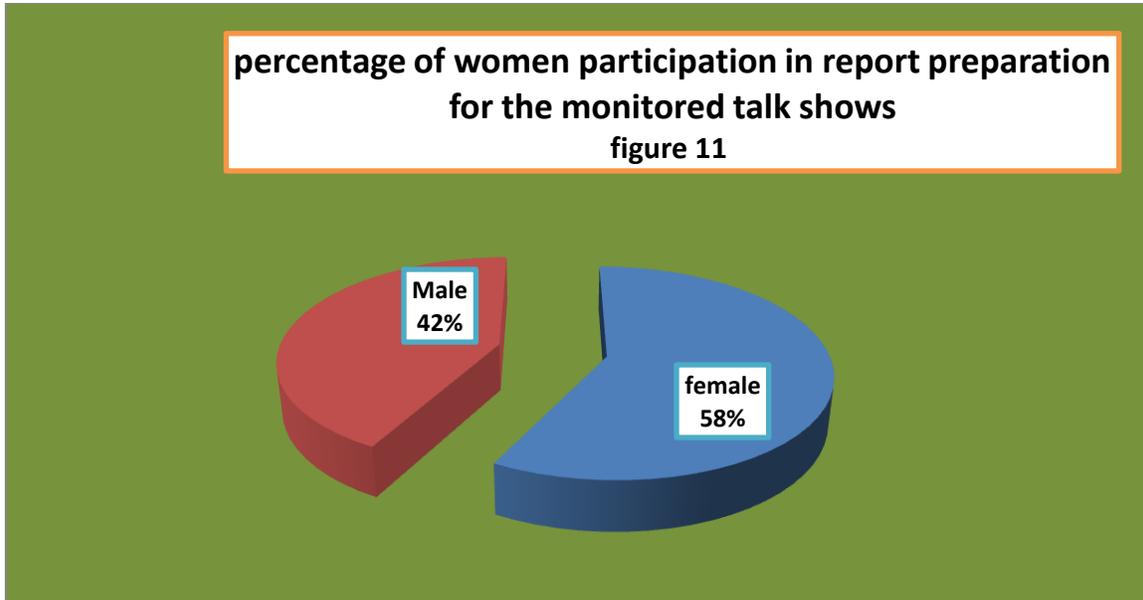
The above numbers show deficiency in women participation in media and public debate about the main public issues of concern like health, old tenants, youth immigrants and other political local and regional issues.

### Role of women in political talk shows



The social stereotypes of women are reflected in the media where men are given more important roles despite the position occupied by women. The figures show that the programs hosted 9 men as main guests, 8 as representatives of syndicates, 3 as representatives of public institutions without any presence for female representatives. Women only participated in the public debate related to public interest. Women were presented as experts, having personal or political experience but with small percentages that do not reflect gender equality in opportunities and roles.

**f- Women as writer of reports in political talk shows**

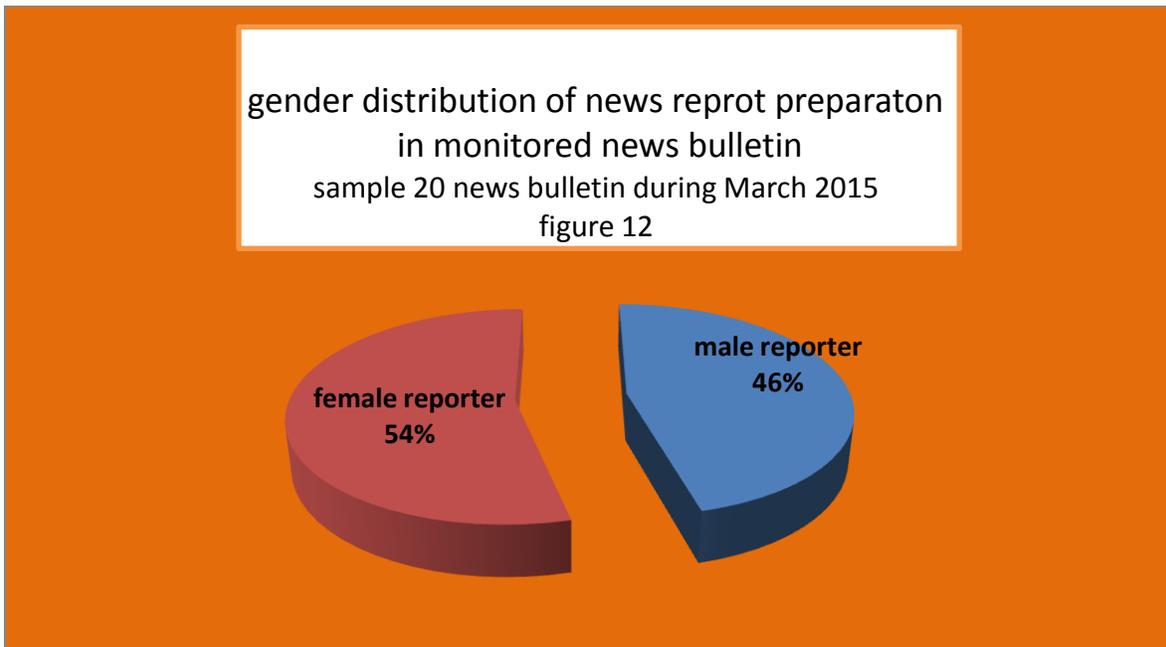


The number of women working on report preparation for the monitored political talk shows was more than the number of men, which mainly were prepared by journalist reporters. The study monitored a total of 45 reports women contribute in 26 of them and men in 19 reports. The reports affect significantly the debate during the discussions. Thus women participation in this regards contributes in decreasing the gender gap towards women participation in public opinion making. The major challenge remains the leading roles where media reflect the stereotypes. It is important to note that the shy leading role of women in political positions is because of social and cultural traditions, but in reality, women are occupying leading roles on different levels like public offices, civil society, education, economy, arts and others. Despite this fact, Lebanese media is not reflecting the significant role of women. The main challenge nowadays is breaking the traditions and presenting a different discussion model that engage women equally. Both genders

participate in the development of societies and both are competent and equally responsible before the public opinion

**Third: women's presence in evening news bulletins**

**a- Women participation in producing the content of news bulletins**



Women showed significant participation in preparation of news reports where 54% of reports were prepared by female reports and 46% by male reporters. The numbers in figure 12 are similar to numbers in figure 11 about the participation of women in preparing reports for political talk shows where women prepared 58% of the reports.



**b- News topics that women produce in their reports.**

gender distribution of news reports  
in terms of raised issues  
sample 100 monitored report  
figure 13

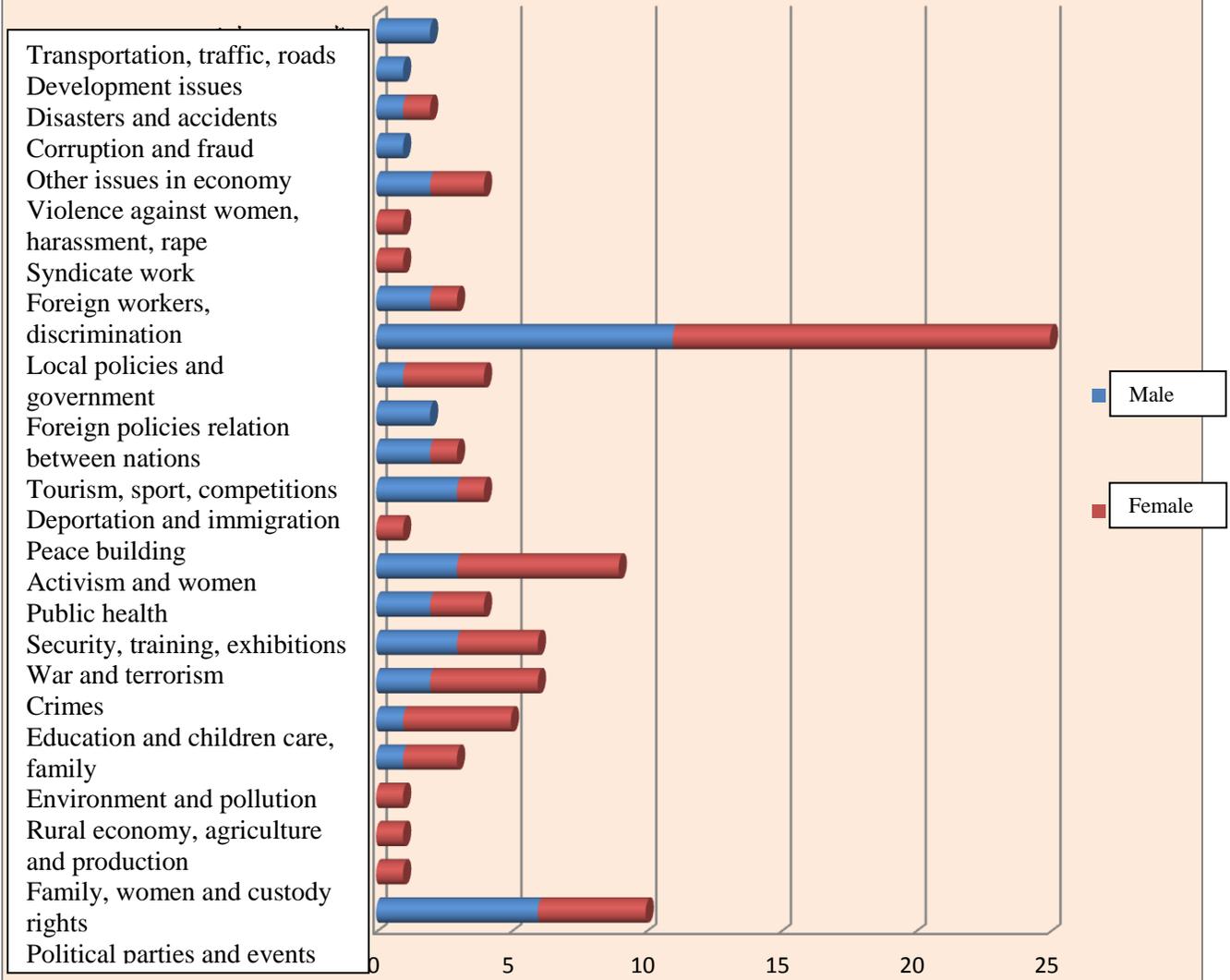
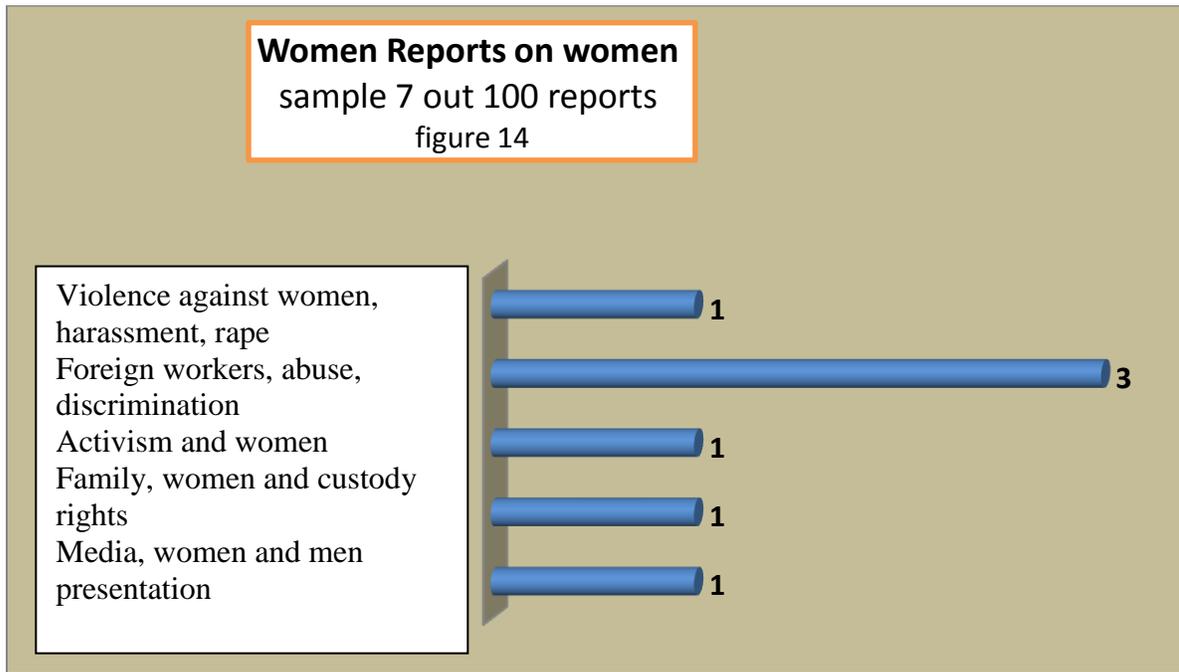


Figure 13 shows that women reporters cover the varied issues that are raised in news bulletins without any gaps in this regard. Women cover issues related to security, war, and terrorism, in addition to local social humanitarian, human rights issues and other issues related to daily life.

**c- News reports on women issues**



News bulletins always include issues related to women like custody rights, family rights, or women activists. The figure above shows that there 7 out of 100 reports covered issues related to women.

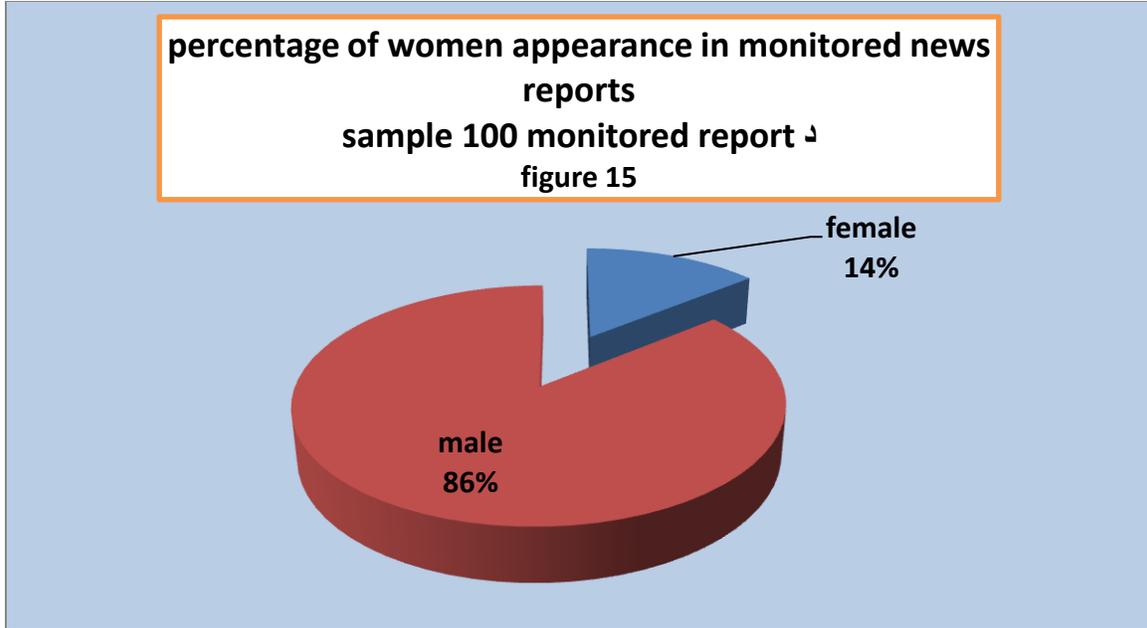


#### **d- Challenging the stereotypes in media and tackling gender equality issues**

Media plays an essential role in challenging the stereotypes and highlights through its coverage cases from society about women playing important role despite what the majority of public opinion believe. This type of coverage is sometimes adopted but it is not the priority of media institution to challenge the stereotypes but seek to highlight special cases, and stress the ability of women of conducted tasks that has been thought to be done only by men.

The monitoring results of a total of 20 news bulletins during March 2015 did not show any qualitative approach of social stereotypes, and the women related issues that were covered didn't tackle equality between men and women. It is important to note that media in general and news coverage specifically are highly affected by the civil movements that specify the priority issues related to women, and table 14 shows that nowadays priority is protecting women from family violence, harassment and rape, and protecting the foreign workers and improve their work conditions.

**e- Percentage of women appearance in monitored news reports**

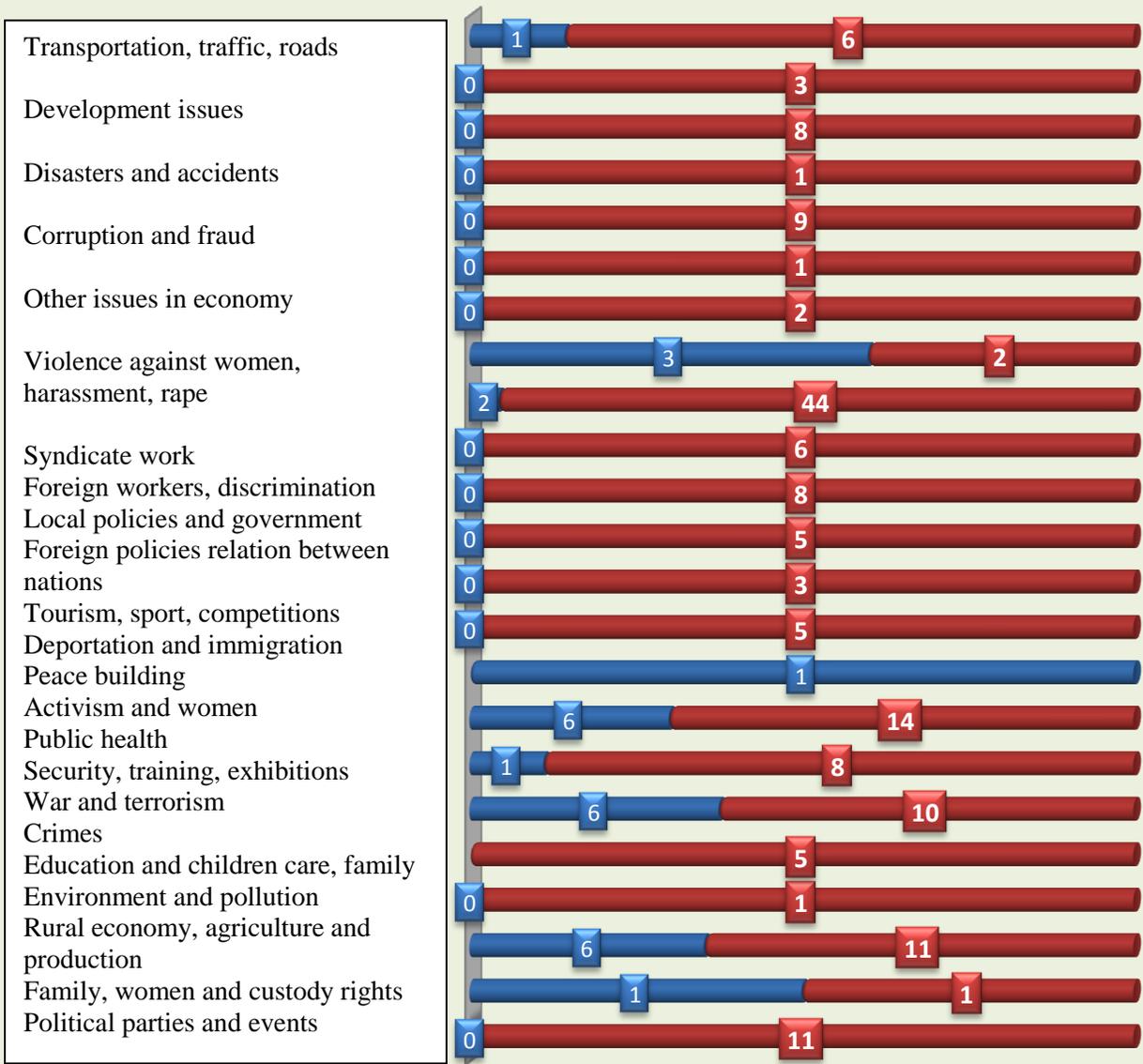


Another indicator analyzed in this study is women appearance in news bulletins, and analyzing the this appearance, its content, implications, and reflection on women figure in media and their relation to the general women issues especially gender related issues and the media role in creating equal opportunities and challenging the social stereotypes. The monitoring results show that the reports tackled 164 men (86%) and 27 women (14%) in the total news coverage.

## f- News topics that includes women appearance

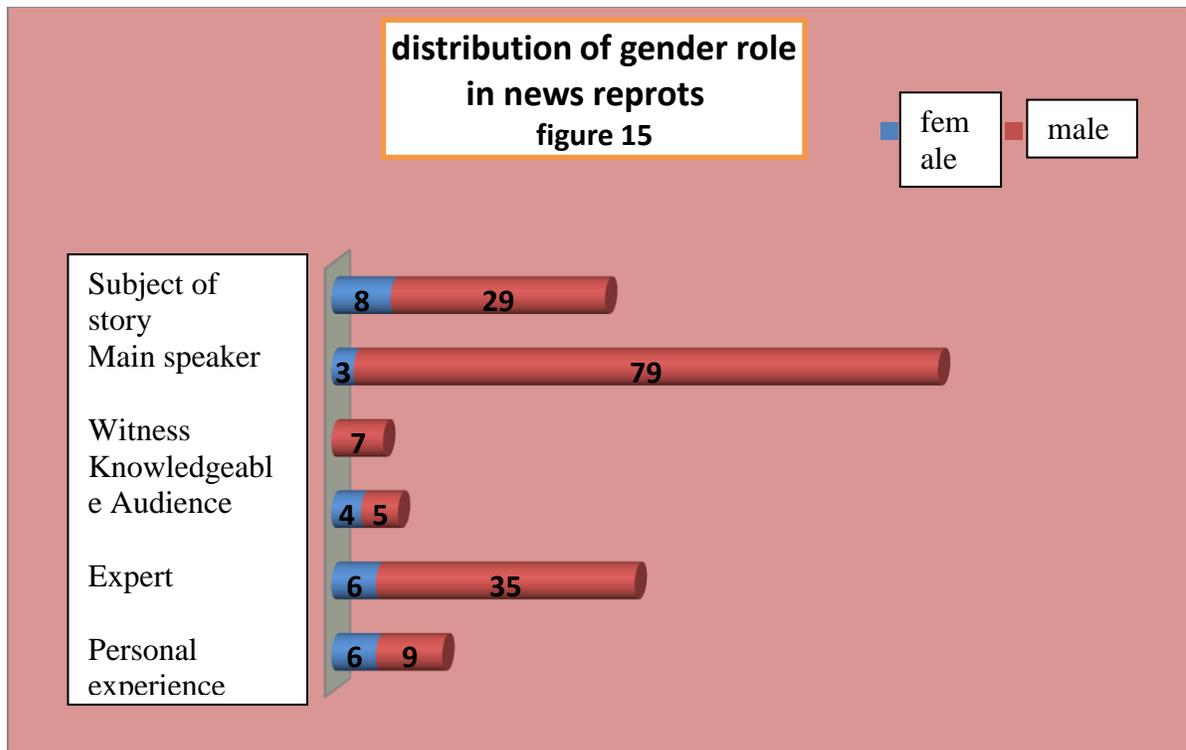
comparison between male and female appearance  
 number shows redundance  
 sample 100 reprot  
 figure 16

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In appearance we mean that one of the two genders is the subject of coverage or to participate in news reports through sharing their opinion from the raised issue. Figure 16 shows total absence of women in reports related to local politics and government where there 2 appearances for women and 44 appearances for men. Similar thing with issues related to political parties where no appearances for women and 11 for men. As for issues related to social crimes there was significant appearance (6 times), public health (6 time), family, education and child care (6 times), and foreign workers and discrimination (3 times).

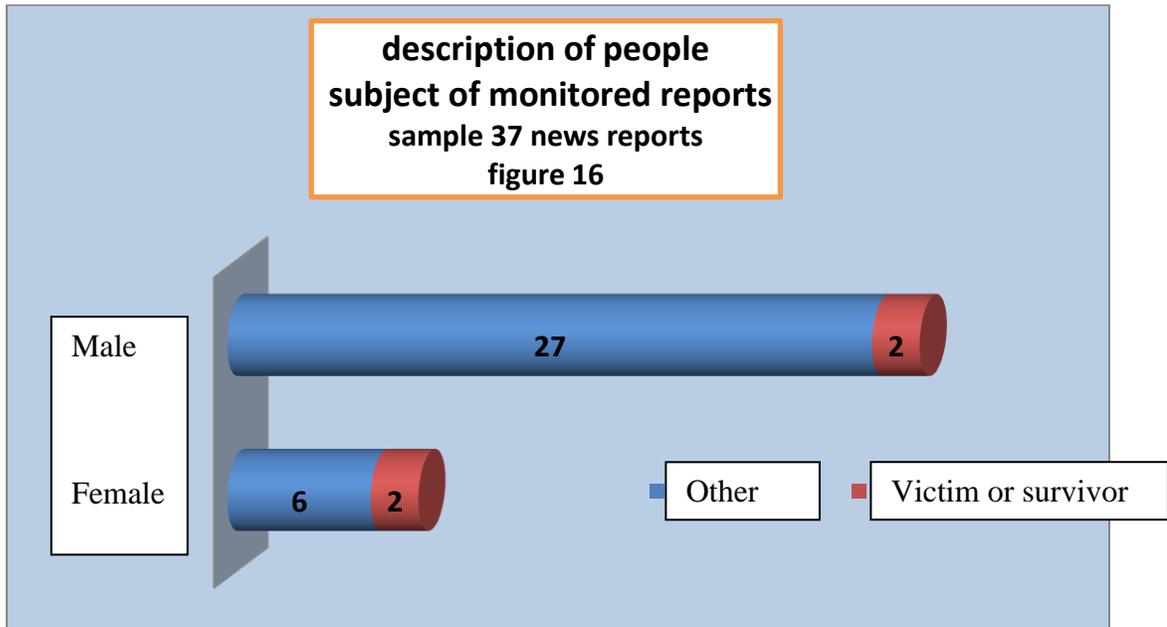
**g- Distribution of gender roles in monitored news reports**



The above figure shows that role distribution between men and women in the monitored news reports.

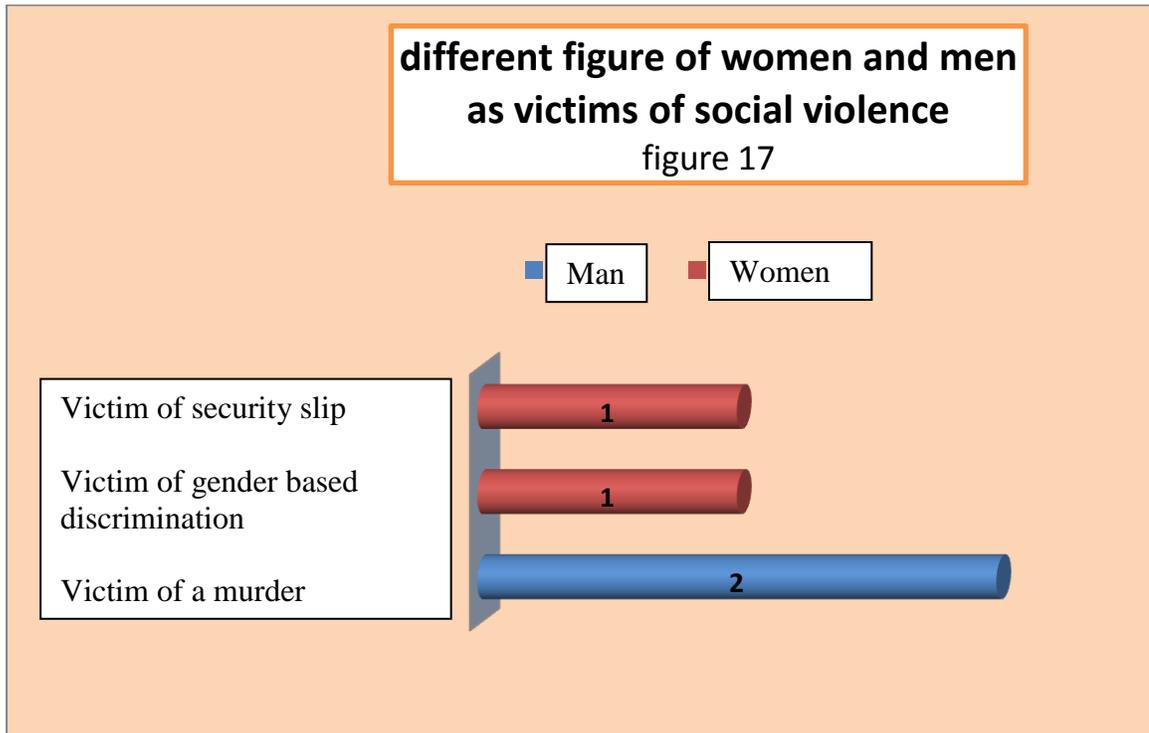
The figure shows that men have higher numbers than women, and the difference increases in the field of official representation and experts and decreases in surveys.

### h- Description of people subject of coverage



The monitored reports that tackled experiences of people subject of coverage are 37 reports out of 191. A specific indicator was used to specify the description of people subject of coverage which means referring and classifying them as victims or survivors from violent or non violent accidents, or in customized news that tackled these people and classified them in a different framework. Figure 16 shows that the

majority of reports approach women as victims, and figure 17 shows the varied figures of men and women as victims of social violence.



The above figure shows the type of violence undertaken by the victims who are subject of coverage. It is important to note, that the last two figures consist a unit of measure and analysis for data that complement each others. The negative indicator was shown in figure 16 (highest share of monitored news reports to tackle women as victims), and a positive indicator in figure 17 that highlights the reason of violence that women undertake for example victim of gender based discrimination in laws and legislations.