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## **Monitoring Racism**

## **in the Lebanese Media**

The Representation

of the “Syrian”

and the “Palestinian”

in the News Coverage

# Introduction

## 1. Why this study?

Within the framework of the UNDP "Peace Building in Lebanon" project, the Lebanese media representatives have developed the "Journalists' Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon", and signed it in 2013. The pact includes 18 articles in which the media institutions confirm their decision to work towards strengthening civil peace. Within the pact, these institutions confirmed in Article 3 thereof their commitment to "rejecting the principles of racial discrimination and refraining, directly or indirectly, from challenging the dignity of people and defamation". So were the media committed to what they had signed on?

The aim of presenting the issue of rejecting racial discrimination in a pact is to strengthen civil peace in a diverse and multicultural society such as the Lebanese society, which forms a unique social mosaic distinguished by the coexistence of 18 different religious sects close to each other, and their fusion in one citizenship under the auspices of the Lebanese Republic. In addition, Lebanon hosts on its territory around half a million Palestinian refugees and one and a half million Syrian displaced who form half the number of the native inhabitants. Besides, the Syrian and Palestinian issues have long constituted a factor of differentiation and conflict among Lebanese people; and the repercussions of these two issues are quickly shown in the political and media discourse, and the expression might push the boundaries of the reflections of the crisis on the ground, and turn into material for instilling fear from the other, "the stranger", diffusing hatred discourse, and playing the cards of identity, entity, demographics, subsistence and national security.

Therefore, this topic has a special significance, given its importance and repercussions on the general

Lebanese situation. A careful reading of the Lebanese media approach of this issue helps anticipating the phases and contributes to a clearer vision that shall contribute to proposing solutions and avoiding repercussions.

It is to be noted that this study is one among five studies launched by the Maharat foundation, in collaboration with the UNDP "Peace Building in Lebanon" project for the year 2015. The subsequent studies (in addition to the first one on racism, subject of the current report) address the issues related to the media Charter of Professional Honour for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon:

- "Religious Incitement", given its threat to civil peace,
- "The positive initiatives" that are to establish a developed and well-off society,
- "Violence depicted in the media", given its repercussions on all levels, including social, political and educational,
- "Talk show programs" and what they market for in terms of values and concepts.

It is to be noted that the topics of the studies mentioned here above have been selected based on the Pact content, in such a way as to reflect its various articles and evoke the basic perspectives that drove the media to sign it, which basically aim at strengthening the civil peace and reinforcing it.

## 2. Methodology

This study aims at showcasing the racism manifestation or the lack thereof in the Lebanese media discourse, as well as outlining their orientations and positions regarding the Syrian and Palestinian issues mainly, through a descriptive analytical approach, based on observing and analyzing direct

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The study at Maharat was prepared by:

Dr. George Sadaka

Dr. Jocelyne Nader

Professor/Mr. Tony Mikhael

Translated by:

Layale Mroue

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or masked racism towards Palestinians and Syrians in the media discourse of the Lebanese media that signed the "Journalists' Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon" which was officially launched on June 25th, 2013.

The observation and analysis study included the following media:

Printed press	TV channels	Radio stations	Websites
As-Safir, An-Nahar, Al-Akhbar, Al Joumhouria, Al-Mustaqbal, Al-Sharq, Al Liwaa, Ad-Diyar, Al-Balad, L'Orient-Le Jour, The Daily Star	New TV, LBCI, MTV, OTV, FUTURE TV, TL, ALMANAR	Radio Liban, Voice of Lebanon – Achrafieh (100.5), Voice of Lebanon (93.3), Radio Liban Libre, Sawt El Chaab (Voice of the People), Radio Orient, Sawt El Mada, Al-Nour station	National News Agency, Lebanon Files, NOW., Elnashra, Almodon.
The media material observed in the newspapers include the various op-ed and analysis, the news coverage, the reportages and interviews whose main or side subject is a topic related to the issues of Syrians and Palestinians in Lebanon.	The media material observed in the TV and radio stations include the main daily news broadcast and the preambles, headlines, and news reports of various types.		The media material observed in the National News Agency website includes the various news and articles regarding Syrians and Palestinians published on the Agency's website. The media material observed for other websites are limited to the journalistic material that is proper to these sites, without the other news that are usually circulated quoting the website of the Agency or other media.

The observation and analysis study, which took place between 5 and 25 February, 2015, aims at the following:

- Defining the subject of the media discourse regarding the issues of the Syrian and Palestinians in Lebanon.
- Measuring the magnitude and position of the media material and the tone used.
- Analyzing the forms and manifestation of the racial media discourse, as well as defining the categories it targets.

- Analyzing the journalistic framework, as well as the various trends and patterns of the media discourse.

It is to be noted that the methodology adopted in this study has been presented to the media targeted by the observation process. A round-table discussion around it has been organized and the opinions and observations that were raised directly or sent later on by email were taken into consideration.

## Section 1: Theoretical approach

### Media and racism

#### 1. Classic racism

The original definition of racism was based on the biological difference and the differences among the human races; the white, yellow and black. Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, the father of racism, proclaimed in his book "An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races", which was published in its complete edition in 1855, that race-mixing harms civilizations and causes their decline. He also showed his fanaticism for the white race which is characterized by "its monopoly of beauty, intelligence and strength".<sup>1</sup>

#### 2. The New Racism

The "classic" racism, based originally on the biological difference, took a step back in favor of what is called today "the new racism" which focuses on the cultural identity instead of the traditional racial categories, and the difference of the communities instead of the inequality based on the race. However, "traditional" racism still represents one of the discrimination and violence factors in several communities, even in the United States of America. This cultural neo-racism is based originally on the cultural difference and the emphasis on the right to be different for a racial separatism with strict boundaries between cultures. This racism has two contradicting forms of ex-

pressing one central phenomenon: "The flagrant or blatant racism, which is violent, in close proximity, and direct. The masked racism is cold, reserved and indirect".<sup>2</sup>

One of the manifestations of the neo-racism is the hatred towards foreigners which is based on xenophobia, and consists in building a symbolic enemy – that is invented as a negative character – to satisfy the search for identity, a desire to belong, and a need for security and protection.<sup>3</sup>

#### 3. Media and Racist Discourse

The media discourse dimension plays an essential role in promoting and reproducing racism. Media today, same as 100 years ago, tends to look at the "stranger": the foreigner, the migrant, the refugee, the displaced and the minorities, as a problem instead of considering him as an integral part of the hosting community.

Media, when approaching issues related to those, plays an active role in promoting and reproducing negative attitudes towards different ethnic or cultural groups, whether by choosing the current topics (most of them covering crime, violence, drugs, security breach and terrorism) or through the informative, analytical and instructive style which contributes to a systematic depiction of the other

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* ("An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races"), édition Jean Boissel, in *Oeuvres*, vol. I, Paris, Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1983, cited in Pierre-André Taguieff, *La couleur et le sang* ("The color and the blood"). *Doctrines racistes à la française*, 1996 p. 38 : The white race originally possessed the monopoly of "beauty, intelligence and strength".

<sup>2</sup> Thomas F. Pettigrew et R. W. Meertens. 1993. « Le racisme voilé : dimensions et mesures » in Michel Wievorka

<sup>3</sup> See Traverso Enzo, « La fabrique de la haine : Xénophobie et racisme en Europe », in *Contretemps*, avril 2011, n9. [www.contretemps.eu](http://www.contretemps.eu)

stranger, not only as different, but also as someone considered to be a threat and an instability factor. The viewer grabs these images and so his memory, which is full of hostility or solidarity, is moved, and he sees its direct repercussions on his daily life, while the positive contributions that are related to him in the economy, culture and diversity are ignored.

On the other hand, the media can be a part of the solution. Some journalists have become aware of this situation and are recommending changes. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has been opposing, for several years now, the representation of migrants, displaced or minorities using prejudgments and stereotypes. The IFJ often denounces this trend and considers it to be a bad practice and lack of professionalism.<sup>4</sup>

The concept of diversity in media has also become a criterion for professional competence, even for commercial success. The journalist knows how decisive his role in publishing information and opinions about all spectrums of society is, and he is also part of a pluralistic society that accepts difference, which constitutes an incentive for more work on looking at the "other" with no prejudice. In summary, the journalist today is aware of the decisive role he is to be playing in the success of the pluralistic society of tomorrow.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> An example of media contributions to the fight against racism and discrimination "Media and Diversity Management", a training manual published by Maharat Foundation. Beirut, 2014. Page 120

<sup>4</sup> Ibid,

## Section 2: Quantitative Analysis of the Coverage in the Lebanese Media

This part of the study comprises a quantitative analysis of the contents of the various media (printed press, TV stations, Radio stations and websites) in their coverage of the Syrian and Palestinian crises, during the observation period which stretched from 5 to 25 February, 2015. The study isolated the coverage that dealt with the issue, classified them

into main subjects and side subjects depending on their level of interest in the topic, defined the fields they address in their coverage in addition to the evaluation of their tone, be it positive or negative, and presented them in charts that make reading and drawing conclusions easy.

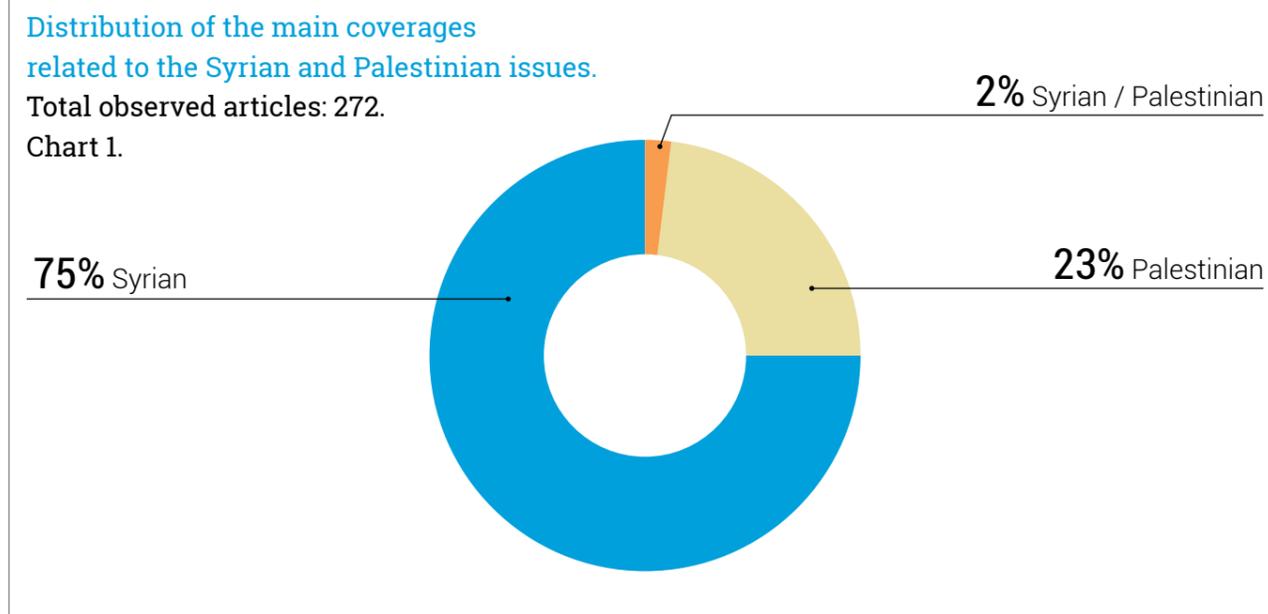
## First: Coverage in newspapers

### 1. The distribution of the press coverage subjects

#### a. The predominance of the Syrian crisis

After an in-depth analysis of the data provided, it appears that the Syrian issue is largely predominant. It received 204 coverages versus 63 for the Palestinian issue out of 272 main articles; so the rate is at 75% for the Syrian issues and 23% for the Palestinian issues (Chart 1).

It is only normal that the Syrian displacement issue that emerged in Lebanon is predominant, given the social, political and security issues that the Syrian displacement raises. However, the rate of coverage of the Palestinian issue appears to be relatively high, which means that the Palestinian migration to Lebanon since 1948 is still a main subject in the political and social life in Lebanon.



#### b. The discrepancy between newspapers regarding the size of coverage

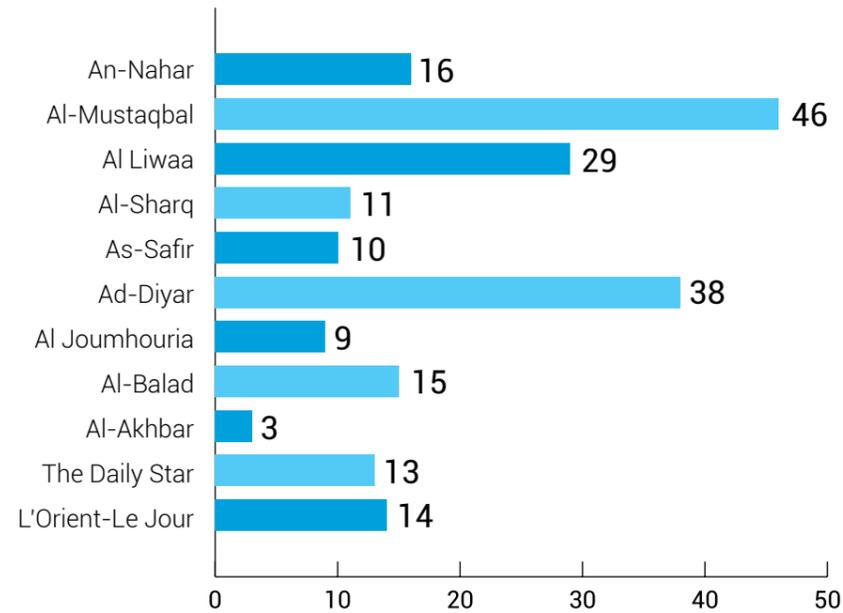
By analyzing the number of main coverages that each newspaper has dedicated to the Syrian issues (Chart 2), it appears that the majority of newspapers (6 out of 11) have dedicated between 9 and 16 subjects thereto. Yet the topic seemed almost inexistent in Al-Akhbar newspaper, where it received

only 3 coverages, which seems low considering the importance of the subject, while it received inflated response in Al-Mustaqbal newspaper, since the coverages amounted to 46. Same goes for Ad-Diyar and Al Liwaa, which granted the subject a major volume (38 and 29).

**Distribution of the main coverages related to the Syrian issues.**

Total observed articles: 204.

Chart 2.



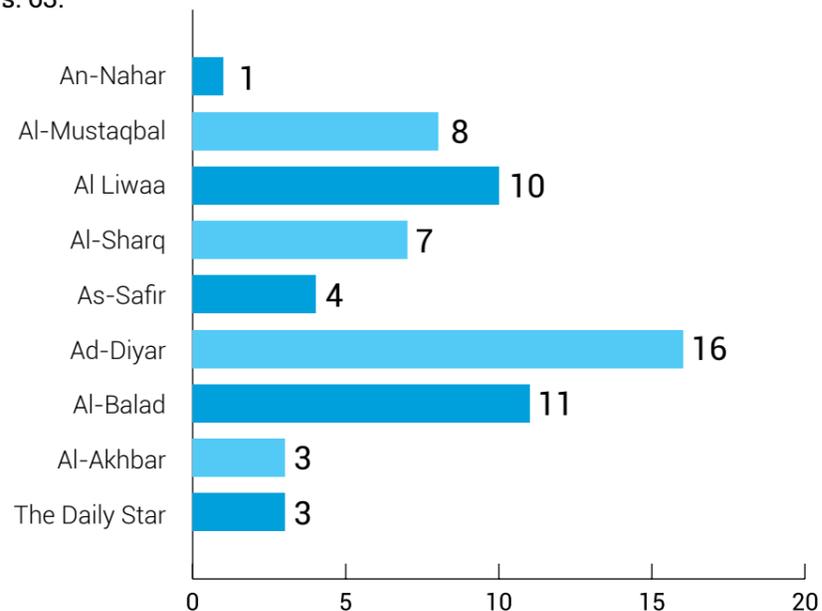
As for the main coverages of the Palestinian issue, it seems that there is major discrepancy in the number of coverages between the newspapers (Chart 3). We have one coverage in An-Nahar and 16 in

Ad-Diyar, which is the highest number. The others vary between 3 and 11. The big discrepancies among the newspapers are also questionable here.

**Distribution of the main coverages related to the Palestinian issues.**

Total observed articles: 63.

Chart 3.



## 2. The contents of the coverage

### a. The contents of the the Syrian issue's coverage

What do the coverages related to the Syrian issue, for which newspapers dedicate separate articles, address?

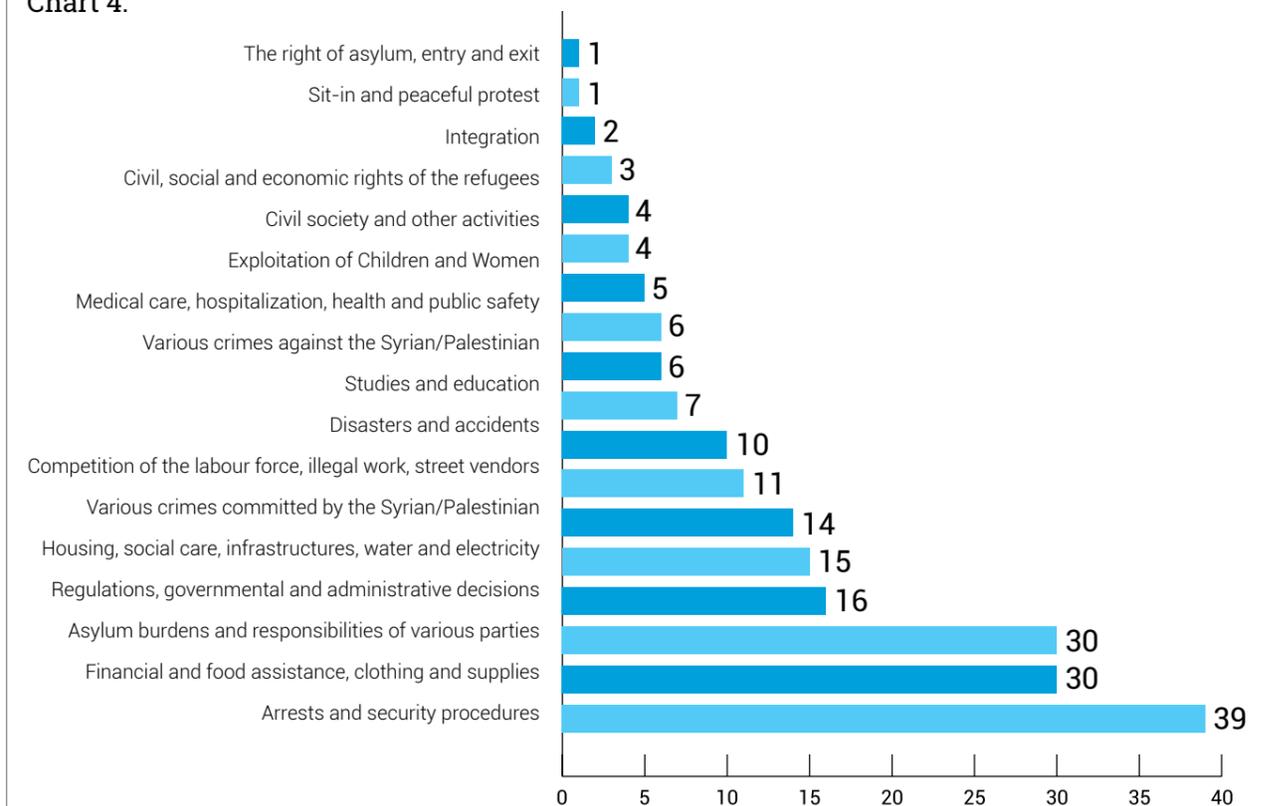
By analyzing the content of the main coverages (Chart 4), it appears that out of 204 coverages observed, 75 have tackled the burdens of asylum, and what it entails in terms of social affairs and accompaniment by various parties and providing for the refugees' needs. 53 of them addressed security is-

ssues related to Syrians. One can confirm that both subjects regarding attention towards the refugees and the security issues are those that preoccupy the majority of the main coverages. The remaining topics can be listed under these two categories: for instance, the administrative accompaniment, attention to the schools for the displaced children and others.

**Distribution of the topics of the main coverages related to the Syrian issues.**

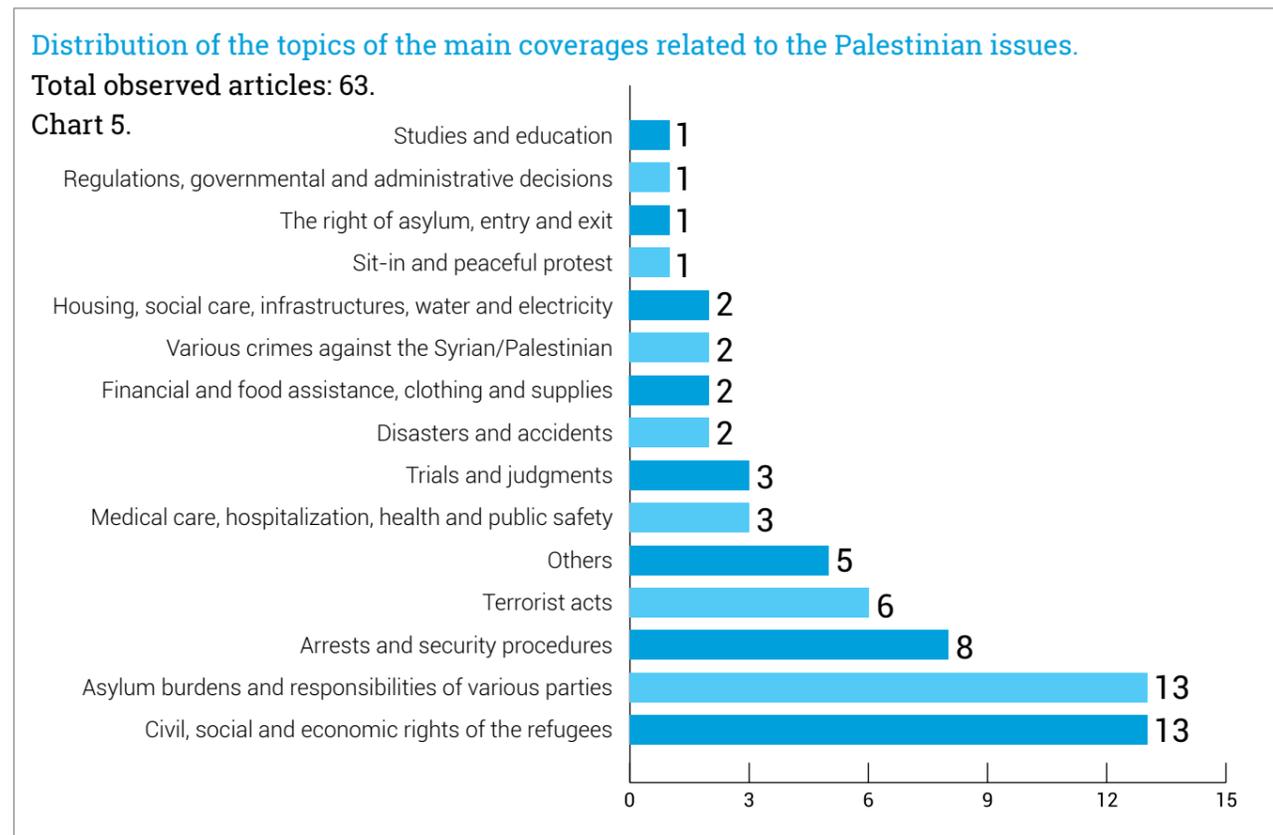
Total observed articles: 204.

Chart 4.



### b. The contents of the Palestinian issue's coverage

As for the main issues related to Palestinians, they can be summarized in three main axes: The security issues related to Palestinians, the social and health issues that the refugees need and the issues related to the refugees' civil rights (Chart 5).



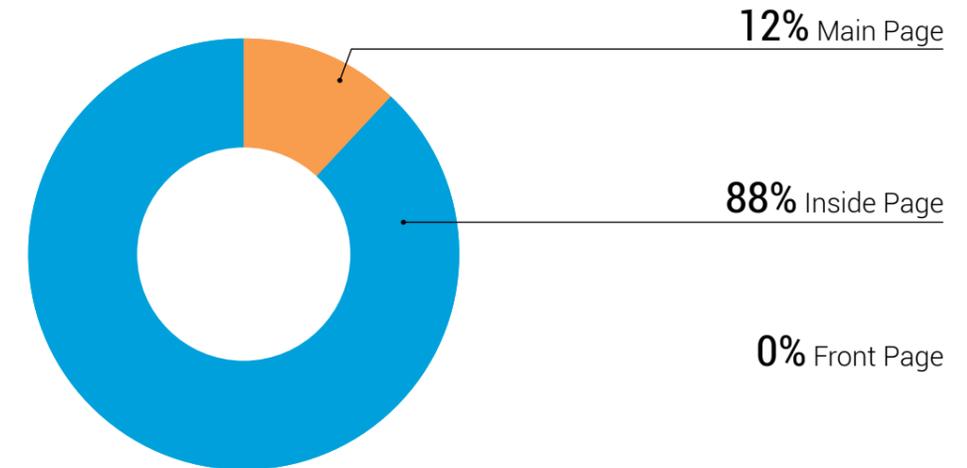
### c. The location of the press coverage of the Syrian and Palestinians issues

The locations for press coverages of the Syrian and Palestinians issues were distributed: the vast majority of 88% in the inside pages, and only 12% in the main pages. They were completely absent from the front pages. (Chart 6).

**Location of the main coverages of the Syrian and Palestinian issues.**

**Total observed articles: 272.**

**Chart 6.**



## 3. The media tone

The media tone appearing in the Lebanese press regarding the Syrian and Palestinian issues during the monitoring period was varied. The number was 521 main and side coverages. The neutral tone had the highest percentage of 49%, followed by the negative tone by 27% and the positive tone at 24%. The Chart shows that the percentage of the negative tone is very high and exceeds the positive tone (Chart 7).

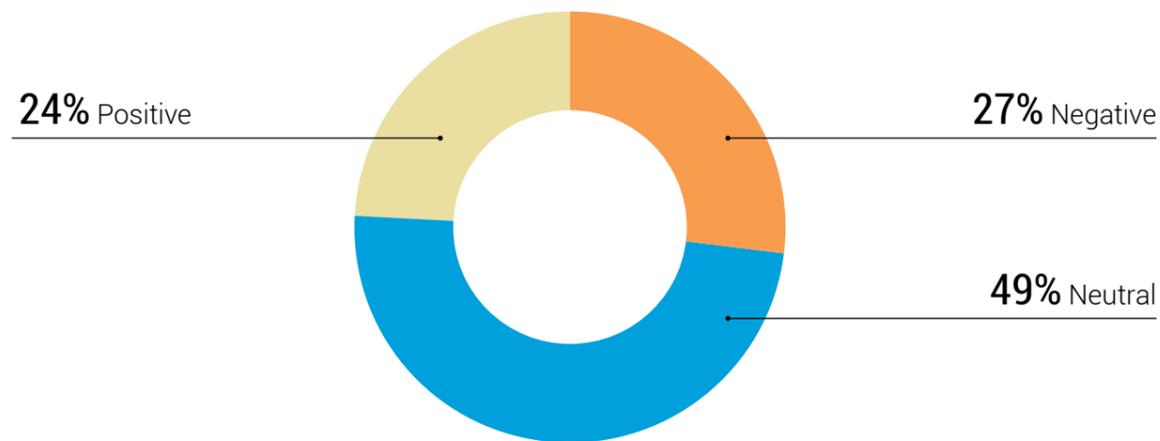
By analyzing the tone in each editorial type separately, i.e. news reports, reportages, analyses and opinions, it appeared that:

- The negative tone was predominant at 43% of the news reports and was down to 37% in the articles of analysis and opinions, and 11% in the journalistic reportages where the positive tone was prevalent at 56%.
- The high percentage of positive tone in the press reportages is due to the fact that they often address social affairs and positive initiatives to create opportunities for communication and dialogue, as well as building trust between various parties.
- As for the analyses and opinions that often focus on the political dimensions or what they consider as important issues, we notice a certain balance between the positive tone and the negative one.
- The high percentage of negative tone in the news reports is due to the fact that media broadcasts new reports the way they receive them from the security sources, without working on reformulating them in a way that avoids the negative implications contained therein.

The average general tone of the press coverages related to the Palestinian and Syrian issues.

Total observed articles: 521.

Chart 7.



### a. Coverage with a negative tone

The topics covered by the press and that have a negative tone are mainly related to the security news, including raids and security measures related to the Syrian and Palestinian presence in Lebanon. The percentage of these topics amounts to 56% of those that are classified as negative. If we add to them the coverages of the news regarding the fight against the terrorist organizations with Syrian extensions, which are at 9%, and the coverages of the crimes committed by the Syrians and Palestinians included in the chart (18%), the secu-

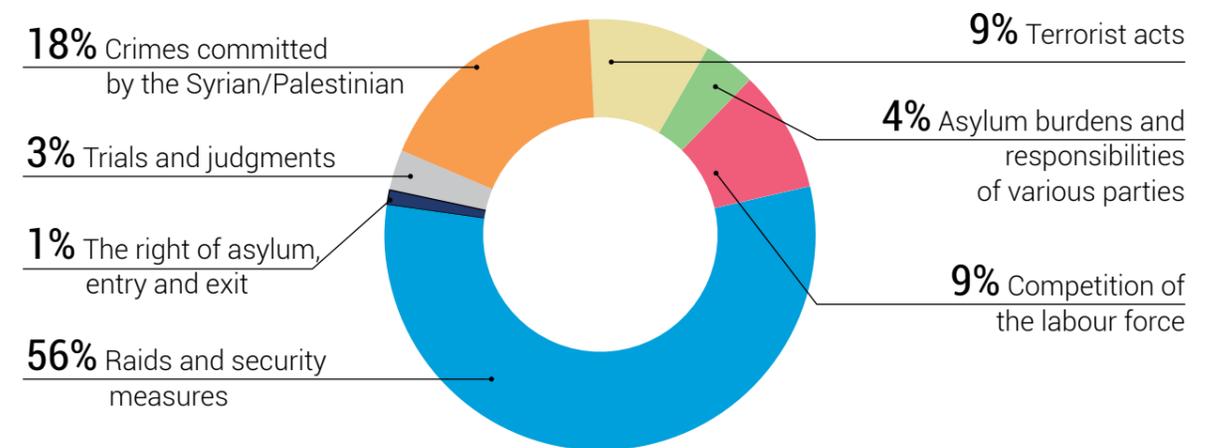
rity news then amount to 83% of the total of the negative tone-news. The issue of the competition between the Syrian labour force and the Lebanese workers remains striking at 9% (Chart 8).

Chart 9 shows the negative tone reflected by the various newspapers in addressing the security news related to Syrians, while Chart 10 showcases the negative tone prevalent in addressing the issue of the Syrian labour force.

The main topics in the press coverage of the Syrian and Palestinian issues with a negative tone.

Sample of 72 observed articles.

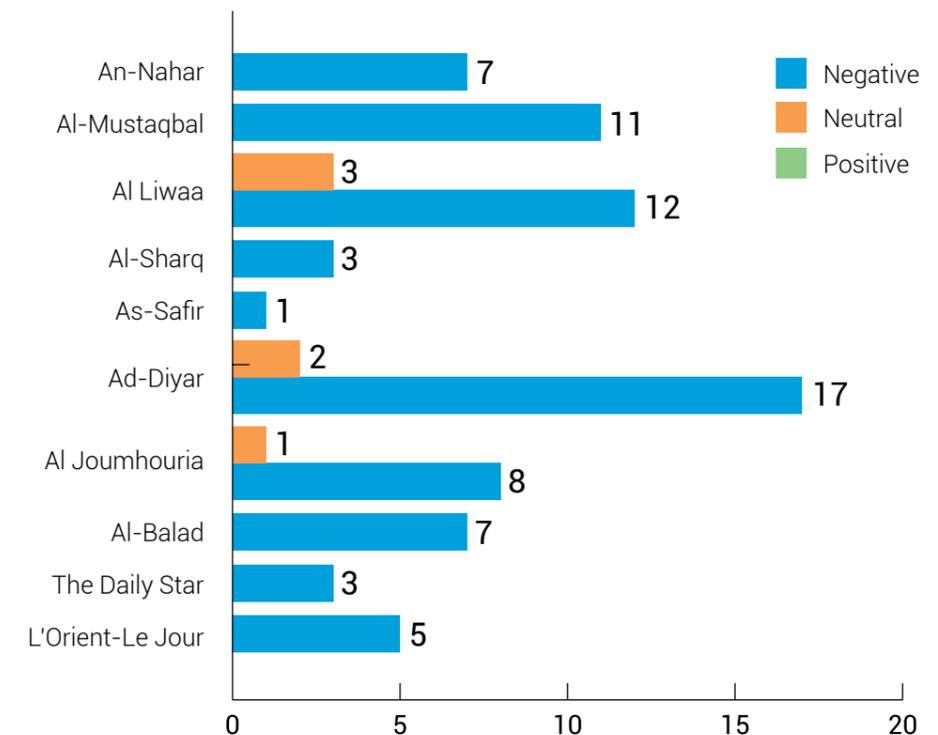
Chart 8.

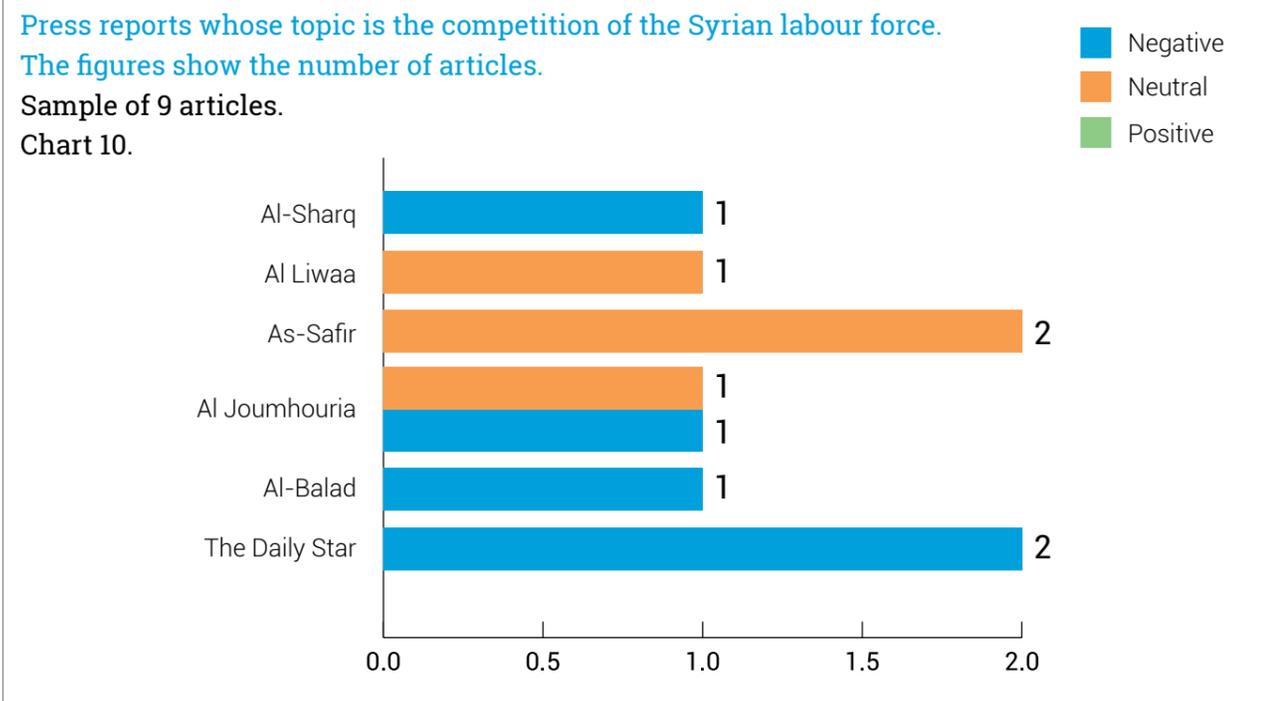


Main and side press reports whose topic is the arrests and security measures against Syrians. The numbers show the number of articles.

Sample of 80 observed articles.

Chart 9.



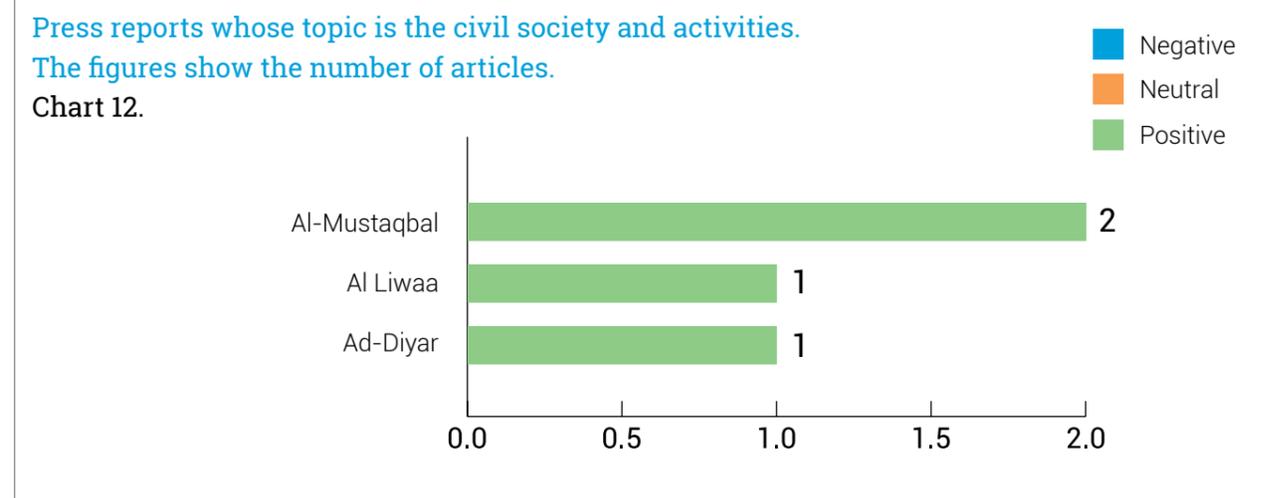
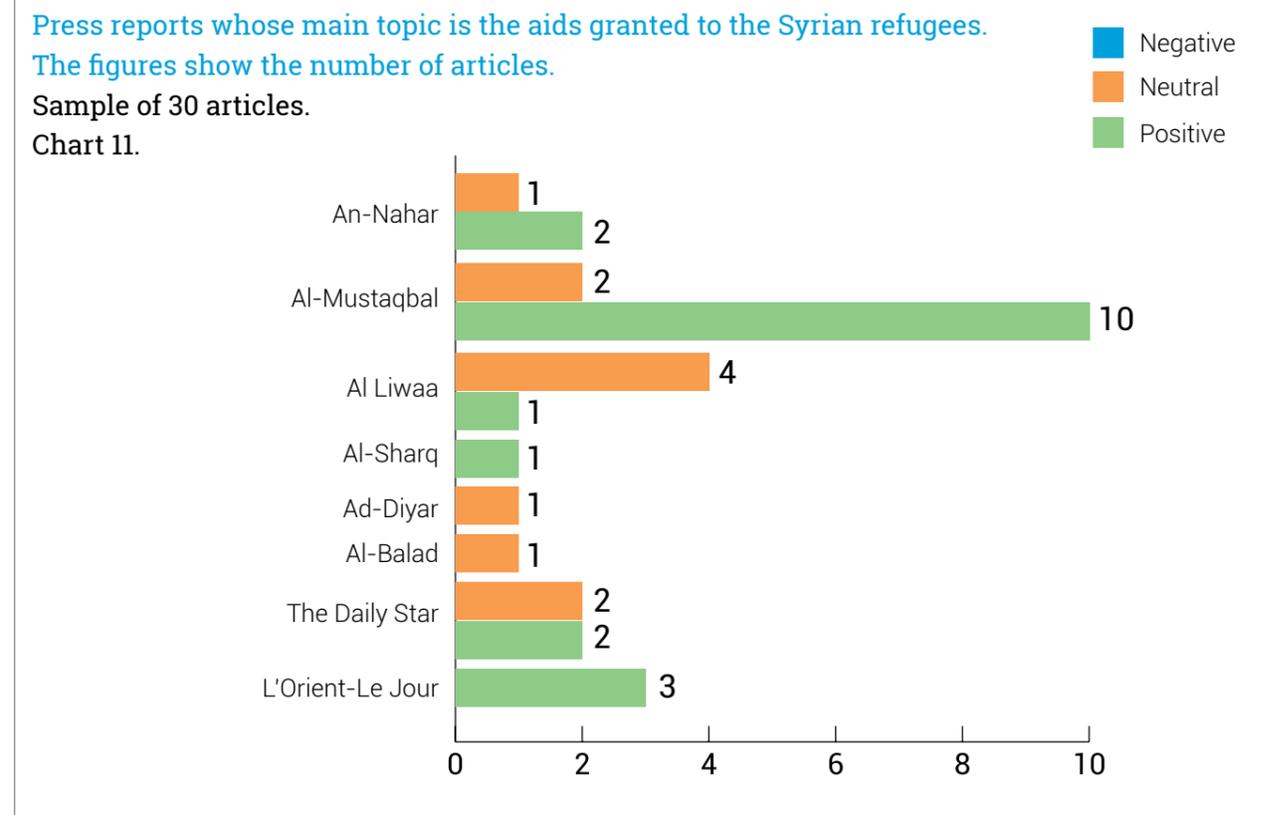


### b. Coverage with a positive tone

Unlike the negative coverages which are concentrated in the security affairs, the topics that have a positive coverage seem to be diverse, and address more than 15 issues. First is providing the aids to the displaced (24%), followed by the civil and social rights, especially regarding the Palestinian presence in Lebanon (16%), then the housing issue (12%), which constitutes one of the major crises of the asylum issues in Lebanon. Then comes the issue of providing schools to educate the children of those arriving in large numbers (7%), as well as the issue of disasters and accidents that the Syrians and Palestinians are exposed to in these difficult

circumstances (7%). These are followed by several matters that the press seems to be aware of, such as the situation of women and children, the civil activities to help the migrants and other issues.

The following charts (11 and 12) showcase two samples of two topics in which the positive tone is prevalent, namely the issue of the aids given to refugees and the issue of the civil society activities and the incoming aids to ease the effect of this human tragedy.



Among the topics with a striking positive note are those concerned with what the L'Orient-Le Jour and Al-Mustaqbal newspapers stated regarding "A project contributing to the integration of the Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese youth in society, through courses about the life and daily skills". L'Orient-Le Jour explains: "Christians, Muslims, Lebanese and

Syrians: Agriculture brought us together". It adds: "The "Peace" project (Agricultural collaboration) has allowed Lebanese and Syrian youth to get close and cooperate for peace education. The differences raise curiosity to discover the other instead of fearing him. Such initiatives bring closer the Lebanese groups and the Syrian migrants".

# Second: TV Coverage

The study observed the evening news bulletins of seven local TV stations, namely: LBCI, MTV, OTV, New TV, ALMANAR, FUTURE TV and TL, for the period dedicated to the study (5-25 February 2015), and it worked on isolating the coverages that address the issues of Syrians and Palestinians in Lebanon.

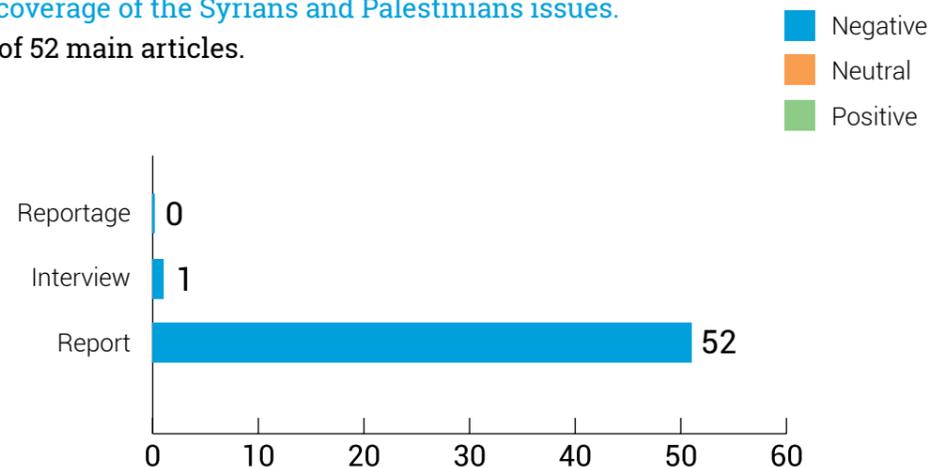
## 1. The analysis of the news bulletins showed the following:

- The TV coverage of the Syrian and Palestinian issues focus on the type of the news report, while the reportage and interview are completely absent (See Chart 1)
- The TV coverages gave priority of interest to the security issue (Chart 2), which obtained 34% of the total coverage, followed by issue of the disasters and accidents that the refugees face, at a rate of 19%, then the administrative decisions and measures at 13%. The issues of aids, housing and other social burdens come at various rates.
- The Syrians' issues formed a substantial material in the TV coverage at a rate of 96%, which is only logical considering the fast evolution of the Syrian events and their repercussions on the Lebanese situation. Besides, the Palestinian issue does not bring anything new to the regional or local scenes, contrarily to the Syrian issue.

Type of the TV news coverage of the Syrians and Palestinians issues.

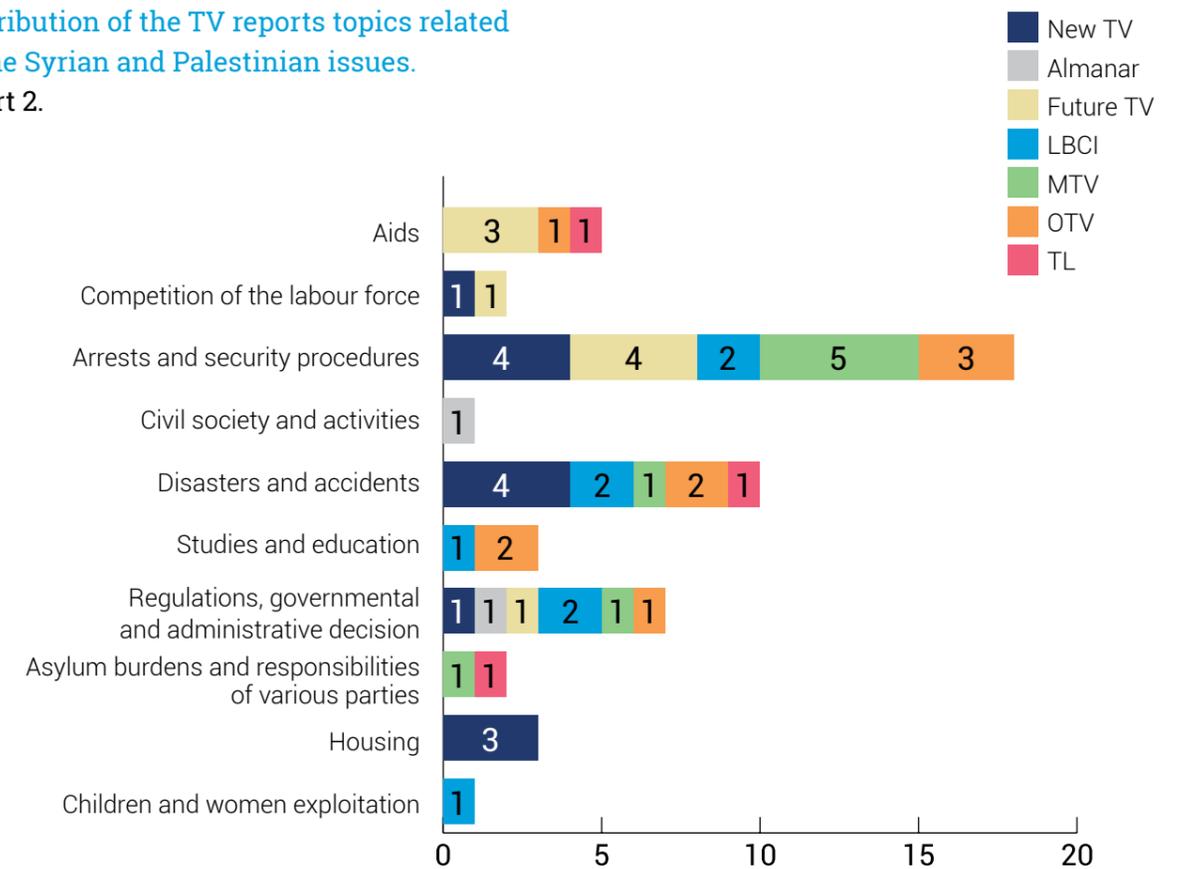
The sample consists of 52 main articles.

Chart 1.



Distribution of the TV reports topics related to the Syrian and Palestinian issues.

Chart 2.



## 2. The tone used in the TV news

The tone used in TV reports for the topics of Syrian and Palestinian coverage varies between negative and positive, according to the issues presented. The charts below (3-4-5-6-7-8-9) show in detail the news media tone for the TV channels observed in the coverages which address similar topics. It is negative when it comes to the coverage of the security issues, the subject of the burdens resulting from the refugees' situation, and in addressing the issue of the competition between the Syrian labour force and the Lebanese workers. It is however

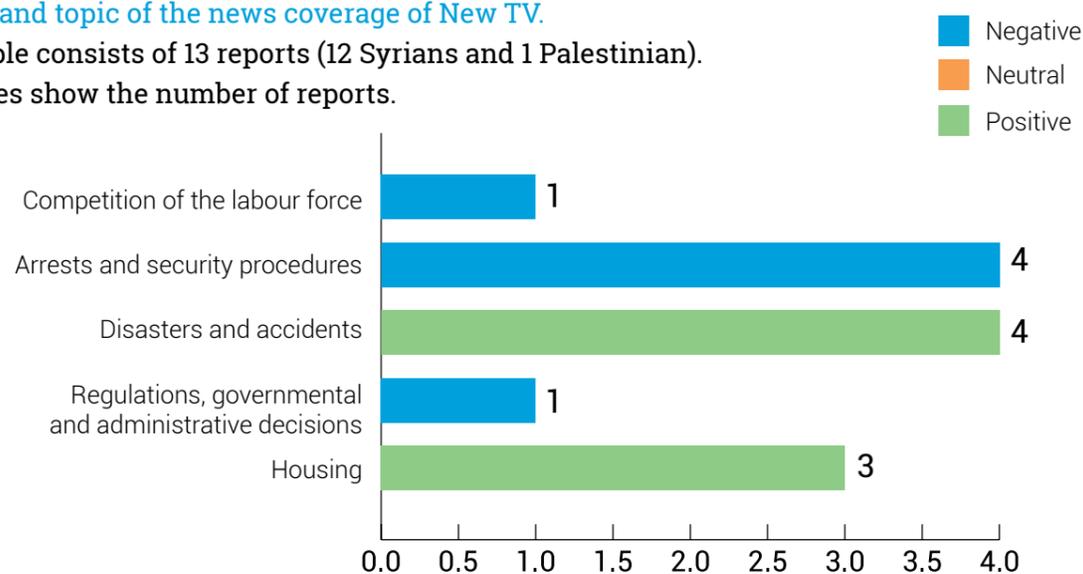
positive regarding the human and social coverages. The tone varies in the issues related to the studies and education between negative (OTV station, Chart 8) and positive (LBCI station, Chart 6). The difference in tone is mainly due to the angle of approaching the subject, be it from a legal point of view or from the angle related to the burdens, the lack of ability to assimilate, or the organization. This applies to the media tone regarding the subject of organizing the displacement.

**The tone and topic of the news coverage of New TV.**

The sample consists of 13 reports (12 Syrians and 1 Palestinian).

The figures show the number of reports.

Chart 3.

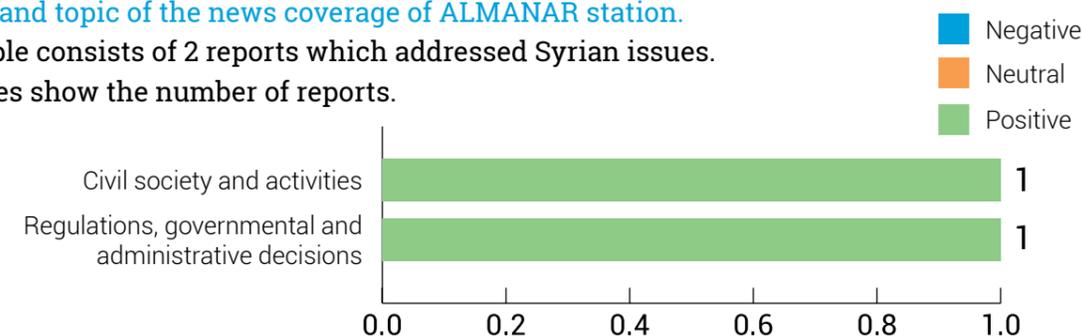


**The tone and topic of the news coverage of ALMANAR station.**

The sample consists of 2 reports which addressed Syrian issues.

The figures show the number of reports.

Chart 4.

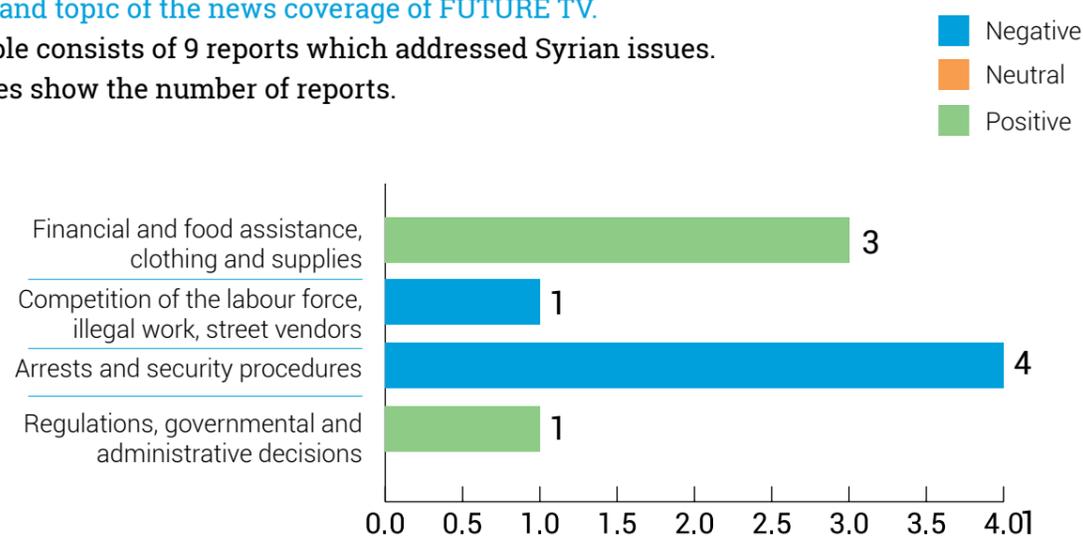


**The tone and topic of the news coverage of FUTURE TV.**

The sample consists of 9 reports which addressed Syrian issues.

The figures show the number of reports.

Chart 5.

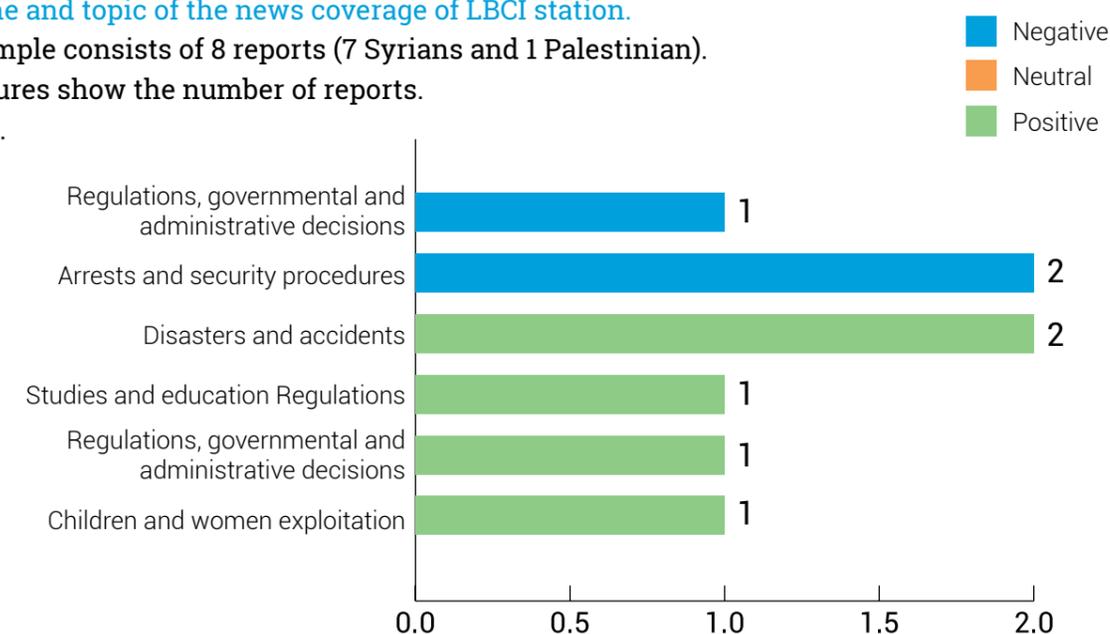


**The tone and topic of the news coverage of LBCI station.**

The sample consists of 8 reports (7 Syrians and 1 Palestinian).

The figures show the number of reports.

Chart 6.

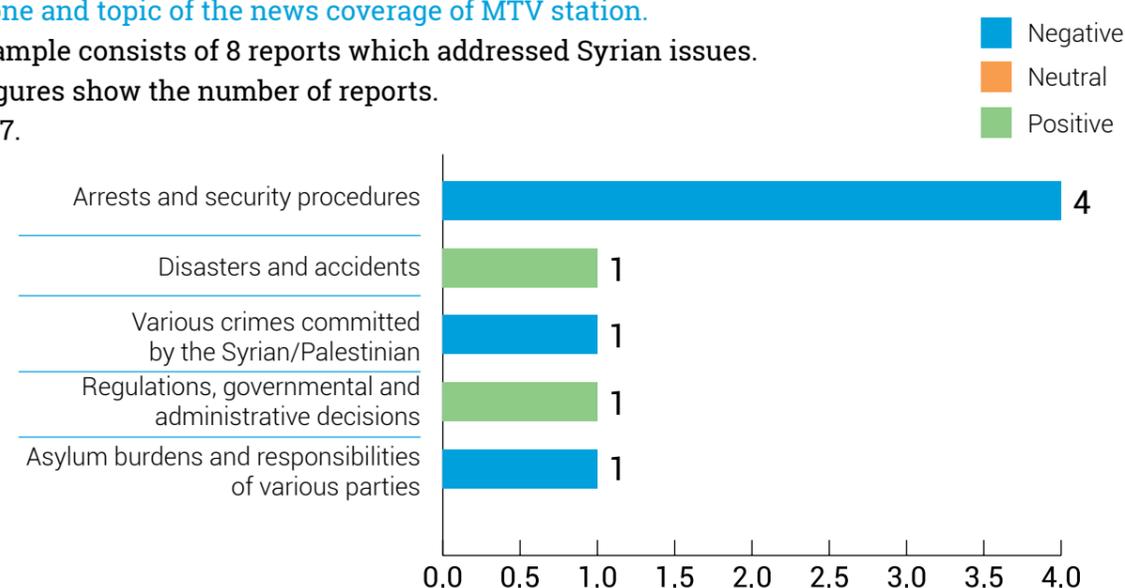


**The tone and topic of the news coverage of MTV station.**

The sample consists of 8 reports which addressed Syrian issues.

The figures show the number of reports.

Chart 7.

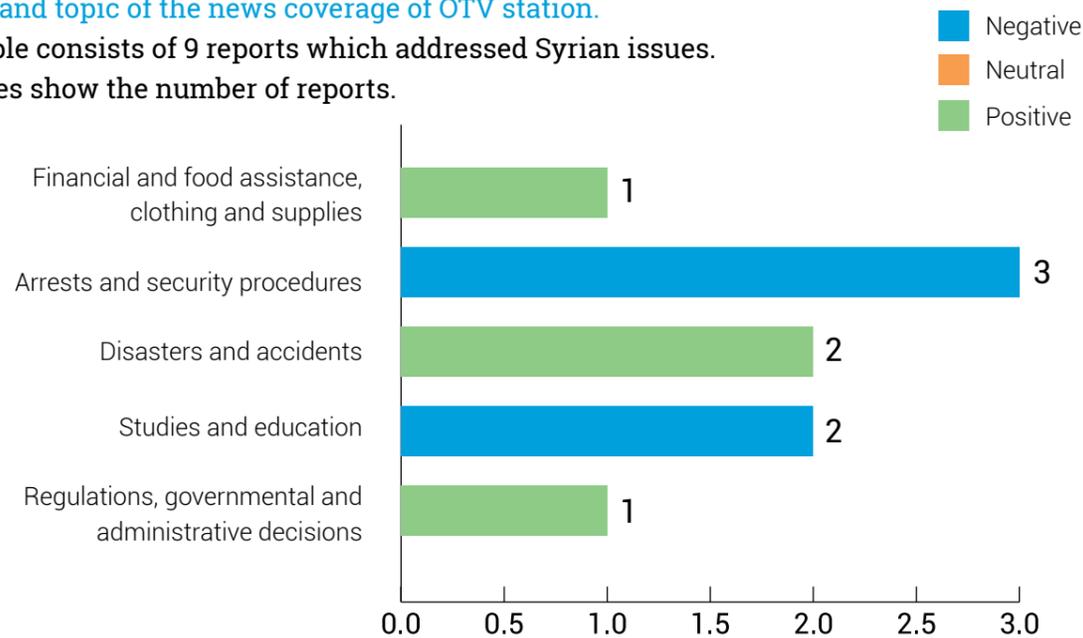


**The tone and topic of the news coverage of OTV station.**

The sample consists of 9 reports which addressed Syrian issues.

The figures show the number of reports.

Chart 8.

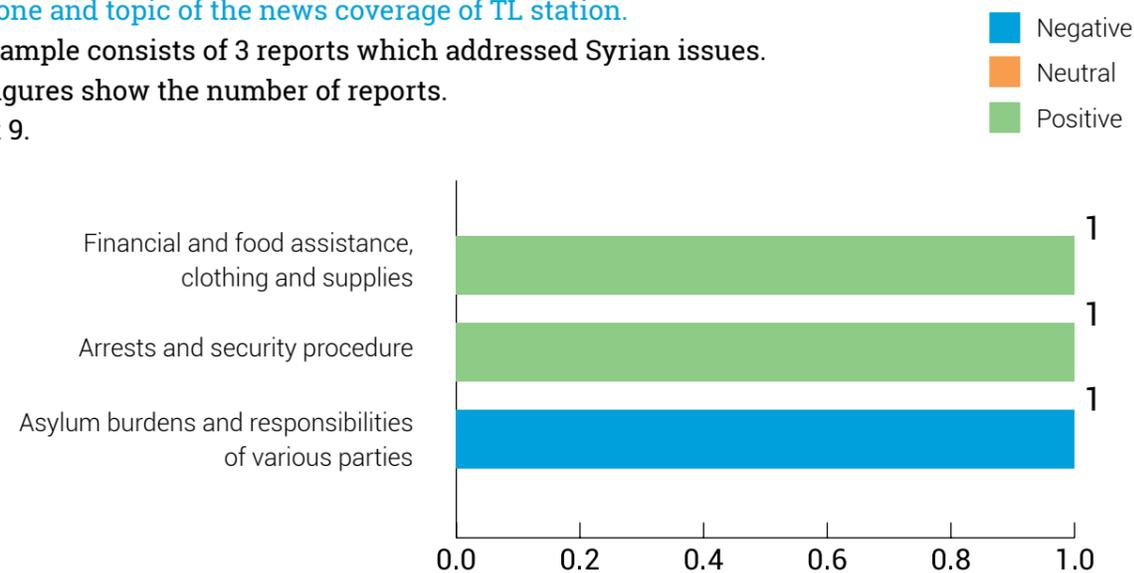


**The tone and topic of the news coverage of TL station.**

The sample consists of 3 reports which addressed Syrian issues.

The figures show the number of reports.

Chart 9.



## Third: Radio Coverage

The study observed the main news bulletins of eight radio stations, namely: Sawt El Mada, Radio Liban, Voice of the People, Radio Liban Libre, Al-Nour radio, Voice of Lebanon (93.3), Voice of Lebanon – Achrafieh and Radio Orient, for the period dedicated to the study (5-25 February 2015), and it worked on isolating the coverages that address the issues of Syrians and Palestinians locally.

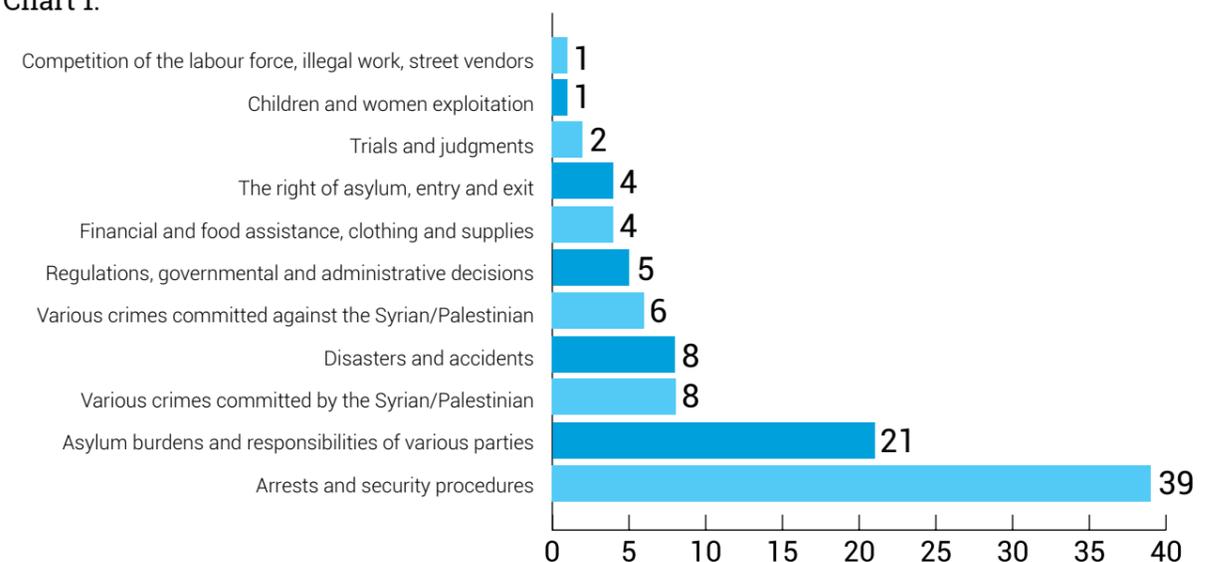
### 1. The analysis of the radio news bulletins showed the following:

- The radio coverage of the Syrian and Palestinian issues focuses on the news report type, while the reportage is often absent. The interview, present at times, often addresses local affairs. The number of radio coverages during the observation period amounted to 99 news.
- The Syrians' issues formed a substantial material in the radio coverage at a rate of 93%, which is only logical considering the fast evolution of the Syrian events and their repercussions on the Lebanese situation.
- What is striking in the radio coverages (Chart 1) is that the security issues are predominant and they amount to 53 out of 99 news, i.e. 54% of the total coverage, divided between the raids and security issues (39 news), the crimes committed by the Syrians and Palestinians or against them (14 news), followed by the coverage of the refugees' support: Asylum burdens (21), aid (4), so that the number amounts to 25, i.e. 25% of all news, followed by the social and administrative news and trials and others.

**Distribution of the articles' topics related to the press coverage of the Lebanese radio stations regarding Syrian and Palestinian issues.**

Total observed articles: 99.

Chart 1.



## 2. The tone of the Radio news

The negative news in the radio bulletins are focused on the security news. The positive news addresses the human affairs of refugees and their various issues.

Chart 2 below shows statistics for the distribution of the tones in various stations and the size of the news that each one reports about the Syrian and Palestinian issues. One can conclude that the higher percentage of news in most radio stations have a negative tone (58%), while the positive news are restricted to 7%.

Tone	Sawt El Mada	Radio Liban Libre	Voice of Lebanon (93.3)	Voice of Lebanon Ashrafieh	Al-Nour radio	Radio Orient	Radio Liban	Sawt EL Chaab (Voice of the People)	Total
Negative	7	10	8	6	4	6	6	11	58
Neutral	1	3	5	4	1	4	9	7	34
Positive	1	1	1	2	1	1	-	-	7
Total	9	14	14	12	6	11	15	18	99

## Fourth: Website Coverage

The study addresses 4 websites, namely: Elnashra, Almodon and Lebanon Files, in addition to the National News Agency. Regarding the first three websites, which are private sites, the study observed the private coverages of the Syrian and Palestinian issues in these websites, i.e. the coverages that are exclusive to the site, not the news that are circulat-

ed by other media. As for the National News Agency, which is an official agency, all the coverages included therein have been observed, given the role of the Agency on the media level and the fact that it is considered as a main news source for many media outlets.

## 1. The coverage of the private websites

- The analysis of the coverages of the three websites Elnashra, Almodon and Lebanon Files shows the following:
- Their number is 17 coverages, divided between 10 main coverages fully addressing a Syrian or Palestinian issue, versus 7 side coverages addressing only a mention of these two issues.
- The forms of the main 10 articles were divided between reports (5), reportages (4) and analysis and opinion (1).

The topics of the ten main articles were divided according to the following (Chart 1):

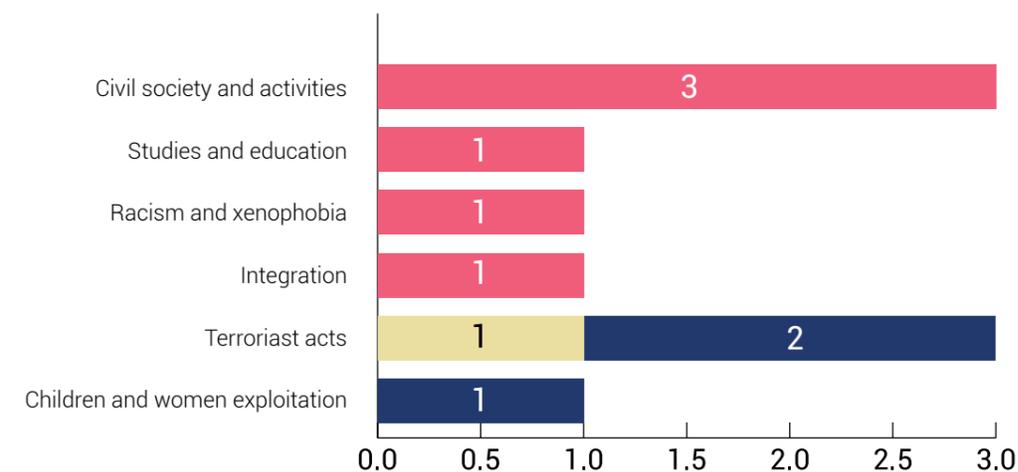
- In Lebanon Files, three articles addressed the issues of terrorism and the exploitation of children and women.
- In Elnashra, one article addressed terrorism.
- In Almodon, 6 articles addressed the issues of the displaced and the mobilization of the civil society for their cause.
- No main article appeared in NOW, and only two articles that addressed the issues of the displaced on the side, were observed.

The subject of the main articles related to the private coverage of the websites regarding the Syrian and Palestinian issues.

The figures indicate the number of main articles.

The sample consists of 10 articles.

Chart 1.

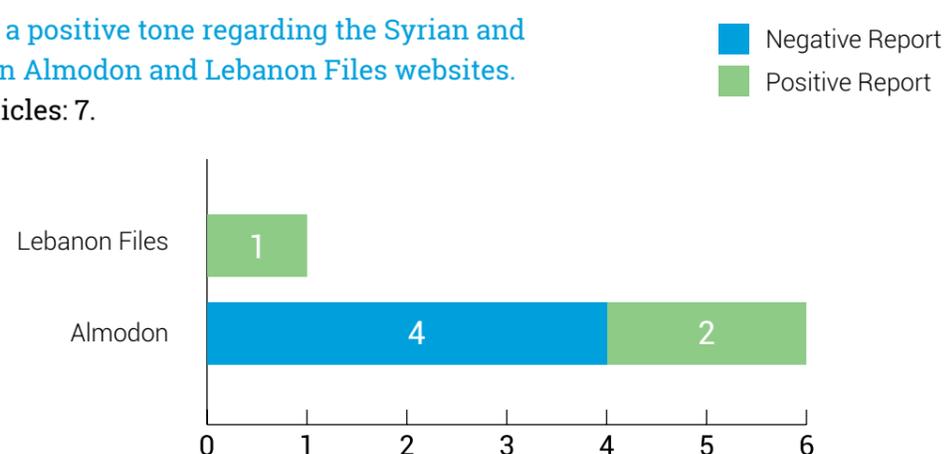


## 2. Websites' tone

The analysis of the tone used in the main articles of the websites that address the issues of Syrians and Palestinians (Chart 2) shows that all the articles of Almodon website (6) are positive, due to the number of journalistic reportages that were published during the observation period (4), which often address legal issues or personal experiences that touch on the human aspect of the targeted people. The negative tone (Chart 3) appears in a news report for Lebanon Files and in an opinion and analysis for Elnashra.

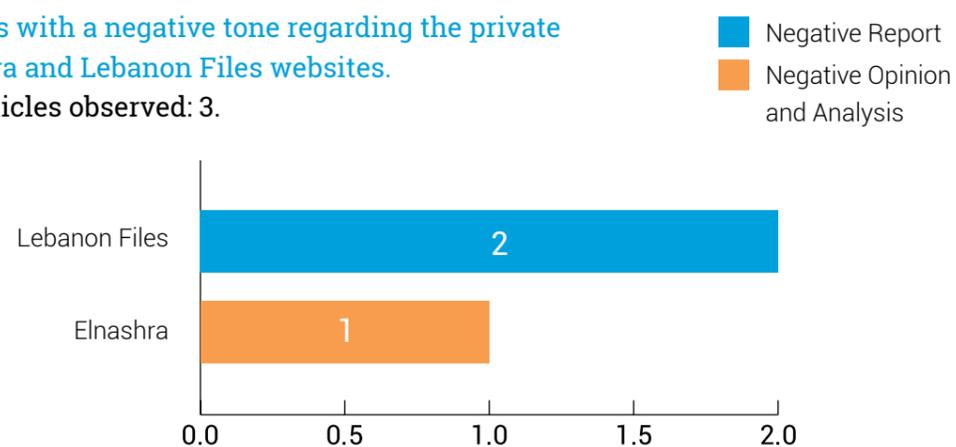
**The coverages with a positive tone regarding the Syrian and Palestinian issues in Almodon and Lebanon Files websites.**

**Number of main articles: 7.**  
Chart 2.



**The press coverages with a negative tone regarding the private coverage of Elnashra and Lebanon Files websites.**

**Number of main articles observed: 3.**  
Chart 3.



## 3. The National News Agency website

### a. The size and subject of coverage

- The total coverages published by the website in the period of study amounted to 213 articles, divided between 140 main new reports addressing primarily the Syrian or Palestinian issues and 73 side reports about these two issues which address them incidentally during the coverage of various issues.
- The analysis of the main coverages shows the comprehensiveness of the topics they address regarding the Syrian and Palestinian issues. They are divided into 15 types, most of which address the human and social affairs, followed by the security issues, in addition to the activities of the civil society and the refugees' rights issue.

### b. The National News Agency tone

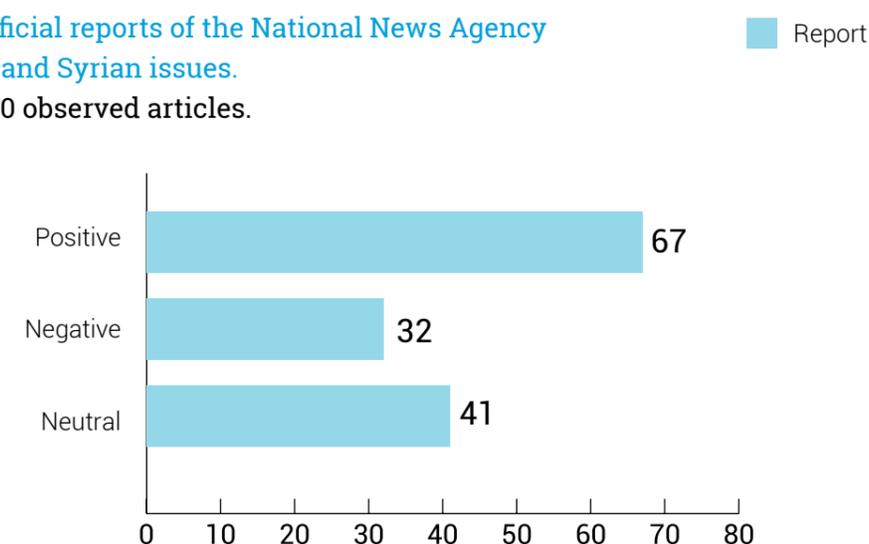
The analysis of the tone used in the main coverages of the National Agency (Chart 1) shows that the positive tone is prevalent in 67 coverages, while it is negative in 32 coverages and neutral in 41.

which constitute around 70% of the negative news and justify the high rate of negative coverages. They are followed by the competition between the Syrian and the Lebanese labour force and the asylum burdens that fall on the Lebanese society in general, at a rate of 19%.

The news types with a prevalent negative tone (Chart 2) are mainly concerned with the security news, including arrests and various measures,

**The general tone of the official reports of the National News Agency related to the Palestinian and Syrian issues.**

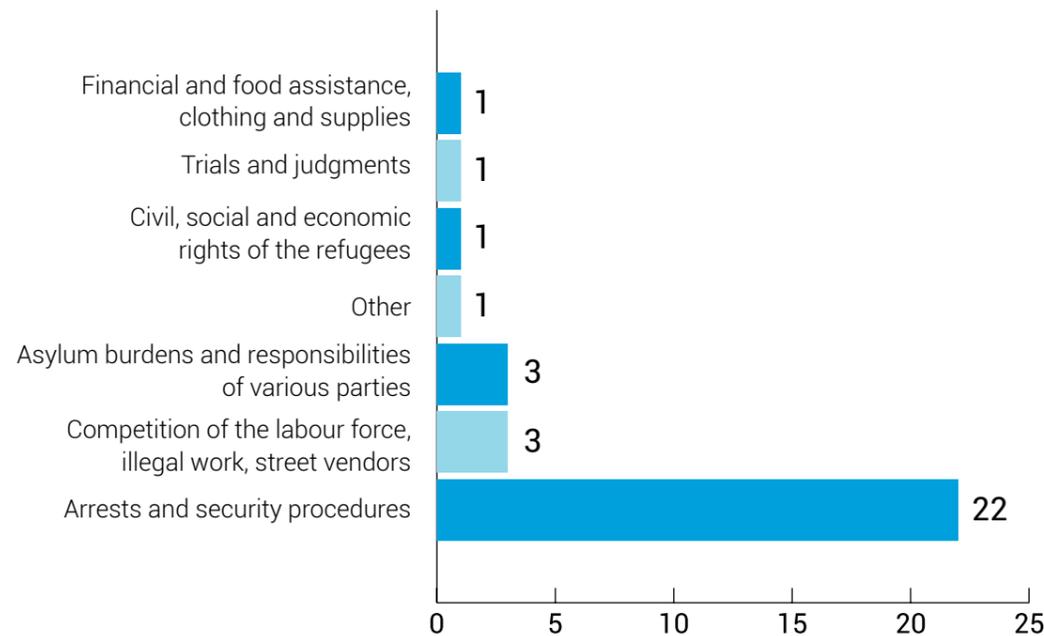
**The sample consists of 140 observed articles.**  
Chart 8.



Topics of the press coverages of the National News Agency reports with negative tone.

The sample consists of 32 observed articles.

Chart 9.



## Section 3: Lebanese Media and Racism

### Qualitative and content Analysis

To describe media in Lebanon as racist is neither completely true nor is it completely false. The truth lies elsewhere and is more variegated. If we examine the meaning of racism, discussed in the first section of this study, it will lead us to the observation that racism never ceased transforming with changing historical circumstances and it is impossible to formulate a single, constant definition of racism.

## 1. Content Analysis Methodology

The third section relating to content analysis is based on a large sample of surveyed media material, the quantitative results of which are included in the second section. The blog processed all the main and subsidiary news and reports on the Syrian and Palestinian respectively, as well as on both of them together when a news report discusses both of them at the same time. The pivotal historical foundation for the study is the ongoing crisis in Syria and all its options with uncertain outcomes as well as the growing numbers of displaced in Lebanon. Although the period was selected arbitrarily, it remains a period full of turmoil whose repercussions can be felt in mass media and on it.

These repercussions were generated by a set of data and conjectures that were, in the beginning, linked to legal, political and humanitarian propositions and variables. These included referring to Syrians entering Lebanon as “refugees” or “displaced”<sup>1</sup>, the concept of the number and its semiotics, the perceptions of the Lebanese citizens in the host country of the Syrian displaced—and with much goodwill—the question of the Syrians’ perception of the Lebanese host. The same questions arise in relation to Palestinians.

<sup>1</sup> In many cases the two terms were used interchangeably in once sentence to refer to Syrians fleeing war into Lebanon. It would be better to use “refugee” to refer to Palestinians and “displaced” to refer to the Syrians.

UNHCR in Lebanon: “The number of displaced Syrians who receive aid exceeds 1,034,000 refugees”. (NNA, Monday, April 28th, 2014)

Afterwards, the issue was linked to the rise or drop of this number and the significations of this change, for instance, when talking about the daily rise of Syrian displaced figures in correspondence with the pace of events in Syria or the drop in Syrian displaced figures to half as a result of measures adopted “following the Lebanese government’s adoption of measures by issuing entry visas to Syrians in the aim of protecting Lebanon’s security, economy, education and demographics”.<sup>2</sup>

There are official figures that attribute the rise in crime and misdemeanours to the rise in the displaced numbers. The postures adopted by the Ministry of Labour (as to Syrian competition on the employment market, particularly since the displaced are willing to work for lower wages...), the social studies examining host countries and the changes they undergo, and other variables have influenced the event narrative.

The discussion about media and racism leads to questions about the research, analysis and assessment methodology using a set of guiding question such as: how do we look for racism (or confirm its absence) in media? Is racism manifested in words or images? Do we search for the key words that point to racism, their frequency, the signification of the frequency, and the lexical field of these words? Or do we read between the lines, look for the intention in the discourse and for the overlap of language and reality? Or do we approach what we read as discourse, that is the enunciations with the conditions

<sup>2</sup> The Minister of Labour Sejaan Qazzin, 15 January 2015.

of its production in media tales as well as reality, cultural heritage and imagination representations? Is racism in meaning? So, do we look for racism in the construction of meaning in discourse and how meaning transfers to the image?

These propositions/premises lead us to ask how is the media discourse produced? How is it manifested? What is the role of this discourse?

If we consider media to be a principal factor in the construction process of a speculative reality that replaces the material reality, and as such reality becomes a narrative, the content analysis of this

## 2. The use of the emotion of fear

There are many terms and tropes that arouse the emotions of anxiety and fear of the other<sup>4</sup>, the "stranger" in this context and, namely, the Syrian and Palestinian. It is a way of revealing the solution through a protective power (in this case the ruling elite, the host country's military, the international or regional community..., or protecting the identity, etc.) "The coming days will witness new achievements for the army... Kahwaji: We will triumph over terrorism", "in a separate security context, the governor of Baalbek Bachir Khodr reiterated, 'We will work to take the necessary measures related to the Syrian displaced camps near the customs centers and security sites in Masharii Qaa so as to protect Lebanon's security, while taking into account human dignity in coordination with security forces and institutions, particularly that there are some camps

4 Voy-Gillis Anaïs, "Les mots du FN : Rhétorique de la peur et populisme", accessible on: <http://observatoiredesextremes.com/?p=751>

discourse, through a quantitative analysis of stereotype words and images that represents the targeted categories, allows us to understand the role of mass media in channeling racism and fabricating it<sup>3</sup>. We shall begin with a structural discourse analysis and a study of the text in relation to social context elements such as the scope of place and time, the various social and communicative roles, fear factors and identity threats.

3 For instance, see: Hartmann, Paul, Charles Husband and Jean Clark. 1974. «Race as news: A study in the handling of race in the British national press from -1963 1970.» In Unesco, Race as News, pp. 174-91. Paris: Unesco.

that overlook military sites; this is not acceptable". (Al-Joumhouria daily 28/02/2015). Fear mongering to create maximum citizen mobilization in discourse with the use of the superlative, for example writing "and we fear the worse", "the biggest problem Lebanon faces is Syrian displacement", aims to transform approval of this discourse into an unwitting reaction.

Fear mongering in this case is more a sign of misleading manipulation than a fact-based argument. According to Corey Robin in his book "Fear: The History of a Political Idea", this emotion is used by many, politicians, thinkers and media. "Fear can efficiently rule a society because it mixes reality with fiction, reason with delirium, rumor with game theory"<sup>5</sup>. People are by nature social animals, bound by

5 Corey Robin, Fear: The History of a Political Idea, New York & London, Oxford University Press, 2004. Traduit de l'anglais par Christophe Jaquet et préfacé par Philippe

common values, religion, traditions and language, etc. However, when these main elements that bind a group are threatened, these groups fear their own demise. As a result, they will try with all available means to eradicate the threat, using violent or illegal means if need be<sup>6</sup>.

There is no escaping the fact of arousing emotions, as Philippe Breton<sup>7</sup> explains, "Emotions are a part of persuasion and fear is not only an argument used by politicians but also an argument used in awareness campaigns (dangers of smoking, for instance...) as a method of persuasion. Thus, one can question the effects of fear on judgments. The elite often presents itself as a means of protection against these dangers.

Media in this case supports this theory and there are ample examples as demonstrated in the table of samples of negative and positive discourse in part 5 below. Fear in the negative representation section of media discourse can be observed in every word. It is a fear of the other, semantically charged with danger, crime, ticking time bomb, and threat at all times. A fear that is related to the continued presence of this "other" and the "serious consequences" that will result from this presence.

In the view of their authors, the semiotics of such discourse, such as the number (number of displaced), the nature of their presence (economic burden, negative social influence, security threat, political threat, and existential threat), the duration of their presence, arouse warranted fear.

Braud, La Peur. Histoire d'une idée politique, Armand Colin, 2006.

6 Atiya el-Ojali: The Policy of Fear. Douroub, July ,14 2009. <http://www.doroob.com/archives/?p=37958>

7 Philippe Breton, La parole manipulée, Paris, La Découverte, 1997.

There are two types of fear: a fear that unites a nation and another one that divides it. In this case, the media has used both. The first one is an external enemy represented by what the society as a whole rejects on an official, social and confessional level and, consequently, the nation has to unite against it. It is also the "terrorist", according to the contemporary terminology of this discourse, that is potentially present among the displaced and in refugee camps. The second fear is a fear of the displaced whose numbers have exceeded the limit that the "small" homeland can tolerate. Thus the discourse condemns a group of the governing elite who by sympathizing with this other are causing harm to the homeland and its people. At the same time, it condemns this other that appears as a danger or threat for the cohesion of groups in the society, which leads to isolation and disengagement on the basis of identity.

This latter fear divides the country because one party views the displaced Syrians as "a threat to their existence" and the other one as a "brother" inside the homeland. Through the fear of losing sovereignty, identity and liberty... the discourse triggers the survival instinct.

In media, special cases are generalized and become conclusive evidence that mix facts with value judgments. It contributes to reinforcing a stereotypical representation that is accompanied with the solid support of examples, which speed its adoption by the audience and use in characterization. In this case, it is easy for the discourse to become a channel for false representations. And we have seen that media discourse has opted for quarrelling over real debate. Propositions are formulated quickly but are often unrealistic, as the media game prefers the

spectacle of from to the reality of  
profundity.

**3. The “hate circle”** The study of demonization of the other (the opponent, enemy or anyone who is different) is basically a study of “the psychological and social mechanism through which a group becomes an object of hatred,” explains Raymond Aron. And pure hatred is the ultimate phenomenon. Demonization is the incitement to hatred by turning an individual or a group into enemies of the human race.

In a country in crisis, where work on collective memory has not been carried out, historical experiences do not work in favour of racial tolerance for a media that represents over half of the Lebanese population, and views this study’s target category (the Syrians and Palestinians) as not being historically on an equal footing with the Lebanese from the point of view of power, control and exploitation, or as a representative of some of the factors that instigated the war and security instability in Lebanon. This does not mean that some media outlets (sometimes even the same ones), even if shyly, do not touch on the living conditions of Palestinians in camps, their employment and their social and legal situation as refugees, as well as the social and living conditions of Syrians in their country and in the host country.

Our hypothesis is that the discourse on national identity and lack of security employs the elements of fear and remembrance to transform the social conflict into a racial question, and not only arouses to feelings of being threatened but slips into legitimizing violence and hatred. This slippery representation of the other (that turns him from a “stranger”

into an “enemy”) is achieved on the discourse level through representing the other into someone who is viewed as holding values that conflict with the state. We reject the other because he threatens the values that the country has strove for.

Discourse plays an important role in fabricating and legitimizing fear of the stranger, excluding and marginalizing him. The main message that this negative discourse channels about the stranger (four arguments) are often observed in any country:

- They pose a threat to the national and cultural identity;
- They are the cause of the rise in crime;
- They are a burden on an already struggling state;
- They exploit the generosity of the state.

Instead of adopting a racist (traditional) discourse, even the extreme right in France has adopted a surreptitious, tactful method (the new racism) that relies on arguments related to job protection, draining state funds in healthcare (and even electricity) and cultural incompatibility. It appears that the rise in racist discourse and the transit into plurality of racism are interconnected phenomena.

## 4. Racist Words

### Words that “hurt”:

#### A. IN DESIGNATING THE OTHER:

They (they have no name) are the cast for a role, displaced (the Syrians) with all its connotations or refugees (the Palestinians)<sup>8</sup>.

“They” is a number, and there are 3 dynamics to this number:

#### 1. Big:

- The influx of Syrian refugees has contributed to the aggravation of the problem - Syrian children represent 73% of street children.
- The Syrian refugees crises has turned into an extremely complicated crisis due to the arbitrariness that the Lebanese economy is facing as a result of the presence of over 1.5 million Syrian refugees
- Il y a 100 000 réfugiés syriens qui posent de problèmes à cause du contact avec des extrémistes. [there are 100,000 Syrian refugees that pose problems as a result of contact with extremists.]
- Half the number of the Lebanese

<sup>8</sup> The word “refugee” has been used by Syrian media, too. It has also appeared along with “displaced” in the same sentence to refer to them as “refugees and displaced”.

population

2. Increasing (the flow of the displaced continues even after the measures as the borders are not closed and infiltrators enter illegally).

3. Higher than disclosed (the registered persons do not reflect the reality of the Syrian numbers found in Lebanon). (In addition, there are signs of fear of the number of Palestinians and stories have abounded to this effect since the Lebanese war. It has been mentioned on the blog implying that the official number is different from the real number).

In these dynamics, the fear game takes a complex turn because the number in Lebanon is at the source of the fear equation. The Lebanese do not survey themselves, and the last population survey dates back to 1932. Many studies were published in the eighties of the last century and in the past years; however, they are not official numbers and are continually refuted.

Moreover, the rise and drop in tension can be measured through the rise and drop in numbers.

Racism manifests in the “naming” by the dominant group, majority or host country of the marginalised, minority, refugee or displaced group.

#### B. THE RHETORIC OF NUMBERS

“There exists the myth of the number, for which the semantic poverty of the latter is in opposition to its operational wealth. From this point of view, the number does not signify anything—it is not part of language. Or it does carry signification, but on a

strictly denotation level that excludes all rhetoric<sup>9</sup> [...] signifies the obscure, the arid, the inhuman, in other words a definite lack of meaning<sup>10</sup>.

Naturally, the myth disproves itself. [...] And if we analyse the number in its uses in mass media, we would on the contrary be surprised at the diversity of its expressive resources<sup>11</sup>"

The number has been the most frequent association with Syrian displaced and Palestinian refugees in their representation in mass media: over and over again the media informs us about events involving arrests of a number of Syrians or Palestinians along with Lebanese persons and often the number ranges between two and four (See news reports on local channels, for instance).

Enumeration, which involves stating successive numbers one after the other, is similar here to rhetorical repetition: there is here no longer a repetition not of the number but of the object counted. This repetition is furthermore the foundation of the concept of number; we are made to witness, by some kind of slow motion, the genesis of the latter. Enu-

9 « Kossyguine, manieur précis de chiffres, de faits, répugnant à la rhétorique... », *Nouvel Observateur*, 7 December 1966.

10 « Non, je me sens plus là /Moi-même / Je suis le quinze de la /Onzième » (Apollinaire, *Alcools*, p. 151).

11 Durand Jacques. *Rhétorique du nombre*. In *Communications*, 1970, 16. *Recherches rhétoriques*. pp. 132-125.

doi : 10.3406/comm.1970.1231

[http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/comm\\_1970\\_8018-0588\\_num\\_1231\\_1\\_16](http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/comm_1970_8018-0588_num_1231_1_16)

meration, which is commonly ascending, was the framework for talking about the daily influx of displaced that had become a large number, as well as Palestinian refugees coming from Syria and a rise in crime that accompanies the rising number of people coming in, etc.).

This numerical accumulation gives the impression of providing a complete picture of the event, an accurate and clear representation: "Demographic data shows that 73% of children as Syrian, 61% of them arrived in Lebanon during the last three years. Whereas Lebanese children represent 10% and Palestinians 8%; the remaining are stateless persons or ethnic minorities." (Al-Akhbar, 17/02//2015).

This accumulation requires curbing "as far as possible, the arbitrary entry of the displaced which has been largely permeated by the security element"; "and in the face of two cabinets that did not provide a clear vision of how to deal with the biggest issue of our times with more than 1.5 million Syrian displaced present on Lebanese territories, the General Security—roughly four years after the beginning of the crisis in Syria, and weeks after the government's announcing intentions to end displacement—had to issue an unprecedented decision in the history of Lebanese-Syrian relations that would regulate the entry of Syrians into Lebanon and their residence in it" (Assafir, 14/02/2015).

There is another number-related equation: that of the "small" figure opposing the "big" figure. Here examples abound, Lebanon the "small" country that is host to a "big" number of displaced and refugees. It is an idea that was used frequently during the Lebanese war when there was frequent mention of the large number of foreigners present on its soil.

As for Palestinians: Accuracy is also a political posture and the number has become a taboo:

"The Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue committee intends to conduct a survey to establish the number of Palestinian refugees present in Lebanon and determine the unemployment rate inside Palestinian camps. The dispute over determining the number of refugees has negatively affected the relations between the successive cabinets and UNRWA, as the agency confirms that the number of Palestinians in Lebanon does not exceed 200,000, while the government statistics to a number around 700,000." (Al-Akhbar 18/02)

### C. USING WAR METAPHORS

Such terms are frequently used in media coverage: "ticking time bomb", "fear", "security" "burden"... "threatens", "threatens the Lebanese model", etc. "The other challenge that it faces is the exceptional influx of Syrian refugees and that now represents a political, security and economic burden in a manner that threatens the Lebanese model and its stability." (Annahar, 11/02/2015).

**"Ain el-Hilweh: A Return to Bombs and Rumours"**, As-Ssafir, 24/02/2015.

**"Even the Syrians themselves have caught wind of an incomprehensible Lebanese reluctance to defuse the ticking bomb of displacement!"**, As-Safir, 14/02/2015.

The general tone of journalistic coverage of Palestinian and Syrian issues in the various sampled articles (a sample of 521 articles) shows an even divide

between a negative tone of 27% and a positive tone of 24%, with a total of 51%, and 49% characterised by a neutral tone.

The incongruity as expected is evident in the main news reports, where the negative tone makes up 43% and the positive 23%, while in investigative reports the positive tone is 56% and negative 11%. This is the case because investigative reports gather information meticulously and cover the story in-depth, so persons gain names, a place and a "personal" story. In particular, the paradox lies in the fact that generalisations are the worst enemy of marginalised groups, they do more harm than good and do not serve the purpose.

Whereas in analytical reports, the divide is even as well reflecting the views held in society: 37% negative and 38% positive.

Rejecting the other and fearing him is a result of representation. As 56% of news reports show raids and security measures, the Syrian and Palestinian represent a security breach and a threat. As a result, the image is imprinted in the mind and becomes difficult to change. How many investigative reports would it take to drive out this stereotype about this "stranger"! The next biggest figure reinforces the logic of fear: 18% cover crimes committed by Syrians and Palestinians. This figure is followed by 9% that pinpoints the cause for fear: terrorist acts. Another 9% focuses on the competitiveness of labour even if described in "neutral" terms like in the English language newspaper the Daily Star or in negative ones like in the daily Assafir. Of course, it was not mentioned positively anywhere.

In an investigative report in the French language daily "L'Orient Le Jour" dated 23/02/2015:

**"Chrétiens, musulmans, LibanaisSyriens: "L'agriculture nous a réunis"**

[Christians, Muslims, Lebanese, and Syrians: "Agriculture has united us"]

On an agriculture project funded by the EU, we find a response to the fears:

**"Les différences suscitent désormais de la curiosité et non plus de la crainte. L'amitié a remplacé les divergences politiques".**

[Differences are now attracting curiosity and no longer fear. Friendship has replaced political disputes".

Investigative reporting represents 7% of all reports, whereas news reports 90%, a fact that does not help prevent racism and stereotyping.

## 5. Sample of the positive and negative tones

Syrian/Syrians		Palestinian/Palestinians	
Negative representations	Positive representations	Negative representations	Positive representations
Social problem	All non-Lebanese categories have a positive effect on the Lebanese economy: Syrians obtain aids that are spent in the Lebanese markets	The security breaches continue in Ain al-Hilweh camp – terrorism disappears in its alleys	All non-Lebanese categories have a positive effect on the Lebanese economy: Palestinians spend 600\$ million
Ambulant bombs	The deprived class	Death in Tripoli of the Palestinian nicknamed "Abul madaris" for distributing drugs to school students	The suffering of the Palestinians regarding their deprivation of civil rights, right to work, right of ownership and inheritance
Suspected to be involved with ISIS	Deprived of the minimum wage – are subject to hard work conditions in the labour market	Raids with the army	Distribution of relief cards for the Palestinian displaced from Syria to Beddawi (medical and food)

Army killer	Sectors that are exploiting Syrians more	Attempts to recruit young people from the Ain al-Hilweh camp to perform terrorist operations	This project contributes to the integration of the Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese youth in society, through courses on life and daily skills
For committing criminal acts	Absence of health follow-up	Arrest of Syrians in Beddawi camp	More than one hundred thousand Palestinians in more than 20 camps in a level of living conditions that falls below the minimum
In possession of fake access cards	The tragedy	The presence of a number of terrorists in Ain al-Hilweh, completely ready to perform terrorist operations	Suffering from hard conditions
Existentially dangerous	Exceeded cold		The priority of addressing the issue of Palestinian refugees' rights

## 6. Images and stereotypes

The visual elements (real and fictional) have been employed to build, at the discourse level, the "us" and "me" to form the concept of the internal group, by linking it to the place or land. Therefore, the study of the location of "their" presence gives us a quick and simple idea about the exclusion and marginalization. They are in their location, and we are in ours, regardless of the true non-systematic fear. The TV image reflects a real form of this presence.

It is a typical location, tents, clothes hanging on laundry ropes outside, a majority of barefoot children. When words are given to them, it has a small circle. These are terms regarding covers, the need for heating, looking for a place to stay. When the nature got rough, children died from cold or because of heating... But any one of them, individually, has a name, a presence, a story, and his own different space. In the group he is but this brief image. The image alone, without the words, shows the magnitude of the tragedy: hunger, cold, poverty...

all are factors that are not related to numbers because humanism cares for the individual a lot, and the collective too, and for the human in his humanity. The word often takes the image to the political reading, so the scene of the displaced comes with the narrative about the randomness in establishing the camp or looking for armed people, etc.

The blog contains a reference to the stereotype in the perception of the other: "Syrians depicted as we see them", Hassan Al Sahili, Almodon on February 16, 2015. "Getting past the stereotype of Syrian refugees seems hard in light of the visual projects and documentaries that are made about them, trying to showcase the suffering in their lives. The focus of these works on provoking the sympathy of the receiver only, without caring for other approaches that address what lies behind this image in terms of life patterns, new communities and sub-cultures created by the camp, promotes the prevalence of the image of misery. This resembles, in one of its aspects, the stereotype of the Palestinian refugees, which is now more consolidated.

It is also to be noted in the blog that even in a very small dose, the displaced and the refugee had a word, and the hosting people even called their names, for instance: Ali Fahs, "Syrian youngsters trying to come back to life", Almodon on February 17, 2015"... "Ribal and Ahmad, despite the difference in their activities, share the same problems", which increase pressure on Syrians in Lebanon, namely the way the Lebanese deal with them. Despite the presence of a lot of moral and human support given by many Lebanese to the refugees, according to Ribal, one cannot ignore some racist comments.

These comments might constitute, according to

Ribal, a provocation that can be tolerated. But some of it is directed towards children, which created some kind of shame from their side. This hinders the effort to help them. Ahmad speaks meanwhile about the difference in treatment since three years ago, until now, for "In the beginning the situation was easier, but now it is tougher, and uncomfortable." In another place, some Syrian youngsters in Lebanon find a spot of freedom to practice their syndicate or struggle activities in matters that are not directly related to the Syrian revolution. Hassan, an AUB student, talks about the "participation of some Syrian youngsters in the activities of the "Secular Club" in the University, same as any Lebanese student".

Not all denominations are of course positive: "A Syrian student in Lebanon: here are wars of another type", Almodon on February 17, 2015.

This is the testimony of a Syrian Master student who has moved to Beirut more than a year ago to pursue his education in one of the private schools. It refers to the first interruptions of life, with multiplied worries, the toughest of which is to secure a minimum level of respect, in a hosting community, what Lebanon has been called, that does not support its refugees and does not take their situation into consideration, but on the contrary holds them responsible of what they cannot bear.

...Knowing you are Syrian is enough for them to reject you, or for you to accept abusive work conditions. Finally, I found a job in a supermarket in Beirut. But it remains a job that does not suit my diploma or my ambitions.

The job was exhausting. But I quickly adapted because of the need to secure the tuition fees of the

private college which are high even for Lebanese students. I start my day by waking up at 5 a.m. to catch the bus that drives me from my house in Dahieh, Beirut to my workplace in Ras Beirut. I arrive at around 7:15.

...Stolen rights at work, and for reasons that became known, my nationality is a pretext for calling me "Al-Daeshi/the ISIS recruit".

## Conclusions

The reading of the media reality that this study provides cannot be separated from the complex situation in Lebanon, which has its specificity and which results in a media and political discourse revolving around fear. Displaced persons are usually a minority in the host country but the situation differs in this case. Refugees are usually not armed but here terrorists pervade the communities of displaced persons. Add to that the delicate security situation and the sharp political dissection. Also, work on memory has not been conducted and the theory of Lebanon as the country of wars is still present for others and reappears as soon as any loose situation whose specifications correspond with the stored memory of the war occurs.

In this reading, the Lebanese media does not look void of the contradictions witnessed by the Lebanese society. And despite the caution in covering major events and abiding by objectivity in doing so, covering the events associated with asylum in the media indirectly strengthens the racist prejudices of a party already convinced that "the displaced persons and the refugees are the ones behind the

The media showcases the difficulty for the refugee to make his word heard: "The camps of Palestinian refugees abound with self-irony, but this is laughter that does not find its way to a theatre stage or a movie screen or even a song. Even in Lebanon." Rasha El-Atrash "About a cause that needs laughter" Almodon, on February 23rd, 2015.

problems and riots", or that most of the crimes are explained by the social factors. The news related to the "stranger", i.e. the Palestinian and the Syrian in this case, are full of drifts that can feed the stereotypical definition. In a country passing through a crisis, such as Lebanon, the historic stock does not play for the benefit of non-racism in relation to a media that represents half of the Lebanese, and this group of people is regarded as historically not equal to the Lebanese in terms of power (Syrian), or as a participant in the war (the Palestinian and the Syrian), or as a causal agent in the war (Palestinian), or as exploiting the host country for political purposes (Palestinian). This is not refute that some of the media outlets (itself sometimes), sometimes, even shamefacedly (barely), regard the living conditions of the Palestinians in the camp, their job opportunities, their social and legal status as "refugee", as well as the social and living conditions of the Syrian reality in their country and the host country. So what are the most important conclusions of this reading of the media reality, through the observed samples?

## A. REGARDING THE QUANTITATIVE OBSERVATION:

- 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. However, the rate of coverage of the Palestinian issue appears to be relatively high, which means that the Palestinian migration to Lebanon since 1948 is still a main subject in the political and social life in Lebanon.
- The topics of caring for the refugees and the security issues are prevalent in the main coverages. The side coverages addressing the Syrian issue seem focused on the displacement affairs and the burdens resulting there from.
- It is noteworthy that the reportages about the refugees are not numerous. They form 7% of the observed sample, while the news reports constitute 90%. This does not serve the avoidance of racism and stereotype. These reportages are set either in the context of the "problem" or in the context of a link to a case or for provocation (emotions, for instance), which widens the gap between the two parties, the hosting country and the displaced and refugee groups, and creates psychological barriers between the two parties that help inflate racism in both directions.
- It is also noteworthy in the monitoring that the word in the coverages was rarely given to the displaced and the refugee, for him to express his problems and his position regarding the hosting population.

- One of the indicators that are worth checking is the discrepancy among the newspapers regarding the magnitude of the media coverage and the topics of coverage.
- In the reports, the negative tone seems to be prevalent, at 43%, and this tone is often due to the fact that the media publish the news report the way they receive them from the security sources, without working on reformulating them in a way that avoids the negative connotation contained therein.
- In the reportages, the positive tone is prevalent and reaches 56%, while the negative tone is down to 11%. These reportages often address social affairs. As for the analyses and opinions that often focus on the political dimensions or what they consider important issues, we see that they contain a balance between the positivity and negativity.

It seems clear from the topics' headlines that the ratio of negative tone is mainly due to the security news, including raids and security measures related to the Syrian and Palestinian presence in Lebanon. The percentage of these topics amounts to 56% of those that are classified as negative. If we add to them the coverages of the news regarding the fight against the terrorist organizations with Syrian extensions, which are at 9%, and the coverages of the crimes committed by the Syrians or Palestinians, the security news then amount to 83% of the total of the negative tone-news. The issue of the competition between the Syrian labour force and the Lebanese workers remains striking at 9%.

## B. REGARDING THE CONTENT:

- The content of the media coverage briefly focuses, in its majority, on linking the Syrian issue to the rejection, i.e. fear, or acceptance, i.e. compassion. In both cases, the positions are highly political and reflect the position towards the Syrian crisis and have nothing to do with the human being or the other.
- Fear is being used to place the citizen in a state of high mobilization: the fear of the number (the number of displaced), of the nature of their presence (economic burden, negative social impact, security threat, political threat and existential threat), of the duration of their stay, all these issues are connotations that mobilize for a justified fear.
- The other has become stereotyped, marginalized, excluded, in the written and audio-visual media: the tendency towards choosing the current topics (most of them composed of crime, violence, drugs, or illegal border-crossings), the headlines, the images, the choice of words, the metaphors, and many other negative characteristics of news and political articles contributes to a systematic depiction of the other stranger, not only as different, but also as someone considered to be a threat factor.
- The tendency to reduce the news regarding discrimination and racism. We often tend to ignore the issues related to the negative practices towards the displaced or the stranger by the hosting country; they exist in lower percentages, unless the topic is striking, then the media points it out clearly.

- The positive economic and cultural contributions of the refugees in the country of refuge are ignored.

## C. RECOMMENDATIONS: OVERCOMING RACISM

- Pierre-André Taguieff, author of the racism dictionary ("Dictionnaire historique et critique du racisme"), was asked: "Following the parliament vote, France removed the word "race" in May 16, 2013, from the Constitution<sup>12</sup>, while reconfirming that it "forbids and condemns racism". Isn't this some sort of contradiction?" He replied: "The contradiction is obvious, and the process is not productive. This is the marriage of the good anti-racism will and blindness, 1. The word "race" has no meaning, because according to the current scientific knowledge, the race does not identify with a genetic reality that can be defined. 2. The word "race" is dangerous because it still carries the meaning of prejudices and stereotypes that can be transferred. This word is forever tarred due to the racist practices that happened in the past to justify modern slavery, western imperialism, anti-foreigners nationalism and the Nazi genocide policy<sup>13</sup>."

<sup>12</sup> L'Assemblée nationale supprime le mot «race» de la législation, le Monde, 16/5/2013  
En savoir plus sur [http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2013/05/16/l-assemblee-nationale-supprime-le-mot-race-de-la-legislation\\_3272514\\_823448.html#lUbpPCquf2LrYuZ.99](http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2013/05/16/l-assemblee-nationale-supprime-le-mot-race-de-la-legislation_3272514_823448.html#lUbpPCquf2LrYuZ.99)

<sup>13</sup> Pierre-André Taguieff : «L'antiracisme en échec», Propos recueillis par Sébastien Le Fol, Le Point - Publié le 28/11/2013.

- In his opinion, erasing the word "race" does not mean erasing the thoughts or the representations that are linked to it or that provoke it.
- The racist does not need the word "race" to express his hatred or disdain. All he needs to do is to make use of the stock of images, the metaphors and imageries that distort the image of a human group and make it devilish.
- To oppose racism, i.e. the racist and exclusionary positions, impressions and institutional forms, it might be useful at first to pinpoint them and say they are racist. Erasing a word or avoiding its use does not restrain racism.

### How do we escape racism?

If the first pillars for resisting racism are memory, civic education and school in order to work on defining a hierarchy of moral standards, working on memory is the first interest for someone who refuses to believe that hatred is the human being's destiny.

When the media discourse is racist, it affects negatively the status of the refugees and their civil rights. This discourse is generated from the negative representation of the other, and it spreads and enforces fanaticism against the other and legitimizes discrimination.

The media discourse is not only restricted to words; it is rather a community practice that is spread and active and is manifested concretely when it comes to the refugee and the displaced through inequality. In order to oppose the racist discourse (of the elite), i.e. the media discourse:

- A different discourse, issued by the same party, is requested
- Not to surrender to the temptations of the easy formulations and the ideological formulations that media can circulate or make
- To fight the prejudices and demagoguism
- Not to fear difference
- Not to generalize
- To put the news in their context
- To examine how to name the other
- To highlight the positive aspect (there is always positivity)
- To avoid speed and stereotypes
- To use concepts that do not enforce discrimination among people
- Humanism
- To pick the subject, words, metaphors, exaggeration, euphemism, negation (I am not racist, but...), narrative, argumentation, images, and many other characteristics of talking
- The daily journalistic writings about the other tend to be restricted to a small number of stereotyped elements such as "the illegal flow", "the problems of integration in the host country", crime, delinquency, etc. In general, the representation of the other confirms the difference, delinquency and threat

- The refugees and displaced have almost no say in the words said about them. In addition to the fact that the discourses about them are not directed at them. Working on giving them a bigger space for expression
- The major cause for concern is the problems that the refugees cause. But the topics in the media concerning the various forms of harassment they face on all levels are scarce
- If the media affects involuntarily the racial prejudices, it certainly can play an active role too in resisting the discriminating cases through awareness campaigns
- This reading of the media reality, however, has to be linked to the complex situation in Lebanon which has its specificity, and which produces a discourse that revolves around fear: usually the displaced forms a minority in the hosting country. Here, the situation differs a lot. Usually the refugee is unarmed. Here he is armed. The security situation is delicate and the political divide is sharp. In addition, working on the memory is not done yet, and the theory of Lebanon the battlefield and the wars of others is still present and goes public whenever there is an incident that is not contained and its specifications match the stored war memories
- One cannot blame the media exclusively; the responsibility is shared, and the fight against racism is a battle that is carried out on several fronts

Under the headline "The counter-currents of progress", Lévi-Strauss, in his book "Race and History", published by UNESCO in 1952 as part of a collection that addresses the racism topic in the world, regarded that "all cultural progress depends on a coalition of cultures. The essence of such a coalition is the pooling (conscious or unconscious, voluntary or involuntary, deliberate or accidental, on their own initiative or under compulsion) of the wins which each culture has scored in the course of its historical development...the greater the diversity between the cultures concerned, the more fruitful such a coalition will be"<sup>14</sup>.

It is an invitation to look carefully at the other, even if we are writing a discourse "about the eulogy of the border"<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Lévi-Strauss Claude, *Race et histoire*, 1958. The Arabic translation – Salim Haddad – University Corporation for Studies, Publishing and Distribution, p 63.

<sup>15</sup> Debray Régis, *Eloge des frontières*, Gallimard 2010. Translated into Arabic by Dima Chokr, *Eloge des frontières*, Doha Book, The Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage, Qatar 2013

To view the interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMZbyOfMNcg>

In reference to a lecture by the French intellectual Régis Debray in Tokyo in 2010 and then printed it in a book entitled «In Praise of Border», in which he refutes the idea that humanity is better off without borders as is commonly spread by globalization.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Peace Building in Lebanon Project  
Arab African International Bank Building  
Riad El Solh Street, Nejmeh, Beirut - Lebanon  
**Telephone** 01- 980 583 or 70-119160