

# Coverage of the parliamentary elections on Lebanese TV screens

## The largest space for traditional politicians and Women are marginalized

**Summary of analysis of media coverage  
monitoring data of December 2021**



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For the second month in a row, Maharat Foundation is keeping pace with the Lebanese Media Coverage about the upcoming legislative elections in May through careful monitoring of television stations within their news bulletins and talk shows, especially with the approach of the important deadline that will determine the course of national political life for the coming years.

This research accompaniment aims to answer many questions, including: How do Lebanese television stations cover parliamentary elections? And how much importance is it given? Who are the political forces that account the most time on these stations? To which extent is electoral education important? What is the status quo of women in the daily political life?<sup>1</sup>

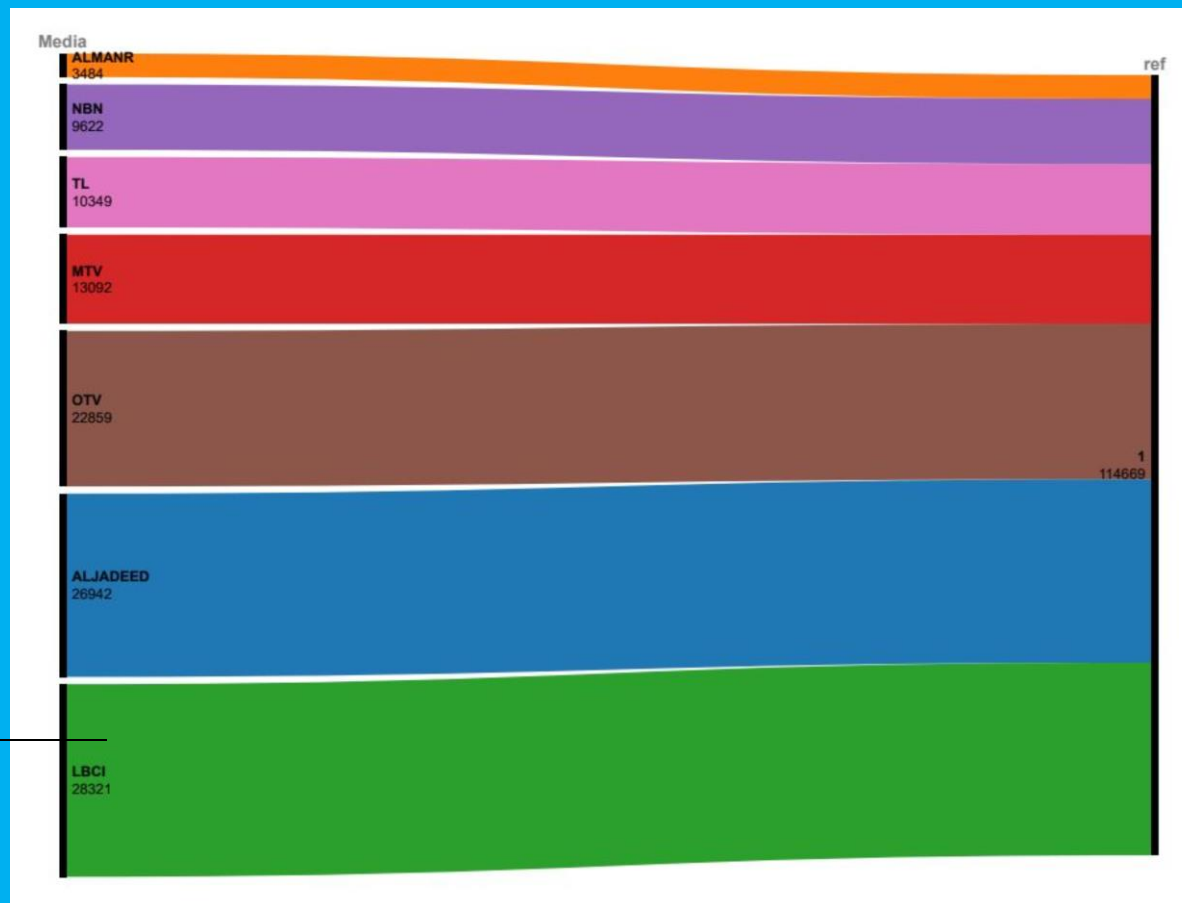
<sup>1</sup>- The monitoring process contains seven television channels: MTV ,LBCI , ALJADEED ,ALMANAR ,NBN ,OTV ,TL.

The monitoring includes Evening news and major talk shows, which are a total of 25, and are distributed between each of these stations as follows: 3 programs in each of MTV, LBCI, ALJADEED, And 7 programs in OTV, 4 programs in NBN, 4 programs, ALMANAR And one program in TL.

## 1- Keeping up with the election

In an analysis of the December coverage, LBCI and Al Jadeed were at the forefront of the time dedicated for the topic of elections this month, with LBCI covering about 8 hours and Al Jadeed about 7.5 hours. And OTV came after with around 6.5 hours of coverage

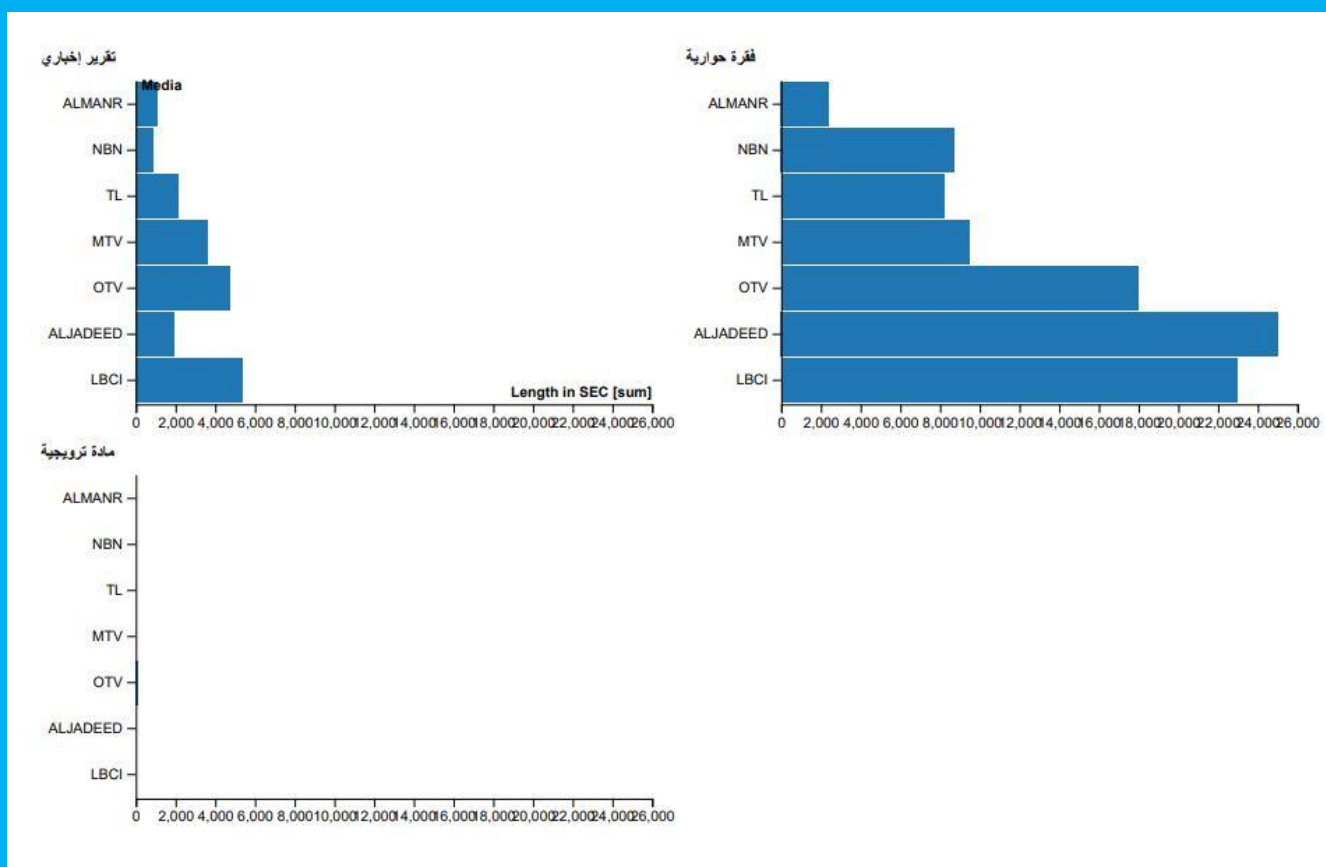
Other stations came further and recorded the following times: MTV about 3 1/2 hours, Tele Liban about 3 hours. It is remarkable that the two Shiite duo stations, as shown in the results of last November's monitoring, allocated less time to the topic, with about 2.5 hours at N.B.N. and after comes Al-Manar station with one hour (Table 1).



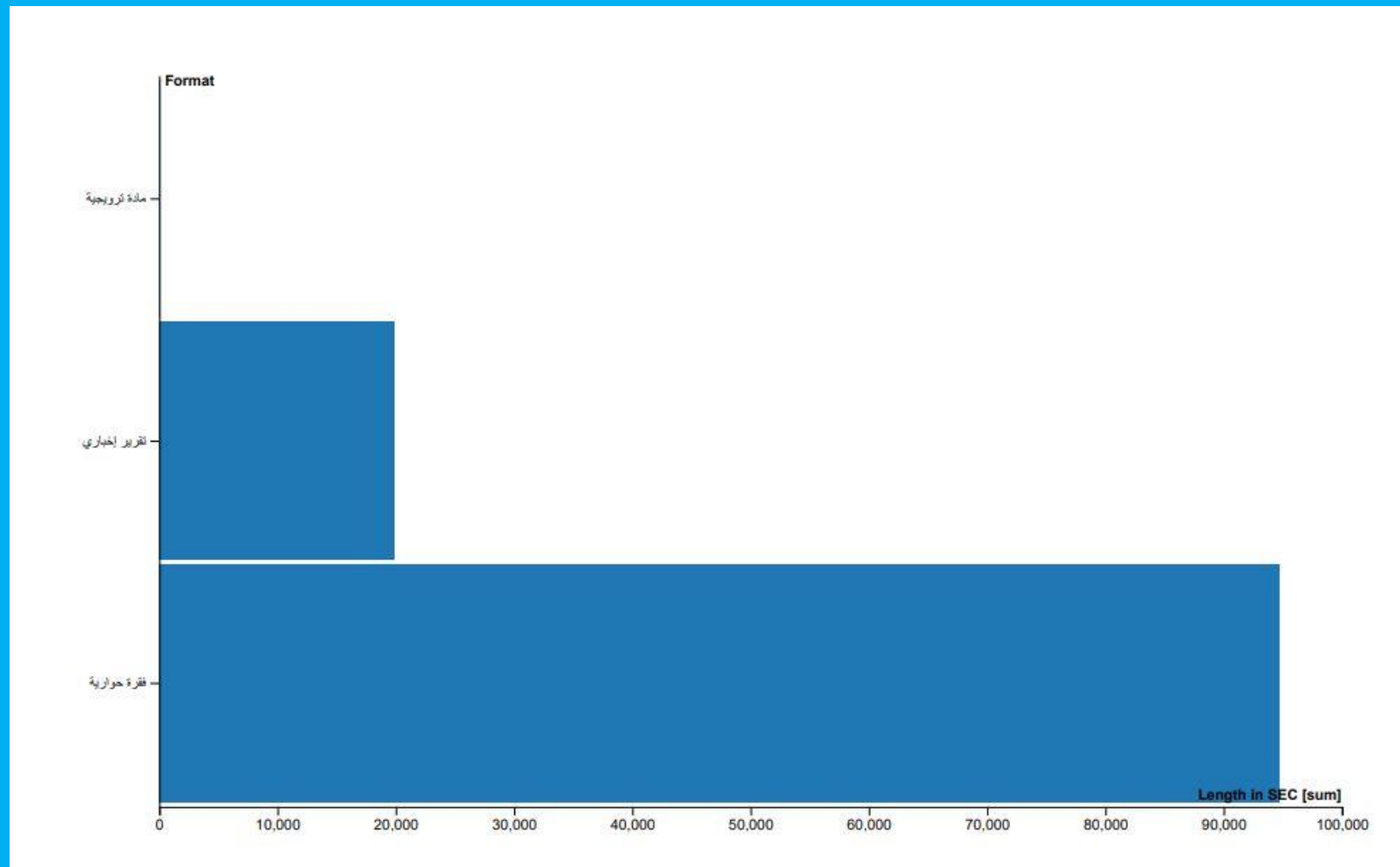
Interest in the electoral issue varies between being put on news bulletins or on talk shows. News bulletins reflect the extent to which the topic is concerned better because the bulletins are subject to the TV's editorial line and are prepared accurately unlike talk shows. Comparing TV news bulletins to each other allows for wealthier conclusions, given the equal number and time allocated to evening bulletins in stations, unlike the unequal number and time allocated to talks shows in between different stations.

Through the inspection of the news bulletins, it is clear that the LBCI station allocated the highest time for the topic in its evening bulletin which amounted to about 90 minutes followed by OTV with about 80 minutes, and then MTV with about 65 minutes.

The other stations fell behind them, with less than 40 minutes for TL and Al-Jadeed, and less than twenty minutes for Al-Manar and NBN. (Table 2).



In calculating the distribution of the time attributed to the topic of elections in the programs compared to the bulletins, it was handled by talk shows at 83%, compared to 17% in news bulletins (Table 4). OTV was distinguished from others as it had started broadcasting promotional material in preparation for the elections, including previous speeches by President Michel Aoun before he assumed the presidency urging the performance of "electoral duty and voting for change."



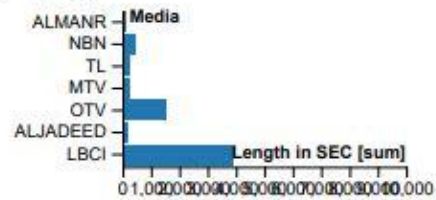
## 2- Beneficiary of appearances on screens

Who did the TV stations give the speech to? A very important question in election times, whoever takes the word can advertise themselves and put forward their ideas to win the support of voters. Or those who can't access the screen, cannot deliver their speech to the public and introduce themselves, their project and their program to voters.

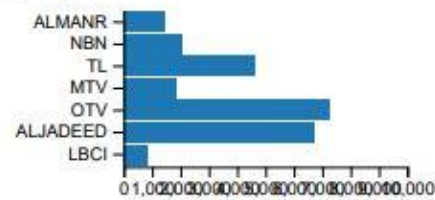
Knowing who owns broadcast times will reveal the stations' positions and political connections, through knowing who will it be time the speak and advertise themselves. And it is remarkable that the category of “traditional politicians” ranks first in the amount of time they receive on screens, all combined.

In a comparison between influential groups that spoke on the stations, the “traditional politicians” category received about 27%, compared to only about 3% for “emerging political groups”. While the categories of “election expert” and “political analyst” each received about 20% of the total time allocated to election issues. The category “Activist and Civic Gathering” received 8% of the total time (Table 6).

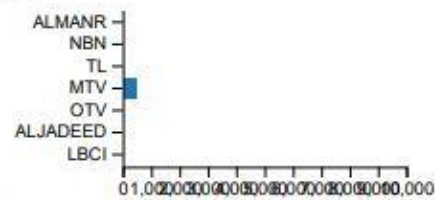
### وسيلة الاعلام



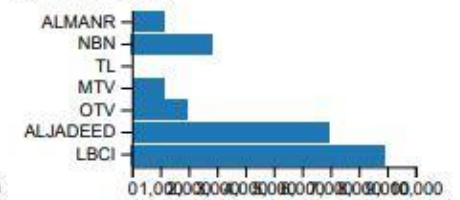
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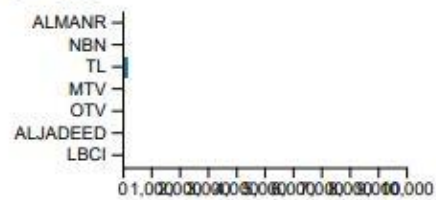
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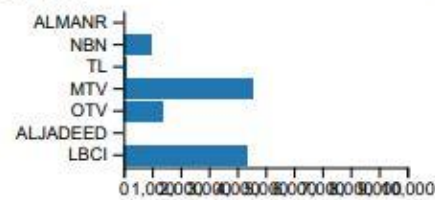
### خبير في الشأن الانتخابي



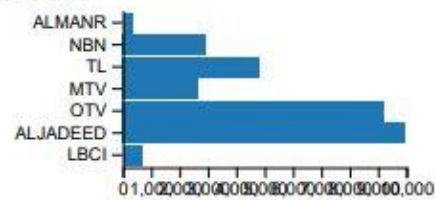
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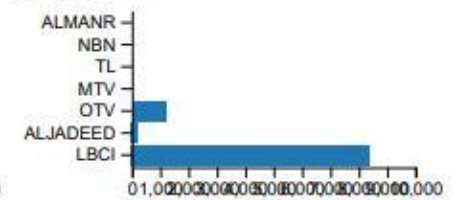
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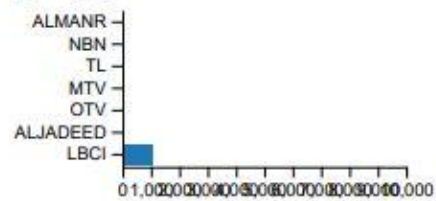
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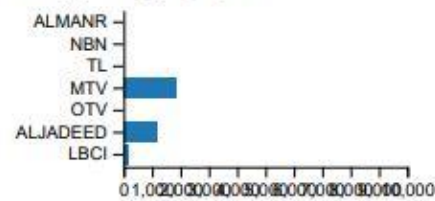
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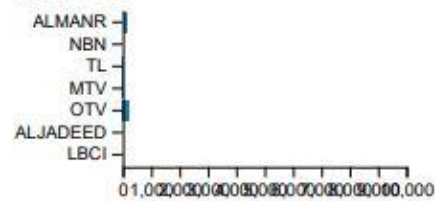
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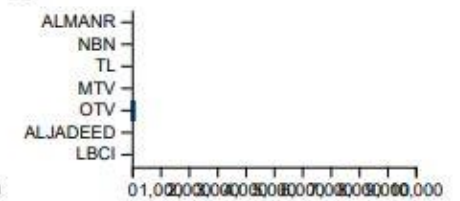
### ممثل عن مجموعات سياسية ناشئة



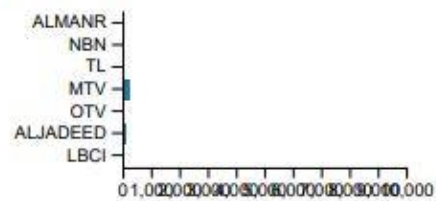
### رئيس الجمهورية



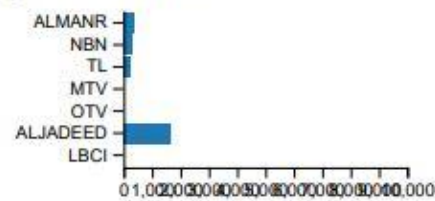
### مؤثر



### ممثل منظمة دولية



### ممثل عن المجلس الدستوري





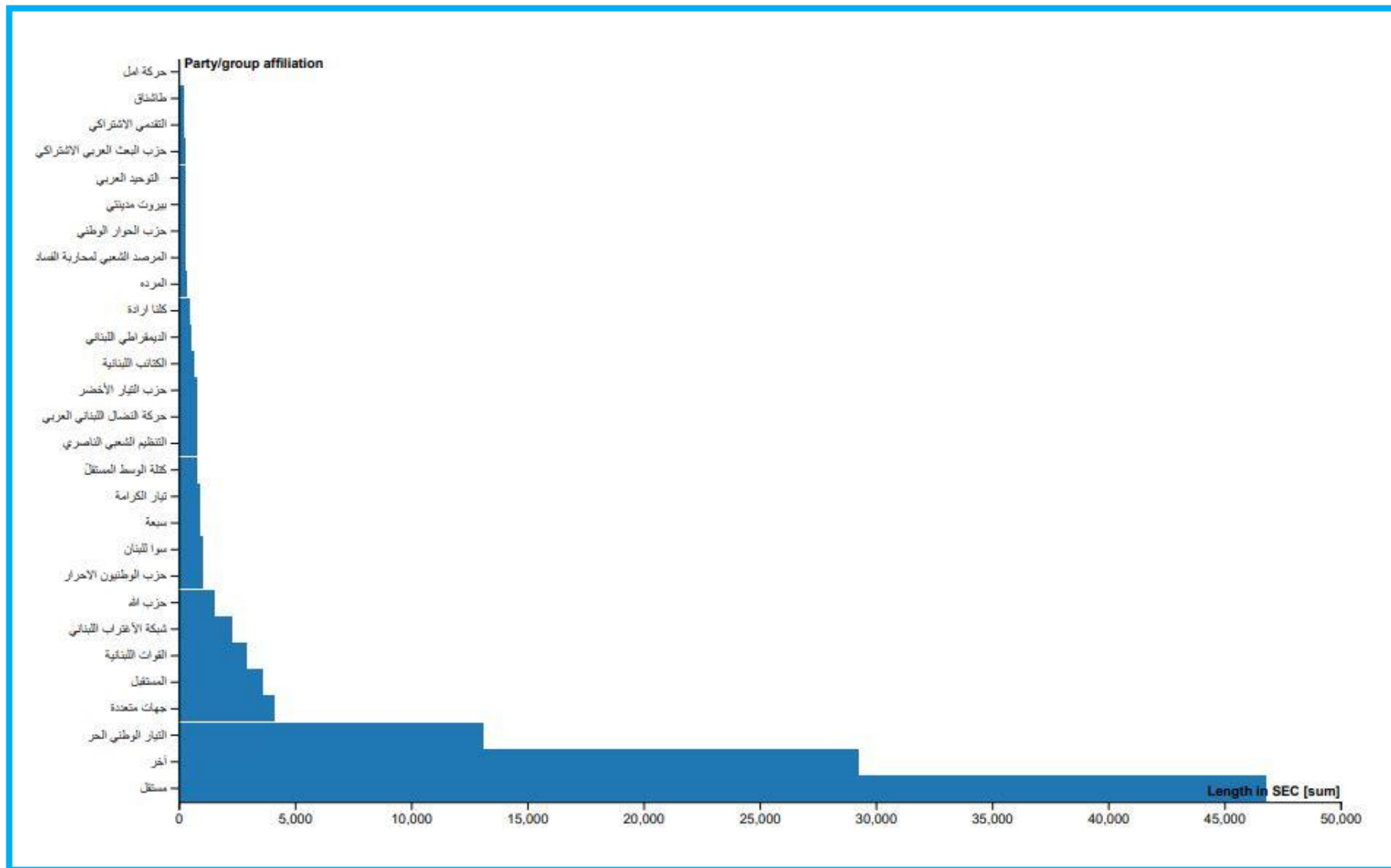
It turns out that traditional politicians were the most visible on Al-Jadeed and OTV stations, and the least on the LBCI, while "emerging political groups" recorded the highest attendance on MTV followed by the Al-Jadeed. The two TV stations, LBCI and Al-Jadeed, were distinguished in an opposite way. LBCI gave a large amount of space to the "activists and civil society" category in exchange for limited space for the category of "traditional politicians," while AL-Jadeed station did the opposite, giving a large space to "traditional politicians" and limited space for "activists and civil society."

In the capacity of political parties appearing on the stations, the Free Patriotic Party came first compared to other parties, first due to the large number of talk shows on the station OTV owned by the same political party. Followed, in the percentage of appearances, by the Future movement and then the Lebanese forces, and finally Hezbollah.

It is interesting that some traditional parties, such as Amal movement and the Progressive Socialist Party, came far behind some parties and movements that have no active political presence yet, such as the national Liberal Party, together for Lebanon, "Seven", "Dignity Movement" and others (Table 7).

This indicates that the election campaigns have not yet been launched.





### 3- Lack of electoral education

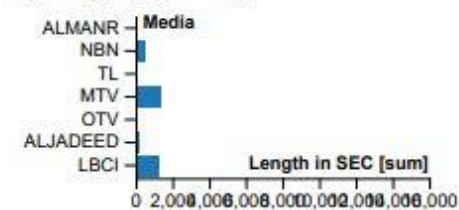
The study indicates that television stations have not yet paid attention to the subject of electoral education or topics of citizen awareness about the elections, and only minor contents on these topics were recorded on LBCI and OTV. The rest of the topics of coverage and dialogue were divided in two directions: the first is the follow-up of the electoral calendar as it is currently on the political agenda, and the second is several other topics related to the elections. While the stations' interests were distributed between the two directions, it was noticeable that Al-Manar station mainly followed the electoral calendar without dealing with separate electoral issues like others. This goes on to suggest that the two Shiite duo stations are least interested in the elections compared to other stations.

The media coverage focused on two main titles: first, the amended election law, and the early elections, and what deals with the issue of appealing the law, and the second, the map of electoral alliances and interests. These two topics, in close proportions, occupied more than ninety percent of the coverage in bulletins and talk shows when dealing with elections. On the one hand, they are linked to the political agenda and the current events and respond to the need of political parties preparing for elections on the other hand (Table 5).

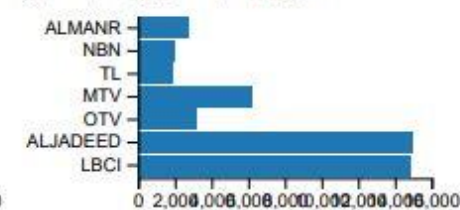
Other topics that were briefly mentioned in the coverage dealt with: registration and voting procedures for expatriates, party positions and activities, electoral system and representation, figures and surveys, and preparations for the elections administration.

Some important topics have been absent, such as: positions of international stakeholders on elections, electoral awareness, electoral education, women's participation, etc.

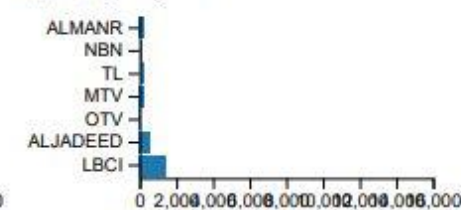
اجراءات تسجيل واقتراع المقترعين



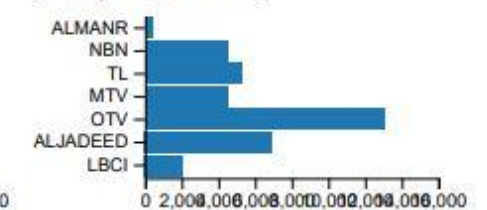
قانون الانتخاب المعدل والانتخابات المبكرة



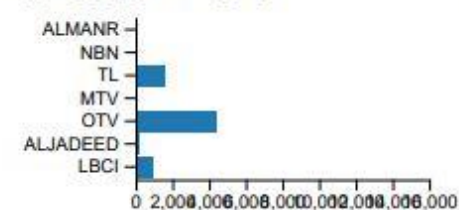
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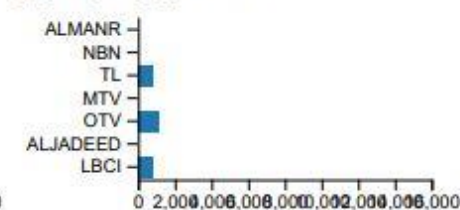
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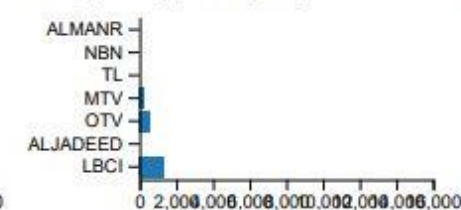
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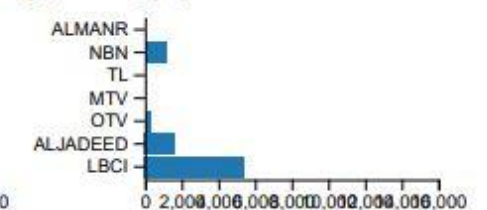
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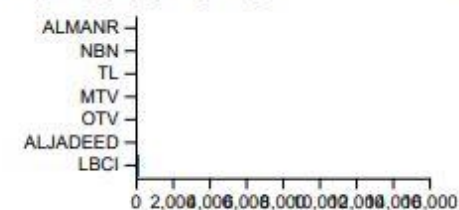
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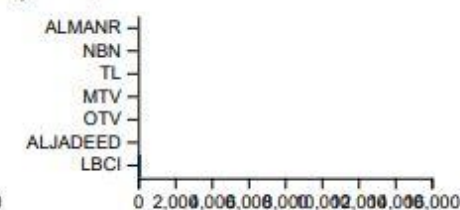
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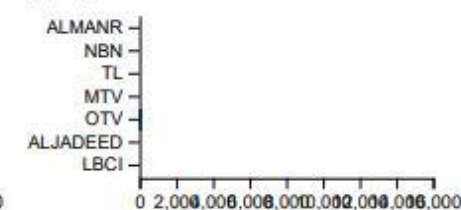
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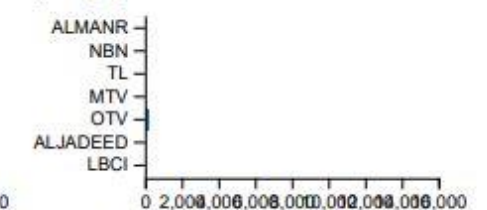
تنقيف انتخابي



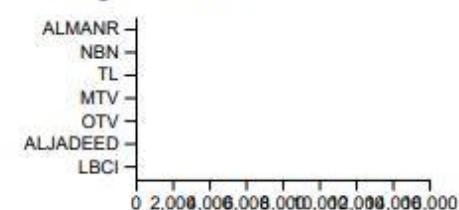
دعاية سياسية



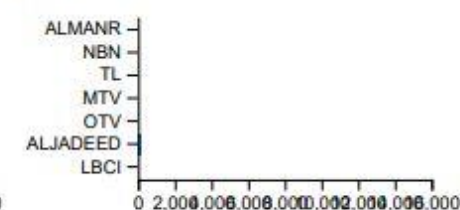
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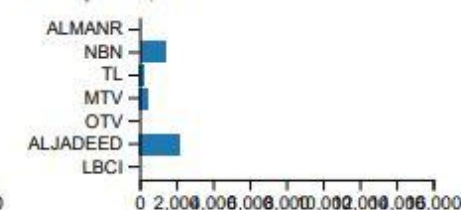
نشاطات رسمية تتعلق بالانتخابات



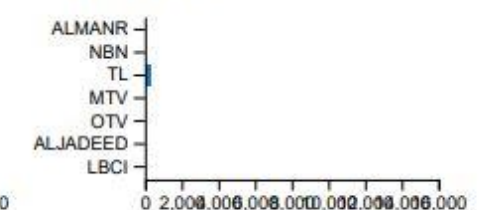
حملات انتخابية



النظام الانتخابي والتمثيل



مشاركة المرأة السياسية



#### 4- Marginalization of women

On the status quo of women on TV screens and the space given to them in news bulletins and in talk shows, it can be highlighted that political life in Lebanon is still distinctly male dominated and that women are still marginalized, as their appearance as keynote speaker does not exceed about the 3.8% compared to 87.7 % the space given to men as keynote speakers in the total public space. This small percentage is concentrated in talk shows. As for their appearance in news bulletins, it remains almost absent. In other words, the political media space remains to a large extent male-oriented.

This requires more effort on the part of civil society, women's movements and organizations to extract more media space and establish an active political role for women.

