

**A Study of the Media Coverage of
the Parliamentary Elections in
Lebanon
June 2009**



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Maharat monitors the status of media freedom in Lebanon and publishes research studies and reports on media institutions with the aim of empowering their role. Maharat specialized media training workshops.

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Introduction

The new media law, which resulted in the formation of an elections overseeing committee with the mission of observing the work of media institutions during the elections, constituted a new factor on the Lebanese political and media scenes. This new law defined the conditions for advertisement and media coverage during the electoral process, thus posing new challenges for media institutions and the authorities at the same time.

On one hand, the law imposed a set of conditions on electoral coverage for media institutions, and on the other hand, the law specified the methodologies of observing and controlling the work of those institutions, and placed this role in the hands of the concerned authorities.

Thus, the law subjected the institutions to a controlling authority and specified a course of action for those institutions aiming at the following:

- Ensuring justice and equity between the candidates, a necessary undertaking to have democratic elections, where all candidates are allowed to introduce themselves and their projects, and to communicate with the people.
- Avoiding the negative role that media institutions might end up playing if left uncontrolled, especially that Lebanese institutions have turned during the last few years into tools for the promotion of violence through their divisional and provocative programs.
- Finding a solution to the institutions' subordination to powers of politics and money, which makes them serve some specific parties and poses a threat to democracy. Indeed, any differences in political opinions or stands transforms the media institutions into pro and con beacons, with some media institutions going as far as defending, attacking or refuting the opinions and stands that they deem a nuisance to the political party that they support.

Thus, the electoral law number 25 was issued on 8-10-2008 to organize - 60 days before the beginning of the elections process - the elections that took place on 7/6/2009 and to systematize the role of media by defining the norms of electoral advertisements and the right to elections coverage according to article 66 of the 6th chapter of the law.

Article 68 of the above mentioned law made it mandatory for all media institutions to respect freedom of speech “in a way to ensure **equity, balance, and objectivity** between all candidates and to abstain from **supporting** or promoting any candidate or group of candidates in order to remain independent (third paragraph).

In addition, the 4th paragraph of article 68 compelled media institutions and candidates to abstain from libel, defamation, slander, and religious, racial or ethnic based detrimental comments; in addition to abstaining from intimidating people, using traitorous or religious based accusations, paying bribes, and abstaining from disfiguring information and hiding it from the public. In addition media institutions were compelled to provide balance for the different candidates in terms of visual or written media coverage.

Based on the media law, this study aims at assessing the performance of media institutions during the elections through comparing their coverage and their contents to the clauses of the new law, in addition to the extent of success achieved by this law in changing the practices and controlling the work of media institutions.

First:

The Study Methodology

A. Selecting the media standards

In order to assess media institutions' commitment to the legal standards and conditions, this study monitored the institutions and their elections coverage. First, we defined the institutions that would be part of the monitoring, in addition to the types of shows that would match the objectives of the study. Seven TV stations, two radio stations, and 4 daily newspapers were selected based on the fact that they are fairly representative of the major political directions in the country, in addition to the high percentage of viewers, listeners, and readers that they enjoy.

Evening news bulletins were monitored as they represent the main coverage for the electoral news and advertisements. In addition, the three main news radio bulletins of the day, and all electoral stories in newspapers were analyzed.

News bulletins of TV and radio stations were monitored as they constitute the backbone of political programs. These bulletins are the reservoirs of all election related activities and events taking place during the day. In addition, the introduction of these bulletins and the way they are presented can be an indicator of the degree of commitment of the Lebanese television stations to the specified norms. The same concept applies to radio news. As for newspapers, all the electoral material was analyzed in these.

B. The methodology of Monitoring and analyzing:

The monitoring process is based on analyzing the terms, expressions and opinions of the news bulletins during the time period of 7/5/2009 to 5/6/2009, the official end day where media are compelled to stop airing any electoral news as specified by the law.

The analysis process is based on the quantitative methodology whereby news timings and the different opposing views within the news are measured in seconds. Furthermore, the size of coverage inside newspapers will be measured and classified into one the following three levels:

- b. Positive news: these are the terms, expressions and opinions that support and promote a certain political party

- c. Negative news: these are the terms, expressions and opinions that criticize or attack a political opponent
- d. Neutral news: these are news conveyed objectively and without interference

C. **The monitored media institutions:**

- The selected television stations were: Tele Liban (TL), Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC), Future TV, Manar TV, New TV (NTV), OTV, and MTV.
- The radio stations were: Sawt El Ghad, and voice of Lebanon.
- The newspapers were: Annahar, Assafir, Al Akhbar, and Al Mustakbal

* **Introducing the television stations:**

1. Tele Liban (TL):
Is the only state run television but is often affected by the directions of the Minister of Information who holds the power of influencing TL and its way of work.
2. Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC):
This station promotes itself as liberal however, it shows a clear attention to the Christian community in Lebanon with a hidden preference to the powers of March 14.
3. Future TV:
This station is affiliated with the future movement headed by MP Saad Hariri (the head of the largest parliamentary block, one of the most prominent March 14 leaders that constitute the current majority). In addition to its apparent political affiliation, this station depicts itself as the official spoke station of the march 14 forces.
4. Manar television:
This station is affiliated with Hezbollah, the main March 8 force. In addition to its absolute support of March 8, this station supports a large parliamentary block and promotes resistance against Israel.
5. OTV:
This station is affiliated with the Free Patriotic Movement that is headed by PM Michel Aoun, the leader of the largest opposition Christian parliamentary block.
6. MTV:
This station was closed down in 2002 as a result of the elections back then, as a result of supporting the candidature of one of its owners, Mr. Gabriele Murr,

the brother of MP Michel Murr, in the face of Mirna Murr, Michel Murr's daughter. It openly supports March 14 forces

7. NTV:

This station is in line with the opposition forces despite its openness to all the different forces. NTV strongly opposes the future movement and follows a Pan Arab direction.

*** Introducing the radio stations:**

1. Sawt El Ghad radio station: it is affiliated with the Free Patriotic Movement that is headed by MP Michel Aoun. It primarily speaks for the movement and for the opposition in general.
2. Voice of Lebanon: is affiliated with the Lebanese Phalanges party, one of March 14 constituents and therefore expresses the party's views in addition to all the pro government forces

*** Introducing the daily newspapers:**

1. Assafir: works under the slogan "the Arabic newspaper in Lebanon, and the Lebanese newspaper in the Arab world. It represents the pro Arabic, nationalistic, Islamic view and is therefore in complete support of the resistance project and its supporters namely the March 8 parties. Assafir does not hide its views but is also open to other parties.
2. Al Akhbar: a newspaper that depicts itself as liberal and, like Assafir, is in complete support of the resistance project and its supporters namely the March 8 parties. It also has a wide margin of criticism.
3. Annahar: a newspaper that depicts itself as liberal and as a representative of all the political powers in Lebanon. The newspaper is however pro March 14, and is headed by candidate Nayla Tueini whose utmost concern is Lebanon and the cedar revolution in addition to its concern with the Christian community.
4. Al Mustakbal newspaper: is affiliated with the Future movement, headed by MP Saad Hariri. This newspaper was selected as it is a self-proclaimed beacon of the March 14 parties in addition to its support of the Future movement.

D. The monitored political forces

The political forces and authorities that were monitored are the following:

1. **The president of the republic (P.R):** in order to assess the influence of his opinions on the electoral process and to measure the political parties' reactions to his stands.
2. **The head of parliament (H.P):** as he is also the head of the Amal movement (a political party), and the head of a parliamentary block, and a major leader of the March 8 forces.
3. **the prime minister(P.M):** as he is the head of the government that is formed in its majority by march 14 forces in addition to him being a parliamentary candidate of the March 14 forces.
4. **The March 14 forces:**
 - Future movement headed by Saad Hariri
 - Lebanese forces party headed by Samir Geagea
 - Lebanese Phalanges party headed by Amin Gemayel
 - Free Nationalists party headed by Dori Chamoun
 - Progressive Socialist Party headed by Walid Jumblat
 - National Bloc Party headed by Carlos Eddeh
 - The Islamic Party
 - The Armenian Hashnak party
 - The Democratic Renewal Party headed by Nassib Lahoud
 - The belonging movement that is backed by March 14 forces.
5. **The March 8 forces or the opposition forces:**
 - Hezbollah headed by Sayyed Hassan NASrallah
 - Amal movement headed by Nabih Berri
 - Free Patriotic Movement headed by Michel Aoun
 - Al Marada movement headed by Sleiman Franjeh
 - The Democratic Party headed by Talal Erslan
 - The Popular block headed by Elias Skaf
 - The Nasiri Popular movement headed by Moustafa Saad
 - The Islamic Work group
 - The Syrian Social Nationalist Party

- The Unification party
- The Armenian Tashnak party
- The Arab Independence party
- The Syrian Baas party
- The popular movement
- The Arab Democratic movement
- The Union

In addition to the Communist party that did not belong to any of these two denominations.

6. **The Independents:** these are the candidates who proclaimed themselves as independents and these are:

- Michel Murr and his block
- Nazem khouri (close to the president of the republic) and his block

7. **The Institutions:** and these are:

- The committee for the supervision of the elections (C.S.E): headed by Minister of Interior Ziad Baroud and formed by the Lebanese Council of Ministers.
- NGOs that are in charge of monitoring the elections (NGOS)
- International NGOs that came to Lebanon to monitor the elections (I. NGOS)
- The Lebanese government (G): in order to monitor its relation to the electoral events.

Second:

Television monitoring analysis results

The process of analysis of the audio-visual and printed news depends on the sole monitoring of electoral news and persons involved in the election process.

A. Television Stations Coverage:

Table 1 shows that OTV is the station that dedicate the largest coverage time (13 hours and 48 minutes) to electoral news and activities followed by Future television, MTV, NTV, Manar, LBC, and finally TL that dedicated the least time, which is normal since TL is state owned and was therefore not directly concerned by the electoral process.

Concerning OTV, the size of coverage is probably due to the presence of more than 60 satellite dishes in most of the electoral districts followed by Future TV that showed interest in covering the news of Future movement and the March 14 forces.

Table 1: Coverage time of electoral news in evening news bulletins in the monitored televisions.

TL	LBC	NTV	Future	OTV	Manar	MTV
H m s	H m s	H m s	H m s	H m s	H m s	H m s
7 44 49	9 27 15	9 37 59	10 36 02	13 47 47	9 32 29	9 52 39

Table 2 shows that Future television had 61% of its total news coverage time allocated to cover the news of the pro parties and 21.18% for the opposition parties.

OTV and Manar respectively allocated 63% and 59% of their air time to opposition parties and only 12.23% and 21.62% to the pro parties.

This was similar for LBC, MTV, and TL with more coverage time allocated for pro parties.

On the other hand, the table shows an almost balanced state for MTV with a slight difference of 2.60% coverage time for pro forces.

Concerning the coverage of the president of republic, the head of parliament and the head of government, table 2 shows that TL allocated the longest time coverage for the government (9.42%) followed by NTV (6.51%) then Manar and LBC.

News coverage of the president of the republic was the lowest in OTV (3.40%), while it reached 7% in TL, 4.62% in NTV, followed by MTV, LBC, and a low 2.13% for Manar.

These figures are logical in the sense that TL is the official state's television. The discrepancy in coverage of the president's news between the different stations can be explained in the light of each station's view of the fact that the president supported some independent candidates.

TL also had the highest coverage for the news of heads of government (5.12%) and parliament (2.41%), while the lowest coverage was for OTV (0.48%, and 0.21%).

These figures are logical for TL as well as OTV, which is affiliated with the Free Patriotic Movement whose campaign focused on the government and whose president was on bad terms with the head of parliament (Hezbollah's ally), over the nomination of candidates in some electoral districts (Jezzine and Baabda).

As for the international news, coverage was almost the same with the highest figure for Manar (5.46%) followed by LBC (5.31%) and the lowest for OTV (2.09%).

Coverage in all the monitored stations did not aim at providing balance. It was rather the subject of a general debate about the meaning of independence. That is why, the highest rate was for OTV, the Free Patriotic Movement's mouthpiece that considered Independent candidates as opponents backed by pro government forces.

The news of the Elections Overseeing committee had the highest coverage rate in Future TV 0.68%, and lowest in LBC 0.05%. NGOs had low coverage in LBC, Future TV, and TL while electoral awareness also had a low coverage in TL.

Table 2 shows differences in coverage of personalities, political alliances, and institutions. However, the size of coverage for every party or candidate can only be made clear through an individual analysis of each media institution separately.

Table 2:
Percent coverage of the different monitored parties in evening news bulletin

TV station	NGOS	Pro gov	opposition	independents	P.R	H.G	P.M	G	INGOS	Independent committees	Electoral awareness
TL	0.01	39.48	27.47	4.05	7.05	2.41	5.12	9.42	4.43	0.39	0.14
LBC	0.51	47.3	29.41	4.83	3.16	1.31	2.69	5.7	5.31	0.05	0
NTV		41.05	38.38	5.71	4.62	0.76	1.7	6.51	4.46	0.38	0
Future	0.09	61.02	21.18	4.01	3.10	0.76	3.74	5.20	3.16	0.68	0
OTV		13.23	63.16	7.06	2.63	0.21	0.48	3.40	3.49	0.18	0
Manar		21.62	59.43	4.06	2.13	1.39	0.70	5.71	5.46	0.10	0
MTV		38.72	32.97	5	3.90	1.07	2.11	3.48	2.09	0.19	0

1- The coverage of the opposition news:

The Lebanese communist party was counted within this group as this party's news were very rarely covered in a way that does not affect the total coverage average (0.57% only in NTV)

Table 3: percentage coverage for the opposition forces

	TL	LBC	Manar	Future	Ntv	OTV	MTV
Opposition	3.18	2.99	9.14	5.08	6.01	4.92	5.74
Hezbollah	11.67	7.16	26.42	8.18	7.85	6.53	11.82
Amal	2.60	2.52	2.77	1.21	4.89	3.11	2.52
Islamic			0.62				
Syrian	0.20	0.20	0.43		0.17	0.78	0.06
Free	6.83	13.67	11.61	4.89	10.43	39.21	9.73
Lebanese	0.74	0.37	1.03		0.61	1.09	0.55
Marada	0.28	1.53	1.59	0.84	2.62	1.78	0.89
Tashnak	0.37	0.34	1.11	0.42	0.35	2.64	0.70
Popular	0.71	0.22	1.28	0.03	1.03	1.54	0.19
Nasseri	0.38	0.41	1.65	0.72	3.01	0.49	0.77
People's			0.27		0.34		
Arab			0.42		0.89		
Coalition			0.29		0.05		
Communist					0.57		0.05
Baas	0.23		0.18	0.25			

Hezbollah's Manar TV had the highest coverage for the opposition news (9.14%) followed by NTV, the station that is supportive of the opposition with 6.01% coverage, then MTV, Future, OTV, TL, and LBC (2.99%).

Table 3 shows that the Free Patriotic Movement had high coverage in most stations except in Future TV (4.89%). Future TV is affiliated with the Future movement, which has been the Free Patriotic Movement's main adversary through its support of the competing parties in Christian areas.

The most striking point is that the OTV coverage had the absolute highest percentage of coverage of the elections news (39.21%) followed by LBC (13.61%) probably because this station takes special care of covering the elections in the Christian districts.

Manar TV, Hezbollah's representative, came third with 11.61% followed by NTV and OTV. Manar TV had the highest coverage rate for Hezbollah and its candidates (26.42%), while the lowest coverage rate for Hezbollah was surprisingly in OTV, because OTV was trying to minimize the side effects of its alliance with Hezbollah on the Christian general opinion.

The news of Amal movement, headed by the head of Parliament Nabih Berri, had much less coverage than its allies the Free Patriotic Movement, and Hezbollah. The highest coverage for Amal movement was in NTV (4.84%) and the lowest was in Future TV (1.21%).

Marada, Tashnak, and the Nasserri Popular Organization had lesser coverage with 3.01% for the Nasserri Popular Organization, and 2.62% for Marada in NTV, and a low 1.5% to less than 1% in other stations.

2- The coverage of the pro-government forces:

Table 4: Percentage coverage for the opposition forces

	TL	LBC	Manar	Future	NTV	OTV	MTV
Pro-government forces	13.80	14.49	9.04	20.20	12.07	9.09	18.89
Future	12.55	14.42	6.21	27.48	10.39	3.87	10.88
Lebanese Forces	4.93	6.82	2.18	3.22	4.24	2.47	8.52
Lebanese Phalanges	3.84	6.06	1.23	3.27	3.02	3.03	6.15
The free patriots	0.05	0.21	0.06	0.37	0.09		0.21
Progressive socialist party	3.56	4.33	1.64	2.08	4.65	1.54	3.05
National bloc	0.21	0.33	0.09	0.66	0.34	0.10	0.75
Islamic group	0.07	0.04	0.63	0.67	0.10	0.07	
Hashnak	0.12	0.21		0.18	0.55	0.21	0.58
Democratic renewal	0.06	0.04			0.23	0.01	0.11
Belonging party		0.09	0.55			0.07	
Free Democratic	0.27						
Left democratic	0.33						

Table 4 shows that the pro government forces had the highest coverage in Future television (20% of total coverage); followed by MTV (18.89%), LBC (14.49%), TL (13.80%), with the lowest coverage for Manar and OTV (9.4% and 9.6%). The Future movement had the highest rate of media coverage on all TV stations without any exceptions.

Future TV had the highest coverage for the Future movement news (27.48%), followed by LBC (14.49%), TL (13.80%), then MTV and NTV, with the lowest rates for Manar (6.21%) and OTV (3.81%).

Lebanese Forces and Lebanese Phalanges parties came second with respect to coverage with a differentiation between the stations. For example, the Lebanese Forces party had the highest coverage in MTV (8.52%) and LBC (6.81%), while the Lebanese Phalanges party also had the highest coverage in these two stations with a lower rate however (6.15% in MTV, and 6.06% in LBC).

The lowest coverage rates for these two parties were in Manar (2.18% for the Lebanese Forces and 1.23% for the Lebanese Phalanges).

The Lebanese Progressive Party had a moderate coverage of its news in most of the TV stations with the highest coverage in NTV (4.65%) and the lowest in OTV (1.54%).

The rest of the parties had coverage rates that did not go beyond 1% in the monitored televisions.

B- Media coverage directions:

The methodology for assessing the directions of the media coverage for the electoral campaigns was based on a three-level scale:

- 1- Positive (+)
- 2- Neutral (n)
- 3- Negative (-)

Table 5: time according to directions of coverage

	TL	LBC	NTV	Future	OTV	Manar	MTV
	m H s	m H s	m H s	m H s	m H s	m H s	m H s
-	37 25 0	45 08 1	05 44 0	04 04 1	13 35 1	03 08 1	30 15 1
%	5.51	12.11	7.62	10.07	11.50	11.88	12.73
+	01 21 2	32 39 2	05 42 3	37 59 3	53 29 3	23 43 2	13 26 2
%	30.33	28.12	38.42	37.67	25.35	28.53	24.67
neutral	11 58 4	59 38 5	49 11 5	21 32 5	41 42 8	04 41 5	55 10 6
%	64.15	59.9	53.92	52.25	63.14	60.10	62.58
Total	49 44 7	16 27 9	59 37 9	02 36 10	47 47 13	29 32 9	39 52 9
	%100	%100	%100	%100	%100	%100	%100

Table 5 shows that all TV stations were rather neutral as more than 50% of the coverage time of electoral news was for neutral news.

The highest rate for neutral news was for TL (64.15%), and the lowest was for Future TV (52.25%).

Positive coverage came in second with high rates as well, the highest of which was for NTV (38.42%) and the lowest for MTV (24.67%).

Negative coverage revolved around 10% with a high 12.73% for MTV and a low 5.51% for TL.

1. General analysis of coverage directions:

Table 6: percentage of positive, negative, and neutral coverage.

	TL	LBC	NTV	Future	OTV	Manar	MTV
	+ - n	+ - n	+ - n	+ - n	+ - n	+ - n	+ - n
Pro Government	43.43	48.42	39.38	69.9	13.7	12.97	53.66
	25.78	32.75	40.09	7.67	52.43	65.77	17.65
	39.01	48.99	39.9	59.76	17.33	16.95	53.78
Opposition	20.48	26.99	37.9	6.31	76.74	72.02	21.46
	60.49	44.62	28.74	80.97	22.63	9.73	77.83
	276.53	27.43	34.47	20.38	62.03	62.25	28.45

Table 6 shows that opposition forces had the highest neutral rate in Manar and OTV (around 62% of the total neutral news in both stations), while pro government forces got the highest rate of neutral coverage in the rest of the stations ranging from a high 59.76% for Future TV to a low 39.1% for TL.

The rate of positive coverage for every TV station was in favor of the pro government forces with a high 69.9% in Future TV, followed by MTV, LBC, TL, then NTV (39.38%). The opposition forces were favored in OTV (76.74%) and Manar (72.02%).

Similarly, negative coverage had the same result, whereby opposition forces received the highest rate of the total negative coverage on Future TV (80.97%), MTV (77.83%), TL (60.45%), and LBC (44.62%). The pro government forces had the highest rate of negative coverage in Manar (65.77%) then OTV (52.43%) then NTV (40.09%).

And to shed some light on the details of these percentages, we will try to read them horizontally in order to compare the rates across TV stations for persons and institutions only, and vertically in the later tables for each TV station separately in order to show the favored positions in each television for the first five rates.

1.1- Positive coverage of parties:

This refers to promotion, praise or anything that might give a positive idea about a candidate, list, political party, or electoral program of the competing parties, candidates, and institutions.

* Persons and Institutions:

Table 7: Shows the rate of positive coverage for every station

	TL	LBC	NTV	Future	OTV	Manar	MTV
P.R	10.42	2.66	4.62	3.42	2.47	1.11	6.57
H.P	2.39	2.94	1.07	0.15		2.64	1.52
H.G	4.22	4.15	1.88	6.89	0.24	0.41	3.61
G	10.20	7.56	7.88	6.26	1.18	7.90	4.63
C.S.E	0.78		0.49	1.52	0.29		0.25
NGOS							

Table 7 shows that TL had the highest additive positive rate as compared to other stations (10.42%) followed by NTV (6.24%) and a low 1.11% for Manar.

In TL, coverage of the government news was equal to that of the president with 10.20% of the total news coverage in the monitored period, followed by NTV (7.88%), and a low 1.18% for OTV.

The prime minister came first with 6.89% in Future TV, followed by TL (4.22%) while the lowest coverage was once again for OTV (0.24%).

The head of parliament had a relatively low percentage of coverage with the highest rate being 2.94% in LBC, followed by TL (2.39%), and the lowest rate in Future TV (0.15%), with a total absence of any positive coverage in OTV.

The committee for the observation of elections had the highest positive coverage rate in Future TV (1.18%), followed by TL (0.78%), and no coverage at all in LBC.

The highest coverage for the international community was in TL (6.10%) then LBC (4.21%) and the lowest rate was for MTV (1.08%). There was no positive coverage for syndicates and local committees news.

***The opposing political forces and parties:**

Table 8 shows the extent of positive coverage for the political forces.

	TL	LBC	NTV	Future	OTV	Manar	MTV
Independants	1.99	3.05	5.01	3.23	1.92	1.52	7.20
Opposition	3.11	2.01	8.08	1.69	3.49	16.53	3.62
Hezbollah	6.78	4.97	6.28	1.69	8.50	28.62	4.52
Amal	2.49	2.52	3.44	1.45	2.31	2.64	1.86
Islamic Work						0.07	
Syrian National		0.02			0.45	0.15	
Free patriotic movement	5.90	13.42	8.81	1.16	52.27	14.04	8.02
Lebanese Democratic	0.50	0.49	0.82		0.29	0.55	1.54
Marada	0.19	2.54	3.35	0.01	3.55	2.52	0.40
Tashnak	0.13	0.26	0.06	0.31	4.16	0.52	0.40
Popular bloc	0.66	0.01	1.93		1.48	2.38	
Nasseri Popular	0.72	0.75	2.34		0.24	2.53	1.02
People's movement			0.80			0.68	
Arab democratic			1.85			0.41	
Coalition			0.13			0.20	
Baas							
Tawhid						0.18	
Communist			0.01				0.02
Pro Government forces	17.89	10.17	11.50	20.50	6.55	2.55	17.30
Future	13.26	19.05	13.28	43.60	2.95	5.27	11.92
Lebanese	4.52	4.36	3.62	1.78	0.73	0.40	11.36
Lebanese Phalanges	3.05	6.92	2.36	0.81	1.53	1.57	6.59
The free patriots	0.18	0.02		0.46		0.20	0.25
Progressive socialist party	3.95	7.79	5.62	1.68	1.83	2.11	6.13
National bloc	0.01	0.11	0.23				
Islamic group	0.12		0.26	0.58		0.17	
Hashnak			0.44	0.49	0.21		0.11
Democratic							
Belonging party			2.07		0.12	0.70	
Free Democratic	0.45						
International community	6.10	4.21	1.79	2.32	3.33	1.35	1.09
Awareness							

1.2. Positive coverage in stations:

* **TL:** Table 8 shows that pro government forces received the highest cumulative percentage of positive coverage 17.89%, followed by Future movement 13.26%, then the president of the republic and Prime minister 10.42% and 10.22%, and Hezbollah 6.78%. These results can be interpreted in the light of the belonging of the Minister of Information to the pro government forces.

* **LBC:** Future movement had the highest positive coverage with 19.05%, followed by the Free Patriotic Movement 13.42%, the pro government forces 10.7%, and the progressive socialist party 7.79%.

* **NTV:** The highest rate was also for Future movement and the pro government forces 13.88% and 11.50% respectively followed by opposition forces 8.81%, the Free Patriotic Movement 8%, and the president of the republic 7.88%. The high rates in these two stations might be due to the high rate of electoral activities that was reflected in the evening news bulletins.

* **Future TV:** Future movement received the highest positive coverage rate 43.60%, then pro government forces 20.50%, prime minister .89%, government 6.2%, and the independents 3.13%. This station had around 78% of its positive coverage dedicated to its own political agenda.

* **OTV:** Same goes for OTV as the Free Patriotic movement received 52.27% of the positive coverage, followed by Hezbollah 8.50%, the pro government forces 6.50%, Tashnak 4.6%, and the opposition forces 3.49%. The probable reason for the high rate of positive coverage of pro government forces on OTV is live coverage where the news are evaluated according to their content.

* **Manar:** Similar to OTV and Future TV, Hezbollah had the highest positive coverage in Manar 28.62%, followed by opposition forces 16.53%, Free Patriotic Movement 16.53%, the government 7.90%, and Future movement 5.27%. Here also, the probable reason for the high positive coverage rate of the Future movement is live coverage.

* **MTV:** Pro government forces had the highest positive coverage rates 17.30%, Future movement 11.92%, Lebanese forces 11.36%, then Free Patriotic Movement 8.02% and Independents 7.20%. The Free Patriotic Movement's presence here is natural as

MTV has special interest in covering the news of opposing Christian forces. As to the Independents, Michel Murr, the brother of MTV's owner, was on the top of the Independents' list.

1.3. The Distribution of Negative Coverage through the different parties:

Negative coverage refers to defamation, libel, and anything that might lead to the promotion of a negative image of the candidates, persons, institutions, or parties.

* Persons and Institutions:

Table 9: Rate of negative coverage

	TL	LBC	NTV	Future	OTV	Manar	MTV
P.R	0.13	0.92	0.19	1.43		0.07	0.13
H.P		0.15					
P.M		3.59	6.54	0.57	0.86	1.40	0.02
G	0.85	3.35	0.23	4.79	0.54	0.73	2.23
C.S.E		0.41		0.10			
NGOS							

The total negative coverage of the president of the republic did not exceed 1.43% in Future TV, 0.92% in LBC, and 0% in OTV, the opposition station that avoided such coverage because of the debate around the nature of the relationship between the president of the republic and the head of the Free Patriotic Movement. As to the rates in Future TV and LBC, these were due to the coverage of live negative statements of some politicians who accused the president of interfering in the favor of specific candidates in the Jbeil district.

There was no negative coverage for the head of the parliament.

The prime minister received a high 6.54% rate of negative coverage in NTV, 3.59% in LBC, and no negative coverage at all in the official station (TL).

Despite its affiliation to a pro government party, Future TV had the highest negative coverage rate of the government 4.79%, followed by LBC 3.35% with a low 0.54% for OTV.

The Elections Overseeing Committee was only mentioned in LBC 0.41% and Future TV 0.1%. NGOs had a high negative rate in NTV 20.49% who broadcasted opinions that conveyed the idea that NGOs are being supportive of some specific parties, followed by Manar 18.42%, and OTV 7.60%.

* The opposing political forces and parties:

Table 10: Rate of negative coverage distribution across political forces

	TL	LBC	NTV	Future	OTV	Manar	MTV
Independents	5.86	7.20	3.71	0.23	15.95	3.87	0.04
Opposition	18.42	6.27	9.07	25.65	3.43	2.25	12.67
Hezbollah	24.86	14.89	9.19	31.17	3.47	4.35	37.80
Amal	0.65	0.05	0.79		0.12		1.28
Islamic Work			0.04				
Syrian National		0.02	0.08	0.03			0.42
Free patriotic movement	13.08	20.27	8.58	19.98	14.70	2.62	20.43
Lebanese Democratic Marada		1.53					
Marada	1.76	1.62	0.15	3.85	0.21	0.49	2.14
Tashnak	0.85	0.05	0.04		0.61	0.02	1.88
Popular bloc	0.59	0.02	0.76	0.03	0.09		1.06
Nasseri Popular			0.04	0.26			0.15
People's movement							
Arab democratic Coalition							
Baas	0.20						
Communist							
Pro Government forces	17.64	13.77	29.22	6.22	36.90	46.93	11.84
Future	4.75	5.43	5.44	1.30	5.36	11.88	3.69
Lebanese Forces	1.89	5.21	2	0.05	6.21	4.34	1.13
Lebanese Phalanges	1.17	7.20	0.60	0.10	2.80	1.89	0.93
The free patriots							
Progressive socialist party	0.33	0.02	1.02		0.58		
National bloc		1.12	1.81		0.56	0.07	
Islamic group							
Hashnak							
Democratic renewal							
Belonging party						0.66	
Leftist Democratic Party					0.02		
International community	7	5.55	20.49	4.24	27.60	18.42	2.16
Awareness							

1.4. The distribution of negative coverage in stations:

As shown in table 10, the rate of negative coverage was relatively low, with the rates distributed according to TV stations as follows:

* **TL:** Hezbollah had the highest rate of negative coverage 24.84%, followed by the opposition parties 18.42%, the pro government forces 17.64%, the Free Patriotic Movement 13%, and the international community 7%. It is to be noted that opposition forces had more than 60% of the total negative coverage in TL.

* **LBC:** Opposition forces also received the highest negative coverage, namely the Free Patriotic Movement 20.27%, Hezbollah 14.89%, and then the pro government forces 13.77%, and the Independents and Lebanese Phalanges with an equal 7.20%.

* **NTV:** The pro government team had the highest negative rate 29.22% followed by Hezbollah 9.19%, opposition forces 9.07%, the Free Patriotic Movement 8.58%, and the prime Minister 6.54%.

* **Future:** most of the negative coverage was for the opposition with Hezbollah scoring 31.17% followed by opposition forces 25.65%, the Free Patriotic Movement 19.98%, the pro government forces 6.22% and the government 4.79%.

* **OTV:** The pro government forces received the highest rate of negative coverage in OTV 36.90% followed by the independents 15.95%. This is because OTV considered the Independents as opponents of the Free Patriotic Movement's candidates and as an extension to the March 14 party, and an interference from the President of the republic. The third highest rate of negative coverage on OTV was for the Free Patriotic Movement 14.70%, followed by the international community 7.60%, and the Free Patriotic Movement's first opponent: the Lebanese forces (6.21%).

* **Manar:** the highest negative rate was for the pro government forces 46.93%, followed by the International Community 18.42%, from the angle of its support of the pro government forces. The future movement received 11.88% followed by the Lebanese forces and the Lebanese phalanges 4.35%.

* **MTV**: the main negative coverage targeted Hezbollah 37.80% and the Free Patriotic Movement 20.43% followed by the Independents 12.67%, pro government forces 11.84%, and Future Movement 3.69%.

1.5. Distribution of neutral coverage across the parties:

The neutral coverage refers to the process of conveying information related to election campaigns of candidates, persons, and institutions, in a neutral way without promotion or demotion. Most of the monitored stations had the highest rates under this type of coverage.

Table 11: The percentage of neutral coverage

	TL	LBC	NTV	Future	OTV	Manar	MTV
P.R	6.05	3.84	5.25	3.19	3.17	3.03	3.62
H.P	2.63	0.78	0.65	1.34	0.33	1.06	1.12
P.M	5.98	1.81	0.90	2.08	0.51	0.70	1.95
G	9.78	5.31	6.43	4.51	4.81	5.65	3.28
C.S.E	0.24	0.00	0.35	0.19	0.17	0.18	0.20
NGOS	0.01	0.86	0.82	0,18			

* **Persons and Institutions:**

Table 11 shows that TL, the official state television, had the highest rate of neutral coverage for persons and institutions, with the president of the republic having the highest rate of neutral coverage 6.05% in TL followed by MTV 5.25%, and a low 3.03% on Manar.

The head of parliament also had the highest neutral coverage on TL (2.63%) then LBC (0.78%), and the lowest on OTV (0.33%) because of the competition between the allies (the head of parliament and the head of the Free Patriotic Movement) in some electoral districts.

The prime minister also came in first in TL 5.98%, followed by Future TV 2.08%, with a low 0.51% for OTV. The government had 9.78% of neutral news coverage in TL, followed by NTV 6.43%, and the lowest for MTV 3.28%.

The elections overseeing committee, had low coverage due to the rarity of its comments in the media, scoring the first place in NTV 5.24%, followed by TL 0.24%, and no coverage at all in LBC.

*** The opposing political forces and parties:**

Table 12: Distribution of neutral coverage across political forces

	TL	LBC	NTV	Future	OTV	Manar	MTV
Independents	4.87	5.19	6.49	5.31	7.50	5.32	5.14
Opposition	1.90	2.79	4.11	3.56	5.76	6.97	5.17
Hezbollah	12.85	6.62	8.78	8.43	6.29	29.77	9.40
Amal	2.82	3.03	6.50	1.40	3.97	3.38	3.03
Islamic Work						1.01	
Syrian National	0.31	0.32	0.31		1.05	0.65	0.02
Free patriotic movement	6.74	12.44	11.84	3.70	38.42	12.25	8.23
Lebanese Democratic	0.92	0.07	0.55		1.62	1.47	0.27
Marada	0.20	1.04	2.44	0.85	1.36	1.33	0.87
Tashnak	0.44	0.44	0.59	0.57	2.40	1.61	0.58
Popular bloc	0.75	0.36	0.43	0.06	1.82	1.02	0.09
Nasseri Popular	0.26	0.32	3.90	1.33	0.67	1.56	0.72
People's movement			0.06			0.12	
Arab democratic			0.34			0.51	
Coalition						0.38	
Baas	0.34			0.48			
Tawheed						0.22	
Communist			1.05				0.07
Pro Government forces	11.35	16.66	10.04	22.68	5.05	4.59	20.95
Future	12.88	14.07	9.03	20.91	4.01	5.52	11.94
Lebanese Forces	5.38	8.30	5.01	4.86	2.49	2.60	8.90
Lebanese Phalanges	4.45	5.42	3.83	5.55	3.67	0.94	7.04
The free patriots		0.34	0.17	0.39	0.01		0.24
Progressive socialist party	3.66	3.57	4.47	2.77	1.60	1.74	2.46

National bloc	0.32	0.27	0.22	1.27	0.06	0.13	1.19
Islamic group	0.05	0.07		0.85	0.12	0.98	
Hashnak	0.19	0.07	0.72		0.24		0.88
Democratic renewal	0.10	0.06	0.42		0.01		0.18
Belonging party		0.16	0.20		0.07	0.45	
Free Democratic party	0.21						
Leftist Democratic Party	0.51						
International community	3.43	5.76	4.10	3.57	2.81	4.84	2.47
Awareness	0.22						

1.6. Distribution of neutral coverage in monitored stations:

***TL:** the highest neutral coverage was for Future movement 12.88% closely followed by Hezbollah 12.85%, the pro government forces with 11.35%, the Prime Minister 9.78%, and the Free Patriotic Movement with 6.74%.

***LBC:** Pro government forces had the highest rate 16.6%, future 14.07%, Free Patriotic Movement 12.44%, Lebanese forces 8.30%, and Hezbollah 6.62%. It is note worthy that these rates were confined to the main competing forces.

***NTV:** The highest neutral rate was for the Free Patriotic Movement 11.84%, followed by pro government forces 10.04%, and their main component the Future movement with 9.03%. Hezbollah came in fourth with 8.78% followed by the Independents 6.49%.

* **Future:** The March 14 forces also obtained here the highest rate of neutral news with a 22.68% rate for the pro government forces, and 20.91% for Future movement. From the opposition, Hezbollah received 8.43%. They were followed by Lebanese forces 5.55% and the Independents 5.31%.

* **OTV:** Opposite to Future TV, most neutral news were centered around the March 8 forces with the highest rate for the Free Patriotic Movement 38.42%, then Independents 7.50%, Hezbollah 6.29%, and the opposition 5.76%. The pro government forces came in last with a total of 5.05%.

* **Manar:** The picture here was similar to that of OTV, with Hezbollah scoring 29.77% of the total neutral coverage, followed by its ally the Free Patriotic Movement with 12.55%, then the opposition forces with 6.97%; while the government's rate was 5.65% followed by Future movement with 5.52%.

* **MTV:** the highest rate was for the march 14 forces 20.95% followed by Future movement 11.94%. Hezbollah, the most prominent opposition force had 9.40%, then the Lebanese Forces 8.90% closely followed by Free Patriotic Movement with 8.33%.

Third:

Analyzing the results of radio monitoring

A. Sawt Al Ghad

1. Distribution of news across the different political powers:

The opposition had the lion's share on Sawt Al Ghad with a coverage rate of more than 56%, compared to 24% for the pro government. This is in line with the fact that this radio station is the mouth piece of one of the opposition parties and is therefore committed to this line of action. The rate of coverage for official powers (the president, prime minister, head of parliament, government and elections overseeing committee) reached 10% with 3.3% coverage of the president, 0.62% for the prime minister, and only 3% for the independent candidates.

Among the opposition forces, the Free Patriotic Movement came first with respect to coverage (37%) followed by Hezbollah (5.5%), Marada (2%), and Amal (less than 1%).

As to the pro government news coverage, a high rate of coverage was dedicated to general news and analysis of the stands and opinions of pro government figures (13%). As to the pro government parties, Future TV had 4% coverage, followed by the Lebanese Forces 3%, Lebanese Phalanges 2.2%, and the progressive socialist party 2%.

This distribution shows the total dominance of the opposition news over the pro government news, in addition to the dominance of one specific political party and the exclusion of the Independents and other parties.

2. News Directions:

Sawt Al Ghad seems committed to a certain line as its news seems very analytical with high rates of positive news (27%) and negative news (19%), while the rate of neutral news was around 54%.

Coverage of prime minister news (0.62%) seemed low compared to that of the president of the republic (3.3%). In addition, prime minister news were mostly negative (38%), compared to 25% positive news and 37% neutral news.

On the other hand, neutral news about the president were dominant (85%) with 9% positive and 6% negative news.

Most of the opposition news seemed positive with some neutral exceptions, while pro government coverage seemed overwhelmed with negativity especially during general news coverage and analysis with a 67% negativity rate, only 10% positive news, and 22.5% neutral news.

As to the news coverage of specific pro government parties, Future movement received 30% negative coverage. 14% positive coverage and 56.56% neutral coverage. While the Lebanese forces rate of negative news reached 31.62%, compared to only 4% positive news and 64.49% of neutral coverage.

On the other hand, neutral coverage was overwhelming for the Lebanese Phalanges with a rate of more than 90%, 7% positive news, and 3% negative news. Negative and positive news were almost equal (around 20%) for the Progressive Socialist Party, with 60% rate of neutral news.

Sawt Al Ghad had a high coverage of the International Community news (5.68% of the total monitored news) with a clear penchant for negative news (20.73% compared to 5.32% for positive news), while neutral news reached 74%.

Concerning opposition news, 43% of those were positive compared to 15% for negative news and 42% for neutral coverage. Positive news were even at a higher rate for the Free Patriotic Movement (46.6%) compared to 5% for negative news.

Amal news coverage had a complete absence of negativity with a 50\50 rate of positive and neutral news. Marada news were also predominantly positive (22%) with a 4% negative rate and 74% neutral rate.

Hezbollah news seemed balanced between positive and negative (24% for each), with a 52% neutral rate.

3. Coverage technique

The coverage technique was mainly indirect in Sawt Al Ghad with a rate of more than 96% for the president of republic news, 81% for the prime minister news, 91% for Hezbollah news, and a high 97% for Future Movement news coverage (compared to less than 3% of direct coverage).

On the other hand, direct coverage style seems high only for the Free Patriotic Movement news coverage with a rate of 35.2%, and for its ally the Marada party (42.39%). This is in line with the station's political choices where it clearly voices out

the news of its allies through direct coverage all the while trying to keep the others in the dark through an indirect coverage of their news.

4. Sawt al Ghad: Conclusion

Opposition forces have the highest rate of coverage in this station 56% compared to 24% for pro government forces, 3.32% for the Independents and a quasi absence of any other coverage, with 0.5% coverage for civil society news and no coverage at all for syndicates. The Independents' news coverage was characterized by a high rate of negative news (36.70% compared to 6.56% for positive news and 56.74% neutral coverage) as if Sawt Al Ghad seriously doubts the neutrality of the Independents.

Distribution of news content (% of total monitored material)

Electoral Awareness	International community	Civil Society	Independents	Official news	Total Opposition	Total pro government
-	5.7	0.5	3	10	56	24

The station's directions (% of total monitored material)

Negative	Positive	Neutral
19	27	54

Distribution of space given to political forces (% of total monitored material)

Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
2	2	3	4	2	1	37	5.5

Distribution of negative and positive coverage across the political forces (% of total monitored material)

	Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
Pos	20	3	4	14	22	50	46	24
Neg	20	7	32	30	4	50	5	24

Distribution of direct and indirect coverage across the political forces (% of total monitored material)

	Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
Direct	8	10	16.5	3	58	-	35.5	9
Indirect	92	90	83.5	97	42	100	64.5	91

B. Voice of Lebanon

1. News distribution:

Pro government forces received the highest rate of coverage with 35% vs. 25% for the opposition and 6.76% for the Independents, thus showing the station's political directions. The rate of coverage for official powers (the president, prime minister, head of parliament, government and elections overseeing committee) reached a surprising 22%, a very high rate compared to the other stations.

The president of the republic received 9.41% of the total coverage, which places him in a special and advanced position, while the prime minister only received 1.6%, and the government received 11%.

Regarding opposition news coverage, the main two opposition parties received almost the same rate of coverage with Hezbollah receiving 8.19% and the Free patriotic Movement receiving 7.75% followed by Amal Movement 3.24%, and Tashnak 1%.

As to the pro government news coverage, a high rate of coverage was dedicated to general news and analysis of the stands and opinions of pro government figures (14.21%). As to the pro government parties, the first rate was for Future Movement

10%, followed by Phalanges Party, the station's owner with 6.34%, then the Lebanese Forces 3.05%, and the progressive Socialist Party with 2.74%.

The international community received a high t% coverage rate placing it very close to local parties.

2. News directions:

Because of the low rate of neutral news, Voice of Lebanon seems to have taken a committed direction with 46% total neutral news, 39% positive and 15% negative news.

The positive direction is obvious towards the official figures with more than 65% positive rate for the president of the republic and the prime minister, and 30.5% for the government. On the other hand, negative news were very low: 1.60% for the president, 2.23% for the prime minister, and around 32% of neutral coverage for both.

The station's directions become more apparent in the coverage of the pro government news with high rates of positive news and very low rates of negative news. Negative news rate reached 45% for Future Movement with a negative rate of less than 1%. The Phalanges news positive rate reached 45% with a total absence of negative news, while the positive rate for Lebanese Forces lingers at 24%, with neutrality rate at 74% and less than 1% negative rate. Positive rate reached 65% for the Progressive Socialist Party with a total absence of negative news.

Negative coverage is dominant for opposition news with a general rate of 61%, vs. 14.5% of positive news. Same goes for Hezbollah news with a negativity rate of 60% vs. 12% positive rate and only 28% neutral news. Negative news rate for the Free Patriotic Movement reached 43% vs. 21% positive news, and 36% neutral news. On the other hand, Amal Movement and Marada news were characterized by high rates of positive news, with 44% positive rate vs. 11% negative rate for Amal, and 51% positive rate vs. 19% negative rate for Marada.

Voice of Lebanon also had a high coverage (7%) of the International Community news with a strikingly low rate of neutrality (25%), compared to 42% positive rate and 32% negative rate.

3. Coverage style

Voice of Lebanon's coverage style seems balanced between direct and indirect. The station gave high direct coverage for all the different parties.

Direct coverage reached 38% for the president of the republic, 36% for the prime minister, and 37% for the Independents.

Direct and indirect coverage reached a 50\50 rate for Hezbollah news, while direct coverage was 36% for the Free patriotic Movement.

The pro government parties received close rates of direct coverage with 53.49% for Future Movement, 47.79% for the Lebanese Forces, and a high 60% for the station's owner, the Lebanese Phalanges.

4. Voice of Lebanon: Conclusion

The opposition and the pro government news seem in balance with respect to the quantity of news and the style of news coverage. However, there is an important imbalance with respect to the news directions with a high rate of positive coverage for the pro government news and high rate of negative coverage for the opposition news, with almost a total absence of negative coverage for the independents and the official figures.

Distribution of news content (% of total monitored material)

Electoral Awareness	International community	Civil Society	Independents	Official news	Total Opposition	Total pro government
0	7	0.7	7	22	25	35

The station's directions (% of total monitored material)

Negative	Positive	Neutral
15	39	46

Distribution of space given to political forces (% of total monitored material)

Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
3	6	3	10	0.2	3	8	8

Distribution of negative and positive coverage across the political forces (% of total monitored material)

	Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
Pos	65	45	24	45	51	44	21	12
Neg	0	0	1	1	30	11	43	60

Distribution of direct and indirect coverage across the political forces (% of total monitored material)

	Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
Direct	61	60	48	53	34	36	36	50
Indirect	39	40	52	47	66	64	64	50

Comparative Chart for Media Institutions:

	Sawt al Ghad	Voice of Lebanon	Mustakbal newspaper	Annahar	Al Akhbar	Assafir
Neutral news	54%	46%	52%	77%	56%	73%
Positive news	27%	39%	34%	12%	24%	18%
Negative news	19%	15%	14%	10%	19%	8%
Pro government news	24%	35%	61%	39%	34%	23%
Opposition news	56%	25%	15%	26%	39%	30%

Fourth:

Analysis of the daily newspapers monitoring

A. Assafir Newspaper:

1. News Distribution:

Assafir news had close rates for the opposition (30%) and the pro government forces (23%) thus relatively balancing and stressing on the importance of the two major players on the Lebanese scene.

Coverage of the official authorities including the president, prime minister and head of parliament, and the elections overseeing committee reached 17%, while Independents had coverage of 5%.

Concerning the opposition news coverage, Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement each had a 6% rate, followed by 3% for Amal movement. Future movement had the majority of coverage with 14% rate followed by the socialist progressive party 3%, and the Lebanese Forces 2%.

In addition, 12% of the general news, news analysis, and the different news stories went to the opposition, while 11% went to the pro government forces and 5% went to the independents. This indicates that Assafir dedicated almost equal coverage to the main two political forces, while the smaller parties and the Independents did not receive the same concern.

2. News Directions:

Assafir seems mostly neutral in its dealing with the news of both pro government (70%) and opposition forces (78%). On the other hand, rates of positive news coverage is equal to 14% for both sides, with a higher rate of negative coverage for pro government forces (18%) compared to opposition (10%).

The newspaper's relative alliance with the opposition forces is apparent in the high rate of positive coverage for those forces. Indeed, a low 4% rate of negative news is recorded for the Amal movement vs. 40% positive coverage; while Hezbollah had 22% positive vs. 7% negative coverage, and the Free patriotic Movement had 7% negative vs. 18% positive coverage.

As to its position vis-à-vis the pro government forces, Assafir had different views towards the different players with a high positive rate for Future movement 20% vs. 8% negative and 23% positive rate vs. 1% negative rate for the Progressive Socialist Party. On the other hand, negativity was dominant for the Lebanese forces news with a rate of 18% vs. 8% for positive coverage.

3. Assafir Conclusion

The opposition and pro government forces received 62% of general coverage with a relative balance in space and direction. However, independents got a low 5% with a positive direction. The Communist Party received 2% coverage on its own. Official figures including the president, prime minister and head of parliament got a 17% rate, while the international community received a high 7% rate. Civil society received a 2% coverage with a total absence of coverage for syndicates news, or electoral awareness campaigns that are supposed to accompany the elections.

In general, assafir news were leaning towards neutrality 73%, with a positive coverage of 18.48%, and a negative rate of 8.5%.

Distribution of newspaper content (% of total monitored material)

Electoral Awareness	International community	Civil Society	Independents	Official news	Total Opposition	Total pro government
5	7	2	5	17	30	23

The newspaper's directions (% of total monitored material)

Negative	Positive	Neutral
8	18	73

Distribution of space given to political forces (% of total monitored material)

Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
3	1	2	14	1	3	6	6

Distribution of negative and positive coverage across the political forces (% of total monitored material across each political force)

	Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
Pos	23	20	8	20	26	40	18	22
Neg	1	6	18	5	9	4	7	11

B. Al Akhbar Newspaper:

1. Distribution of news:

The size of coverage for the pro and opposition forces was relatively balanced in al Akhbar with a slight advance for the opposition 39% vs. 34% for the pro government forces, and 4% for Independents. These rates show the domination of the main two powers (pro and opposition forces) on the media scene and the relative weakness of the Independents and other parties. The official authorities (president of the republic, head of government, prime minister, and elections overseeing committee) received a 13% coverage rate.

As to news coverage across the different components of the opposition, the Free Patriotic Movement received 12% of the total monitored material, followed by Hezbollah 9%, Popular Nasser party 3%, and Amal movement 2%.

As to the pro government forces, the Future Movement received 15% followed by Phalanges and Socialist Progressive Party with 3% each, then the Lebanese Forces with 2%.

The general political news, analysis, and stories that are not related to one specific party, these were distributed across the opposition 10% vs. the pro government parties 13%, and 4% for the independent candidates. Once again, these rates show the domination of the main two powers (pro and opposition forces) on the media scene and the relative weakness of the Independents and other parties

2. News Directions

Most of the news coverage for the opposition tended to be positive while that of the pro government was negative. The rate of neutrality in opposition news reached 68%, with 16% for negative news, and 17% for positive news, while positive rate for Hezbollah and

Free Patriotic News news reached 29% for each vs. respectively 10% and 8% negative rate. Amal Movement positive news rate reached 38% vs. 11% negativity rate.

The majority of pro government news was negative 31% vs. 11% positive rate. Same goes for Future movement news with 34% negative and 29% positive rate. Lebanese forces had 28% negative vs. 15% positive rate. Phalanges had 15% negative and 11% positive coverage. Only the socialist Progressive Party received relatively high positive rate 36% vs. 8% negative rate.

3. Al Akhbar: Conclusion

Forces of pro government and opposition had the majority of coverage 73% and only 4% rate of Independents, with an overwhelming negativity towards those 19% vs. 13% positive rate. Official authorities received 13% of the total coverage, the majority of which was neutral 92%. International Community news coverage reached 6% with an overwhelming negativity 27% vs. 12% positive rate. In this newspaper also, there was no coverage of NGOs, electoral awareness and syndicates.

Neutrality in Al Akhbar newspaper seems very low compared to Assafir and Annahar (56%) with respectively 24.37% and 19.48% positive and negative rates, which indicates Al Akhbar commitment to a pro-con attitude vis-à-vis the competing political forces.

Distribution of news Contents (percent of total monitored news)

Electoral awareness	International community	Civil society	Independents	Official news	Total Opposition	Total pro government
0	6	0	4	13	39	34

The newspaper's directions (% of total monitored material)

Negative	Positive	Neutral
19	24	56

Distribution of space given to political forces (% of total monitored material)

Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
3	3	2	15	0	2	12	9

Distribution of negative and positive coverage across the political forces (% of total monitored material across each political force)

	Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
Pos	36	11	15	29	-	38	29	29
Neg	8	15	28	34	-	11	8	10

C. Annahar Newspaper

1. News Distribution

Annahar's news is dominated by a 39% rate coverage of the pro government factions vs. 26% rate for the opposition, 13% rate for official authorities (president of the republic, prime minister, head of government and elections overseeing committee), and 12% for the Independents.

The Free Patriotic Movement came in first among the opposition news coverage with a 9% rate, followed by Hezbollah 5%, Amal movement 2% and Marada movement 1%.

The total coverage of pro government news equaled 16% vs. 9% for the total coverage of opposition news. Among the pro government parties, Future movement came in first with 11%, followed by the Socialist Progressive Party and the Phalanges with 4% each, Lebanese Forces with 3%, and National bloc 1% with no worthy to mention coverage rates for small parties.

2. News Directions

Although Annahar was rather on the pro government side with respect to the quantity of news, the direction of its coverage was rather neutral with a 77% neutral total rate for opposition news, and respectively 12% and 11% for negative and positive news.

Same goes for Hezbollah news as neutrality rate reached 78% with a 12% rate for negative coverage, and a 10% for positive coverage. In Amal movement news coverage, positive rate takes over the negative (respectively 16% vs. 5%). As for the Free Patriotic Movement news, neutral rate drops to 69% and positive and negative rates are almost equal (respectively 16% and 15%).

As for the pro government news directions, neutrality reached 77%, with a 16% rate for positive news and 7% for negative news.

Neutrality was also dominant for the coverage of pro government parties with a rate of 81% for Future movement vs. 11% positive rate and 8% negative rate. Phalanges party received 89% neutral coverage, 7% positive coverage and 4% negative coverage. Lebanese forces had an 84% neutrality rate with an almost tie between positive coverage (7%) and negative coverage (8%). News coverage of the Progressive Nationalist Party was characterized by high positive rate 16% vs. 4% negative rate.

3. Annahar Conclusion

The majority of Annahar news was for pro government forces 39% vs. 26% for the opposition in addition to an especially high rate of 12% for the Independants (higher than all the other newspapers: Assafir 5%, Al Akhbar 4%, Al Mustakbal 5%). Annahar also gave 1% of its coverage space for electoral awareness rising and 1% for civil society news. The international community news rate was 4% and neutrality was dominant in the news coverage of the two main political powers. Neutrality seems high in general (77.51%) in Annahar's news vs. 12.23% positive and 10.25% negative coverage.

Distribution of news Contents (percent of total monitored news)

Electoral awareness	International community	Civil society	Independents	Official news	Total Opposition	Total pro government
1	4	1	12	13	26	39

The newspaper's directions (% of total monitored material)

Negative	Positive	Neutral
10	12	77

Distribution of space given to political forces (% of total monitored material)

Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
4	4	3	11	1	2	9	5

Distribution of negative and positive coverage across the political forces (% of total monitored material across each political force)

	Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
Pos	16	7	9	11	5	16	16	12
Neg	4	4	8	8	19	5	15	10

D. Al Mustakbal newspaper

1. News Distribution

Al Mustakbal through the nature of its coverage seems to be in line of a specific political party, where 61% of its news were devoted to pro government, with a 15% rate for the opposition, 5% for Independents, and 8% for official news (the president, prime minister, head of government, and the elections overseeing committee).

The highest rate of coverage was devoted for the Future movement, the newspaper's owner 24%, with a similar rate devoted to news, analysis and investigations of the pro government parties in general 13%, with an additional 13% for the other pro government parties thus raising the total rate for pro government forces to 61%.

The Socialist Progressive party and the Lebanese Forces each received a 4% coverage rate, while the Phalanges received 2%. AL Mustakbal also highlighted other pro government parties such as the Free Nationalists party 1%, the National Bloc Party headed 1%, and the Islamic Party 1%.

Coverage of opposition news reached 6% with Hezbollah receiving the highest rate 6% and the Free Patriotic rate receiving 5%, followed by Amal movement, the Lebanese Democratic Party, and the Nasserri popular movement with 1% each.

The Independents received 5% coverage rate while other parties and forces were not covered at all.

2. News Directions

The newspaper's political directions become apparent here. The opposition news coverage is dominated by negativity with 60% rate for Hezbollah vs. 34% neutrality rate. The Free Patriotic movement received 56% negative coverage, 12% positive and 33% negative coverage. The Nasserri Popular movement had a 61% negative rate and a 6% positive rate. Negativity drops to a 15% rate for Amal movement news vs. a 29% positive rate. Negativity disappears completely towards the Lebanese Democratic Party with a neutrality rate of 98%.

Pro government news were overwhelmingly positive with 45% positive and 2% negative rate for the Future Movement coverage. Negativity is nil for the Socialist Progressive Party (Positive news = 49%) and the Lebanese Forces (Positive news =

19%), while negativity for the Phalanges is equal to 1% and positive news rate is 24%. Almost the same scenario applied for other political allies such as the nationalist Bloc, the Islamic group, and the Free Patriotists.

3. Al Mustakbal: Conclusion

Al Mustakbal newspaper seems adherent to the stands and opinions of Future Movement with a high rate of coverage 61% dedicated to the movement and to its allies, and only 15% to the opposition, and 5% to the Independents. The civil society and International community were each represented with a 2% rate while electoral awareness, other parties and forces were not covered at all.

Neutrality rate seems low in Al Mustakbal (52%) with a 34% positive and a 14% negative news rate.

Distribution of news Contents (percent of total monitored news)

Electoral awareness	International community	Civil society	Independents	Official news	Total Opposition	Total pro government
0	2	2	5	8	15	61

The newspaper's directions (% of total monitored material)

Negative	Positive	Neutral
14	34	52

Distribution of space given to political forces (% of total monitored material)

Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
4	2	4	24	0	1	5	6

Distribution of negative and positive coverage across the political forces (% of total monitored material across each political force)

	Socialist progressive party	Phalange	Lebanese forces	Future	Marada	Amal	Free Patriotic	Hezbollah
Pos	49	24	19	45	-	29	12	6
Neg	0	1	0	2	-	15	56	60

General conclusion

Based on the study results, it is clear that the electoral law did not succeed in achieving its goals in monitoring and organizing the work of media institutions in covering the elections. The below comments show some of the drawbacks that are indicators of the limited role played by the law and the gaps in its implementation, in addition to the wrong practices perpetrated by media institutions and that need to be dealt with.

A. Drawbacks in media institutions coverage

- Article 68 of the electoral law made it mandatory for all media institutions to respect freedom of expression of all the different opinions and currents of thought, in a way to ensure equity, balance, and objectivity between all candidates. However, the analysis of news contents of the different media institutions showed that these institutions were far from being objective or balanced.
- Article 68 also stated that audio visual media cannot promote or advertise for any candidate or list of candidates. However, media coverage analysis shows that some of the institutions were promotional tools and were completely in line with specific political parties that these institutions are affiliated with.
- Some institutions seemed like tools for political incitement through taking sides, while media institutions are supposed to be on an equal distance from all parties in order to perform their critical role and be the keeper of democracy. Political side taking weakened media institutions and transformed into mere tools.
- The majority of media institutions did not present any educational or awareness raising shows as called for in article 69 of the law.
- Media talk stooped down to very low levels reaching a bottom low on some websites that allowed insults and comments from readers without supervision, disregarding journalist's role of separating proper and improper opinions.
- Some media institutions published survey results all through the elections period that proved to be erroneous after the elections were over. This calls for correcting the survey tools and methods in order not to mislead the candidates and the public.
- It is worthy to note that media institutions suffered from a sort of chaos while announcing the results of the elections, with serious discrepancies in the results between the different institutions. This adversely affects the institutions' professionalism and calls for a different approach in elections coverage.
- It was difficult to separate between advertisement and true responsibilities in the media talk of ministers who were running for elections. This calls for the separation of

ministries and parliamentary representation, and for an effort to prevent using public jobs for personal interests. It should be kept in mind that any piece of news regarding a specific personality whether outside or inside the personality's job is considered to be a form of advertisement.

B. Drawbacks of the political speech

The electoral campaign was characterized by a violent speech and the use of every available tool to affect the public opinion. The political public speech was mainly characterized by:

- Rudeness and violence and the use of rough terms and accusations that fall outside the limits of healthy political behavior. Offensive accusations were often repeated such as accusations of lying, crimes, treachery, and others.
- Unfounded and unproved accusations were thrown such as accusing others of being followers of foreign forces. These fear inciting accusations replaced the political dialogue and the discussions that were supposed to take place mainly around issues such as electoral programs and projects.
- Political speech often carried religious and sectarian dimensions in total contradiction of the country's benefit and the values of citizenship.
- Most parties strived to show their own projects as salvation projects picturing the others' projects as destructive and conflict causing ones. This resulted in a negative outlook about "the others", which goes against the concept of cooperation for the common good.
- Some old events were brought back to life in order as a way of incitement and to affect the public opinion.
- Some institutions purposefully broadcasted hateful and violent political speech. These institutions could have overlooked some of that speech in order to decrease its adverse effects all the while keeping their objectivity.

C. The role of media institutions

State media institutions such as TL and the Lebanese radio station are supposed to be a public arena open to all candidates in an equal manner, allowing all of these to introduce their electoral agendas and tampering down the fact that private media institutions are followers of specific political parties. Therefore, it is crucial to empower official media institutions and to set new directions and goals for them.

D. The weakness of electoral agendas

- Media campaigns of candidates were characterized by weak content and the absence of clear agendas at least in media coverage. Candidates' speeches failed to mention main issues of interest to citizens namely daily life issues that are supposed to raise the quality of life and bring all the Lebanese together.
- The content of electoral campaign was almost exclusively constituted of political speeches. This has cost the country an occasion for reform that would have been possible had the candidates proposed specific projects and competed in suggesting real solutions to deal with daily problems of the Lebanese, and to adopt reform projects that in great need in Lebanon.

E. Dealing with gaps of the law

- There were many irregularities in the news coverage during the election period, with the elections overseeing committee being unable to correct these irregularities. This calls for a review of these gaps and an evaluation of ways to correct them through practical or legal solutions.
- Paragraph 3 of article 68 prevented audio visual media from promoting or advertising any candidate or list of candidates. This is in contradiction of the fact that institutions are given permits to broadcast based on their political affiliations, thus making this article very hard to abide by. Therefore, and since it is very difficult to reconsider the permits distribution, media institutions must be obliged to have specific air times for all candidates in a balanced way. The challenge is to implement such decisions, and this was not the case in the current elections.
- Pictures and posters were randomly plastered in all the Lebanese areas, and this breaks the laws, and disturbs the scene. This is also sometimes an indicator of electoral spending.
- The issue of live coverage (speeches, opinions, press conferences...) in addition to non live opinions, remained an issue of controversy as to whether they should be counted these opinions should be counted as being adopted by the media institution or by the source of the news.

F. The weakness of women and independents status

- The role of women in political life remains humble, and more efforts are warranted in order to involve women in a way that reflects her growingly important role in the Lebanese society. Feminine quota might be an entrance point to this issue. Media seems to have a major role to play in empowering women's roles.

- The political and media reality seems closed in the face of new faces that strive to enter the political arena. These have therefore failed to get any media attention in view of the pro government and opposition forces monopoly of the media scene. This calls for a review of the electoral law in a way that allows renewal of the political faces and currents. In addition, there should be a way to ensure balance for candidates in media institutions in a way that allows new faces of expressing themselves.

G. Electoral spending

Electoral spending dominated the elections with some candidates and politicians not even trying to deny the issue but rather trying to justify it, and to pin it on all the other candidates.

Paying off voters constitutes an insult to the Lebanese citizens by transforming them into merchandise. This is also an indication of the poverty level that has hit the Lebanese society and that pushes citizens to sell their votes. This shows that true democracy requires the foremost provision of the citizens' basic needs and their freeing of their daily life problems. It is to be noted that these practices remain undealt with by the judiciary system which further accentuates their dangers.

H. Positive comments

Despite the long list of negative comments, some positive points must be highlighted:

- The elections were characterized by a heavy participation of the civil society, as this was warranted by the electoral law. This is a positive thing as it increases monitoring and empowers the role of NGOs.

In addition, the international community constituted a monitoring tool and this was a positive aspect that constituted a guarantee of transparency and of the proper methodology of the elections,

- Media monitoring served to decrease the level of direct and indirect negative coverage and increase the level of neutral news. This constitutes the beginning of a change in political speech and the coverage methodologies.
- The organization of electoral advertisement resulted in opening up of all the media institutions to the different powers and political currents. In addition,

the law called for balanced coverage and the representation of all the different powers. This means that the electoral law has provided a diversified media scene even if the stage of balance was not fully reached.

The law served to limit "black lists" in televisions that prevented some critics or opponents or opposing parties from being aired, and this is a positive thing that needs to be later developed through the revision of the available media laws.

Maharat Foundation and all the participating organizations hope that the results of this study will serve in developing a media electoral law. We also hope that these results will constitute a scientific basis for media institutions and workers to develop and promote the Lebanese media scene and to purify it from all the existing drawbacks so as to allow the Lebanese media to remain a keeper of the Lebanese democracy and one of its main pillars.

