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For a Balanced Image of Women in Media

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The research is conducted by
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■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ About Fe-Male



Fe-Male, a non-profit association founded in 2012 by a group of young women and human rights activists; a civil non-sectarian Lebanese association that works under the umbrella of Human Rights Charter to ensure women's rights as integral part of human rights; building young feminists, raising awareness through mass and social media, empowerment, elimination of stereotyping and objectification of women, and changing laws are our objectives and our methods of work.

About the project ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

This study is within the project «**Towards Changing Women's Image in Media and Ads**» implemented by Fe-Male in partnership with ActionAid Arab Region Initiative, which is a continuation of the work Fe-Male began for the aim of challenging the objectification of women in media and advertising.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

From a gender perspective, the researcher finds it hard to evaluate the performance of a certain media outlet, TV show or content, due to several reasons, among which are the following:

- The ongoing overlapping as a result of the current technology and communication progress, among: media, advertising, and communication; sender and receiver; seriousness and entertainment, public and private, real and virtual, globalization and cultural particularities.

- The message of the Lebanese media, known for its variety and diversity, and crowded by opposites and paradoxes from all aspects, differs according to: the purpose of the owner, manager and financier; target audience, culture; sensitivity of the staff towards the tackled topics, and the circumstances surrounding the media performance.

- The Decline of the nation-state role for the sake of major companies and market economy, along with the rise of individualism, and the decline of political and volunteer work and commitment to the group interests, as well as the decline of social services, and the loss of effectiveness of traditional censorship techniques.

- The overlapping of the gender factor with other factors related to age, ethnic and religious affiliation, social class, and living conditions.

- Technological and communication advances in a complicated social, political and cultural context that is surrounded by duplicity; these changes are lately accompanied in many Arab countries by popular uprisings and movements whose internal dynamics got disrupted by a group of local, regional and global factors, and turned them into violence and counter-violence. Violence is generated in concrete forms at times and abstract at other times, to an extent that we are now living in a state of chaos and media hype that was about to lead us to a real crisis.

In light of the aforementioned confusing and ambiguous reality of media, the dilemma of gender presence in media outlets remains in several countries, and is getting urgent in a country like Lebanon whose system is facing the following structural deformations:



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■ A continuing struggle among sectarian and religious groups, correlated with conflicts on financial interests and political figures that have regional connections. The conflict sometimes intensifies, and other times winds down, as is influenced by Arab and regional conflicts and alliances.

■ A media system resulting from a patriarchal political system based on sectarian quotas.

■ Intense and fierce competition among media outlets to share advertisings that are already confined.

■ The absence of institutionalization and limited production in various media.

■ Outdated laws that govern the media performance and fail to follow up on developments, and discretionary application in most cases, not to mention the structural imbalance which the regulatory frameworks are suffering from. That is negatively reflected on the performance. In addition to syndical paralysis.

The dilemma of the gender presence in media gets more complicated in light of life situation changes for Lebanese women, who went a long way in the level of education, knowledge and capabilities, yet they couldn't penetrate the glass ceiling on the level of decision-making in a way that matches their abilities.

At the present time, this dilemma strongly surfaces as violence is taking place in the region and has brought double implications on women. In this context, this dilemma intersects with another one related to the media work itself, based on how media should deal with the realities on the ground and the buffer between the realities it is striving to build (for considerations beyond the scope of this document) and the ones on the ground..

In addition to that, there is the dilemma related to the conflicting needs of the female/ male media figures, the owners, the advertiser, the target audience, and what the media outlets themselves need.

This complexity is manifested when we review what the media outlets had broadcasted during the past years from titles related to women, whether through highlighting their experiences or achievements, covering several violence cases they faced, or through an inherited discrimination, or evaluation for their performance, or holding conferences, writing articles on their case, or conducting studies on their situations



In order to clarify the image, we considered adopting in this paper the following methodology:

- ▶ **First**, presenting the Lebanese media scene, in order to get acquainted to the gender presence and observe the positions and role of women, in regard to the characteristics and specificity of this scene.
- ▶ **Second**, presenting the main studies I already conducted concerning the gender presence in news, TV talk shows, advertisings, and drama.
- ▶ **Third**, following up the aftermath of the gender presence in the Lebanese televised media during the current time which is witnessing an unprecedented violence, linked to an infinite non-compliance with standards and ethics of media profession, through TV shows that raised a controversy in printing and electronic press and on social media, and chose the following samples of shows¹ : “Tony Khalifeh 1544”² , “Lilnasher ”³, “Bila Tashfeer ”⁴, “Hki Jales”⁵. Observation of these programs doesn’t aim at analyzing their content in the traditional and accurate significance of the word, as much as it aims at being acquainted to the raised issues and the approach used by each of these programs to tackle women. It aims to demonstrate, whether by being aware or not, the thoughts, opinion, distinguished expressions that display a kind of hidden violence, whether verbal, psychological, moral or symbolic. It also shows the relationship between these stereotypes and the media performance techniques that enforce or weaken it, as well as drawing out the distinctions related to addressing social issues in all of these programs, the degree of stereotyping of each one of them, and the extent of gender sensitivity in the method of treatment.
- ▶ **Fourth**, extracting the most prominent indicators related to the printing press (paper or electronic) that focus on the following headlines:

■ The female journalist: when she featured as a guest and as a theme in a televised media context.

■ Coverage of gender-based violence, which happens to women within the family circle from one hand, and due to disputes and armed conflicts, on the other hand.

¹ Regarding the monitoring sample, check the main report, index no’ 2, p 104.

² Presented by Tony Khalifeh on Lebanese MTV broadcasting station, time of broadcast: Every Monday at 8:30 pm (Beirut time); the monitored episodes: 6 (from the first season), from episode 28 till 35. MTV introduced “Tony Khalifeh 1544” on its website as follows: “the program presented by the media figure Tony Khalifeh tackles different cases and dossiers that interest the viewer. So he addresses in several segments topics stemmed from political, security and social developments , as well as humanitarian and medical issues (achievements, discoveries or carelessness), in addition to arts and sports news, etc... The program sheds light on the inventions talents, discoveries mistakes and carelessness.

³ with a new décor and segments, through which the reporters are an important part of the issues that are raised and discussed for two hours live on air, at 8:30 pm every Monday, came back and is presented by Rima Karaki.

⁴ Aljadeed introduced on its website “Bela Tashfeer” program by this briefing: It’s a new talk show characterized with it courage and direct questions; the program presenter is Tamam Bleik; it is broadcasted weekly on Wednesday at 9:30 pm. Six episodes were monitored consecutively: Joelle Hatem, Milad Abo Malhab, Sama Al-Masry, Lara Kay, Layal Aboud, and Boushra Khalil.

⁵ “Hki Jales” is presented by Joe Maalouf and broadcasted on LBC and LDC every Monday at 9:30 pm.



■ Discussion of the applicable laws and prevailing censorship methods, in connection with the emergency variables, thanks to the technological and

■ Following up with emerging changes in women's status and coverage of conferences and studies on women. That can be achieved through an electronic archive which I prepared personally during the last four years, as I am up-to-date researcher in the gender affairs in media, in order to observe the level of distinctions between the visual and written media in their approach to women, as well as the mutual reflections of each outlet on the other. In addition, considering addressing media, from a gender perspective, enables us to know the major concerns during this period and shows us where the media is developing or deteriorating and where did it stand regarding the level of stereotype in dealing with women's issues.

After reviewing the list of titles in my electronic archive ⁶, the interest in the sample, referred to above, has focused on the following topics:

- Talking about women journalists who became famous in presenting their programs, taking certain decisions, or facing pressure as a result of their stances. The sample included Paula Yacoubian, Hayat Mershad, Lilian Daoud, Lina Zahreddine and Rima Karaki.
 - Monitoring television programs and their advertising, or changes that happened to some of them, and publishing articles that analyze and criticize the performance.
 - Exhibiting news and reports about creative Arab women who won awards, produced artistic work, created certain phenomena, went beyond the ordinary, resisted, performed professions that were already monopolized by men, or migrated to work abroad.
 - Hot topics about violence which women face due to conflicts and terrorism in the Arab region.
 - News about harassment and domestic violence which Lebanese women suffer from and how the parliament and judiciary deal with it.
 - Tackling the laws which govern media outlets, breaches, conventions and censorship devices in case the media figures were law-suited with claims of slander and libel, etc...
 - Displaying studies on women, media and communication, covering conferences held about women and their status, and publishing articles and analysis that touch several topics such as the following: Feminism, Globalization, Mobilization, Arab Spring, Political Parties, Female Advocates, Arab Women Status, Feminist Advocates (Betty Freidan- Denise Kidnawati), Women and Media, Women and Struggle, Women and Citizenship, Women, Liberation and Empowerment, Decline of Women's Rights⁷.
- **Fifth**, after diagnosing the current situation, the progress areas will be identified to build upon, as well as the shortfalls and their reasons, in order to continue the path towards establishing criteria for the media performance away from gender-based discrimination.

⁶ Regarding the list of subjects, read the main report, index no' 3, p.105.

⁷ Given the space limitations, we decided not to include this aspect in the paper, especially that it forms a complete subject that marks the level of appropriateness of the intellectual movement and mobility on the ground.

01

Characteristics of the Lebanese Media Scene from a Gender Perspective

Talking about the main characteristics of the Lebanese media scene from the gender perspective puts us in front of two intersecting dilemma: the first goes to gender and the second to media.

► First: Gender Dilemma

Obviously, the forms of discrimination leading to violence which was brought by the social construct of gender difference, wouldn't have evolved and became an ordinary feature without what Bourdieu called "Doxa": the preservation of power building structures (culture and society) through standards, rules, laws, beliefs and values held by media⁸ or at least reproduced by media. Bertini believes that the standards, principles, as well as the implicit and explicit knowledge which form and organize every human society are fruits of a social and cultural construct that is specific in time (evolution of truth through history) and place (relativism). She indicated the benefit of the "gender" studies as an essential reconstruction of problematics and methodologies. For gender operates the imagination of media and communication that are the main aspect in every society, and it is necessary to grab its political extension through the devices by building one piece over the other and from the family to the school, passing by media, institution, university, research, general space, contributing to control a social and cultural system based on a gender hierarchy away from any questioning⁹.

► Second: Media Dilemma

Media, as a concept, has always carried several paradoxes, because it is not an independent, but rather a social structure. The information doesn't exist unless carried through a social regulatory context, and through an effective strategy made by parties that contribute to create or modify its meaning at the production, transmission and receiving stages¹⁰. Thus, when a party informs the other, it transfers it from the state of uncertainty to certainty, but once the receiver gets the information, he becomes insatiable for further knowledge. This means that the information that settled in his mind immediately generates another uncertainty, so the media goes back to reduce it. It is an infinite game

⁸ Doxa symbolizes a group of ideas, values, beliefs and adopted standards taken for granted and an arbitrary cultural problem that is particular to a certain community at a period of time. For more details, read: Fleury, B, et Walter, J. (2009). *Penser le Genre en sciences de l'information et de la communication et au -delà*. Questions de communication numéro15. P.164.

⁹ For more details: Fleury, B, et Walter, J. (2009). *Op.cit.* P.P 116117-.

¹⁰ For more details: Muller, P. (2001). *Politiques publiques et effets d'information*. Dans J. Gestle (dir), *Les effets d'information en politique*. Paris: éd. L'Harmattan. p.237.

that urged researchers to look at the contradictions that the media game is based on: between shedding light on social problems, to encoding messages in a dramatized manner that exploits people's pain to install an attractive scene, and from amplifying the phenomena to seeking to deflate, ridicule and then consume them

These differences urge us to ask: Can media contribute to limiting discrimination and gender based violence at the time it attracts other forms of discrimination and violence, starting from the agenda and hierarchy it sets and the mechanisms it adopts that are clearly oscillating between: the secret and the scenic, self-promotion and offering service to others, reducing violence by telling about it and setting things on fire, thrilling and instinct panting, pornography, and claiming chastity and purity? It is worth-noting that any attempt to answer this question has to be derived from the uniqueness of the Lebanese media landscape.

1

Specificity of the Lebanese Media Scene

The structural problematic of media gets more complicated due to the specificity of the Lebanese media scene that got worse in the last few decades as it intersected with the Arab media scene, especially with that of the Gulf. The complicated relations that were built between the Lebanese and Gulf media figures emerged from the need of the Gulf media for Lebanese expertise, and the need of Lebanese media for Gulf capital and audience purchasing power, to an extent one can barely distinguish between the Lebanese and Gulf components of this model¹¹. It even gets more complicated with it being interconnected with the global media scene whether in terms of the mechanisms of action, the standards of the profession or the requirements of competition. In other words, there are the paradoxes that control the quality of the Lebanese media production that mixes between the global and the local; It is like a tree rooted in the social mentality and popular beliefs and at the same time carrying hybrid leaves of imported and modern values. Even though this dynamic and diverse media scene has produced major talent who surpassed the Lebanese market towards the Arab one; it has started to suffer from the following symptoms:

■ Deficiency in the legalization of audio-visual media, as there were many missing conditions in the terms of reference of the law, in addition to attempts to circumvent it, and discretion in its application. Moreover, the National Media Council (NMC) - supposed to ensure the proper functioning of media - finds its role restricted due to composition that is cloned from the Lebanese political system.

¹¹ In this regard, read: Al-qadiri, Issa, Nahawand. (2008). *قراءة في ثقافة الفضائيات العربية- الوقوف على تخوم التفكيك*. Beirut: مركز دراسات الوحدة العربية.

■ Obsolescence of laws: The law of written press, set in the sixties of the last century is no longer up-to-date; the law of Satellite broadcasting hasn't been amended since more than ten years, despite rapid technology and communication advances; and the Internet censorship is still facing many obstacles.

■ The ethics of professional practice are affected by the weakness of syndicates and by local divisions that do not meet on common values.

■ Changes affecting the advertising market due to the current technological and communication progress that led to several transformations touching on the advertising methodologies, strategies and broadcasting channels, as well as the behavior of consumers and their consumption patterns. That has prompted advertisers to spend the majority of their budgets to manage «Facebook» pages, «Twitter» accounts and other social media websites, in a race to increase the number of fans and comments via social sites.

The use of the Web has raised a number of questions from the legal, economic, political, social and cultural perspectives, in the context of the duality between internationalization and localization, as the users themselves are involved in producing the economic value through exchanging media goods on the internet. This media attraction toward cyberspace, associated with the temptations of reduced cost and infinite potentials to reach specific groups, was reflected negatively on the ever-receding ground advertising market. Advertising market in Lebanon wasn't immune to these transformations that are linked to various difficulties within local contexts. This market, regardless to the clash and inaccuracy of numbers, suffers from several defects.

That resulted in crises and conflicts which negatively influenced media structures and contexts, as well as the media corpse.

2

Women's Status in Media Outlets and in the Media Regulation Law

After young females occupied between 80 and 85% of media faculties and institutes students, as well as 23% of workers in the main Lebanese newspapers, 34.2% in the main magazines, 29.36% in main TV stations, and 47.2% in the radios¹², it is worth-mentioning the following:

First, that females constituted only 3.4% of shareholders in Lebanese Radio stations and 6% of shareholders in TV stations. It is good to mention that the majority of females names were used by male owners, in order to circumvent the law¹³, and

¹² Al-qadiri, Issa, Nahawand. (2012). نحو تمكين النساء في الإعلام من أجل تحقيق التكافؤ بين المواطنين والمواطنات. Beirut: United Nations Population Fund, the private table numbers of women in TV and radio stations, Annex no' 2, label no' 3 and 4. pp 144- 145.

¹³ Consultative workshop for civil society organizations in the Arab region on the progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after twenty years - Intervention of head of the Lebanese Women's Rights Committee Ms. Azza A-horr Mroueh- www.escwa.un.org

that only two women own political publications out of 111. Second, that the Press Syndicate Council included 1 female member out of 18 members, i.e. 5.5%, but did not include any female members in its latest elections in 2015. The Editors Syndicate Council included one female out of 12 members, i.e. 8.33%, knowing that females occupy 35% of seats among members ¹⁴, and later women were represented by 3 females out of 12 members in the 2015 elections. Third, the way through which the legislator perceived women and their relation with media, especially that the terms of reference of the media regulation law mentioned the following in the seventh article related to Women and Family programs: The broadcasting entity should allocate in its programs periods addressing family issues that help strengthen the family ties among its members, and create compassionate climates and understanding among them.

■ A woman should be given the proper attention to help her perform her role in society and secure family happiness.

■ The corporation should not broadcast any advertising or segment that inspires or encourages directly or indirectly sexual or physical violence, perversion, degradation of women, undermining family bonding or contradicts with the provisions of Article 36 of the audio-visual media law ¹⁵. Moreover, it was stated in the list of conditions in clause 9: It is not allowed to broadcast or transmit what would incite or instigate sectarian strife, or whatever would urge the society, especially children, to practice physical or moral violence, moral perversion, terrorism, or racial or religious discrimination. The institution should not broadcast movies or programs that include violence and sexual content before 10:30 pm, and should not promote these films before 9:30 pm.

In this context, we note that the patriarchal perception of women is represented by not recognizing the woman's independent entity, value, and immunity, and by considering that she was born only to make her family and spouse happy. «This view that undermines entity, value, and status becomes abuse, and facilitates the exploitation and denial of rights» according to Mustafa Hijazi¹⁶. This is proved by the fact that the programs, consumption patterns, and “objectivity” as seen by advertising companies, started to practice unprecedented violence against women, especially those who have financial problems and those who do not have the beauty specifications displayed on television screens, without any impunity. Furthermore, the Gender sensitivity aspect is also absent from the new draft law that was proposed by “Maharat Foundation” in collaboration with MP Ghassan Moukheiber. It is only stated in Chapter II, Article 55, that: Everyone who uses the media in this law in order to incite racial discrimination, hatred or violence against persons because of their gender, origin, color, orientation, tendency, as well as ethnic, religious or sexual affiliation, justifying war crimes or crimes against humanity, will be punished through a fine of ten million to twenty five million Lebanese pounds. (Equivalent at most to the profit made from one or two episodes in the programs that achieve high ratings).

¹⁴

¹⁵ Check out exemplary Conditions of Contract for the television and radio attached to the decree no. 7979 on 02.29.1996, the Ministry of Information in Lebanon. See in this regard: Hijazi, Mustafa. (2004).

تجمع البحوثات اللبنانية، المركز الثقافي: Beirut: Researchers 9. المرأة والتحرر من الاعتراف المشروط. النساء في الخطاب العربي المعاصر، pp. 577- 580.

¹⁶ See in this regard: Hijazi, Mustafa. (2004). 9. المرأة والتحرر من الاعتراف المشروط. النساء في الخطاب العربي المعاصر - باحثات. Beirut: Lebanese Researchers Committee, Arab Cultural Center, pp, 577- 580.

3

Major Characteristics of Gender Presence in Media

Despite the richness and diversity of the Lebanese media scene, its dominating characteristics are either a media that mimics political conflict, or a trend of entertainment programs that are gender biased. In between them lies a group of programs/pages that claim to address human rights issues and taboos, and at the same time claim modernity by using techniques that have no clear boundaries between information, advertising, and communication, between the private, intimate and public, and between the sender and the receiver, as well as between integrity and suspense. Spectacular media has thus become the favored type, even in written press lately following the television example. It is a media that takes advantage of human blood, tears, despair, poverty, violence and death; that's why the sociology of media discourse about women is at the heart of the media sociology: every media product demands three different social spaces: the production space, reception, and the space produced by the inferred characteristic of the subject. The media corporations are main parties in production and all these form what we call the media field, which faces pressure from other fields like advertisers and politicians¹⁷.

Despite all these difficulties, some changes happened and allowed the media outlets, especially the third generation media, to occupy an important status in dealing with women's issues and in shaping the contradictory images of women: the negative and the positive, the realistic and the mystified, the liberal and the conservative.. These media outlets follow most of the time strategies and standards in work, employment, ways of dealing with journalists, and a look at the audience based on being part of a global media regime run by a patriarchal capitalist ideology¹⁸. Besides, these media outlets work in societies controlled by extreme centralism where money, power, and media intermingle, and where fierce competition exists between Arabic and international TV stations for a narrow advertising market, which makes these media outlets target an Arabic audience while exerting preexisting prejudice inherited mostly from Western outlets, without taking into consideration the changes and differences that influence that audience. For this reason, some TV stations used men for politics and women for entertainment at the beginning of their international broadcasting, forming a media pattern that lead to only recognize, from all the different female journalists, those who appear on screen. This pattern quickly retreated as competition grew bigger, and physical appearance was no longer enough to compete, and culture, experience and languages became required¹⁹.

¹⁷ Check out in this regard: Al-qadiri, Issa, Nahawand. (2008). نحو تمكين النساء في الإعلام—من أجل تحقيق التكافؤ بين المواطنين. Beirut: Report issued from Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development supported by World Bank and Council for Development and Reconstruction.

¹⁸ Studies, conducted by the global project to monitor the media in seventy countries on the participation of women in the news in one day, showed that women in the news make up to 43% of the journalists, but only 17% of those with who were interviewed and 29% of the interviewed women, are victims of various accidents.

¹⁹ See in this regard: the United Nations Development Program, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Gulf Program for United Nations Development Organizations. (2006). 2005 Human Development Report, For the Development of women in the Arab world. Printed in Amman: the national printing press: Amman - Jordan. P. 151.

See in this regard: Al-qadiri, Issa, Nahawand. (2008). ورقة خلفية لتقرير التنمية الإنسانية 2005، في نحو نهوض المرأة في الوطن. العربي، op. cit, p.151.

A

Gender Presence Features in TV Shows

Before going into gender presence in what is called social televised shows, it is good to mention that the social stereotyping of women, keeping them away from politics, played a role in setting the hierarchy of the news. Priority was given to narrow political conflicts in which women have no interest, and from which they were already absent, whereas living concerns that mean to women at the very core were pushed down the queue.. In other words, the news have reproduced gender stereotyping roles in their context and structure, though few shattered interjections that were unable to shake the usual structure and hierarchy, took place.

Moreover, the relation between the structure of talk shows and the political, cultural and social structure is very strong. Their main feature was therefore to maintain the status-quo whereby the man had the largest share in the preparation, direction, presentation and promotion of the show. Male presence is still ahead of women as guests, participants, and as callers, despite the increasing numbers of female presenters, and participants in the preparation and in the attached reports.

Thus, gender stereotyping in talk shows seemed complicated and bore several forms; sometimes it increases and other times decreases; sometimes it openly distributes roles and responsibilities, other times it ignores women; sometimes it neutralizes men, other times it circumvents women rights through exaggeration; sometimes, it compromises and recognizes her rights but conditionally, and other times it exposes her when she adopts and re-projects gender stereotyping, and at times chooses to jump from one title to another. What is important is that despite this variety in methods, these shows used mechanisms that know when to exclude women and when to feature them, and within which defined limits. The man remained through that mechanism the fixed element and the woman, the mobile element which moves towards him, considering the man as the whole and the woman as part of that whole²⁰.

²⁰ For more details, check out: Check out in this regard: Al-qadiri, Issa, Nahawand. (2008). نحو تمكين النساء في الإعلام—من أجل تحقيق التكافؤ بين المواطنين والمواطنات op.cit.

B

Gender presence features in advertisings

The monitoring and analysis of advertisings showed that priority was given to cosmetics and household items, and that entertainment programs the most attracting. Whether their creators knew or not, these advertisings were building the concept of the advertising phenomenon in Capitalist societies, and were mirroring their changes.

Gender studies, mainly in the United States, considered the development of the advertising phenomenon, as one of the features of the new stage of Capitalism: Trying to produce individuals' needs and at the same time the consumer products that satisfy them. This led to redrawing life patterns, family identities, and gender identities for the sake of big industry dominance. In this context, femininity and masculinity were considered ideological concepts faced with practices and consumer behavior, whose definition is highly connected to the interests of the industry²¹.

Other studies went farther, by treating the advertisement as a brief manifestation of culture.

This proved that a woman, in order to conform to the present idea about femininity, has to look negative in her appearance and attitude (Lightness, thinness, sweetness, tolerance) and to look ready (alluring and has to seduce to reach her goals). On the other side, advertisings of masculine items carry recipes every man should have to conform to the real masculine example: surfed the world, physically strong, decides, leads, smokes, seduces through power, strength and possession. I.e. men have bravery, hostility, dynamism, and the public sphere, whereas, women have beauty, softness and occupy the private sphere²².

However, in the last few years, the traditional advertising eloquence started to coexist with the more individualistic speech. This led to improving woman's relation with her body and taking into consideration her desires. Starting the mid-nineties of the past century, the advertisings expressed the difficulties of women's liberation on both genders, and features individuals that are hesitant between contradicting roles and values. Advertisings are not effective enough to impose cultural contents, but are an accelerator to view some problematic and non-problematic cultural dimensions²³. In this context, it is good to note samples of this confusion, presented by the following: first, difference in success factors between both male and female; second, isolation of advertisings for traditionally

²¹ For more details, Perret, J.B (2003). L'APPROCHE FRANÇAISE DU GENRE EN PUBLICITE- Bilan critique et pistes de renouvellement. Une communication sexuée? Réseaux Numéro 120, 20034/. Paris: éd: La découverte, Hermès, p.151

²² For more details: Perret, J.B (2003). Op.cit, p.154

²³ For more details: Perret, J.B (2003). Op.cit p.159 in (CATHELAT, 1986 ; DEFRANCE, 1999 ; METOUDI, 1982 ou Perret 1997)



gender-based items; third, full investment of the advertising in female figures²⁴; fourth, working on perpetuating male dominance²⁵. This means that advertising contributes to building the concepts of both the feminine and the masculine. The evidence is that the American cultural industries have built a feminine example directly linked to the new ideology named “modernism”. These industries work on opening the family up to outside, to the new, to the market that is inexhaustible of commodities. Households became the best place for selling goods, as Mattelart indicated that the “myth of modernity” made us think that the more we consume, the more we get choices²⁶. Michele Martin considered that the “myth of modernity”, broadcasted by “media”, doesn’t contribute to the sexual or economic liberation of women, but it is used to add an additional value to their most traditional features. From her point of view, the source of the “myth of modernity” goes back to the advertising, which alludes that the characteristics of something new get reflected on its owner, and the value of a person is presented in the things he/she owns. Thus, progress in capitalist societies bears the “Exogene” attribute, i.e. extending to the outside. The progress became based on possessing future-linked items, despising the past, the traditional knowledge, and the local cultural practices, and portraying that nothing existed before this progress, for it is eternal in return²⁷. This “myth of modernity” results with an “abstract” society that generally implements, without discrimination, the specifications of the ruling class and the Western culture on all societies. That is what Mattelart called “Democracy of Desire²⁸”. This theory sought to perpetuate the control through language and direction, thus the media contents linked men to the public, work, production and making money, yet linked women to the private, emptiness, and spending money.

In general, the advertisements grabbed the market potential towards the phenomena of women’s liberation and they worked on investing it. They presented females as an entity named “the woman”, whose characteristics, flaws, and aspirations are specific to her gender. Digging into this subject unveils the facts behind this advertising game: the working woman, the strong woman, the baby woman, the mother woman, the easy woman: these woman things are all different faces of one model that is based on negative personality attributes, and this model seems normal as linked to the commodity being advertised more than being fabricated by the advertiser²⁹.

²⁴ In light of this, the ads worked on investing female characters in all places: Women always have capabilities linked to temptations, motherhood and house ruling. However, along with the traditional qualifications, new capabilities were added and were previously reserved exclusively for men: the competition, perfection, and social, financial and sexual control. That is what makes us believe that the example of the ideal contemporary women goes back to this mixed picture, while we rarely see ads that show men in a female role; and if they did, it displays them in a funny image and caricature, which reduces the credibility of this image.

The exchange of roles almost exclusively happened from masculine to feminine: it’s valued for women to adopt a male behavior, but on the contrary the error remained, and these mixed images of women exclusively translate the sustainability of the type of male dominance, through the mastery of neutrality model.

For more details: Perret, J.B (2003). Op.cit, p.163- 164

²⁵ This means that the advertising scene is a marriage with volatile manner between the current dynamic of the evolution of gender roles (as described by many actors since decades: the stability «neutrality» model made it closer than masculine, and embrace women more and more in mixed roles) and the desertion of the most typical behaviors of traditional masculinity.

²⁶ For more details: Martin, M. (1991). Communication et Médias de Masse Culture, Domination et Opposition. Québec: Presse de l’université de Québec, Télé-université, p.p173177-.

²⁷ For more details: Martin, M. (1991). Op.cit, p.180.

²⁸ For more details: Martin, M. (1991). Op.cit, p.182.

²⁹ For more details: Martin, M. (1991). Op.cit, p.319

C

Gender Presence Features in entertainment (series and songs)

The challenges behind women topics taking part in the intellectual domain go back to the fixed conceived presentations of women in the media world, according to philosopher Genvieve Fraisse. In the prejudice of those controlling the thought, women are attached to their appearance and eventually they are far from reality. Talking about women (reduced to their appearance) is therefore the specialty of media, and the latter, by taking interest in women topics, is looking for media impact, and by tackling women issues is compacting them to deprive them from their meaning. That is the fate of women: to be out of the conceptual field from one side, and the conceived representations –fashion- from the other³⁰.

Since women were marginalized in the field of producing ideas and codes, men consider that what they say is important, and therefore it is worth publishing. In other words, men gave themselves the role of producing thoughts and representations about women³¹. Thus, we can notice that there is a duality that governs women's image on Arab TV stations: either the woman is a topic for consumption, display, and "watching" or the conserved woman treated like a precious stone that should be saved and locked in a box. Unfortunately, these two theories meet at the same point, which perceives a woman as a body that only the other, particularly the man, decides how to deal with it and how he will use it, whether to cover it or unveil it!.

This kind of marginalization propagates to the level of receiving the messages and decoding their symbols. Women sometimes become, more than men, victims of a succession of images accompanying the waves of tension, violence, disasters, crises and conflicts in Lebanon and the Arab region that took place recently, in addition to the flowing images from waves of laughter, humor, fun and night-life which the Lebanese mastered displaying on TV stations, especially in times of crisis, for the succession between two extremes controls the human nervous system. Hence, such incidents cause anxiety and fear from one side and amusement from another side and prepares to a new wave of intimidation and so forth.

The violence, resulted from the succession of these images, becomes intermingled with gender-based violence. The components of violence (acts, images, words) against women in particular, become isolated individual acts of the daily life, and get infiltrated into pictures, jokes, melodies, songs, and different creative works.

A very good example is recent famous songs that display photos of violence against women or against rivals, due to the insistence of a group of men to consider a woman as one of their possessions³².

³⁰ Réseaux, Numéro 120.(2003). " Une communication sexuée?", dossier coordonné par Simone Bonnafous, Josiane Jouet, Rémy Rieffel, FTRFD. Paris: Hermes, science Publications.,pp.2627-.

³¹ For more details: Martin, M. (1991). Op.cit, p.365.

³² A number of songs that deal with gender- based violence became very common recently, including the Nawal Al-Zoghbi 's song "foa' jrouhi" , written by the poet Fares Skandar; the song dealt with the story of a divorced wife who is disputing her ex-husband about the custody of her children.



That is the reason why anti-domestic violence organizations worked throughout the recent years to work on passing their messages through artwork, so they started sponsoring video-clips, TV advertisings, and drama series in order to spread out awareness. For instance, during the period of monitoring Lebanese social TV shows, mainly in May 2015, the Lebanese singer Elissa launched a video clip for her song “Ya Mrayti”, and achieved high view rates that exceeded one million views after 5 days of broadcasting on YouTube.

It is worth- mentioning that the video clip tackled domestic violence, and specifically physical abuse. We see Elissa at the beginning of the video clip trying to hide the bruises by sunglasses, which the makeup artist removes. We also see her being hit, abused, thrown onto the floor, and she tries to hide that all the time from her children, as we see her in many scenes afraid and intimidated, and every time the spouse makes a move with his hand she shivers and moves away afraid that he’s willing to hit her. At the end of the video clip, the abused woman (Elissa) decides to ask for divorce and to raise her children on her own, saying: “It wasn’t the time by then; at that night I decided to put an end to my story with him, so that I can have a new beginning... Years passed, I moved on and wrote my story; my book is about a woman that suffered, maybe she’s watching me today to know that... No, it is not the end.” Elissa addresses women saying: “Break your silence, and don’t break your image in the mirror”. The end of the clip includes advertising for “KAFA” organization and the hot line in order to give a notice in case of violence ³³

Another example is the Tinder shows which became very common for a period of time in most of the Lebanese TV stations and which are scented with violence carried by the abusive social mentality towards the abused woman, picturing her as implicitly enjoying the rape and naturally lured to violence³⁴. This happens because the waves flow of images in media result in insensitivity towards the surrounding world, and in negligence and less desire in investing in public life where the cost is sometimes taking the place of the worshiped idol that is another ego, for when it is no longer a screen to make screen, we can simply believe that we can surpass the screen. Despite the coincidence, cinema and television scenarios in the nineties warned us of the situation away from the law and the outlaw, but the infinite violence which they displayed returns us back to the unstopped waves, revealing all its violence.

However, we should have taken a pace forward and understood that this display of violence has extracted mental and sensual mechanisms, which might be the from the receiver itself, who should have self-control within the waves of violence that conform to the fake and deceiving images in most of the cases ³⁵.

³³ “Ya Mrayti” song, written by Ahmad Mady and composed by Ziad Borji, was video-clipped for two days in Serbia under the direction of Angie Jamal that announced that the whole idea is hers.

³⁵For more details : Mongin, O. (2003). Une violence en mal de transgression, du contenu des scénarios à la réception des images. *Esprit: La société des écrans et la tv*, No. 293 (34/b) (Mars –Avril -2003(. PP.156- 164, ,p. 164.



In drama, the man is the one who produces the meaning in general, and the woman is the one who acts it. While monitoring gender presence in a sample of broadcasted series on Lebanese TVs in 2007, it seemed that these series included gender stereotyping that decreases and increases according to requirements of the plot, attracting audience, and mostly producing a consensual speech with the prevailing community culture. Thus, these series reflected, through the diversity of their stories, a stereotyped presentation of an eternal unsatisfied woman that embraces the culture and values of society, and gave an impression to men and women alike that they are in the stage of discovering themselves, and represented sufferings and social problems as individual pains.

Using analysis grids, gender stereotyping appeared on several levels:

- At the level of professions related to actors and actresses, men have free professions, while women are unemployed.
- At the living status level: women's status in series seemed harder than men's.
- At the level of capabilities, men's intellectual and educational abilities were higher than that of women.
- At the level of potentials, men's rate was higher than that provided to women. On the contrary, women preceded men in taking initiatives and making decisions.
- At the level of behavior, men were overshadowed by violent irritation, whereas women were calmly irritated. In other words, the position of a man that is exceeding the woman offered him the privilege to give orders, and woman's inferior status forced her to obey. So, the man seemed the competent, furious, and harasser, while the woman looked as the poor, deceived and searcher for real love.

The potentials were stereotyped as follows: the financial potentials of men and the beauty potentials of women. The result is money exploits beauty. Men took control of the whole community activities, so the powerful and successful woman seemed introspecting the patriarchal values and devoid of passion and femininity. As a result to this stereotype, the situation of the man, who is imprisoned by dominance, becomes harder than the situation of a woman. In addition, if the gender presence sometimes looks shaky, for example, some men appear weak and jobless whereas women appear strong and rebels. The gender linguistic significations were uttered by women as men, as women unconsciously introspect masculine expressions, such as "mozza", "tehfi", "ashta", and other patriarchal expressions that objectified women and made men lose their humanity³⁶.

While searching for aspects of the dramatic dealing with gender-based violence for a certain type of series on Lebanese TV stations in 2012, most of the scenario writers were females, and most of the directors were males. Moreover, the

³³ Al-qadiri, Issa, Nahawand. (2008). نحو تمكين النساء في الإعلام- من أجل تحقيق التكافؤ بين المواطنين والمواطنات. op.cit.



promotion of the episodes held gender-based violence indicators, as most of the monitored episodes held indicators of gender-based violent conduct, and the aggressors were adult men in the first place. First, the source of violence was the individuals, second, the groups and the mentality of the society. The first violence attitude revealed was psychological and verbal; the second was physical; the third was symbolic; the fourth was economic; the fifth was sexual; the sixth was legal.

The place, where violence was committed, was at homes and families in the first place. Most of the actors were male spouses who have high educational levels, belong to the middle class, work free professions, occupy middle social statuses, and face hard living conditions within an anxious social setting.

Most of the abused are adult females who haven't been married and have high educational levels; they have a free profession; they belong to the middle class; they have middle social status; they live in an anxious social setting. The first reaction of the abused was reluctant acceptance; the second was silence; the third was a spontaneous violent response; the fourth was acceptance. One third of the abused referred to a third party that is in the first place friends and family, whereas the reaction of the aggressor was the feeling of satisfaction first; second, apologizing and promising not to do the same action again and that he will compensate regarding what happened; third, lack of awareness of the act of violence.

According to drama, the main indicators of the causes of gender-based violence go back at first to the social mentality and habits; secondly to the decline in values, and thirdly to the family education. The effects of gender-based violence were reflected on families in the first place, then on the victimized women, and on aggressor himself. First, the TV series considered gender-based violence as individual, second as a social case that has been linked to the family, society, law, culture, political system respectively. The attempts of the series to exit from the gender stereotyping box stemmed from: first the desire to escape the social mentality; second, the plot requirements; and third, the desire of both³⁷.

While listening to a reduced sample of script writers and actors in the focus group session, which included Mona Tayeh, Shikry Anis Fakhoury, and Marwan Najjar, add to the actors Rola Hamadeh and Majdi Machmouchi, we discussed the factors leading to the growing tide of violence against women, only because they are women, along with the gender-based violence forms; we also discussed the forms and phases of dealing dramatically and urgently, in delicate cases like this, and in the thread separating the drama's consideration towards the problem as an individual work or a social responsibility.

We touched on what is necessary to do to improve the drama production in a way that serves the humanitarian cases including opposing violence against women. The most important stance from these people was that the simplest details in

³⁷ Check out: Al-qadiri, Issa, Nahawand. (2012). أوجه معالجة الإعلام اللبناني لموضوع العنف المبني على أساس النوع الاجتماعي. op. cit, p.51.



daily life hold violence against women, and the reasons behind that come from religion, education and society customs, in addition to that the physical difference demands social differences! And that the role of drama is to raise interest in the issue and its problematic ³⁸ .

Those people found that the drama isn't doing its job in addressing sensitive issues such as rape and incest; and since it is not presenting the real cases in our societies, it appears confined to rich people; moreover, drama has many problems such as: absence of clear strategies that have developmental and social goals; dominance of profitability mentality with television stations; observance of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf markets; violence of the Lebanese political system; censorship of the clergy that is worse than general, not to mention the apathy in communication between the creators and civil society organizations. In their view, the guarantee to reduce the chances of a misunderstanding the drama message is to draw a plan to apply on a large scale in all the dramas, and to look at the positive aspects of women's work. The problem lies in society, and the evidence is the reaction of women to some series that are saturated with violence scenes against women, and that portray women as satisfied with this violence while they still call their abusive husbands by adjectives like " Ibin aami, taj rasi, i.e. «My cousin, the crown of my head.»

³⁸ Episode conducted on Tuesday July 20, 2010, at the headquarters of the Lebanese Council to Resist Violence against Women, Beirut.

02

Gender presence consequences in current TV shows

Adopted programming mechanisms in connection with hardware requirements

It is beneficial to monitor the formation mechanism of any televised speech according to how TV works as a device in general. As it is known, the media outlet works in order to attract the partner during the exchange operation, as the sender has no reason of being without the receiver. Here the medium faces a problem, as it does not only have to demonstrate its credibility in front of the receiver, but has to do so for the largest possible number of recipients. In other words, even if the media outlet has educational and awareness goals about public opinion, it finds itself obliged to search for the largest possible number of citizens who consume the message, i.e., she must produce an information speech that is based on emotions most common within social and cultural groups, and that knows well the beliefs of these communities. Because of this dual objective, the media finds itself in a tense situation between two poles, each of which gives legitimacy to its work: seriousness and excitement. Whenever it leans toward the first, it loses the second, and vice versa. It is aware of this and that its game requires juggling between these two poles based on its ideology and the nature of the event ³⁹.

According to Bourdieu⁴⁰, television is managed by a soft ideology represented in daily doses and broadcast timing. Accordingly, in this climate of structural corruption, it is practicing symbolic violence, and its danger comes from the fact that the picture has a feature that can produce what literary critics call “influence of reality”.

Thus, TV currently seeks to exploit and flatter with the tastes of its audience by a production represented by rapid scenes which exhibit life experiences free of masks, and are mostly extreme and prepared to satisfy the tendency of lustful stares, peepshow and exhibitionist tendencies of the entertainment circles. That is how the temptation speech replaced the persuasion one (thus the increasing feminization), as the logic of the nice ambiance is more important than the logic of proof and evidence, according to “Debré”. The trend is to work more and more on the integration of everything into entertainment programs, everything has to be show business. Is there anything more beautiful than» showing of girls «!? Is there anything easier than showing differences and problems?! Is there something more sincere than expressing the feelings, sensations and emotions, especially that

³⁹ For more details: Charaudeau, P. (1997). *Le discours d'information politique*. Paris: éd: Nathan; p.80.

⁴⁰ Check out: Mahmoud, Sayed. (1999). “التلفزيون وأخطار الأيديولوجيا الناعمة، عن بورديو، التلفزيون وآليات التلاعب بالعقول”. *AlHayat newspaper*: 5 September 1999 issue.



the importance of entertainment in the visual culture stems from the TV viewing penetrates without noise, especially if the program was entertaining, popular and non-political; that puts the person before a new knowledge equation “beyond political”, reaching –without them realizing- his/her thought and practice patterns in the daily and professional life. For when it comes to a project addressing feelings, all resistance fades away, the practical and theoretical alternative cease to exist, and “watching” replaces “participating”⁴¹.

This adopted mechanism is manifested in the televised programs that import their working methods, aimed at maximizing profit, and at maintaining the status-quo. These programs leave their viewers absorbed with their problems in a vulgar and consumerist way, a very characteristic feature of Lebanese TV programs. The latter assemble pre-conceived scenes characterized by pursuing everything weird, exciting, and extraordinary, based on a conspiracy game between the producers and the case witnesses (it is unknown how it happens and the money involved) and the values guards. Some shattered attempts to break taboos happen by switching the balance of power of one party against the other, or by playing on contradictions inside the construct, the result always being high viewer ratings and maintaining the status-quo.

And in order to convince us of the reality of this pre-orchestrated scene, often do the presenters emphasize the fact that the witnesses they bring on stage came by their own will, and that the program aims only at either helping them solve their problems, voice their opinions, have government officials look into their issues, or preach to the astray and lead them to the correct path.

Consequently, Toni Khalifeh seemed in his program “1544” a fierce advocate of the dominating patriarchal structure and a safeguard to the common mentality that consider man’s abuse towards his wife as a personal issue, removing the legitimacy of third party’s interference, except for clergymen who seek reconciliation between the couple. This way, he skipped the law and worked to deepen the rift between the association itself, between the association and the clergy, as well as between activists, lawyers and families of the victims. Remarkably, while Khalifeh was touching on a violence incident practiced by a young man towards his old uncle, and later on his sister because she reported him, used at many occurrences the word “scandalized him”, and this is an evidence about the level of Khalifeh’s condemnation of the violence that varies depending on the gender of the victim.

Khalifeh also used the difference in the clergy’s opinions towards the veil, to lead us to the conclusion that the veil summarizes the humanity, chastity and purity of women, in the sense that he brought us back to the stereotyped image that blur the woman’s personality and judges her by what she is wearing, whether revealing or otherwise. In his and his guest’s analysis on the incident of the media figure Kawthar Bashrawy kissing a soldier’s shoes, they assumed that kissing the shoes is exclusively a female act and that only women do such acts, they did not mention for example the rural settings where kissing hands, feet, and sometimes shoes, are widespread and carried by men.

⁴¹ Check out: Maatouk, Frederick. (1995): «التلفزيون الذي يحتفل بمناسباتنا بالنيابة عنا». AlHayat newspaper: 2 September 1995 issue



Khalifeh took advantage of the peculiarity of a marriage incident of 62-year-old man to a new-born girl in order to create a case for his show, without elevating to the level of tackling it; so he started by calling on the Sharia law to know their opinion about that contract and when can the family apply it, underlining the sectarian differences between Sunnis and Shiites on this issue and ignoring the violence aspect of such act on the baby, whose mom has caused due to her ignorance; thus he closed the door before addressing this case from a humanitarian perspective. The evidence is that Khalifeh has hosted two clergies (Sunni and Shiite) without hosting anyone from the humanitarian and legal organizations. Through the questions he posed to the two Sheikhs, Khalifeh seemed seeking for answers that legitimize such act, alluding that if the Sharia authorized it then we can understand, ignoring a highly significant cause currently being advocated called “Forced Child Marriage”.

Moreover, in some segments, Khalifeh didn't notice the intersection of gender-based violence with political and class factors, and closed the subject being keen not to touch the political structure, by playing with the tackled problem and letting the victim become the aggressor.

The way he poses the questions urged one of his guests to identify with the criminal and confess her desire to use the same methods he uses with his victim, in case she had the chance to persecute him. Khalifeh, the continuous defender of the patriarchal society, often falls in the trap of contradiction, as he blames female and male singers for spreading out their secrets and their private life stories, whereas he is seeking for and gasping for such news as material for his program.

This in addition to the gender stereotyping that filled the questions and answers of his program segments, reproducing the mainstream mentality about the roles and attributes of each gender: The woman is always ready to meet her husband's desires, and if necessary, prepares a sudden dinner for his guests late at night; there is also the woman who should accept the verbal abuses and humiliations, in addition to another one who lives the obsession of the outer appearance and aging, and yearns for plastic surgeries, as well as the immature woman, etc...

This is violence based on the continued rooting in women of the feeling of physical humiliation (through marginalizing all women's bodies that are incompatible with the strict standards of the male's desire: ugly, old and obese), resulting from the fact that women have adopted this view. It is a process supported with pictures that are covered by the media outlets and the beauty factories that break down many women's self-esteem⁴².

That is what “Bourdieu” called that symbolic violence, where the dominant applies the standards built on the dominant's point of view. This makes these standards appear as natural and leads to a kind of self-hatred and systematic self-denial; this is the fact witnessed in our contemporary world, through women's view about their bodies whose characteristics do not conform to the beauty standards imposed by “fashion ”⁴³.

⁴² Check out: Réseaux.(1999).p.30,in Lowy,p.130.

⁴³ For more details: Bourdieu, P. (1998). La domination masculine. Paris: éd. Seuil, collection Liber, p.55.



The presenter of “Lelnasher” program was perplexed while running the episodes that address from one side a topic that she considers thrilling, strange, shocking, and vulgar, expressing disregard and lack of ethics of the couple who published the pornographic film, and from the other side, the program keeps on broadcasting scandalous video segments of the couple, by hiding the face and genitalia, and masking the family name.

The question here is “what is the benefit of it?” The husband was hosted in the studio, and the presenter urged and provoked the wife to appear and defend her point of view.

This game, based on the installation of a shocking and attracting scene on one hand, and the persistence of the program managers to show concern for ethics and morals through bashing who carried out this work, giving advices and preaching them; on the other hand, the game created violence which appeared on the face, tone and gestures of the presenter as if she’s saying: I am not convinced with what I am doing, yet I am obliged to do so, and that is what the program requires, that’s what the camera wants and I’m here to serve it.

Because the scene is required per se, the absence of view-points other than the accused witnesses was notable, whether legal, psychologist or technology expert in order to learn how the videos were leaked on Facebook. In addition, “the Cause of Zainab” in her program was not to shed light on the issue of female prisoners in Lebanon, the conditions of their arrests, conditions surrounding them, or girls trafficking and drug dealing, but as a matter of sexual excitement and revelations that were mentioned in the segment title, and which Zainab repeated it more than once while narrating her story in the studio and in the report.

Furthermore, the program did not intend, while addressing the chapter of «the clergy, financial blackmail and sexual harassment», to discuss the legitimacy and authority of the clergy in controlling the fate of the people, not in isolating themselves away from accountability, but it aimed at drawing a shocking and weird spectacle, that includes sexual appeals that get more inflamed in the presence of taboos and holy sites. For this reason, episode designers began this spectacular chapter with suspense by warning parents who have children under 18 from watching the report or moving them to another room «because it includes shocking and tough words. The question here: If that is the case, why show it? That was quite like smoking advertisings which are always associated with the Ministry of Health warning of its fatal danger.

Besides, the aim behind touching on one of the episodes concerning the abduction of a minor girl (Farah) and her forced marriage didn’t aim at addressing the underage girls’ marriage, and shedding light on the causes and consequences towards the girl and the community, but at the exchange of accusations between the guests (the girl’s father and her fiancé on one hand, and the girl and the father of her husband, on the other hand), and a cleric to apply the Islamic Sharia in the case. The discussion



missed hosting other parties that tell about Farah's mental, psychological and humanitarian state, as if the program gives Shariah the exclusive right to decide the fate of the girl in order to close the subject.

The hostility expressed by Karaki, every now and then, presented by the tone of her voice or in the firm closure of the topic- which is not tactful sometimes towards the guests, and is caused by the double pressure she's facing for what she wants, and what the program requires- were not guaranteed with the Islamic preacher Sibai. She was already forced to wear the hijab upon the preacher's condition in order to show up in her program outside the studio; and when she had the opportunity, during his prolonged speech while digressing from the subject he had to speak about, she kicked back the ball and stopped him, in a way he found unsuitable for a Sheikh who was given the right to impose his conditions to show up in her program. So she said: «I am here the chief of the studio, and I decide what happens here», so he continued his answer in order not to waste time in a “non-sense” discussion.

Consequently, the scene design ran out of hand, to become more important and an interesting material for the Arabic and foreign media, and to build analysis based on gender and intertwined with political views, stances and prejudgments of Arab women. Thus, this tape became a rich media material for many newspapers and news websites, which devoted their front pages for the material, and agreed unanimously to praise the audacity of this media figure that refused the insult.

Perhaps what Karaki has said to the British “Guardian” newspaper requires a pause and thinking about the confusion which the female media figures are facing due to their current unenviable status in this kind of shows.

Karaki obtained a significant level of consciousness in gender-related cases, even if she kept introspecting the forms of discrimination that pushes her to deny the pressure and oppression she's facing from the program mechanism that is already built on a macho mentality of a hierarchical structure that exploits the tragedies, problems and feelings of the lower classes of women and marginalized people to form an attractive scene to the advertiser.

From one side, Karaki doesn't want to explain Sibai's speech in her program in the frame of gender discrimination for she doesn't know his intentions, and she doesn't see that the case is related to religion or political stances, but it is rather related to ethics. From the other side, she talks about the patriarchal society that judges women from their appearance.

In this context, many questions are raised to Karaki, and perhaps the answers might make her more confused: what is the relation between the gender discrimination and intentions? Let's suppose that there is a connection, weren't the Sibai discriminating intentions clear when he imposed his previous condition on her to put on the hijab, so he can show up in the program, even if he was outside the studio? Of course, she reluctantly accepted for the sake of the program that is a typical version of the patriarchal system that I already mentioned. Is it true that what happened between



her and Sibai has nothing to do with religion or political position but it is related to ethics and morals? Where's that? In a program that pretends keenness for ethics and act reversibly with his guests as he humiliates them, penetrates their privacy, purchase their problems retailed and sell them as wholesale to the adviser. Across the race to obtain the highest number of views, and, of course, it protects itself by neutralizing the current political and religious structure, whose symbols are often required to decide regarding the proposed topics, and to close any treatment that leads to a change for the better.

Despite the fact that TV presenter Joe Maalouf is very respectful of his guests (males and females) in his program "Hki Jales", and expresses his gratitude towards them for participating in his program, and reveals his unlimited enthusiasm to uncover the corruption and distortions in the Lebanese society, and despite dedicating a fair number of episodes to tackle women's issues, and hosting feminist activists more than once, his program nevertheless includes, whether voluntarily or not, opinions and expressions that indicate gender discrimination and establish the ease of abuse of woman's body and disrespect of her human dignity.

In one of the episodes, women were reduced to one category that only cares about appearance. This is an exaggeration as it is belittling the woman and her wisdom, and reflecting an image that she is an obsessed and shallow creature who tries seducing men by her looks. This conceals other categories of women (the drudges, strugglers, and workers in order to support their families). In another instance, Joe Maalouf's was not convincing in justifying relaying defamatory speech about women "to expose to people the size of sectarian and confessional speeches, for it is not an accidental act». The goal does not justify the means. However, it transfers the conflict and hatred to a wider audience, even though we only see a sexual connotation by men of a term related to a woman's body.

The working mechanism of "Bila Tashfeer" program, is based on designing an attractive scene for the viewers, by surfing the internet and digging in the so-called yellow press/tabloids and entertainment shows, in order to look for public personalities that are either famous, or looking for fame by taking shortcuts around the common social norms.

This makes good material for the show producers who play the role of scolder, preacher, aggressor, summoner..etc while claiming religious, moral, and political legitimacy in order to play the role of the judge, investigator, and the public opinion spokesperson. All of this happens in complicity between the host and the hosted in order to increase his/her stardom by feeding it with doses of fame while increasing viewer ratings. It does not matter what indications this scene brings with respect to the humiliation of woman as human entity, or exerting different forms of violence towards her by digging into her privacy and intimacy, even though it is presented as self-inflicted by emphasizing the fact that she came to the show by her own will. Bleik often tries to increase the excitement in his episodes, though the viewers didn't have in mind that they might hear from him a question on air that crosses all red lines and limits of decency.



He asked his guest: Is it true that you had sex with your business manager in the parking? The guest denies, and the presenter calls the journalist who published the news, the latter clarified that he said by mistake in one of the interviews that the singer is L.A. (Layal Aboud) whereas in reality it is F.M. Hence, we discover afterwards that the news is incorrect and the presenter already knows that, but despite the fact he insisted on posing this question on air to a woman working in the artistic field.

Bleik doesn't feel satisfied with playing the role of the investigator but also plays the role of a preacher, as he once asked one of his guests: If you stand facing 'Kaaba', what do you ask from God? To forgive your sins? When she answered him "I am a believer who prays and fasts", he answered her in a surprised tone: "You don't have sins!" He usually gives himself the right to violate his guests' privacy, asking questions as an investigator, and using body language such as putting his hand on the guests' chair and turning around it. By conclusion, the viewers find themselves before an image of irresponsible woman: careless for her dignity; her prime intention is to take advantage of men; collects money and wastes it unconsciously; has babies without marriage. Therefore, in order to humiliate, insult her, and push her to cry, Bleik brings in motherhood, Sharia law, society and the village, to 'whip' her and force her to 'whip' herself.

Gender sometimes intertwines with the familial affiliation and political allegiance, exactly as what happened in the episode that hosted Boushra Khalil. The program producer wanted to create a scene inspired by another TV program (1544), so they hosted a lawyer that was provoked by the presenter from the beginning as he described her as "heroine and iron lady", wondering if she will be a heroine in this episode, without knowing from where he came up with this attribute.

Is that because she had a fight with her colleague in Tony Khalifeh's program or insulted each of Mrs Nazek and Bahiya Hariri? Is it because she was the lawyer of Saddam Hussein, or because she is currently defending Bashar Assad? Is it because she ran for elections against the list of president Berry, or because she criticized Saad Hariri and Ashraf Rifi? These assumptions carry a stereotyping image about the strong woman that is usually described as Mannish.

Thus, Bleik's concentration during the episode was on taking away the feminism attribute from her, because in his mentality the woman is a thing possessed by a man, and feminism is related to marriage, motherhood, loveliness, low voice, away from politics, as this domain in his point of view is a pure male topic. Bleik's speech contained discriminatory stereotypes as he allured his guest the lawyer and the political figure to fall in the trap of these stereotypes, in a way she's not aware of, for he touched on the delicate topic of "aging, not being married and having no children.» And in order to surpass her "heroism" as he described her at the beginning of the episode, Bleik referred to the dancer stereotype to degrade her or to "score a point" against the lawyer, politician and daughter of a decent family, as Boushra Khalil described herself.



Likewise, in one of the episodes, the program theme was inspired from cyberspace, and the scene was constructed around a model, mother of a baby, daughter of a famous doctor, and wife of a famous singer, who is regularly posting her personal and intimate life and news on her Facebook page in an exhibitionist manner. Thus, the presenter goes deep in insulting and humiliating his guest, pauses to preach and advice, then repeats, until he makes her to cry and regret. The weird thing is the conspiracy between the presenter and his guest, as we rarely see objection towards any of the questions despite the insults that are sometimes clear, and other times concealed. We, as viewers, do not understand these questions, and cannot also understand the following: The justification, provided by the guest to the presenter after all these questions, is: «No one should feel annoyed from Tamam (presenter); that's his work, and I had to accept or not accept.»

Furthermore, in another episode, Bleik brought the players to his stage through a conversation on one of the TVs for a star named “Men have become extinct”, and through nudity in more than a protest for his hero named “king of nudity”. He designed this scene, indicating that this would give both guests the right to face each other regarding the concept of “manhood” which was lost among the maze of humor, laughter, and mockery shared between the guests. In addition, the concepts of beauty, feminism, and the practiced violence against women in its physical and symbolic forms were lost. Accordingly, the episode carried in its novelty insulting stereotyped images against both women and men due to the material presented by the presenter and the guests. It was worth-mentioning that a complex insult was directed to women, when the “Abo Milhib” described the man who hits his wife as a “woman”, and the presenter didn't object to that.

The same scene design reiterates in the episode that hosted one of the models, whom he reminded of hosting her as a favor by increasing her popularity, and went to the extremes in humiliating her to the extent of accusing her of nastiness and scum, etc... He also put her in comparison with the descent and taintless people and the conservative oriental society, then he switched to preaching and advising her, wearing the image of decency and purity and denouncing the prostitution advertising on TV stations, as he thought that what his program is performing is the peak of holiness, chastity and purity. He also accuses the model of distorting the image of Lebanese women. The collusion game looks clear when he finds that she is the guest that gave the highest number of silly confessions in his program, so she answers him complimenting these absurdities already required.

In general, the televised programs, tackled earlier, went deeply into consolidating the stereotyping and maintaining the macho patriarchal structure, due to several considerations: competition, TV set requirements, the status of workers in the media, absence of gender awareness, ineffectiveness of the ongoing censorship tools, and the conditions of the audience who is overwhelmed by its problems and drawn to the problems of others.; That made these programs register a decline regarding gender presence in media. The question is therefore whether this presence varies with the variance of the media outlet, which is what we will find while we discuss printed press.

03

Gender Dilemma in Printed and Electronic Media

Tackling the news of famous women journalists in order to highlight their successes, courage they displayed, or discrimination they suffered from due to a stance they took, fall under what Bourdieu called “the circular motion of information”, whether at the level of the personalities or the topics raised.

Criticism of televised media by the printed press has formed a significant breach in the world of media, since it is easy for media outlets to try to present themselves constantly before political and economic authorities as defenders of freedom of expression; however it's very difficult to exercise this freedom before itself, especially if it was issued by one of the journalists who work in that institution, since media-media reticence was a phenomenon that prevailed for a long time in the world of media.

Hence, it's difficult to investigate about oneself (if the media outlet played the roles of both a party and a judge, it would be running a risk, since there are no genuine tools to analyze the content of televised shows and published articles, except if the one who is confronting this mission will personally define the field that is being addressed by the journalist.) Besides, it is practically impossible to measure the validity of the presented results; it's difficult to investigate fellow colleagues for fear of reciprocity; press syndicates raise the subject of ethics from time to time, in a regular conviction manner; and demands rarely lead to collective struggles;.

Not to mention the absence of punishment or announcing it in cases of errors or lapses committed by editors such as: mistakes, hidden promotion, tricks, bias and forgetfulness. In light of the above, it is legitimate to ask questions about how to resolve the conflicts between the institution and the journalist about certain fundamental issues. Not to mention that media figures should show humility and shouldn't claim transparency. And in order for the media to enjoy some credibility, it should show humility without claiming transparency, have the courage to refuse illusion of realism, as well it should be creative, find new formulas and manage the relation between figures of: media, politics and citizenship.

Moreover, media figures have to be humble, knowing that they would be unaware of some issues and mistakes or fail to decide on some issues. The responsible journalist is the one who gives evidences, raise problems rather than deciding on them, and formulate final provisions. At the individual level, every person has the right to think and say what he/she wants within the framework of legal rules. Yet, if someone claims that he/she wants to teach, he/she shall bear new responsibility in addition to the right of expression.



Hence, it's necessary to distinguish between the work that is close to communication and that which relates to information ⁴⁴. In light of the stiff competition between TV stations to record highest viewer ratings and as some media figures are, unsupervised, ignoring media standards, unmasking media becomes an urgent need, so that viewers can know the conditions of the profession, the type of programs they are watching, conditions of practicing journalism, screen stars, their incomes, their limits etc. This has been addressed by a number of Lebanese newspapers a short time ago, dedicating sections to monitor and criticize the audio and visual media.

In addition to the criticism of televised programs, the printed press addresses women in several ways to highlight creative and artistic works that address women's issues in a meaningful way, highlight extraordinary women, criticize marketing practices that exploit and degrade women, and point up urgent transformations of women's situation that contradict and oppose the stereotypical mental structure historically designed for women's characters and roles. In addition to the questions raised about the male-dominated politics in Lebanon and the studies that tackle gender discrimination.

As for gender-based violence, we notice that the printed press - and in view of the uprisings, tensions, violence, armed conflicts and terrorist acts- addresses this issue merely as a "news" and in an incomplete way due to the difficulty of investigation and the unusual challenges journalists face in the field, this made media resort to witnesses, foreign media outlets without being able to verify or even compare information with other sources, or resort to reports issued by the United Nations or international human rights organizations, without analyzing them, rather transferring content in a way that combines amusement and seriousness, reality and illusion. The most prominent example of that is the problem being tackled herein and that reflects the failure of media to deal with such a complex problem that carries not only violence, but violence that leads to insensitivity and thus hampers movement.

In terms of the analytical treatment of the gender-based violence and in light of conflicts, wars and immigration, we can find various simplified treatments that often settle for relevant articles issued by the UN or published online or posted on social media.

Regarding the way that news printing press addresses gender-based violence, whether domestic or public, it was clear that this media moved from the stage of simplified treatment of the news towards complex treatment that encompasses the subject's dimensions and legal, social and political backgrounds and addresses it in several aspects: judicial, administrative, psychological and living; though sometimes a number of outlets attempt to cover up the dominating structure or avert certain errors or negligence committed against the victims of violence.

⁴⁴ The article will be close to contact if it is based on single source, in the absence of disputes, if it doesn't underestimate the reader and if it is unsigned and presented for free. This kind of media indicates either convenience or a need to guide the reader. On the contrary, the objective article that reveals all parties' positions towards any conflict, and allows the reader to judge, without concealing any gaps, even from the sender, this article will be close to media even if it is published in the institution's newspaper, this kind of media reveals the sincere efforts exerted to search for the truth.

For more details: Lagardette, J. (2006). *L'information responsable- un défi démocratique*. Paris: éd. Charles Leopold Mayer, p.89.



The analytical processing was as well characterized by seriousness, in view of its interaction with the real actions of civil society, human rights activists and legal experts, in addition to some leading judicial rulings and available academic studies and data. This was reflected in journalists' adoption of interrelated methodologies and combined approaches with a gender perspective, especially female journalists who became activists in the fight against this type of violence. The absence of gender sensitivity from the printing press discussions about media and advertising laws, their implementation and weak points, was remarkable; except for an investigation conducted by journalist Vivian al-Khawli on "Now" website, titled: "Women in Lebanese ads:

Commodities, Absence of Laws." At first, the report pointed out to several examples of using the woman as a sexual object on TV, in street billboards and in commercial advertising, wondering who is to blame for exploiting women in the Lebanese advertisements, and what about censorship? Besides, the disputes between some media figures and censorship authorities sparked a debate over the eligibility, legitimacy, legality and discretionary of the situation and over the relation between media and the judiciary. Consequently, media figures, especially females, started to recognize how much it's important that laws keep up pace with changes on the ground, knowing that this wave of awareness remained incomplete due to the absence of gender sensitivity.

04

Best practices to reach a non-discriminatory attitude towards gender in Media and more balanced representations of women

As a final conclusion, the observer of gender presence in Lebanese media can notice that the role of females is growing day after day, whether in terms of numbers or diversity of tasks and missions⁴⁵. However, the quantity of females was rarely translated into effective quality that influences media production process and content of media messages.

Indeed, this qualitative shift is being hampered by a number of obstacles, some are common between both genders, and others are specific to females. Considering media ownerships and chairmanship of the Board of Directors from a gender perspective, we find that it is difficult for females to overstep this glass barrier even if they were holders of advanced degrees sparkling with intelligence and excellence. Besides, if we consider the regulatory frameworks governing media, National Media Council, syndicates that are almost devoid of women, and laws and proposals to amend those laws, we notice that all lack gender sensitivity.

Not to mention that the observer has lately found himself before a televised scene devoid of any ethical standards that govern media work, witnessing this stiff competition between TV stations to record highest viewer ratings and thus attract advertisers, whether or not that scene was at the expense of women and their dignity, as long as the program organizers have preserved their interests and their patriarchal structure, made it more legitimate and gave it the last word, thus hindering any possibility to solve gender-based issues related to discrimination or violence. However, the observer of electronic and printing press finds that the gender stereotypical image was breached by a number of young journalists, mainly females who gained sensitivity on gender issues either by experience or training.

This was reflected as well in criticism that targeted televised programs using women as sexual objects at the expense of their dignity, and in media coverage of crimes committed against women that puts the incident in its legal context, unveils reasons, deals with results, and interacts with the mobility of civil society in this regard. And this appeared as well in the interaction with gender studies and in conducting investigations into gender gaps like tackling the issue of women migration for work or their work in professions that used to be heavily dominated by men, given that gender diversity is merely an embodiment of democratic diversity.

This development achieved by the printing press (paper or electronic) in addressing domestic violence has no equivalent in terms of covering gender-based violence in

⁴⁵ Check out: Al Kadiri, Issa, Nahawand, Harb, Souad. (2002). الإعلاميات والإعلاميون في التلفزيون - بحث في الأدوار والمواقع. Beirut: Arab Cultural Center -Lebanese Female Researchers Gathering.



wars, conflicts and terrorist acts, since media coverage seemed to be limited and helpless, suffering from resource scarcity, resorting to foreign sources, reports and study centers, without even attempting to investigate into the dimensions and backgrounds of foreign media coverage.

And in light of laws that govern media work, censorship and organizational structures, we notice that journalists who addressed lawsuits that are filed against their colleagues, and looked into censorship and failure of laws to keep up pace with technology, and relation between judiciary and the law, have neglected gender sensitivity in their coverage.

Whereas, the head of the media office in the General Security Brigadier Mounir Akiki has diagnosed the censorship problem, saying: “Visual ads are subject to prior authorization, however there are no articles in the law that prevent the appearance of a woman’s body.” Akiki added, “We are exerting lots of efforts to bridge gaps between legal controls and companies’ interests. For this reason, the censorship body tends sometimes to consult social and psychological advisors or even the group or center targeted in the ad (self-employment, children, or civil or religious institutions).

Hence the ad will be presented before a committee to scrutinize and reach a final decision that satisfies both parties.” And he added, “The role of women in ads exists, and sometimes this role exploits and abuses women,” explaining that even if visual ads or billboards are licensed, newspapers and magazines have the right to publish the ad as it was before being edited, since newspaper ads are not subject to prior authorization. Voicing sorrow over this situation, the Brig. blamed the feminine civil society who has never advocated for this cause.

He said that women’s outcry highly affects the society and thus helps amending some articles, knowing that competent parliamentary committees are currently (2013) discussing a new media law ⁴⁶, though we have not noticed gender sensitivity among the parties who proposed a new media law (Maharat Institution with MP Ghassan Mukhaiber), and we have not noticed this sensitivity neither in Parliament’s Media & Communication Committee that has worked on the project, nor in the media figures who interacted with and discussed the proposal.

Based on the foregoing, we can conclude that the gender presence problematic still exists in media outlets and sometimes pressing for several parties concerned with women’s human and citizenship rights. As soon as gender stereotyping of the roles and positions of both genders takes one step backwards, it moves many steps forward. Despite the fact that the number of female journalists is increasing in Lebanese media, this was rarely accompanied by new methods and approaches in addressing gender-based violence, since media figures whether males or females are being exposed to hidden and implicit violence derived from the dominating media, political, cultural and economic system, and sometimes derived from the audience itself.

⁴⁶ Check out: Al-Kholi, Vivian(2013). المرأة في الإعلانات اللبنانية: سلعة ولا قوانين رادعة». <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/ar/nowspecialar/> Published: 1006:28 ,2013/01/ PM.



Even those who have gender sensitivity weren't able to address this problem well enough; especially in light of a situation where media finds itself before a behavior-oriented vision - i.e. seeing what is visible – and in light of a situational treatment related to events, and work methods governed by scoops on one side and excitement on the other, which have become typical commercial methods accompanied by unprecedented symbolic violence.

This scene media aiming at attracting wide audiences and therefore advertisers, employs speech to defuse violence and tension on one hand, rebuke the self by stripping it and re-scolding it on the other, and ignore the offender and ridicule the subject on a third hand.

This fact urges all parties to think of ways to make media a real partner in accelerating the problematization of this subject, and preparing for holding a legal and human rights debate, and to push for continuously questioning its methods and working mechanisms, and to question the hierarchy controlling the prioritization of agendas, and the role of women in this hierarchy in the production, content, and consumption., so that the responsibility won't be decomposed and Media won't misinterpret discrimination and gender-based violence since they overlap with discrimination and violence based on class, living, regional and sectarian differences. Media content was the best evidence of the violence that dominates the social mentality which oppresses abused women especially raped and harassed ones. The Lebanese society, where modern violence and decisive traditional lifestyles coexist, legitimizes violence and converts it into a normal act. This makes gender-based violence a complex violence based on a social mentality that is governed by modern and traditional violence.

Arab Experiences/ Attempts to Enhance Women's Position & Role in Media

Far from the Lebanese situation that is tainted by carelessness and chaos, and in light of the progress realized on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 20 years after its adoption in the Arab region⁴⁷, in media-related part in particular, we find that procedures and legislations varied between Arab countries to promote women's position and role in media outlets and their organizational structures, enhance media outlets' professional performance to help produce images that reflect women's various situation far from exploitation and standardization, sensitize media female and male figures to gender issues, and boost the capacities and skills for workers in national institutional mechanisms. Those procedures varied between countries. They included law amendments, establishment of central organizational structures to guide media work, development of Codes of Conduct that govern media, encouragement of women to specialize in media, training male and female media figures on gender issues, involvement of some national institutional mechanisms in the media work through the production of some media-related materials, sponsorship of some programs, creation of some websites and promotion of media censorship on women's image.

For example, in Morocco, audio-visual communications law was amended in 2014, to prevent defamation that abuses women or promotes gender-based discrimination from being published. In the same context, a number of conditions were imposed on public TV channels, including the requirements of promoting female presence in media. In 2013, a Charter of Ethics was drawn, urging public media outlets to respect the gender issue in their programs. In 2014 in Bahrain, a new comprehensive draft resolution on media was put forward, according to the report, and it was referred later to Parliament to be passed, it mainly prohibits abusing women's image and infringement of rights and freedoms. Moreover, a press charter was drawn in 2012 in addition to the issuance of another charter for audio-visual media and a behavior guide. In Iraq, Journalist Rights Law Draft no, 21 was approved in 2011 especially that many journalists, including females, were victims of terrorism.

Centralized entities were introduced in some countries to guide media; Tunisia is one of those countries where media has witnessed several changes since 2011, where the ministry of telecommunication was dissolved, new and private media outlets emerged, media freedom increased and debates and political news flourished, and the Independent Authority of Audiovisual Communication was created and

⁴⁷ I personally participated in wording its final draft, check out: ESCWA (2015), Report Implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action +20, www.escwa.un.org



it established specifications for the granting of operating licenses, knowing that all outlets who gain the license must abide by a number of basic principles such as respecting women's rights and reversing deeply rooted stereotypes against women in media, with the aim of establishing balanced audio visual media scene. In Bahrain, the Supreme Body of Information and Communication was established in 2013 as an independent body specialized in preparing the project of the National Plan for Media, Supervision and Control of Media and Ads Content, to ensure that media outlets are abiding by international agreements and profession regulations related to boosting women's role in society and protecting children's rights, where women account for 43 per cent of the total members.

In Oman, The Public Authority for Radio and Television was established in 2010. Besides, a number of Arab countries have also prepared studies on ways to strengthen the professional capacity of media figures, from a gender perspective, and organized training courses and workshops for this reason. In Algeria, a program was established to strengthen the capacities of professionals with regard to the issue of women in media, in a bid to improve their new image away from stereotypes. In Bahrain, the national plan for the advancement of Bahraini women (2013- 2022) was developed in order to change the dominant culture and the stereotypical image of women. Besides, the Supreme Council for Women presented a training program to train a network of trainers on women's issues and organize workshops for male and female media figures on strategic planning for media. In Sudan, 240 media figures were trained across various states on the concept of gender and reproductive health, implementation of workshops on the role of media in reducing the causes of maternal mortality from social and cultural perspective, broadcast of a number of programs on various media outlets on raising health, legal and environmental awareness for women, and produce plays and documentaries to fight harmful habits.

Further Steps to Ensure Balanced Images for Women in Media

In essence, in order to ensure balanced images for both males and females in the Lebanese media, to establish work standards for media that respects human far from gender-based discrimination and stereotypical images that harm vulnerable and marginalized groups especially women, and to ensure fair and equitable participation whether to get work or, practice the profession or establish plans and programs to influence various policies, it is necessary to achieve the following:

- Consider gender-based discrimination as a freestanding topic and not included with other forms of discrimination, since its solutions require work on many levels and need the efforts of all parties involved⁴⁸.
- Knowing that Lebanese laws that govern media are in urgent need of a comprehensive review that takes into consideration developments that affect media and women, it is necessary to urge all concerned parties to find suitable environment for male and female journalists, apart from the pressure applied by employers, advertisers and target audience, through adopting laws that govern the methods of work, employment, promotion, training and presentations in a fair and balanced way. The possibility of achieving that depends on the quality of interactive links between female and male journalists, civil society organizations, human rights activists, academics and judges who are renowned for just and fair judgments. For example, in this regard, the guiding agenda of Center of Arab Women for Research and Training suggested the following:
 - ▶ Publish and circulate the Media Parity Index proposed by “Kawthar Center” to identify discrimination between male and female media figures in various media institutions.
 - ▶ Work on amending laws that govern journalism, making it include, in a clear and explicit way, the need of ensuring equality between men and women in jobs, salaries, promotions, training and ongoing training.
 - ▶ Urge media institutions to adopt transparent and fair standards that take into account gender equality in employment, salaries, training, ongoing training, tasks and promotions⁴⁹.

⁴⁸ E.G. a royal study indicated that the Code of Professional Ethics for press association doesn't include any provisions about gender equality or any requirements or regulations on sexual harassment, and it vaguely combines discrimination and sexual harassment with general forms of discrimination. Check out Malak (2015) Op. Cit.

⁴⁹ The document calls for adoption of Unified Arab Media Charter (Gender)-check out : 2010) (الوسط) – (الوسط العربي: مؤنث مظهر... مذكر عدداً وقراراً ونشراً» - الوسط البحرينية» issue 2676, Sunday, Jan. 3rd, 2010



■ Establish traditions at work, for the sake of promoting the media profession itself, such as forming neutral committees for every outlet to monitor the quality of work especially in terms of gender-based discrimination. In this regard, head of Women Journalists Association, Pascale Colisson, said that the issue is a matter of will and volunteering, there is no possibility of coercion or force, citing “Le Monde” newspaper that established an internal cell to monitor its content and alert to the way women’s image is treated on the newspaper’s pages⁵⁰. In the same context, and at the level of institutionalization of gender in media, the Media Parity Index issued by “Kawthar Center,” proposed integrating gender with the documents that organize the work of TV channels and radio stations and stressed the need for having diversity in images and respecting women and their dignity. In addition to producing statistics classified by gender to be included in the studies and reports issued by syndicates and bodies, to form a key indicator for respecting the gender approach and the principles of equality.

■ Urge male and female journalists to overweight union action and add value to the meaning of this work, not only through claiming journalists’ rights and safeguarding their freedom, but through making journalists engage in debates over the profession and the concepts that govern it, filling the law-free void, setting work ethics that raise the profession to a model of democracy, in addition to putting reference points for gender issues in unions that currently exist.

■ Regardless of the previous stances on censorship and away from the endless debate on censorship usefulness and the best methods that must be followed to contribute to improving the quality of media, artistic and creative work as a freestanding work instead of considering it as a tool used by influential people in an arbitrary and discretionary way that hinders creativity and stifles freedom of thought, it is necessary to recognize the importance of the inclusion of the gender issue in the functioning of censorship bodies and help them develop censorship standards regardless of type from the gender perspective. Those steps could be taken by demanding unified censorship standards among all outlets, assigning a unified censorship body, establishing basics for gender issues, and training workers in the censorship body in order to provide them with skills that help them take decisions away from discretionary.

■ Push for the establishment of gender reference points across various regulatory frameworks that govern media, such as the Ministry of Information and National Media Council. Moreover, push for reconsideration of the structure and powers of this council from a gender perspective.

■ Activate the method of media-media criticism because it contributes to liven up the debate and discussion over the profession, its working methods and its ethics.

■ Work hard to develop gender sensitivity among male and female journalists through continuous training and making advantage of the expertise of some journalists, mainly in printing press, and work accordingly. Besides, dismantle media processors and unveil its stereotypical side, pointing up the methods that

⁵⁰ Sous la direction de Marlène Coulomb- Gully. (2011). «Médias: La fabrique du genre», in Sciences de la société, revue publiée avec le concours du CNRS, du centre national du livre et le soutien de I.IUT Paul Sabatier, numéro 832011-, éd. Presses Universitaires du Mirail..Entretien avec Pascale Colisson président de l’association des femmes journalistes par Smati Nozha ,pp. 153- 160.



are adopted and the ones being neglected, and highlighting the stereotypical phrases and formulas and gender-based language.

■ Cooperate with academic parties and vocational training centers in a bid to insert the gender issue into university programs, introduce a new diploma in gender studies at the Lebanese University, and advise theses and dissertations to discuss this issue and benefit from the relevant studies.

■ Introduce gender issues into the core of the laws that govern media work and set up reference points for gender issues among the bodies that are specialized in the application of laws. General Security Captain Tareq Halabi said that the status of women is not stipulated in any of the laws or censorship classifications, neither the status of men and children.

■ Establish monitors for gender issues to monitor and hold accountable the media and advertising institutions and take advantage of analysis grids that researchers sometimes develop for this reason. Head of Women Journalists Association, Pascale Colisson, said that after participating in The Global Media Monitoring Project, 'le projet mondial de monitoring des medias', and thanks to the observation, the Supreme Audiovisual Council Of France has taken an initiative to create a special committee for women and media where Brigitte Gresy, Inspector general for Social Affairs, works on sensitizing media content on gender issues ^{IX}.

■ Provide organizations with communication skills that help them raise issues, make their voice heard, point up weak points and work on removing them^X. Urge media officials to activate women's participation in various programs, highlight the importance of accepting others' points of view, and supply media outlets with data regarding women's qualifications and skills.

■ Activate communication between human rights activists, civil society organizations, writers, directors, actors and artists, and boost cooperation among them to produce artistic works free of ready-made ideas and stereotypes that abuse women.

Finally, in reference to the unified Arab report, we can come up with some challenges, mainly making the growing presence of women positively affect the professional work mechanisms and the quality of media production; training women to benefit from the interactive media system; involving them in drafting laws, regulatory frameworks and codes of ethics that govern media from a gender perspective; and developing action mechanisms that boost interaction and networking between concerned parties that care for women advancement, including media.

⁵¹ Check out the suggestions of the index issued by "Kawthar Center" for diversified media products

^{IX} Entretien avec Pascale Colisson président de l'association des femmes journalistes par Smati Nozha. Op. Cit.

^X Akiki said that women's role in advertisement is sometimes a sort of exploitation contempt, explaining that even if visual ads or billboards are licensed, newspapers and magazines have the right to publish the ad as it was before being edited, since newspaper ads are not subject to prior authorization. Voicing sorrow over the situation, the Brig. blamed the feminine civil society who has never struggled for this cause. He considers women's outcry highly affects the society and thus helps amending some articles, knowing that competent parliamentary committees are currently discussing a new media law. He pointed out that ads are not subject to prior censorship by the General Security, so it cannot ban any ad before being made, it can merely modify or cancel certain parts of the ad or in some cases not to approve the ad as a whole. Check out: Al-Kholi, Vivian, Op. Cit.