

# WOMEN

IN EMERGING SYRIAN MEDIA  
A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (2011 - 2016)



MAN UP

Imprint  
Published in 2016 by the Stichting Female Journalists Network (SFJN)  
Kastanjelaan 6828 ,26GM Arnhem, Netherlands  
[www.sfn.org](http://www.sfn.org)

WOMEN IN EMERGING SYRIAN MEDIA/ 2011-2016

**Not for sale.**

© The Stichting Female Journalists Network

All rights reserved. No parts of this publication may be printed, reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means without prior written permission from the publishers.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the original authors. They do not necessarily represent those of the Stichting Female Journalists Network.

## Foreword

Against all odds, the Syrian civil society that emerged following the 2011 uprising continues to resist authoritarianism in all its forms. The original focus of this resistance was the Al-Assad regime, but it now extends to extremist groups, armed groups, unjust societal practices, warlords, and so forth. This is taking place in a dire humanitarian situation and a context of conflict and violence. Both professional and citizen journalists form a key part of this civil society. They have established a new wave of Emerging Syrian Media that includes hundreds of platforms. Many of them challenge the status quo and contest abuses of power, even at the expense of their lives.

Five years after the emergence of these revolutionary media, we are observing instances of the reproduction of unjust gender-based abuses of power, and of a culture of guardianship of women in Syria. Wary of the consequences, we – the Syrian Female Journalists Network – are working with emerging Syrian media (ESM) to challenge this phenomenon at different levels. For instance, with the current environment of escalating violence, displacement, persecution, detention, enforced disappearance, etc. in Syria, one is faced with a dilemma in terms of the representation of women in the media. One approach would continue to victimize women by presenting them as weak and helpless in the face of oppression; another is to empower them by showing their changed social roles as leaders and takers of the initiative. It is the latter approach that we strive to implement.

While acknowledging the inhibiting contextual factors in Syria, we, as the Syrian Female Journalists Network, aim to disseminate positive images and success stories of Syrian women wherever they are, while in parallel empowering men and women professionals in the media field to display gender sensitivity in their daily work. The progress towards such improved representation of women in the media due to the emergence of ESM could benefit from more critical analysis, and there is a need to challenge the social impediments facing women who select the media as their profession; for these reasons we have carried out this research, together with leaders in ESM, journalists, activists and researchers. We hope our work will act as a baseline for monitoring and analyzing the content and production process of ESM in terms of the representation of women.

In this quest, we are thankful to many people. Firstly, we are utterly grateful to Sarah Abu Assali, and Milia Eidmouni. We are also indebted to the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF) and Hivos for their generous support in funding the research and for their advice and assistance. Also critical to the success of this research was the support of Rua Al-Taweel, Maurice Aek, Bashar Al-Katreb and Mohan Dehne, to whom we are thankful. We are also obliged to Enab Baladi, Sada Alsham, Fe-Male, Saidat Souria and Souritna for the valuable information they provided, and to the CFI Syrian Media Incubator in Gaziantep for their support. Our thanks also go to Sabah Hallak, Laila Asmar, Alia Awada, and anonymous reviewers for their feedback and editorial comments. Last but not least, we are thankful to Rana Khalaf who authored and led this research.



## About The Syrian Female Journalists Network

*The SFJN is a nonprofit association, registered in The Netherlands since 2013. It seeks to build bridges between media and the Syrian women's movement by enhancing and empowering both men and women working in the field of media, by empowering women journalists to take over leading positions in their institutions, and by activating the role of the media in raising social awareness concerning gender equality and women's issues. The SFJN also works on improving the representation of women in the media to achieve a Syrian society that is fair to all of its men and women citizens, and to realize a positive social change in thinking and behavior with respect to matters surrounding gender justice and equality.*

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	6
Introduction.....	10

### Part I: A Guidline to Researching Women's Issues in the Syrian Media

Chapter 1: Research Scope .....	19
Chapter 2: Research Framework .....	23
Chapter 3: Connections and Structural Issues .....	30

### Part II: Women's Reperesentation in Emerging Syrian Media: Findings and Analysis

Chapter 4: Power over Discourse: Representation of Women in ESM? ....	37
Chapter 5: Power in Discourse: Representation of Women in ESM Texts ..	49
Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations: "Whalla2 la Wain?" Where to from here? .....	58

### Appendices

Appendix 1: CDA Codebook .....	60
Appendix 2: The Evaluation Survey .....	62

## Executive Summary

- This report addresses the issue of gender equality in Emerging Syrian Media (ESM) and investigates whether the dominant discourse and social practice exacerbate existing levels of inequality. It covers the period between 2011 and 2015 and addresses two aspects of ESM: women workers and the discourse on women. The ESM under review is primarily print media (magazines and newspapers), and radio to a lesser extent. The report incorporated both qualitative and quantitative analysis in a mixed method approach. The research tools used were: a content analysis of 136 texts from 24 media outlets selected through a stratified random sample, 36 structured online questionnaires, eight face-to-face interviews and two focus groups.
- The term of Emerging Syrian Media covers the media outlets established after the Syrian uprising. They are: condensed in non-regime controlled areas, mostly not-for-profit, written in the Arabic language, and available for free. The ESM under review form a representative sample of ESM in general. They are new (in existence for 2.2 years on average), small (with 3.7 ESM full-time staff on average in print outlets), and have low levels of distribution and coverage (with a circulation ranging from hardly 100 to roughly 500,000 for printed ESM, and from 10,000 to 5,000,000 listeners for radio stations). ESM are expanding and do have an impact on society in different ways.
- To measure ESM impact based on a Critical Discourse Analysis framework devised for this research project, the report is divided into two parts that can be read independently of one another. Part I provides a guideline to researching women's issues in the Syria media and a learning tool for using CDA. Part II outlines the research findings to identify the lessons learned from this analysis, while also creating baseline indicators for future research on women's issues in the Syrian media in particular, as well as regionally and globally.
- In Part I, the CDA examines the content of ESM texts to assess power in discourse, but also looks beyond them at wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes in order to assess power over discourse. It was 'critical' in that it sought to uncover invisible power relations and bring about changes. Our CDA framework assessed discourse at three levels:
  1. The Text Level: this examined the linguistic features of the discourse (vocabulary, grammar, structure, discursive strategies, etc.)
  2. The Text Production Level: this focused on the politics of production and the role and agency of

producers

3. The Context Level: this analyzed discourse as a feature of ideology, power and hegemonic processes within the broader Syrian sociopolitical and historical context.

- To understand the context in Syria in this regard, one needs to understand the history of the media in Syria and their representation of women. The media sector was monopolized and owned by an authoritarian state for decades, and its discourse was dedicated to serving one-party Baathist rule. There was some opening up in the last decade, but the media remained heavily controlled. This resulted in the treatment of women's issues as a background topic. When the topic was covered, a stereotyped image of women was the norm. This meant that women were associated with a limited range of topics, such as beauty and health issues and the family. Men outnumbered women in media professions, both as journalists, and in decision-making and publishing.
- Such structural issues, as Part II establishes, are accentuated by the current context. Despite the increased space which has opened up for civil society, the rise of armed groups and their tyranny has affected the outreach and content of print ESM.

Even so-called 'moderate' groups are tyrannical when it comes to women, for example, limiting the operations of women journalists by prohibiting their movement unless accompanied by a man. Many of these groups heavily censor ESM on the ground, particularly targeting coverage of women's issues. 20% of the ESM under review said they can only publish certain material relating to women online because of this censorship. Other outlets engage in self-censorship.

- Evidently, the context of conflict in Syria has played a major role in constraining the emergence of a more constructive approach towards gender equality. This situational factor is, of course, outside of the control of media outlets. However, there are two other key factors which are in need of more critical assessment, namely: the processes of production, and the text itself.
- Production processes were found to impact the representation of women in ESM. In terms of the topical coverage on women, the political and conflict situation affected the ESM under review, as well as its representation of women. This is clear from the coverage of topics centered on violence and the victimhood of women. Despite many constraints and deficits relating to the

representation of women in ESM, there was evidence of efforts to contest the stereotyping of women, and of a small yet important trend of covering women's experiences and success stories. There also seemed to be positive signs that some ESM have a good understanding of the gender biases against women. A question remains about how and when these good intentions are translated into action.

- The amount of coverage of women-related topics is low (hardly reaching 200 articles per year in the best case scenario), increases seasonally in line with events such as Women's Day and Mother's Day, and is then forgotten once more. Decision-making on this coverage is often ad-hoc and driven by the circumstances on the ground. Decision makers were more likely to be men, who in turn dominated the coverage, as data suggests that men are less likely than women to cover topics related to women. While the quality of this coverage is important, the involvement of women in decision-making about what topics to cover is critical.
- A high proportion of women in ESM are from vulnerable socio-economic backgrounds. On average, 54% of the ESM workforce in radio outlets under review are women, and over a third of the ESM print workforce (35%) are women, according to

survey respondents. However, only 38% of the women working in the ESM print outlets under review hold senior positions. ESM is thus still more likely to be led by men, especially in the case of print media. Only 4% of senior ESM journalists are women.

- The ideological stances of ESM outlets are difficult to define. The lines between them are often blurred, as many are still in their embryonic stage and have no clear identity. The two general ideological trends noted to be affecting women are (1) the liberal/secular ideology, and (2) the religious ideology. Nationalist and patriarchal discourses are often intertwined with both. Both displayed similar assumptions on women, often based on social and author attitudes towards women's equality. Common trends include a lack of belief in women's capacity, a conviction that women are followers of men, and the understanding that women can be utilized as a useful tool to raise sympathy when they are portrayed as victims.
- The report went on to analyze ESM discourse in terms of text and image, undertaking a twofold assessment of the portrayal of women's identity and action. Four main trends were identified in how ESM generally portrays women. These suggest that women in ESM are: A. Active players in the public sphere, given most recognition when fa-



mous; B. Non-existent or confined to the private sphere; C. Generalized and used as “victims” to promote causes not specific to women; or D. Objects of beauty, incapable of political involvement. In line with this trend, women are portrayed in some instances as active and in need of solidarity and partnership, but in many others as themselves in need of protection, sympathy, advice and help.

- In the ESM under review, it is noted that women are around three times more likely to be passive (having things done to them) than active (doers). They mostly have things done to them as victims of violence, including rape, torture, death, detainment, ransom and human trafficking. Verbs used to portray women in ESM primarily show them engaged in material and verbal processes that are about ‘doing’ and ‘saying’. To a lesser extent, women are shown as involved in behavioral processes related mainly to ‘feeling’ and ‘dreaming’. In a few cases women are engaged in mental processes of ‘realizing’ and ‘noticing’, and in rare cases they are depicted in relational and existential processes of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’.
- In terms of images of women, it was found that there is a deficit in ESM in terms of the effective use of visual language. Possible explanations are misconceptions about the function

of the affixed-to-text photograph, or a lack of targeted funding. Photographs in the ESM under review generally overrepresented conservative Sunni women from one socio-economic demographic, thereby creating a stereotype of Syrian women. There is a need for ESM producers and editors to pay more attention to context, and to select photographs which are more context-appropriate. There is also a need for more knowledge and experience on the part of ESM members tasked with selecting images for publication.

- The report concludes by drawing attention to some of the most important tools of the CDA framework as a starting point for a process of critical thinking and discussion on the issues raised in this analysis. These tools were utilized in the report as a means to improve the media coverage of topics relating to women, and can offer great insights in the analysis of the representation of women within media texts, as well as in the analysis of women’s participation in the mass media. This is true not just in the Syrian context, but also in regional and global terms. Effective use of the media offers an opportunity to create a discourse capable of challenging structural injustices and hidden relations of power, which will in turn improve the context for discourse and improve existing methods of discourse production.

## Introduction

### Statement of the Research Problem and its Importance

---

This report addresses the issue of gender equality in Emerging Syrian Media (ESM). The term 'gender' refers to the roles, activities and behaviors that are considered appropriate to and expected from women and men within a particular society, based on the assumption that they have different bodies, capabilities, needs and desires. It is a social construct which is learned and reinforced through education, the political and economic system, legislation, religion, culture and tradition (Holmes, 2007). The term 'ESM' incorporates the formal and informal media that emerged after the 2011 uprising in the aftermath of a context where the media had been heavily controlled and manipulated by the Ba'athist regime.

This report addresses two aspects of ESM – women workers and the discourse on women. It focuses primarily on print media, as well as on radio to a lesser extent. More specifically, this report analyses the representation of: 1- women workers in ESM outlets (radio and print media); and 2- women as represented in the discourse of ESM outlets (magazines and newspapers). Our assumption is that if gender equality is to be achieved in practice, a set of empowered women and men media professionals who adopt gender sensitivity in their daily work will go hand in hand with a more critical and gender-sensitive media discourse. A participatory mixed method was employed to support this research and analysis, making optimum use of: ESM mapping, an online survey, face-to-face interviews, and discussion groups. As the research takes cognizance of the Syrian

socio-cultural background and the current context of conflict, it is carried out by Syrian researchers and professionals and uses a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the media as its framework. CDA is a recent school of discourse analysis that is context specific, and which concerns itself with relations of power and inequality in language. This is intended to feed into possibilities for ESM and their donor organizations to work towards gender equality in Syria.

**Why work towards gender equality in a complex context such as Syria?** Does gender equality matter at the moment amidst all the bloodshed, violence, conflict and revolt against the authoritarianism of all warring sides in Syria? The simple answer is yes. Peace, justice and liberation cannot exist without challenging existing power structures, or without the participation of all concerned sides. The imbalance in the gender power structure in Syria is critical. Before the uprising, gender inequality was embedded in government policies in the public sphere<sup>1</sup>, as well as in local perceptions and the practices of religion, norms and traditions within the private sphere (the family unit)<sup>2</sup>. The uprising and the civil society space it opened up has allowed the issue of gender equality to be raised and promoted; however, this concept has also been strongly contested given the rise of "uncivil" actors, i.e. those with agendas considered contrary to the values

1. For instance, there was much gender discrepancy in decision-making roles at work. Furthermore, the personal status law discriminates against women in several aspects, ranging from early marriage, to punishments for honor crimes, to inheritance. For further detail, please see the link to updates to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women for Syria at: [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=SYR&Lang=EN](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=SYR&Lang=EN)
2. The undermining of women in the private sphere and men's dominance of women while limiting women's role to the domestic function has not changed. For more information, see: Ghazawi et al, 2015, which highlights women's peace activism in Syria post-2011.

of pluralism, tolerance, inclusion, equality and democracy. While some women have assumed a more active role in the public sphere, others have had to deal with warlords who use women's bodies as war tools and seek to limit their agency and voice by claiming this as "Awra" (a source of shame). This is especially the case in areas controlled by extremist groups like Al-Nusra and Daesh, or the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). However, it is not just extremist groups that have caused a great leap backwards for gender equality in Syria. Gender inequality continues to be enforced by negative stereotyping of women and by a lack of women's input. This is true within even the most progressive groups, let alone those considered to be "moderate". Accordingly, it is important to investigate and challenge the discourse on women in Syria.

The media can be a powerful tool for affecting discourse and bringing about change, especially vis-à-vis women. While the media are conditioned by social reality (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), the media also constitutes reality (Searle, 1995). The media impact what people think through the information selected for dissemination, and how this information is covered. The media employ language and images to assign and create meaning in relation to groups, practices, events, conditions and even objects (Fairclough, 1989, 1995; van Dijk, 2001). This meaning then circulates in the discourse of society and has the power to repeat, privilege and naturalize certain perspectives (Sakr, 2004). Because these perspectives are affected by their originator and influenced by ideology<sup>3</sup> to influence the perception of particular objects, events, etc. (Fairclough, 1989; Wodak, 2002; Karlsberg, 2005), there will

always be competition among groups over what is taken to be a correct or preferred representation (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak, 2001).

In a conflict situation, media discourse is particularly critical. In this context, it has been shown that feelings of shock at the scale of the conflict causes people to become vulnerable to readily accepting agendas presented to them in the media, even if this occurs at their own expense (Klein, 2007). To promote increased gender equality in the discourse amidst the continuing fight for power between the different sides in the conflict in Syria, it is important to assess the meaning one creates through language with regard to women. For instance, the ongoing representation of women as victims and the exclusion of their views can serve to frame the public's view of women as helpless and lacking agency in society, and portrays men as perpetrators of violence.

If this situation is to be changed, women's views need to be a constituent part of shaping the discourse about their lived experience, in addition to ensuring that the discourse on women is positive and enables the strong agency of women. The implication is that women must have the means, through the media, to challenge the inequalities that disempower them. (Sakr, 2004) This covers a range of circumstances, from the presence of women in the field covering stories and events, to having women leading the decision-making process at the highest level in media outlets.

Men do share a stake in better gender equality. They share in the advantages in terms of their own and their family's well-being, and men will benefit from the positive developmental implications for the country. This can be seen when a more just power balance is

3. See for instance Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995; Hodge and Kress, 1993; Bloomaert and Verschueren, 1998; van Dijk, 1999; Goatly, 2000.

created between men and women, so that men are relieved of the typical gender roles with which they had been burdened. Despite the assumption that the dominant power in the equation will automatically lose out, in the long term, relationships between men and women would improve by being based on social solidarity rather than asymmetrical power relations. Achieving gender equality is of concern for men too.

Nonetheless, men cannot lead that change alone, simply because they are not and cannot be in a woman's position. Margaret Gallagher, a leading researcher on gender patterns in

media, explains it thus: "If we are not getting the mix right in what people are hearing (from both men and women), there is a deficit"<sup>4</sup>. This is also confirmed by interviews with senior managers in ESM, who stated that it would have been impossible to access and understand certain realities without the involvement of women journalists, writers and editors, especially in times of conflict such as that in contemporary Syria. Because of this, there is a need to emphasize increased equality for women workers in media outlets, in terms their roles, agency and representation.

4. View (Margaret Gallagher, 2013) at the following link: <https://vimeo.com/80159360>

### Box 1. Who are the Emerging Syrian Media?

Emerging Syrian Media (ESM) are defined as the media outlets which were established after the Syrian uprising that began in March 2011. Since then, there has been a mushrooming of new media in both regime and non-regime controlled areas. However, due to the regime's heavy regulations and control (as highlighted in Section 3.3), most of the ESM in regime-controlled areas remain limited to online

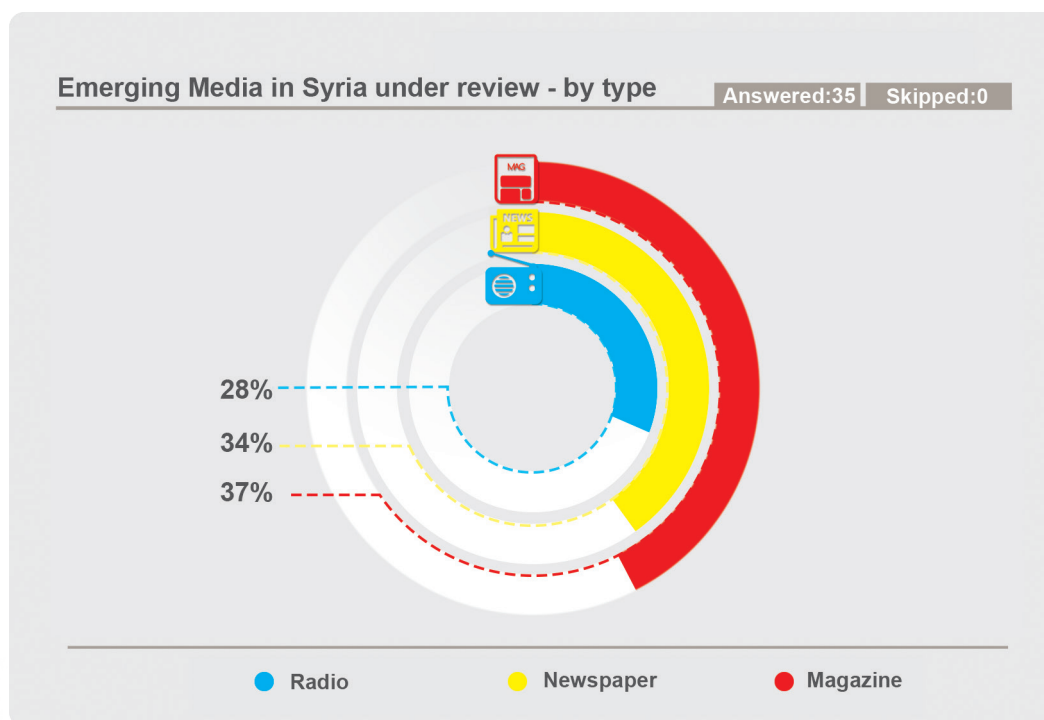


Figure 1: Emerging Syrian Media under Review by Type

platforms. It follows that print and radio ESM are over-represented in non-regime controlled areas<sup>5</sup>. Another aspect of ESM is that the vast majority of outlets are not-for-profit, are dependent on donor funding and can be accessed for free. In addition to limited and often localized print distribution, most use their websites to re-publish their printed work, making them available to a wider public. A lot of their work is also available on the Syrian Prints Archive<sup>6</sup>. Another key characteristic of ESM is that the vast majority use the Arabic language, with very few translating their work to English. Kurdish language publication is also sizable and on the rise in Kurdish majority areas. Other non-Arab ethnic groups, such as the Assyrians, also publish in their own language. However, this remains rare and limited to small circles within institutions such as the church and community organisations.

ESM are likely to share the same characteristics as the 36 ESM outlets mapped for this research. According to the Syria Prints Archive, there are 56 ongoing or still active ESM print outlets. In our research, we covered 33 outlets that are still publishing and three that are not. Having disregarded these three defunct outlets, the ESM mapped for this report forms 59% of the total, and the results can be taken to be statistically representative. Despite this, it must be noted that the sample size remains small and it is difficult to make generalisations as a result. As shown in Figure 1, these ESM, are comprised of radio (29%), print newspapers (34%), and print magazines (37%), and are:

**New:** with an institutional age of an average of 2.2 years, and the vast majority (76%), having been opened in the past two or three years (i.e. in 2013 or 2014 – see Figure 2). Relative to print media, radio outlets are found to be newer, with 60% having an institutional age of two years, 30% being three years old and the remaining 10% being hardly one year old.

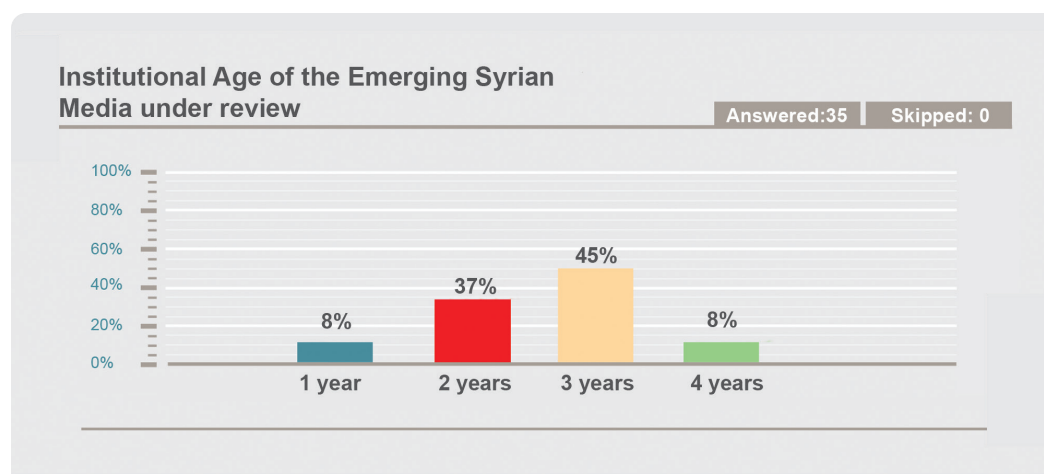


Figure 2: Institutional Age of the Emerging Syrian Media under Review

5. For an illustration of the geographical coverage of the ESM under review, please view the map in section 5.1  
 6. To review these, please see the Syrian Prints Archive at: <http://www.syrianprints.org/en/>

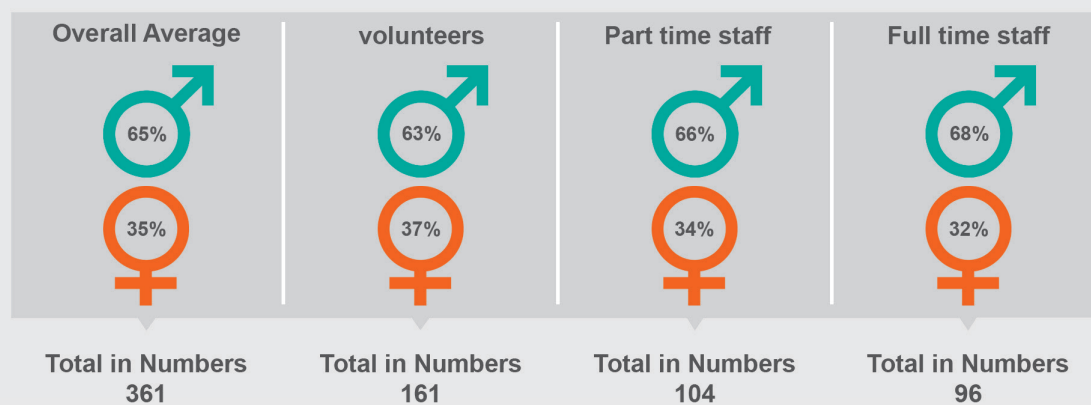
**-Small and to a large extent dependent on volunteers:** with an average of 3.7 full-time employees, 4 part-time employees and 6.1 volunteers in the case of print ESM, and much higher staff number in radio, where the average is 27 full-time employees, 4.8 part-time employees and 6.7 volunteers. Interestingly, the participation of women is significant. In the case of printed ESM, women account for over one third of the labour force (35%), with women making up 32% of full-time employees, 34% of part-time employees and 37% of volunteers.

**Average Number of Staff in Emerging Syrian Print Media Outlets under Review**

Answered:26 | Skipped:10

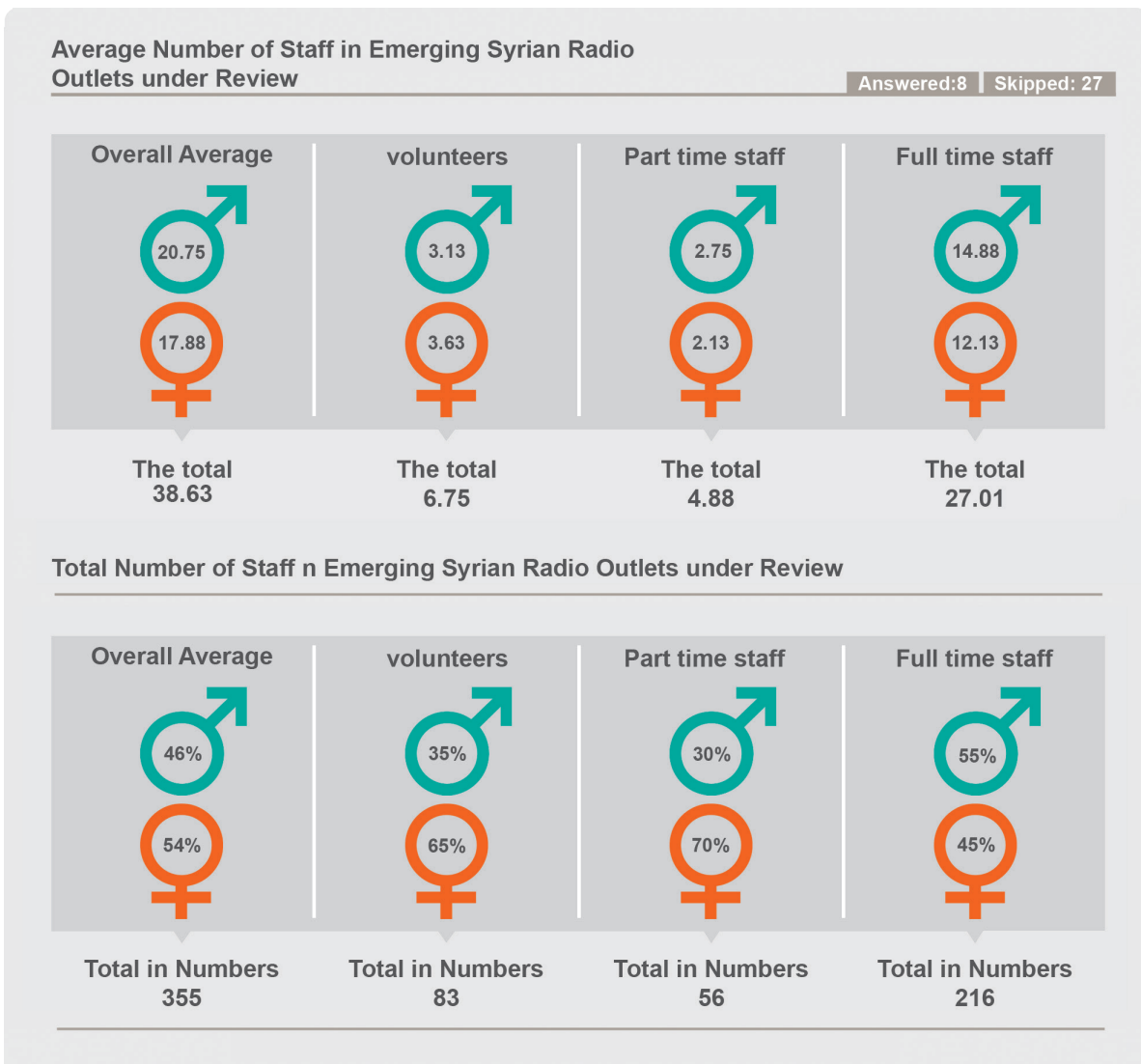


**Total Number of Staff in Emerging Syrian Print Media Outlets under Review**



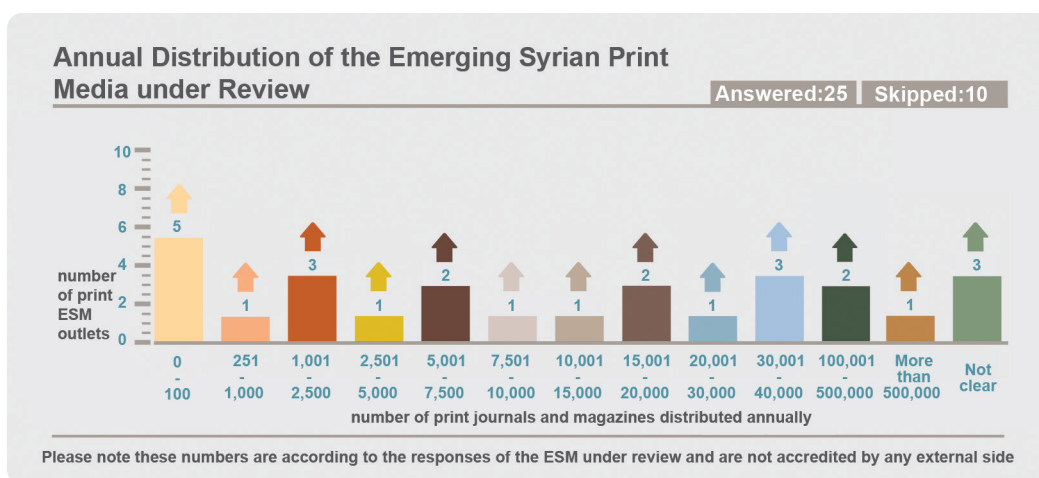
**Figure 3A: Staff Size of the Emerging Syrian Print Media under Review**

While the percentages of women seem to decrease in print media in proportion to the seniority of the role, their representation is relatively high, even when factoring in a possible exaggeration in numbers in survey responses. The representation of women workers is even higher in radio, where women make up over half of the total work force (54%), with women also representing 45% of full-time employees, 70% of part-time employees and 65% of volunteers.



**Figure 3B: Staff Size of the Emerging Syrian Radio Outlets under Review**

**-Have relatively small distribution figures:** where the annual distribution of print magazines and newspapers remains low,. As per ESM responses, it is suggested that 19% (five institutions) distributie approximately 100 prints per year, 7.7% (two institutions) produce between 100,000 and 500,000 prints per year, and 3.9% (one institution) produce over 500,000 prints per year (see Figure 4).<sup>7</sup> As for radio, according to their own assessment – which is difficult to accurately calculate – at the lower end, one institution reaches between 10,000 and 100,000 people, and at the higher end, 30% reach between 2,000,000 and 5,000,000 people. Meanwhile, 30% of radio institutions said they were unable to provide accurate listening figures.



**Figure 4: Annual Distribution of Emerging Syrian Media under Review**

7. The study has tried to do some fact checking by comparing these numbers to those documented by the Syria Prints Archive. Alarmingly, there were certain discrepancies especially on the higher distribution amounts cited. Thus, it is noted that these numbers may not be fully accurate.



## Structure of the research

---

This paper consists of five main sections divided into two main parts. Part I serves as a guideline to researching women's issues in the Syria media. Part II highlights the key research findings, the lessons learnt, and the way forward.

Part I begins with Chapter 1, highlighting the research methods and scope of the report. Chapter 2 presents the research's theoretical framework and explains the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) utilized. It is hoped that this framework will be employed beyond this report by ESM themselves, in order to assess their own discourse on women. Chapter 3 analyses the media and gender context in Syria and its structural issues to date.

Part II of the report comprises Chapters 4 and 5, where the report culminates with the richest part of the research – its findings. These chapters highlight some trends in recent ESM approaches to dealing with women, women workers and women's issues within the Syrian context. An alarming note here indicates that the risk of failing to engage women in the rapidly changing local

and international context will constrain their potential for influence both locally and internationally. It is critical to challenge the structural impediments to fostering gender equality in Syria, whether these structures are cultural, political or social.

These sections go on to use the theoretical framework to explain how ESM can conceptualize women as constituting an 'inner circle'. This approach will give ESM the optimal chance to manage the discourse on women in Syria, in the context of an increasingly turbulent conflict where ideology plays a major role. Finally, in the concluding chapter, the report does not offer rigid recommendations; rather it uses this chapter to suggest that this report and its methods and findings are treated as a space for critical thinking, reflection, and group action. It is then left to ESM and readers to use this research as they see fit, which could range from gaining credibility both locally and globally for improved discourse practices on women, to using it as a tool for advocacy.

# Part I

## **A Guideline to Researching Women's Issues in the Syrian Media**

The Scope, Framework, Theoretical and Structural Connections of the Research

# Chapter 1: Research Scope

## 1.1 Objectives

---

This participatory research aims to study gender equality in Emerging Syrian Media (ESM) between the years 2011 and 2015. Based on a Critical Discourse Analysis CDA framework, it analyzes the representation and positioning of:

1. Women media workers in radio and print media (the power over discourse in terms of gender equality in ESM)
2. Women and women's issues in print media – magazines and newspapers (the power in discourse in terms of gender equality in ESM)

## 1.2 Methods and Data Collection

---

Following a qualitative and quantitative mixed method approach, the research tools used were: content analysis, a structured online survey, face-to-face interviews, and focus groups. In total, 136 media texts were accessed for content analysis using a CDA method; 35 of the 47 survey responses received were complete and thus used for sampling and media production analysis; five in-depth face-to-face interviews were held with leading ESM professionals, women journalists and critics; and three focus group discussions were held with ESM professionals and journalists – one of which was a focus group made up entirely of women journalists. Other meetings and focus groups also took place with several ESM leaders for the purpose of consultation and to seek their advice regarding the research stage. This participatory approach was valuable both in designing the research and in the analysis.

**Research Process:** As illustrated in Fig-

ure 1, the research began with a literature review that supported the design of the CDA framework used. In parallel, a mapping of ESM was carried out, as there have been no similar studies on ESM to date. This mapping process in turn fed into the sampling method for each research tool. Data was then collected and analyzed on the basis of the CDA framework, focusing on the two levels of the power in discourse and the power over discourse in regards to women in ESM.

The power in discourse involved an analysis of discourse at the level of text. First, a priori design was carried out in order to identify the list of issues to be studied. These then fed into a Codebook that provided the researchers and coders with variables and with a consistent framework for conducting the research. This Codebook has also helped to check inter-coder reliability. The analysis phase followed. The randomness of the publications of many ESM sources, due to forced closures and the insecurity across Syria, in combination with a lack of baseline data, meant that it was difficult to identify the sources of higher circulation, ratings and outreach. When respondents did provide such data, more often than not these were estimates. As a result, media weighing was not possible during the analysis phase. However, this issue was mitigated because of the focus on qualitative indicators. The findings were supported by interviews and focus groups. These interviews and focus group discussions were also used to support the analysis at the level of power over discourse, in which we studied the production and context of ESM discourse.

In terms of discourse production, the online survey and focus groups were the tools used to collect data. Face-to-face interviews were used for the context analysis, coupled with the background knowledge of Syria of the study's team of researchers and coders, who are themselves Syrian researchers, journalists and communication specialists. These tools charted a

**Sampling:** One of the most challenging aspects of this study was the sampling. This was due to the conflict situation, which had an impact on both the context and ESM themselves, especially vis-à-vis the absence of baseline data, the irregularity of ESM publications, and the limited data on ESM sources. For instance, an annual sample of media texts taken every sixth day over a

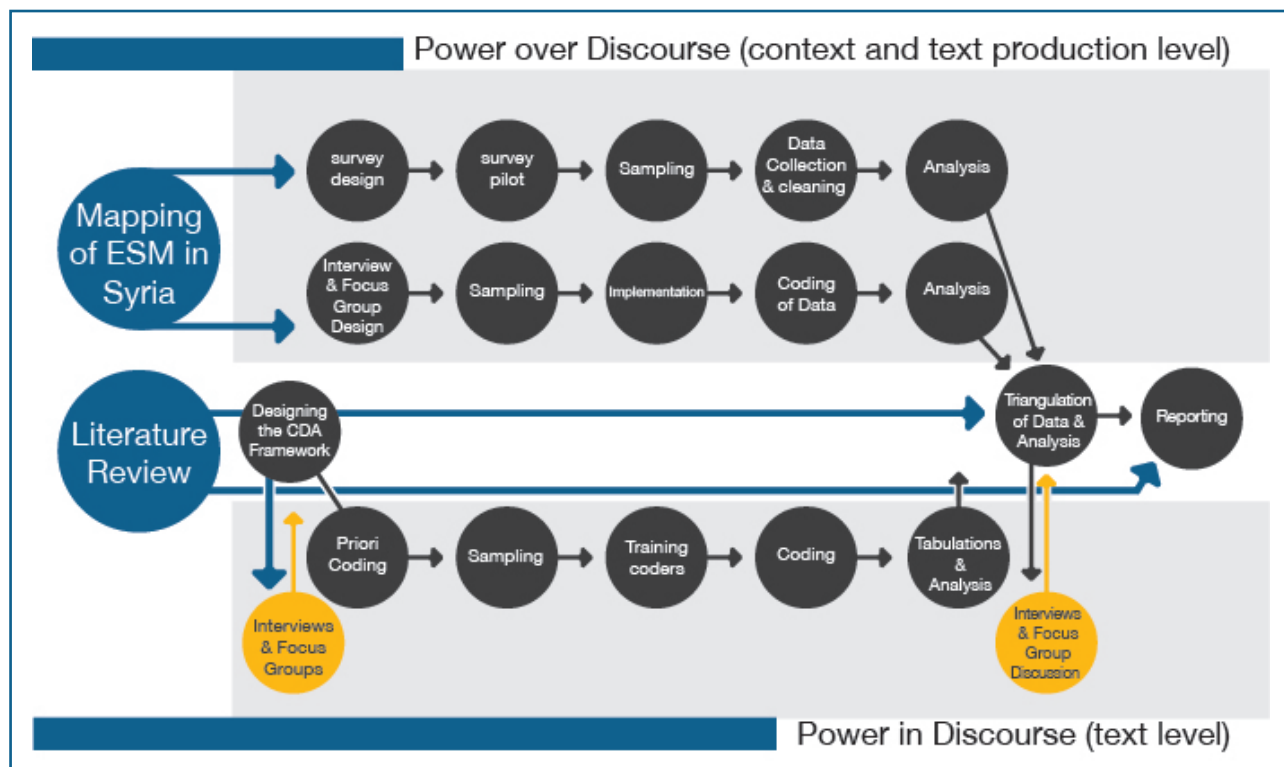


Figure 5: The Research Methodology

similar process. This started with the design and sampling phases, which were followed by the pilot phase. Next was actual implementation, during which data collection and cleaning took place. This then fed into the analysis. In the case of the focus groups and interviews, analysis benefited from manual coding of responses, with a minor use of the nVIVO program. The findings from these tools were then triangulated with the findings from other tools, all of which then fed into the broader CDA framework. These findings were then discussed with some ESM staff and in many cases amended according to their suggestions, before ultimate drafting and publishing of the final report.

two-week period is cited in literature as statistically representative, but this was not possible in the case of ESM given the irregularity of publication. Our own research tools were thus used to feed into the sampling of the research. Because of this, data collected from the survey and the mapping were used for the sampling of the text analysis. Details of the sampling methods applied in the case of each tool are illustrated in Table 1. A main factor in detailing the sampling methods used is to ensure that this research is – to a certain extent – replicable in the future for comparative purposes when monitoring developments in relation to women's equality in the media in Syria.

**Table 1: Research Tools and Sampling**

Component/Tool	Target group/ Sampling Method, Strengths and Limitations
Objective 1: Providing the numbers, functions and positions of women media workers in Syria	
a) Structured online survey (Survey Monkey) sent as a link via email and Facebook.	<p>A snowball sample of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior ESM managers across radio, print newspapers and journals</li> </ul> <p>Strict confidentiality was adhered to throughout the process. All personal data and responses were protected and anonymized. We adopted this method to address the fear and mistrust common to conflict environments. Confidentiality has been shown to be effective through its use in the SFJN's networks. This ensured a higher response rate. Nonetheless, we realize the representativeness of the sample may be an issue, as the choice of participants depended on referrals from those known to the SFJN. Although this network is wide, this approach may have excluded certain sides who were not contacted or who were unwilling or unable to respond online. As a result, it remains difficult to generalize findings due to selection bias.</p>
b) Semi-structured interviews	<p>A convenience sample of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESM staff (from radio, newspaper and magazines)</li> <li>• Senior ESM managers</li> <li>• ESM journalists</li> <li>• Syrian activists working with donor organizations and NGOs related to ESM</li> </ul> <p>The sample ensured the inclusion of platforms of differing geographical coverage and ideology.</p>
c) Focus group discussions	<p>A convenience sample of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior ESM managers</li> <li>• ESM journalists</li> </ul> <p>The sample ensured the inclusion of platforms of differing geographical coverage and ideology.</p>
Objective 2a: Studying the representation and positioning of women in ESM – quantity of material	
a) Online survey (same tool as 1a)	Same as in 1a except for radio sources
b) Mapping of EMS	<p>A snowball sample of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESM (newspaper and magazine) sources</li> </ul> <p>This was limited due to incomplete data about some ESM. Support was sought from the Syria Prints Archive website – a project that seeks to collect ESM publications in a single online platform.</p>
Objective 2b: Studying the representation and positioning of women in ESM – quality of material	
a) Critical Discourse Analysis at the text level (See the Codebook for details)	<p>A stratified random sampling of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 136 articles from 24 newspapers and magazines taken according to category quotas that included the diversity of ESM, especially vis-à-vis their ideological orientation and geographical spread.</li> </ul> <p>The purpose of this method was to guarantee that each element of ESM was represented, that each had an equal chance of being selected, and that every possible combination of these had an equal chance of being selected. The steps followed were:</p> <p><b>Firstly</b>, ongoing Syrian print journals &amp; magazines that emerged after 2011 were identified. <b>Secondly</b>, these were grouped into categories/strata (children, youth, women, detainees, news, Islamic, social/cultural, local politics, political-mixed, political-civil society). Where categories included four sources or less, all were analyzed; otherwise, over 50% of the sources were analyzed. <b>Thirdly</b>, the element of analysis was taken to be an article. Between two and four articles were chosen for each edition, and between two and four editions were chosen for each ESM outlet.</p>

Component/tool	Target group / Sampling Method, Strength and Limitations
	<p>To ensure maximum coverage, two sampling exceptions were made:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Women's magazines: As these were fully focused on women, an entirely random sampling was taken.</li> <li>2. Three categories ceased to exist because a number of publications were stopped, although these categories were still included in the sampling. These categories are: 1-comics and politics, 2-LGBT rights, and 3-youth &amp; politics.</li> </ol>

### 1.3 Strengths and Limitations

The two main strengths of this research are its particular attention to the contextual factors rather than the text alone, which is crucial given the context of conflict in contemporary Syria, and its participatory approach, which made optimum use of the SFJN's circles of trust and the researchers' background knowledge of Syria. The analysis is heavily reliant on the researchers' and participants' own reading and interpretation of media texts and of the situation. This has helped to create an in-depth assessment of women and women's issues in ESM.

The downside to this qualitative approach, however, is that it has necessitated an intensive and time-consuming focus that is relatively subjective and unable to cover a larger and more scientifically representative sample. Nonetheless, we argue that this more qualitative method has better placed the research to produce a deeper understanding of the texts in question, which is the ultimate goal of analyzing media content. Furthermore, the limited availability of a functional and automated coding system compatible with Arabic has made it unrealistic to carry out a quantitative content analysis of a larger sample size of media texts.

Indeed, another limitation came at the quantitative level in relation to the survey. Most of the answers to non-opinion related questions relied on the perceptions of the respondents, but the lack of online data mapping (of size and

coverage, for instance) means a high probability that many of these responses are exaggerated. Although responses were anonymized and not shared with any third party, to minimize the effect of potential exaggeration, the name of the ESM outlet was included in the questionnaire as a means to increase respondent accountability. In any case, despite possible inaccuracies, these numbers do illustrate a trend that illuminates the nature and context of the ESM under review. This is useful both for the current phase and also for the future.

This research has created a useful framework for analysis of ESM, and should it be replicated in the future, it is advised that the researcher have a situated knowledge of the context being researched. It is also critical that the researchers present and conduct themselves with integrity, transparency, and sensitivity vis-à-vis the war context and its politicization, the ESM research population, and their own personal biases. Furthermore, a fundamental element of our framework is the pursuit of the trust of the research population, by ensuring their participation in the research. That participation is critical, especially as the research is being carried out in a complex environment of conflict. It is only by carrying out research with women and ESM rather than on women and ESM that a better understanding of the complex dynamics of gender and conflict in Syria can be achieved.

## Chapter 2: Research Framework

**Discourse is a form of social action; is historical; does ideological work, constitutes society and culture, and is embedded in power relations.**

(Wodak, 1996; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997)

### 2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

---

CDA research has awakened consciousness and placed sensitive issues under the limelight, including power, ideology, social inequality and institutionalized dominance. In this study, CDA is used to investigate how gender relations are presented in ESM and thereby to question the positions and roles of women in order to remedy existing injustices. To this end, a framework has been designed based on CDA theories. Firstly, it is important to understand 'discourse' and to define CDA.

In the past decades, linguists and scientists from humanities and the social sciences have been concerned with studying discourse because of its influence on the perception of reality and self-identity. However, discourse remains a complex and highly debated concept. This study adopts Fairclough's understanding of discourse. Discourse is a communicative system extending beyond written and spoken language to non-verbal and visual images in text; it is born out of and bears the meaning of surrounding realities (Varga, 2010). More simply, discourse is "any spoken or written language use conceived as social practice" (Fairclough, 1996, p.71). As discourse is a both product and a producer of social practice and processes that enable or inhibit power relations, the examination of the broader social context beyond the text alone is crucial to CDA theory (Fairclough, 1995).

CDA theory is defined by its interest in

looking within texts to assess power in discourse, while also looking beyond them at the wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes which surround them in order to assess power over discourse. Van Dijk (1993) argues that CDA is "critical" because it seeks to unleash invisible power relations and bring about change to those affected by inequality and injustice (Varga; 2010). **"Critical" in this sense, as argued by Wodak (1997), means that although texts may not be intended to trigger inequality, these are not taken for granted as they contribute to social practices (ibid).** Of concern in the current study are inequalities towards women where the dominant discourse and social practice trigger further inequalities.

### 2.2 Our CDA Framework<sup>8</sup>

---

This framework is conceived for the print journalistic discourse of ESM – newspapers and magazines. As per Fairclough's CDA (1992), it assesses discourse in three dimensions: the individual text, text production and the wider context (Blommaert et. Al, 2000).

**1- Text level:** This examines linguistic

8. This is constructed based on the work of Richardson, 2006; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Bloor et. al, 2013; Gee, 2014; and Blommaert and Bulcaen; 2000; while also referring to Fairclough et. al, 1995; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Halliday; 1994; Hall, 1997; Stephan, et. al, 2000; Titsler et. al, 2000; Lazar, 2005; Vagas, 2010; Van Dijk; 2001; and Wodak, 1996.

features and the organization of the discourse as a text. It looks at what is present in the text (including visuals) and what is not. This covers structure, vocabulary, semantics, grammar, language, rhetoric, discursive strategies and ideological standpoints..

**2- Text production and consumption:**

This examines discourse as a discursive practice – as something that is produced, circulated, reproduced and consumed in society. This means that in analyzing text, attention needs to be paid to aspects that link text to context, such as intertextuality. The study mainly focuses on the politics of production, and on the role and agency of producers. Analysis of consumption patterns is generally important but is beyond the scope of this research, which is limited to producers' perceived production needs.

**3- Context:** This looks at discourse as a social practice, that is, as a feature of ideology, power and hegemonic processes within a broader sociopolitical and historical context. In certain contexts, the reframing of discourse highlights the emergence of new struggles over normativity, attempts for new hegemonies/control, and resistance against regimes of power. We assess this framing and reframing of discourse in the Syrian sociopolitical and historical context.

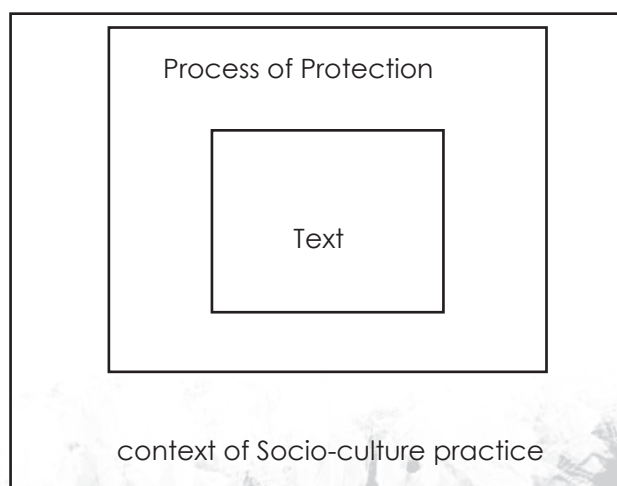


Figure 6: Critical Discourse Analysis Framework

**1. The Text Level**

In CDA, individuals are referred to as social actors, and semiotic choices are referred to as “representational strategies” (Machin & Mayr, 2012). “These choices help place people in the social world and either draw attention or omit aspects of their identity. They can connote sets of ideas, values and sequences of activity that are not necessarily openly articulated” (ibid). The representational choices studied are:

**A. How is women’s identity represented?**

This can occur using the linguistic features of referential choices:

**Personalization and impersonalization:**

Personalization can be used to give extra weight to a statement, and impersonalization can be used to conceal certain issues. For example, consider the use of the sentence: “Amina was threatened by ISIS”, as opposed to: “A Syrian woman was threatened by ISIS”. Impersonalization may serve to protect some women by concealing their names for security purposes in a conflict situation.

**Individualization versus collectivization:**

When followed by a negative verb, individualization attributes the responsibility for a particular action to a specific actor, whereas but collectivization may obscure responsibility. For example, “A soldier named X killed the nurse” versus “Fighters killed the nurse”. Individualization may also have other effects, such as connecting structured abuses, such as corruption, to individuals rather than to an institution, armed group or system.

**Specification versus generalization:**

Specification can emphasize a person’s identity, whether to cast it in a positive light, or more commonly, to



point fingers at a particular group. For example: “Three men from a Muslim background attacked the parliament” versus “Three brothers attacked the parliament”. Generalization can also act as a double-edged sword, politicizing or depoliticizing topics. For example, “The refugees are on the European border”, as opposed to “20 refugees are on the European border”.

**- Nomination or functionalization:**

This is a choice to focus on who a person is (Samah, for example) or to focus on what she does (activist). Nomination emphasizes the personal, and can serve to create more familiarity and a closer relationship to the reader. Functionalization emphasizes the professional, and can limit people to a role but can also empower them by giving more weight to their statements. For example, consider: “Roula said that we need a just peace” versus “The activist said that we need a just peace”.

**- Objectivities and Adjectives:**

Adjectives may reduce a woman to her appearance, ensuring that she is defined by her beauty. For example, see the contrast between “Hala, that sexy beautiful woman, is now in a senior position” and “Hala, who succeed in saving the institution from bankruptcy, is now in a senior position”.

**- Anonymisation:**

Hiding the identity of an actor allows arguments to be dismissed. For example, “Three civilians were killed”, using the passive tense to obscure responsibility, as opposed to “Al-Nusra killed three civilians”.

**- Aggregation:**

This is the treatment of participants as statistics. While this is not always negative as it can be used to confirm a thesis, it may depoliticize a topic. For example, “Thousands of immigrants are

arriving”.

**- Pronoun use: us vs. them:**

This creates a division between two groups. This is often accompanied by particular ideas, such as the claim that one group is more advanced than another, for example, Sunni versus Shia, women versus men, Kurds versus Arabs, etc.

**- Suppression:**

What is missing is important here. Sometimes the agent can be missing, as in the following example: “The area was recovered” versus “The army of X recovered the area”.

**B. How are women’s actions represented?**

**Grammar** is a system of options from which speakers/writers choose according to the circumstances:

**Transitivity and verbs** “make meaning” with what is present or absent (Halliday, 1994). Transitivity is used to study what people are depicted as doing – that is, who does what to whom, when, and how (1). To carry out a transitivity analysis one needs to identify verbs and their associated process, and then to identify coin patterns in the use of these processes. To do so we look at:

- 1. Participants** (the doers and those affected by their actions) – this can be people, things or abstract concepts.
- 2. Processes** (verbs) can be material (the process of doing), mental (the process of sensing), behavioral (taste, dream, smile), verbal (say, speak), relational (mean, represent) and existential (to be).
- 3. Circumstances** (adverbs or prepositions showing where, when and how a thing occurs). Verbs can be used in many ways to make participants appear authoritative or subservient, or legitimate or non-legitimate. They can help to define the roles of par-

ticipants or events even where this is not explicitly stated. For example, the quoting verb 'to announce' sounds relatively formal, and is used by official groups. Use of the verb 'to grumble' indicates that the subject is not official, suggesting a lack of power. Such quoting verbs as "grumbled", "claimed", "shouted", or "explained" can also direct us to consider some participants as having a negative attitude and others as being more friendly. We need to consider whether verbs are neutral as well as what they express and how they make us feel.

### C. What is concealed or taken for granted?

**Nominalization** - when a verb process is replaced by a noun construction, it can obscure agency, responsibility for an action, what exactly happened, and when it took place. Changing a verb or process through nominalization has the following effects:

1. Obscuring responsibility for an action: "I am sorry about the failure" rather than "I failed to return the books on time";
2. Obscuring the agent and the party affected: "The demonstration prevented students from attending class", rather than "The students demonstrated because of increased tuition fees, resulting in class disruption";
3. Making the action the focus of attention and the consequences a relatively lesser concern: "The regretful failure to submit the report caused this delay", rather than "I am sorry that I did not submit the report on time, which delayed the receipt of new funds";
4. Functioning as new participants: "Nibal said that the demonstration prevented students from attending classes", rather than "The stu-

dents demonstrated because of increased tuition fees, resulting in class disruption";

5. Making nominalization a stable entity of common usage: "Globalization is an opportunity for all of us";
6. Including the process but omitting the agents, time and specificity through simplification: "She lied" rather than "She lied about her activism to protect her friends when questioned by the forces who detained her";
7. Compressing details and simplifying solutions: "Students are not allowed to demonstrate against increased fees as this disrupts learning" obscures the amount of the fee increase and the effect on the students.

**Presuppositions** - this occurs when meanings are assumed. This can take place through:

1. Verbs, changes to the state of verbs, or implicative verbs: for example, "Will you stop beating your wife?";
2. The definite article ('the') and possessive articles ('his'/'her'): for example, "the real issue is ...";
3. Questions: for example, if a foreigner asked a Syrian woman: "How did you overcome your cultural limitations to continue your education?", there would be an implicit assumption that there were cultural barriers to her continuing her education, even though this may not be the case.

### D. What lexical choices – word meaning, wording and metaphor – are used?

Lexical or word choices can signify different discourses/ themes/ ideologies. Lexical choices suggest certain kinds of identities, values, and sequences of activities not necessarily made explicit. They function like a map drawn for us by the author. We look for patterns

here which confirm or contradict one another. Relevant questions include:

- What are the key words?
- What are the wording patterns?
- What discourse/theme is used?
- What or whose ideology is being used?
- What metaphors (uses of symbolism or comparison for rhetorical effect) are used?

### **E. What is said and what is unsaid?**

**Modality:** This refers to the speaker's attitudes, judgments and comments about the truth of a proposition or the degree of commitment to a claim they are making. This is highlighted through modal verbs (may, can, etc.) or their negation.

**Truth and positioning of actions:** This occurs when part of the information is left unstated, or when it is veiled by being placed later on in the sentence, phrase or paragraph. (Van Dijk, 1991) highlights that actions can be deemphasized when placed later in a sentence or embedded in a clause (compare "Children killed" with "Regime barrel bombs killed children").

**Hedging:** This is used to create a strategic ambiguity within claims. It occurs when there is an avoidance of directness or full commitment (for example, "some people say that multiculturalism is outmoded", rather than "I think that multiculturalism is outmoded"). Hedging is used to cover the use of stereotypes (for example, "Although I am not sure if this is true, I have the impression that Libyan men are sexist").

## **2. Discourse Practice Level – Discourse Production**

A fundamental characteristic of discourse is its historical nature. Texts build on each other, taking up or challeng-

ing discourses (Fairclough; 1995). In any given moment, texts function in the service of a certain interest. CDA thus looks at discourse in a time-sensitive manner while analyzing the practice of discourse – in other words, the production and consumption of discourse. CDA achieves this by examining the relationships between different texts across different times and different producers. In other words, CDA focuses on intertextuality. Intertextual analysis reveals the strategies of the producer of a given text in advancing or reformulating knowledge, ideas and beliefs. It also helps to trace dominant ideologies or an ideological struggle for cultural change across a timeline.

With this intertextuality in mind, CDA is used in this report to analyze: 1- the timing or historical moment, and its implications for the producers and receivers of a text; and 2- the power relations with regard to media production in discourse production (which story is highlighted, how it is edited, by whom it is written, the context, the role of ideology, etc.).

In the Syrian case this analysis is at both the local administrative and at the editorial levels. It extends to media trends, which are often impacted by the larger regional mainstream media institutions, such as Al-Jazeera or Al-Arabia. These often set priorities and agendas which filter down to emerging media outlets through freelance journalists. When these freelancers work with emerging media, they are likely to carry these agendas with them, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

Factual information that is easy to provide includes the date of publication, or the gender of the author and editor. However, it is more challenging to pursue less obvious information, such as the orientation and ideology

of a source or the potential audience. These can be assessed, *inter alia*, from the language and keywords used, the sources referred to, the people quoted, the construction of the argument and the reasoning used in coming to conclusions. It is equally useful to look into the cohesion of the text and the manner in which sentences are linked. For instance, an entire text may have only the single pronoun, 'they', which is used to refer to underprivileged women. The lack of the pronoun 'we' could convey a dissociation from the group, created by the producer of the text.

Given its limited scope and the impeded access to ESM audiences within Syria due to the conflict situation, this study primarily analyzes the power relations of media production. Nonetheless, the analysis takes cognizance of audience figures as reported by the ESM institutions themselves. The study addresses

the following questions in its analysis:

- What and where are the hidden relations of power in terms of gender (at the stages of production, consumption, editing, etc.)?
- Who is exercising power in the text, and whose discourse is it (with a specific focus on men versus women)?
- Who is solicited for quotes?
- Who is the ideal audience?
- What is the author trying to tell us, and why?
- Does the text tie into any historical event or moment? If so, what does this imply?
- Where is the text positioned, and what does this imply?

Highlighted in the table below is an excerpt from the researchers' Codebook for this study, which also addresses other features.

**Table 2: Excerpt from the Researchers' Codebook**

Title	Theme	Date	Word count	Author's Gender	Editor's Gender	Page	Ideological Orientation	Case (+, -, or interesting?)

### 3. The Context Level

Challenging texts in order to address inequality and remedy social wrongs is only possible when texts and their ideological claims are analyzed in comparison to the facts on the ground and the reality of social practices and social relations. To do so, it is essential to understand the society, culture, institutional practices and historical context in place – in other words, the system of knowledge and belief – as well as social relations and social identities, and finally, the situation and timing which form the context for the text in question. Accordingly, this research studies two issues:

**Social Practice:** Social practices are behaviors that involve specific socially established rules or conventions, with the possibility of some degree of unique individual behavior. One example of social practice is religious services, which involve a degree of knowledge of conventions. The knowledge and skills required to engage in social practices are often based on socially shared knowledge gained through experience or learned via instruction from one's environment. Although social practices are often well established and persistent, they are not unchanging. To understand social practice in re-

lation to women in Syria, we assessed the beliefs about social relations regarding the roles of women by asking:

- What are the locally held beliefs on the identity and role of women?
- How do these beliefs parallel or conflict with beliefs on the identity and role of men?
- What are the social relations between men and women as reflected in ESM?
- What are the social relations between the text producer and the reader/listener of ESM?

**Historical context:** Social practices do not occur out of context, particularly when this context is a combination of uprisings and conflict, as is the case in contemporary Syria. It is this context that has given rise to ESM, and this context has been and continues to be a main factor shaping ESM. With the disintegration of political authority, continuing violence, a war economy, humanitarian crisis, the use of social services as tools of war and the rise of non-state actors in Syria, micro- and macro-level power struggles have risen to the surface. These are hugely shaped by the actors in control on the ground as well as by the locals across different areas in Syria at any given time. The fight between different ideologies here is a key component as they seek to naturalize certain discourses. There are invisible ideologies which also exist, and these are just as worrying. These invisible ideologies continue to be used by default, because they are what is available. One example is the discourse of pater-

nalism which is often used and reused unconsciously, even amongst the most progressive groups. Because these are the dominant discourses, they are heavily promoted and have the effect of constituting identities and constructions of the world. In a time of change, new discourses become available, offering us new subject positions from which to speak and read the world. These transform text production and text reception, and consequently the text itself. This is why this study focuses on analyzing ideology, geopolitics, and the historical moment, and examines their implications for the text under review in particular and ESM in general, focusing on the period from 2011 to 2015 in the aftermath of the uprising,. Sample questions to be addressed, where possible, include:

- What is the ideology used or followed?
- What contextual factors in Syria could have influenced the production of the ESM text?
- Who is the perceived audience for the text under review?
- What contextual factors in Syria could have influenced the interpretation and local buy-in to the ESM text?
- How are non-state actors on the ground affecting the discourse of ESM?
- Could this text have been produced earlier? Is it the reproduction of an old nationalist/religious discourse?
- Could this text have been produced in context other than that of Syria?

## Chapter 3: Connections and Structural Issues

### 3.1 Theoretical Connections: Gender, Media and War

---

#### *Roua Al Taweel*

As a bridge between events and the people, the media have the power to act as gatekeepers, controlling opinions by making choices about the information to be disseminated, as well as about how this information is covered and prioritized. In the abstract of their *Public Opinion Quarterly*, McCombs and Donald (1972) explain that:

“In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news report and its position.”

This is to say, the media influences and determines public opinion on an everyday basis. Hence, critical examination of the representation and positioning of gender in the media is highly important. Although media coverage is changing and there are more signs of gender equality, there is still evidence that media industries and various roles within them are divided along gender lines (Beyrly and Ross 2006; Gill, 2007). Women are generally underrepresented, are often presented as victims, and are situated as eternally passive and dependent, with an extra touch of orientalism and racism being applied to women of color and Muslim women who need ‘white men’ to save them (Macdonald, 1995, 2006; Spivak, 1988; Abu-Lughod 2013; Parry-Giles 2000). In *Women and Media: A Critical Introduction*, Beyrly and Ross (2006) note that news and media affairs are seen as al-

most the exclusive purview of men. In earlier empirical research (1995c), Rose Ross found that women were aware of the bias in news reporting towards men. They believed that the news did not reflect their concerns or everyday life (Beyrly and Ross, 2006).

A major issue is that “the ways in which women are represented in news media send important messages to the viewing, listening and reading public about women’s place, women’s role and women’s lives” (Allan, 2005: 88). Allan contends that the media is arguably the primary definer and shaper of the news agenda, and that it performs a cultural function in the gendered framing of public issues and in the gendered discourses it persistently promotes. Stereotypes and myths are greatly reinforced in the coverage of critical issues related to gender, one of which is rape. In many places around the world, including Syria, the reporting of a rape case still follows a certain formula of women-blaming, in which the focus is shifted from the actual act of rape and the agency of the rapist to the women’s appearance, the place, and the time of the incident (Marhina, 2008). In times of war, the narrative takes on a nationalist spirit in which rape, as an act and as representation, is used as a weapon of war against the enemy. Media reporting of rape cases is not only a matter of conforming to but also of shaping attitudes about rape. It has serious implications for women, as Boyle explains that where blame is ascribed to the victim by the media – and by extension, by society – this leads women

into “a false sense of security about the types of women who are raped and the types of men who commit it, and thus leave them completely vulnerable” (Boyle, 2012). Moreover, “it also discourages women from reporting instances of rape” (ibid).

Thus, whether used consciously or unconsciously, gender stereotypes play a part in asserting a matrix of injustice and inequality. The fact that the media reinforces such stereotypes calls its credibility into question. The struggle for freedom cannot be partial. Everything is reflected at the symbolic level; no political, social, or economic transformation can be achieved without a real change in the media. This requires that journalists become aware of the nature and power of the language and images they use as a medium to communicate their subject matter. Journalism can be a tool of oppression or liberation. It is important for both the journalists and the producers to decide how it is to be used.

### 3.2 Media and Women in Syria and the Region before the Uprising

#### **Rula Asad**

The portrayal of women by the Arab media is, in general, negative. According to a 2006 study by the UNFPA on Arab Women and Media,<sup>9</sup> 23 research projects on the topic have shown that media representations of women in Arab media – including Syrian media – use women’s bodies for marketing purposes. They are reduced to commodities and their sexual features are highlighted. Women tend to be depicted as: sexually exciting; immoral; displaying bad qualities; unemployed housewives; beautiful, young, and concerned with nothing but their appearance; vulnerable; illiterate and

narrow-minded; unreasonable; not concerned with public life; fragile; fat and ugly; or are stereotyped as merely mothers, sisters, daughters or wives. Furthermore, the prevailing association is that of an urban woman with certain professions, such as actress.

However, according to this study, the media also presented some positive images, so that women are depicted as: working women; capable of leadership; participating in public life; educated; moral; fighters; excelling in their own areas; citizens; athletes; or modern workers. Moreover, the stereotyped image is broken by the introduction of rural women. Remarkably, the positive image criticizes the negative image which is frequently portrayed. There is often a juxtaposition between the working woman and the unemployed wife or housewife,<sup>10</sup> or between the woman as a leader and the woman who doesn’t take part in public life. This illustrates the contradiction in the way women are represented within the institutions themselves (Kothar and UNFPA, 2006.)

The situation in Syria is not very different; the state-owned media controls public discourse, and the media is monopolized by the government. The media deal with women’s issues in the news as a second level topic or as background to the main topic. For example, in relation to political and economic issues, women rarely appear as experts or speakers, and we rarely hear women’s opinions on political decisions or economic developments, nor do we hear their opinions how anything affects them. One example can be found in the media treatment of the series of campaigns carried out by women’s organizations to change the National-

9. All numbers and statistics that follow in section 3.2 come from this report, unless otherwise stated.

10. This is the case albeit from a gendered perspective, a house wife is considered as working without a salary as her work in the house is not accounted for.

ity Law or the Personal Status Law and its impact on women. The state-owned media completely failed to mention any of these campaigns, meaning that women's voices about them remained unheard.

On the contrary, the state-owned and semi state-owned (private) media enforce the stereotyped image of women by limiting coverage of women to beauty and health issues, especially reproductive and breast-feeding issues, as well as family, education and slimness. Women's attendance in the public sphere is linked to charitable activities or to the activities of elite women, such as those of businesswomen, the majority of whom are either daughters or wives of influential businessmen. In the few years before 2011, coverage of rural women's issues did increase due to the interest of the First Lady Asmaa Al Akhras', as expressed through one of her civic organizations.

In the professional sense, the Arab media scene is generally dominated by men in terms of staff numbers. The same applies to the Syrian media, where men outnumber women in the media profession; this is also true for positions in decision-making and publication. The status of women in media in Arab states seems to be common to all media outlets. They are presented as: objective; committed to their work; very rarely commissioned with the creation of content; commissioned to carry out secondary tasks; contributing to society's advancement; having low involvement in decision-making; having their attendance recognized as important but having little impact; having low levels of attendance in institutions because of their gender; struggling with strong personalities; or lacking a community culture. The increased number of women in media results in improved performance of media outlets.

Syria came fifth out of nine countries in terms of the proportion of women in the television sector (26.2%), and fourth in terms of women's representation in news departments (43.9%), while they make up 6.5% of television directors<sup>11</sup>.

Women announcers appear mainly as presenters of social, cultural and morning programs. One new development, however, is the existence of women political announcers, such as Luna Al-Sheble in *Zawayya* and A'ameda, in addition to some women announcers in sports programmes, where previously these roles were filled by athletes. One example of this is Alisar Moualla.

As for administrative positions, the first woman to be appointed as a television director was Diana Jabbour. Another woman, Suhair Sarmini, was appointed as director of the official television Channel I. 38% of the membership are Journalists Union are women.

### **3.3 Media in Syria before the Uprising<sup>12</sup>**

#### **Yara Badr**

Syria is one of the first states in the Arab world where the printed press became widespread. The first printed magazine was issued in 1851, while the first Publications Act was approved in 1865. The beginning of the 20th century witnessed a real revolution in the press, with Mary Ajami issuing the first magazine on women's rights in the Middle East in 1910, entitled "Al'arous" (The Bride). In 1920, the number of publications was 31 magazines and 24 periodic newspapers. This momentum in the development of the press reached its culmination in Syria after independence in 1947, when the new Publications Act No. 39 lifted restrictions on freedom of

11. Federation of Arab States' Broadcasting Stations, a study conducted in 1998.



publication and on ownership of independent and party newspapers.

In the 1950s, the number of publications in Syria set a record with 52. This was the case up to the Syrian-Egyptian union of 1958, when one of Abdel Nasser's conditions was to harmonize the legal situation in Syria with that of Egypt. This meant dismantling the political opposition, civil society, the parliament, and the press. The political forces complied with these conditions, as they considered unity to be more important than democracy. This was the heaviest blow to freedom of speech and freedom of the press for the Syrian people.

Between 1961 and 1963, in the period after the collapse of the union with Egypt, the Syrian press regained its vitality and came back to the fore, although it was forbidden for the press to oppose the breakdown of unification. In 1963, Al Ba'ath party came to power and declared the state of emergency, issuing a martial law which rescinded authorization for the press and all publications, brought an end to magazines and newspapers, confiscated printing

- 
12. This section is written by and according to the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression. It is supported by the following references:
- The Case of Media and Freedom of Expression, Syria: [https://scm.bz/?page=category&category\\_id=78](https://scm.bz/?page=category&category_id=78)
  - The Case of Media and Freedom of Expression, Syria 2007: A Year of Ironic Surveillance: [https://scm.bz/?page=category&category\\_id=79&lang=ar](https://scm.bz/?page=category&category_id=79&lang=ar)
  - The Case of Media and Freedom of Expression, Syria 2008-2009: The Silence of Crayons and the Noise of Surveillance: [https://scm.bz/?page=category&category\\_id=80&lang=ar](https://scm.bz/?page=category&category_id=80&lang=ar)
  - Taming of the Internet: [https://scm.bz/?page=category&category\\_id=36&lang=ar](https://scm.bz/?page=category&category_id=36&lang=ar)
  - Syria Ten Years: The Media, Mazen Darwish, 5th August 2010: <https://damascusbureau.org/ar/11657>

presses and tools and seized the assets of much of the press and publishing houses.

Syria then entered the era of politicized government media. As formulated in Article No. 3, "the mission of the Ministry of Information is using all media means to enlighten public opinion and to consolidate all Arabic nationalism trends in the country, and to strengthen the links with Arab and friendly states in accordance with the principles of the Arab Socialist Baath Party and the policy of the state". All laws that followed were consistent with this directive.

### **The first decade of Bashar Al Assad's rule (2000 – 2010)**

The decade from 2000 to 2010, during which Bashar Al Assad was in power as president, created hope that Syria would end its intimidation and totalitarian authority. In his first oath, he stated: "There must be reform and development in our educational, cultural and media institutions with a view to serve our national issues and enhance our authentic heritage (...)". However, Syria continued to be the republic of silence. His words were carefully formulated, referring only to the reform of media institutions, rather than tackling the mentalities and ways of thinking that control the functions, freedom and independence of the media.

The changes began with Act No. 50 of 2001, which created a system of controls limiting freedom of the press and freedom of expression and targeting print publications. Article No. 51 (A) then criminalized the delivery of "incorrect news" and disseminating "made-up or faked papers" without defining these terms, leaving them ambiguous enough for an interpretation which would justify the imposition of abusive restrictions. The article states that

maximum penalties could be imposed "if the publication or the delivery has been done based on bad intentions or caused public disturbance or intruded on international relations or damaged the prestige of the state or its dignity or damaged national unity or the army and armed forces morale, or even if it damaged the national economy and the safety of currency". Article No. 29, meanwhile, cites a list of topics which are banned from publication. Article No. 56 (D) in turn provides for the license to be revoked for any "publication that calls for changing the constitution of the state by unconstitutional means", and providing for punishment for those responsible. Those who criticize the government by demanding democratic rule have been found guilty of committing the criminal offence of "changing the constitution via illegal means", even if the means were nonviolent. Article No. 56 (B) then bluntly stated that no publications in Syria were permitted to publish articles calling for a change in the constitution which changed the role of the ruling party.

Act No. 50 did not cover the right to establish radio stations, TV channels or electronic media sites, as only addressed print media. Nonetheless, the authority of the state remained absolute over all forms of media, allowing just a few private radio stations and websites to exist under legislative decree. The authorities also allowed the establishment of private TV channels, but this was not based on any legal framework, but was only on the basis of the government's satisfaction or otherwise with station or website owners. For example, a private radio station named Al Sham was closed on the basis of a verbal decree made by the minister of information. This decision was never explained.

The Syrian authorities accelerated their violations against freedom of opin-

ion and expression on one hand, and against the right to information on the other. The authorities also committed more than fifty violations against the rights of media professionals during the period between 2008 and mid-2009, arresting Syrian media professionals and bringing them to trial, prohibiting them from travelling by restricting their freedom of movement, and blocking websites (particularly those related to centers of human rights). The Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Speech also documented instances, particularly in 2009, where issues of foreign publications were blocked from distribution in Syria as they included articles which contravened Syrian policy.

### **The Union of Journalists**

Decree No. 58 of 1974, which remains in place to the current date, dictates that the right to join the Union of Journalists is limited to those who work in state institutions. This is the case despite the existence of dozens of private newspapers employing journalists who cannot join the union, and who therefore have no right to start up private and independent syndicates. However, the most severe articles in the rules of this union are the discriminatory articles. Article No. 10 (E) allows the employees of any media outlet of Al-Baath Party or its subordinate organizations to join the Union of Journalists, preventing all other political parties from doing so. Articles No. 6 and No. 18 also discriminate against non-Arab ethnicities, creating the condition that all members must be Arab and Syrian or Palestinian refugees.

### **The Syrian Kurdish media**

In addition to the general problems with the Syrian press, the Kurdish press in Syria also faces a major problem of denial and a lack of recognition. Until now, the Syrian government still for-

bids publishing in the Kurdish language, regardless of the medium or topic in question. Meanwhile, it allows publishing in foreign languages such as English and French. As a result, the Kurdish press has been portrayed as partisan and affiliated with banned Kurdish political parties. This has meant that the Kurdish press has a tendency to cover topics and materials with the purpose of spreading Kurdish culture. The Kurdish press has operated secretly during its inception using simple tools, to the extent that it was first copied by hand and circulated among people in secret to avoid harsh penalties, including arrest. These were the circumstances surrounding *The Kurds' Voice*, the official newspaper of the first Kurdish party founded in Syria in 1957.

### **The pre-2011 situation in a nutshell**

The security machine in Syria operates a regime of censorship which “is without any legal cover”, according to journalist Mazen Darwish, as their activities are not covered by the Publications Acts or any set of rules or contracts. This is disrespectful to the Syrian constitution and to the fundamental rights of Syrian citizens. Legal controls not only restrict freedom of expression and freedom of the press, but also contribute to financial losses for Syrian publications. Following the uprising of March 2011, social media, new technologies and mobile phone cameras have played an active role as the means of expression of the Syrian youth who are now raising their voices.

# Part II

## Women's Representation in Emerging Syrian Media (2011-2016)

Findings and Analysis

## Chapter 4: The Power over Discourse: Representation of Women in ESM

According to the Critical Discourse Analysis employed by this research, the power over discourse in the representation of women in any medium is attributable to one or more of the following factors: 1) the context; 2) the producers and the politics of production; 3) the ideology and hidden power relations which affect the text. In Syria, a major opportunity presented itself at the beginning of the uprising, when a space opened up for civil society and facilitated the growth of media organizations. The contextual factor determining the power over discourse is, of course, embedded in the current conflict situation and the rise of warlords and exclusionary ideologies, all of which accentuate the pre-existing authoritarian and patriarchal order. The second factor is triggered by ESM outlets themselves, in terms of their coverage of women's issues, and in terms of the extent that their mode of operation ensures that women have an equal partnership in their production roles and processes. The third factor is subject to the language and strategies used by producers to frame women in their texts, whether these are utilized knowingly or unknowingly. These three factors are covered in more detail below:

### 4.1 Structural and New Contextual Factors: Authoritarianism, Patriarchy, Warlords and Censorship Impeding a Revolution that Co-exists in Parallel with Them

This level of the research involves an examination of discourse as a social practice, that is, as a feature of ideology, power and hegemonic processes within a broader sociopolitical and historical context. This involves an analy-

sis of the socio-political context on the ground and a look at the attempts by emerging hegemonies to gain control and impose their rule over areas and people. These hegemonies range from the regime to extremist groups, to sharia courts, and to so-called 'moderate' armed rebels.

### The current context

Today, the Syrian conflict is best described as a space where a popular uprising against authoritarianism co-exists with civil war and proxy war. The uprising in Syria has revived civil society and its agency. In a research project mapping civil society in Syria, Khalaf et. Al (2014) identified over 94 non-humanitarian civil society organizations established in Syria between 2011 and 2014. Against all the odds, these have been promoting the values of the revolt – freedom, equality and democracy – through their work.

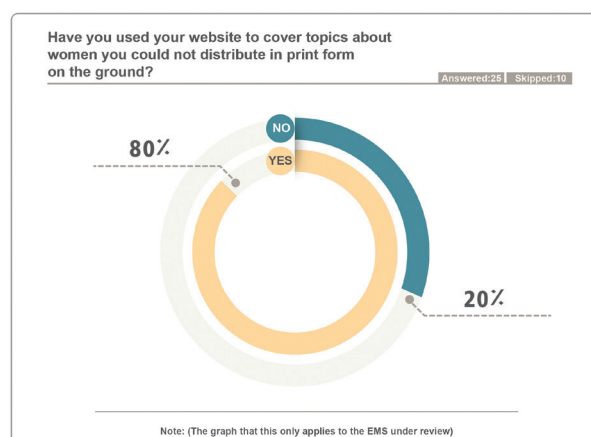
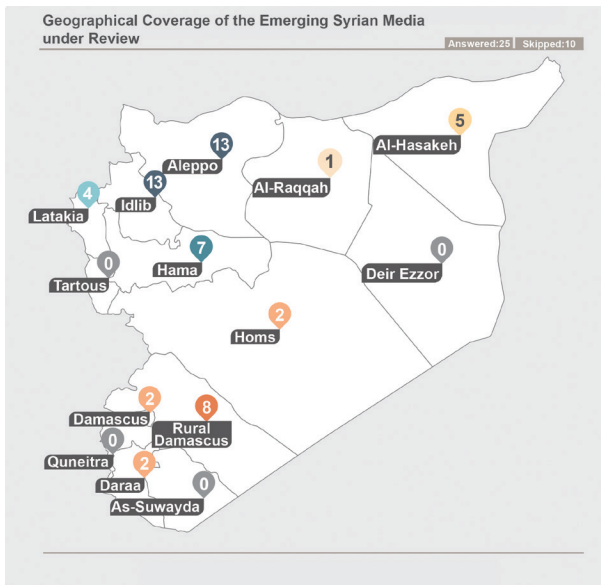


Figure 7: ESM Outlets under Review Forced to Publish Online Due to Restrictions on the Ground

Media outlets have also emerged in this period, and have been increasing in number and diversifying their coverage and focus. However, these outlets face several challenges, including a lack of media knowledge. This deficit comes



**Figure 8: The Geographical Coverage of the ESM under Review**

from the fact that many of the key personnel involved in this movement are citizen journalists who could benefit from training. Other difficulties are their young institutional age, their small numbers and the context of insecurity in Syria. Furthermore, these ESM are influenced by geographical boundaries and by the functioning of power relations on the ground. Graphs 7 and 8 show that although some of these media outlets operate from areas of Syria not controlled by the regime, they face serious challenges in accessing other sectors of Syria, whether controlled by the regime, by ISIS, or by other actors, including the PYD (the Kurdish Democratic Union Party) and the different rebel brigades.

The challenge of accessing certain areas can be attributed to the war situation, state failure and increased violence. In many areas it is due to the rise of armed groups to power and their tyranny and control of ESM, not only in terms of freedom of movement for journalists but in terms of what news they cover.

Cross-border networks often support these groups, which include extremist groups such as Daesh and Al-Nusra, as

well as the 'moderate' rebels and the PYD. When challenged, these armed groups become increasingly authoritarian. In many areas they have used either religion or ideology to govern, and this has impacted civil society in general and women in particular. These groups have engaged in many instances of direct censorship of ESM.

## **B. Censorship in relation to coverage of women's issues**

ESM publications are examined at regional borders and checkpoints, and their availability can be restricted if they cover certain key topics relating to women, such as early marriage. Before magazines are allowed to be carried into an area, armed groups have attempted to check their content. This censorship extends to photographs; even women in cartoons may have to be depicted wearing the veil before many of these tyrannical groups will allow magazines to enter a given area. As a result, ESM are just as restricted as they were when the regime was in full control, when the Ministry of Information would censor them even before they actually voiced their ideas to spare themselves the nuisance of having to deal with the authorities on the ground.

It seems that moderate rebels are not so moderate when it comes to women. In discussions with several ESM members, 20% stated that they can cover certain topics in relation to women online only, because it is impossible to include them in printed media on the ground. Given that the majority have not resorted to this option despite clear constraints on covering certain issues, this raises the question of whether self-censorship is in effect.

### C. Armed groups and women journalists

Control by extremist groups and even moderate rebel forces has hit women's rights hard. A major concern is the lack of mobility inside Syria for women journalists, as women may now be prevented from travelling if they are not accompanied by a man. This context is limiting women journalists severely. One ESM producer explained: *"We are not able to get women journalists on the ground; they cannot go out without men; while we are being supportive if they need to bring a man/others with them, it is still very difficult"*.

This situation has worsened in some cases, where men staff have imposed additional rules with the purpose of protecting their women colleagues. One woman journalist stated: "My colleagues do not let me go on the ground with them, though I really want to and can". One manager said that he feels more pressure when women staff are working inside Syria, because he fears that his institution will get the blame if something bad happens to them. To complicate matters, some families prohibit their daughters – no matter how old they are – from working on the ground. Given the increased stigma of detainment, many women journalists are shying away from being on the ground. These women are afraid that their reputation will be negatively affected and that their options will become limited if they are detained. One woman journalist is said to have been beaten by her family and made an outcast because of her detention. This illustrates the extreme limitations for the mobility of women journalists inside Syria.

### D. The vulnerability of men and women media workers

Half of the ESM survey respondents live outside Syria, and 73% of these live in Turkey. Although the situation for journalists is at its worst inside Syria, the conflict also creates great vulnerability for those outside the country. Almost all ESM members operating from Turkey have no contracts because they are not registered in Turkey, which creates difficulties because of the conditions they have must meet, such as providing insurance, employing Turkish citizens, and so forth. It is difficult to comply with these conditions given limited budgets. In Turkey, most ESM journalists – whether men or women – operate without a license, have no legally binding contracts, are not insured, have very little annual leave (12 days), and do not receive compensation for work or meetings outside the office. It is often ESM managers and staff themselves who bear all the risks and costs for the hazards of their work, such as injuries suffered while on assignment. Such injuries are highly possible given the ongoing conflict situation. A legal contract may only be accessed after 3 years of residency in Turkey. These media members face serious problems for lack of documentation confirming their status as journalists. Such media members stated that they risk being stopped at any time because they are operating without Turkish work permits.

#### 4.2 Production: Coverage and Participation of Women

---

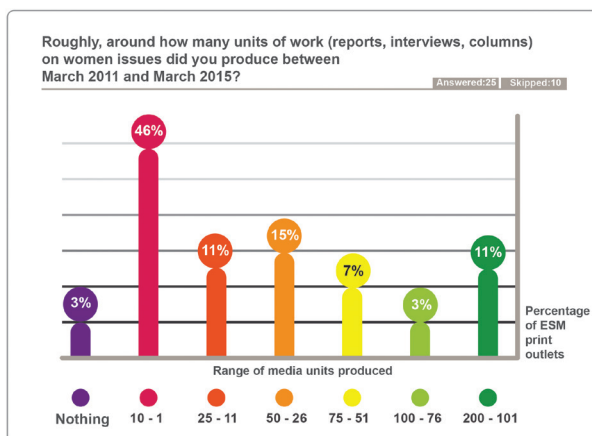
For further assessment of the power over discourse, the research studied text production as a discursive practice, examining:

- A. Coverage of women's issues
- B. The politics of production: women journalists and their role

## A. Coverage of women's issues

### How often is there coverage on women?

It is highlighted that coverage on women in ESM is very weak, hardly reaching 200 articles between years 2011 and 2016 in the best case scenario, with the average being far below this (see Figure 9).

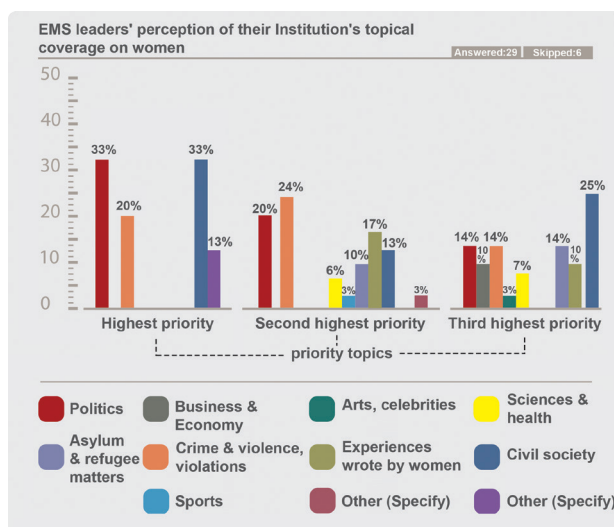


**Figure 9: Response to the Question – “Roughly how many units of media work on topics relating to women did you produce between March 2011 and March 2015?”**

### What topics were covered?

When asked about topical coverage in relation to women's issues, ESM managers said that their main focus is on politics, with women's success stories receiving some of the least attention. Figure 10 illustrates the level of priority given to various topics. The highest priority topics are politics, civil society, and to a lesser extent violence against women. The second highest level of priority was given again to politics and violence against women, followed by first-hand accounts of women's experiences. The next level of priority was civil society, followed by topics connected to violence on women, refugees and politics. Topics related to the economy, success stories, business, science, sports, and health were also mentioned, but not as top priorities.

These findings are interesting in many ways. Although it is not always clear



**Figure 10: Priority Topic Coverage by the ESM under Review**

what was meant by the term 'politics', the qualitative data collected during focus group discussions indicates that the main focus tends to be on women detainees and violence against women. To a smaller extent, ESM covered topics such as how women's viewpoints changed because of the conflict, the role of women, women intellectuals and educators, and women heads of households.

Differences between women and men ESM journalists were also evident. Women journalists appeared to focus more on women's intellectual production, on the absence of women in local councils, on online marriage, and so forth. Meanwhile, many men journalists seemed to continue to address topics related specifically to women only if the topic was social and about emotions or nutrition. Political and topics perceived to be 'harder' were targeted at an audience of men.

**Despite the constraints which the violent situation has imposed upon ESM, there have been efforts to contest the stereotyping of women as victims and vulnerable, with evidence of a small yet important trend of covering women's experiences and success stories.** Moreover, some ESM show signs of having



a good understanding of the gender biases against women. However, despite the good intentions of several ESM leaders in relation to the issue of gender equality, a critical question remains about how and when these good intentions are translated into action.

Coverage of women's issues increases at particular times of year, corresponding with events such as women's day or mother's day. Overall, however, topical coverage on women does not appear to vary greatly from year to year. Despite several new and brave articles and broadcasts challenging tyrannies in power on the ground and in society, the representation of women as victims remained a dominant trend. Table 3 highlights the main topics covered by the articles under review in chronological order.

**Table 3: Topics Covered by the ESM under Review - by Year<sup>13</sup>**

Year	Topics Covered by the ESM under Review
	* denotes a topic is repeated more than once in a particular year
2011, 2012	<p><b>Conflict actors</b> Regime's violence and tactics Mistakes of the opposition</p> <p><b>Society:</b> Society's revolution</p> <p><b>Women:</b> Victims causing suffering for mothers</p>
2013	<p><b>Conflict actors</b> Regime's violence &amp; war Hezbollah The National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces</p> <p><b>Civil society &amp; the values of the revolution</b> Nostalgia for the first year of the revolution The revolt &amp; its peaceful rise Civil society</p>

13. \*denotes a topic repeated more than once in a particular year.

2013	<p><b>The situation</b> Martyrs &amp; the death toll Sectarianism State failure, a lack of services &amp; resources &amp; economic suffering Unemployment Local governance</p> <p><b>Women</b> Victims: refugees, the displaced, the detained heroines: evidence of women's agency</p> <p><b>Events</b> Geneva conference</p> <p><b>New topics</b> Homosexuality Corruption in humanitarian aid Local &amp; international interests in Syria</p>
	<p><b>Conflict actors</b> Regime's violence &amp; war* Hezbollah* ISIS* The Kurds</p> <p><b>Civil society and the revolt values</b> Kidnapping and detainment of activists Nostalgia to return to Syria</p>
	<p><b>The situation</b> Martyrs &amp; the death toll* Sectarianism* State failure, a lack of services &amp; resources &amp; economic suffering* War economy and corruption* Micro-conflicts of armed groups Local security situation – looting</p> <p><b>Women</b> Victims: refugees*, the displaced*, the detained*, widows, trafficked people, early marriage, forced marriage, sexual violence Agency: role of women in the revolt Women's exclusion from Local Councils Women's stereotyped relationship to men</p> <p><b>Events</b> Women's day* Mother's day* Geneva conference*</p>
2014	

2014	<p><b>New topics</b>  Love during the revolution  Social media  Impact of the conflict on youth</p>
2015	<p><b>Conflict actors</b>  Regime's violence &amp; war*  Hezbollah*  ISIS*  The Kurds*</p> <p><b>Civil society &amp; the values of the revolution</b>  Growth in the number of civil society organizations*</p> <p><b>The situation</b>  Martyrs &amp; the death toll*  Sectarianism*  State failure, a lack of services &amp; resources &amp; economic suffering*  Micro-conflicts of armed groups*  War economy &amp; corruption*  Victims: the detained*  Massacres  Livelihoods  Oppression</p> <p><b>Women</b>  Victims: refugees*, the displaced*, the detained*  Agency: Women working for economic reasons</p> <p><b>Events</b>  Women's day*  Ramadan</p> <p><b>New topics</b>  The Islamization of the Syrian revolution  Islam  The abuse and arming of children  Kurdish women fighters  Regionalization of the Syrian war  Arab news – Egypt  Crisis of Syrian refugees in Europe</p>

## How are topics chosen and written up in ESM?

According to most ESM members, sometimes coverage is driven by events on the ground, and in other cases the editor or manager suggests topics. These choices are said to be more ad-hoc rather than pre-planned. In many cases, depending on the character of

the journalist, they personally select the topic in line with the guidelines of the media outlet in question. This is sometimes preceded by negotiation with the editor-in-chief, primarily to address the issue of the security of staff on the ground. For instance, often journalists are unable to criticize Al Nusra from within their territory, or are restricted from creating awareness on LGBT rights because of the associated social taboo or uncertainty in how to address the issue.

Another issue that was raised was the NGOization and project-led nature of media outlets, which have become in dire need of donor support. As a result, ESM can be constrained by the need to ensure that donors are satisfied. It was noted that even the best intentioned donors are in danger of doing more harm than good to the cause of gender equality by demanding greater representation for women but without providing the accompanying training or an explanation of why this is important. This has led some of those involved in ESM to feel that topics are imposed on them. The ultimate result is that their coverage of women is increased, but only because, as some put it: "topics on women sell and attract funds". On the staffing side, ESM have also expressed frustration with donors' over-emphasis on numbers and quotas of women workers and workshop participants, which may come at the expense of competence, which in turn has an impact on the work of the media outlet. There has also been heavy criticism and questioning of why all media awards tend to go to women and not men.

The analysis of men's and women's roles showed a clear division of roles, with men dominating both the leadership of ESM outlets and the coverage of the news on the ground inside Syria.

Furthermore, it was noted that women within ESM institutions were more likely to cover topics on women than men (see Figure 11).

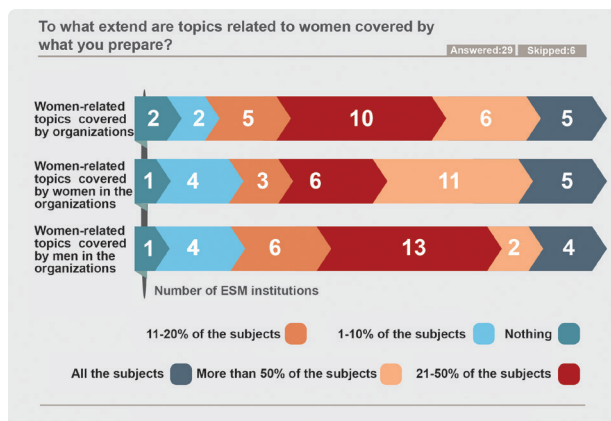


Figure 11: Women-related topics covered by organizations, by women or men in the organizations

## B. Representation of women journalists in ESM: their roles and agency

One very positive finding is that the share of women in ESM is relatively high. Even more importantly, it is generally inclusive of women from social and economic backgrounds which would previously have tended to be excluded from participation. Over half of the ESM radio workforce (54%), and over a third of the ESM print workforce (35%) are women, according to survey respondents. Despite the likely respondent bias to give answers matching the values of the SFJN, these findings are still very positive.

However, one issue to note in relation to print media is that these numbers of women are over-represented by volunteers and part-time staff. Our data indicates that only 38% of women working in emerging print media in Syria hold senior positions, while 62% hold junior positions (see Figure 11). This shows that ESM is still more likely to have men in leadership positions, particularly in the case of print media. Furthermore, it was found that only 4% of senior journalists were women. This is often attributed to the contextual constraints on the

ground, as noted earlier, whereby there are various limitations impeding women's mobility, such as social pressure and the reputational consequences of detainment. Nonetheless, some women asserted that they are willing to take this risk but are prevented from doing so. One woman journalist interviewed eloquently explained her motivation for working on the ground by saying: "Here we are behind a glass door and we do not know when we will escape".

It may be better to allow women journalists to make this choice for themselves rather than having it imposed on them. Indeed, several leaders in ESM noted that women are more capable of carrying out field work of high quality. They are able to connect with women, and are more likely to be found trustworthy. This was illustrated when a local council shared information with a woman journalist that they had failed to share with her men colleagues. Respondents also stated that women were more likely to tell their stories to other women.

Meanwhile, positions as editors and producers are dominated by men, although there are no security threats from the context if these roles are based outside of Syria. When asked about the issue, one woman ESM producer said: "I am sure if I open any magazine, I will not find anything about women – even the authors are men! Ah, there is one woman author. She is writing poetry!" if this situation is to be altered, more women need to be encouraged and motivated to write.

In terms of remuneration, ESM reflects and has maintained one of Syria's positive policies, namely, equal pay for men and women. One possible improvement here would be to increase the likelihood of equal full-time job opportunities for both men and women.

## Working Together

When questioned about their perception of working with women, men said that women are punctual and have plenty of ability, but can be embarrassed while working around men. One journalist who is a man told us that “Women are taking too much attention; women are blackmailing us, as if all we want to do in life is oppress them!”

When questioned about their perception of working with men, women said that men are not committed to their work, are disorganized, are inaccurate, have no patience and are less responsible than women. Women emphasized this lack of patience especially in con-

nection with the issue of pregnancy. Furthermore, women were unhappy to be perceived to be taking men’s roles and to be given men’s nicknames. One women said that when she gets angry with a colleague’s failure to delivering their work on time, the response is “Rawe2na Abou Abdo” (Calm down, father of Abdo).

It is important for both women and men working in ESM to be aware of their own biases and assumptions towards each other, as this impacts not only the content of their work and the discourse, but also how they work together.

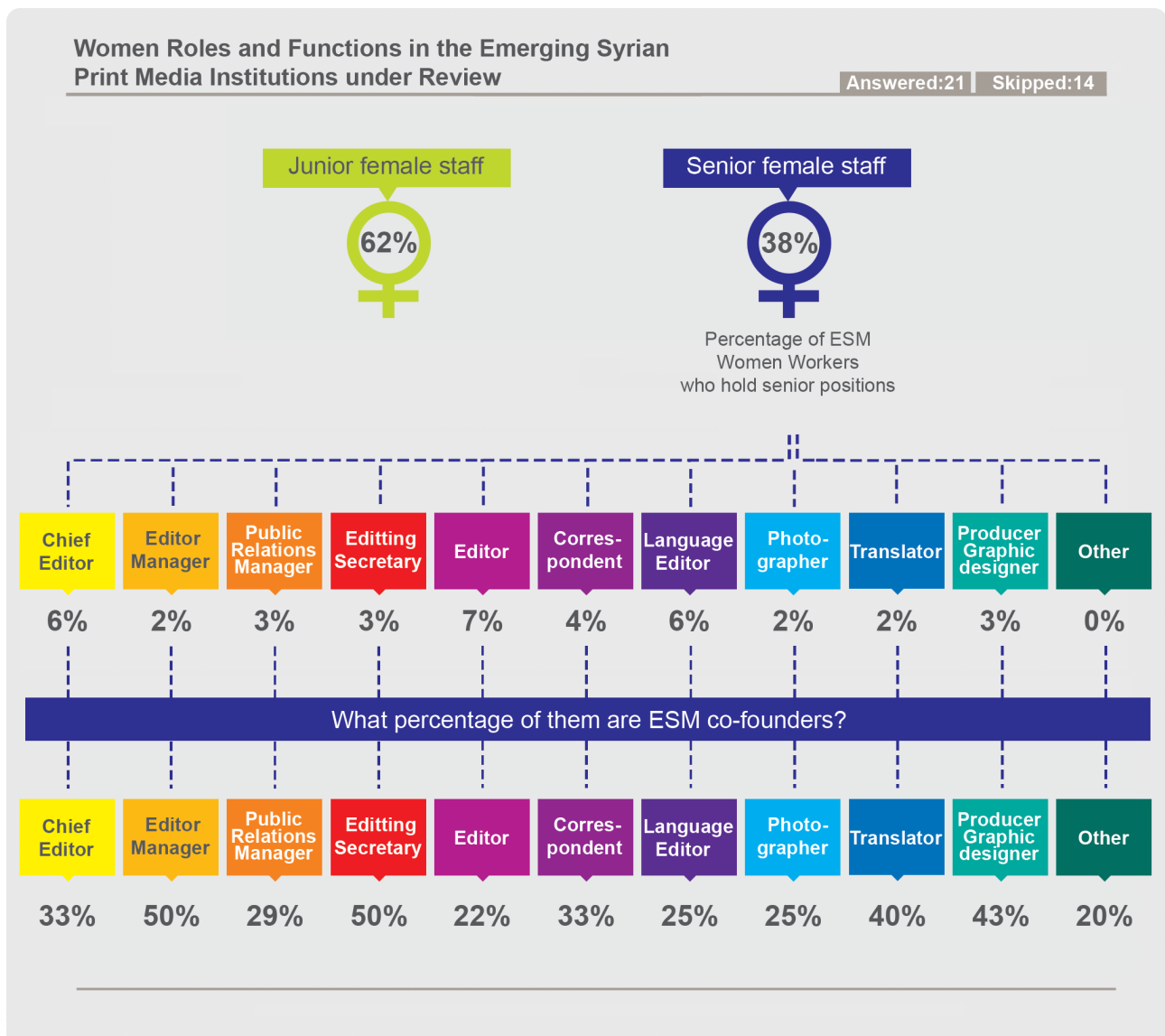


Figure 12: Women’s Roles in the Emerging Print Syrian Media Under Review

### 4.3 The framing of women: language and hidden power relations

---

*“The general attitude in ESM, whether a woman does a thing positively or negatively, is over-exaggerated, as if they are saying: wow! A woman did this?!”*  
(ESM producer)

The choice of language used in ESM texts by producers, whether knowingly or unknowingly, does frame women in particular ways. This language builds on ideological stances and assumptions and employs different strategies to further them. This is where the power over and inequality against women lies in ESM.

#### A. Ideologies in EMS

The ideological stances of ESM outlets are difficult to define. The lines between them are blurred in many instances, as many are still in their embryonic stage and have not yet established a clear identity. However, two general ideological trends which were noted to be affecting women are: (1) the liberal / secular ideology and (2) the religious ideology. Nationalist and patriarchal discourses are often intertwined with both trends, with the nationalist discourse more inclined to be secular, and the patriarchal discourse more inclined to be religious.

It was the outlets and articles with liberal ideologies that were found a focus on citizenship and human rights in general, and specifically on LGBT and women's rights. Some of these focused on society, children, youth, and other mixed topics. The outlets and articles with nationalist ideologies in turn were found to focus on the Kurdish issue, youth, children, women, politics and news. The discourse on women as represented in many secular articles expressed cau-

tion on society's attitude if there were progressive discourses vis-à-vis the status of women. Other articles seemed to have the best intentions, but tended to rely on the familiar patriarchal framework that frames women in traditional ways. Although it is undoubtedly difficult to overcome old habits and traditional assumptions about gender relations, it was noted that there was often a failure to delve further than accepted assumptions and received wisdom. There is a need for more rigorous challenges to the representation of women and the mainstream discourse on gender. While many articles utilized the terminology and concepts relating to women's rights, this was often not accompanied by convincing arguments relevant to the local context, or explanations of why these rights are important and the meaning of these concepts. The evident good will and well-meaning efforts of many ESM outlets needs to be accompanied by a more informed and nuanced approach to the issue. ESM outlets and articles which reflect nationalist ideologies, meanwhile, seem more interested in appropriating women in the service of their own cause than in promoting the cause of gender equality for its own sake. One example is the articles highlighting of women Kurdish fighters, who do not necessarily fight for women's equality.

Outlets and articles with religious Islamic ideologies were found to focus on the news, Islam, youth, children, politics and society. These were identified by their use of religious or Islamic narratives. Their references and discourses are jihadist in many cases. These rarely include women authors, and in most cases promote a “return to God” as

the solution to all issues. It is interesting that in terms of topical coverage, some try to be sensitive to other minorities, but in general they are not very sensitive to gender equality issues. They endorse the view that women belong in the private sphere in traditional roles, and there is a pattern of seeing women in terms of their relationships to men: as mothers, sisters, wives, daughters, or grandmothers. Religious ESM were found to be the most likely to use women to elicit sympathy in order to promote their own cause, with sentences such as “X citizens were martyred, including many children and women”. These outlets rarely portray women as active revolutionaries, and when they do so, their success is ascribed to their Muslim identity.

## B. Assumptions

Both the religious and the liberal/secular ideological stances were observed to share relatively similar assumptions. This was often the case even where there were good intentions, as these were often largely unexamined assumptions rather than conscious bias. These assumptions were often based on the author’s or the societal attitude towards gender equality, whether intentional or unconscious. In many cases there is a lack of conviction in women’s capacity, a conviction that women are followers of men, and a belief that women victims or casualties are a good tool to raise sympathy. However, this was not always the case; there were instances indicating strong underlying assumptions that women have a high capacity and are very capable of strong agency. For the sake of providing constructive criticism, our principal focus is on the negative assumptions in order to bring them to light and combat them. The box below summarizes some of these assumptions reflected in ESM articles under review.

Table 4: Negative Assumptions made by the ESM under Review

Topic	Assumptions made in EMS
Women's capability	<p>Women are weak and need help</p> <p>Women are incapable</p> <p>Women have no agency or choice in areas controlled by Sharia courts</p> <p>Women are not good at fighting</p> <p>Working women benefit from male boss' favoritism; their success is due to their beauty, not talent</p> <p>If journalists, there is little women can take; they can easily break down and cannot resist</p>
Women's identity	<p>Women are defined by their relationship to a man as his sister, mother, wife or daughter</p> <p>All women are homogenous</p> <p>If fighting, they should remain feminine</p> <p>Women are victims</p> <p>All Syrian women are scarfed and conservative (case of most photos)</p>
Women's role and function	<p>Women's role is only in the private sphere in taking care of her house and raising children</p> <p>The priority for women is their house, even if in refugee camps</p>
Women's behavior	<p>Women are always on children's side against the father</p> <p>Women are overspending, especially on beauty products</p> <p>Women don't read this or that EMS</p> <p>Women are passive &amp; submissive</p>
Relation of woman to man and to society	<p>Women are under constant threat and need protection</p> <p>If a woman is raped, she loses her dignity</p> <p>The man and family's dignity is linked to a woman's virginity</p> <p>Family violence is only practiced against women</p>

## C. Strategies used to promote ideologies and to consolidate assumptions and biases

### Presuppositions

In terms of the use of language, the assumptions mentioned above came as presuppositions, which were presented in ESM outlets through the use of: (1) verbs; (2) the definite article, 'the', in conjunction with women; and (3) questions. Verbs were used in a manner that keeps women submissive and passive. Women tended to be the object of the verb rather than the subject – things were done to women rather than done by women. There were also positive cases where women were portrayed as 'doing'. Common such verbs used with women as subjects were "resisting", "dreaming", "aspiring towards something" on one end, and "grieving" or "suffering" on the other. Women were rarely presented as "thinking" and "being", which is highly problematic whether or not it is unintentional. "The" was used to portray all women as victims, as in "the Syrian woman is suffering". The definite article was also used to identify a woman in relation to a man, by naming her as "the wife of X", thereby indirectly defining her by that relationship rather than portraying her as a person in her own right. Questions were posed when talking about women as a means of conveying disapproval. For example, one woman author asked "Where did we lose our values?" to express criticism of a woman who was smoking, reflecting the assumption that the woman's behavior was linked to a lack of morals and values.

Other methods used in identifying women are listed below. More information on these kinds of representational choices, as well as explanation of the terminology, can be found under Section 2.2, above:

**Personalization and Specification** can be used in a positive way when making statements about famous women, or citing a woman's profession (as journalist, lawyer, etc.). In other cases, it is used to enforce stereotypes of a woman's connection to a man (for example, identifying her as the wife of X instead of giving her own name), or stereotyping her in terms of her role (for example, whereby a Muslim woman is suggested to only have a traditional role).

**Generalization, Aggregation and Collectivization:** when they are victims or mothers, women tend to be generalized, aggregated, collectivized and treated as statistics as a means to raise sympathy. These tactics are also used to a small extent where women are activists or engage in activity perceived as heroic.

**Nomination** is used when criticizing women, but functionalization is used when praising their success. Women's failures are deemed to have occurred because of who they are (women) rather than what they do. In a positive sense, in most cases a woman's success is attributed to what she does.

**Objectification** is used to reduce women to and define them by their physical appearance, rather than their capacity. Objectification was rarely used positively.

**Anonymization and nominalization** are used against women, especially in the coverage of acts of violence (such as rape), as a means to obscure the perpetrators of these acts and focus on the victimhood of women. In certain other cases, they were used to conceal the names of women in order to protect them.

**Suppression** of topics about society, or of coverage of warlords and men who

perpetrate violence against women, is used as a means to obscure these issues and leave them unquestioned. Meanwhile, other issues which are important to these actors are put forward instead.

**Lexical choices (choice of wording and use of metaphors)** have been used either to empower or to limit women. One example of disempowering language used in an article from an ESM outlet under review is: “the security services branch is like an stepmother’s house”. The suggestion is that both can be compared as they are locations for questioning and as in both cases, pressure is applied to gain access to sensitive information. Meanwhile, lexical choices were also used to empower women in some cases.

**Hedging** is often used to indirectly create ambiguity. For instance, in coverage of violence against women, there was rarely any deeper investigation into its drivers and causes. Furthermore, in

some cases, calls for democracy were limited to calling for the removal of the authoritarian Assad regime as a means to avoid criticism of the violations of ‘moderate’ armed groups.

**Functionalization** is used to associate many women with a strong sense of agency. This also had the effect of undermining stereotypes, for instance where women were working in non-traditional jobs.

**Collectivization** was a means to portray all women as the same – and often, depicting them in the role of the victim.

**Generic** terms were commonly used to stereotype women as conservative and restricted to involvement in traditional roles

**Exclusion** of women, from photographs for example, has the effect of creating an impression that they do not play an active role in the public sphere.



# Chapter 5: The Power in Discourse: Representation of Women in ESM Texts

The research assessed the linguistic features and organizations of the discourse as a text and image in ESM. At this level, it assessed the representation and portrayal of women's:

- Identity – who women are and what they need
- Actions – what women do and what is done to them

## 5.1 Trends & Narratives: Who are women in EMS and what do they need?

Women in ESM are represented in positive or active terms in some cases, in negative or passive terms in other cases, and elsewhere represented in a contradictory way which continues to confine them to pre-defined, traditional roles, despite offering some praise. Table 5 divides the representation of women in ESM into three categories accordingly. Category 1 contains examples of positive representation, category 2 has examples of negative representation, and category 3 has examples of ambivalent representations. However, the situation is not always so clear-cut and easily defined, as it is very much dependent on the context. For instance, defining a woman as a 'sister' could potentially be a positive designation which incorporates strong agency. Take the example of a children's book about a family adventure in which the brother and sister are side by side as equals, without the brother dominating in a traditional man's role.

Table 5: Sample of Terms Used to Represent Women in the ESM under Review

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Active revolutionaries (4 articles)	Belonging to a male (mother, sister, wife) (5 articles)	"Key in society BUT only as mothers"

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Challengers of tyrannical power	Victims – of regime oppression and conflict; subject to poverty, early marriage, displacement (14 articles)	"Active in work life BUT only because of a man's absence"
Part of the working power	Raped (3 articles)	Have positive role, only if engaged in traditional roles of cooking, cleaning and raising children
Entrepreneurs	Refugee (2 articles)	If "heroines", that is in a movie and there she is weak and innocent
Founders of organizations	Unable to do political work (2 articles)	
Members of local councils	A subject of sympathy	If politically active, it is suggested that she works for foreign security services
Innovative (2 repetitions)	Over-spend-ing	
Artistic	Prostitute	If a widow, she is helpless
Capable against all odds	Submissive	
Persistent	A no-body	If innovative, this is news
Directors	A curse	
Activists	Overburdened	If subject-ed to early marriage, the issue is their ability to raise a family and not their health risk
Educated	Weak	
Free	Sad	
Teachers	In pain	
Intellectuals		If taking the leadership role in a play, it is because there are no men good at it
Nurses		If old, she is a burden
Relief Workers		
Partners to men		
Leaders		

14. \*denotes descriptions that are common and repeated several times by the ESM under review

Several articles in the ESM under review belong in the first category, but the majority do not. Often, even the most progressive and best-intentioned media sources fail to positively represent women in a way that enables them to “be” who they want to be. It should be noted, of course, that men themselves have had predefined roles imposed on them in ESM coverage, which also constrains their individual freedom of identity. Although men were found to be assigned more agency, they suffered similar problems of self-determination in terms of identity. However, the focus of this analysis is on the placement of women in ESM and not the representation of men.

Building on these categories, four main trends were identified in how ESM generally portray women. These suggest that women in ESM are:

#### **A. Active players in the public sphere, and most recognized when famous**

The first category in Table 5 defines women positively according to their role and what they do beyond the private sphere. Certain roles such as journalist, human rights lawyer, author and leader are compared to and personified by one famous woman. This is usually a well-known Syrian figure, such as Majd Al-Shourbaji, Samar Yazbek, Razan Zaintouneh, Mountaha Al-Atrash, Ghada Shouaa, Zeina Erhayyem or Suhair Atassi, or it may be a non-Syrian figure like Simone de Beauvoir.

It is mainly when they are attributed certain roles that women’s full names are used. The other occasion where full names are used is when there is coverage of girl – not woman – ‘martyrs’. In most other cases, only the woman’s first name is used, or she is defined by her relationship to a man. While names may be understandably obscured for security reasons, for example to protect

a source’s safety and confidentiality (which often occurs for men’s names too), at issue here is the common practice of de-personalizing women by confining them to their role in terms of a relative who is a man or her husband, even if either are deceased. A woman is often presented as a man’s mother (‘Em X’ in the Arabic language), wife (‘Haram X’), or daughter (‘Bent X’). A man may be presented as a father (‘Abou X’) – usually of a son – but rarely in terms of his status as the brother or husband of a woman. This trend is included in the second category in Table 5.

#### **B. Non-existent or confined to the private sphere**

In over a dozen of the analyzed articles, women were not mentioned. A major cause of this is the Arabic language itself, which is gendered and privileges the use of the masculine form. For example, one text in a children’s media outlet used only the masculine word for child (طفل) when describing that also included girl children (الطفلة). This is standard Arabic usage for plural nouns where a group has a mix of genders, and so the journalist is not to be blamed. However, even apart from this linguistic particularity, it was noted that women tend to be absent in media coverage of certain topics, namely war, fighting, local councils and detainees.

Furthermore, almost all ESM outlets other than women’s magazines over-represented men in their coverage at the expense of women, even when addressing topics related to society. This overemphasis was also observed in LGBT-focused ESM magazines, where it is mostly gay men and rarely gay women that are addressed. Coverage of women’s issues tended to increase in line with certain annual events such as Women’s Day or Mother’s Day.

In terms of the coverage along ideological lines, media outlets defining themselves as Islamic tend either to ignore the existence of women entirely, or to confine them to the private sphere. One magazine stated explicitly that “a woman’s role is limited to the private sphere, as per Islamic rules and teachings”. If women are portrayed as successful in these outlets, this is often attributed to her being a Muslim who is devoted to her religion. Usually, the term ‘Muslim women’ is followed by advice or orders to remain in the private sphere, to be good and obedient mothers, daughters and wives. However, it is not only media outlets that identify as religious that confine women to traditional roles; this was also found to be true in the case of many sources that identify as secular. Many secular ESM outlets defined women as mothers, sisters or wives, limited to the roles of raising children, cooking and cleaning. This was as likely to be true whether these women were portrayed at home or in a refugee camp, as victims to the conflict or as objects of beauty. Even when women were involved in the labor force as workers, the rationale for this was attributed mainly to chance, to dire need, or to a lack of alternative men candidates for the role; women were not seen to be capable of making such a choice for themselves. There were certainly also notable positive exceptions which challenged this portrayal. However, the depiction of women in traditional roles was the prevalent approach.

### **C. Generalized and used as “victims”**

While some trends may be rooted in socio-cultural practices which date from before the uprising in Syria, an alarming new trend has been identified. Namely, this is the conflict-related appropriation of Syrian women as victims, with the

purpose of utilizing them in the service of other causes not specifically related to women. Women have frequently been found to be portrayed as victims in ESM texts with the agenda of furthering a particular political cause. Women tend to be shown as victims of the regime’s violence, and to a lesser extent, that of ISIS. It is rare to find ESM criticisms of violations against women by the ‘moderate’ armed groups, whether in regime-controlled or non-regime controlled areas. Furthermore, women are the only gender regularly portrayed as passive victims with no ability to resist or agency to “be”. Indirectly, this discourse is serving to trap Syrian women as passive, helpless victims, and is not helping any resistance movement.

**In ESM, women are portrayed as displaced, as refugees, and as suffering from poverty and violence. Meanwhile, although men are also at risk of displacement, of becoming refugees, and of poverty and violence, they are mainly portrayed as fighters, detainees or martyrs.** While women’s bodies are used as a tool by all warring sides with the use of rape as a weapon of war, it is almost never mentioned that men have also been subjected to rape.

In addition to this alarming portrayal of women, there is a discourse in several ESM outlets which feeds the stigma against women when their detention is described in media articles, particularly if they have been subjected to rape while in prison. Some articles insinuate that such women become a burden on their family and on society, which adds another dimension to women’s suffering. On the contrary, men who have been freed after a period of detention are portrayed as survivors and heroes. No reference is made to possible sexual violations against men prisoners, despite the social taboos which would sentence them to even deeper silence

and trauma. Rather than challenging society's misconceptions, many articles seem instead to reinforce them in regards to both women and men. This paradox of representation of women versus men, despite both being affected by the same conflict and violence, is shown below.

Table 6: The Representation of Men Versus Women in the ESM under Review

Women	Men
Mother = love and patience	Father = aggressive
Daughter = obedient, calm and cooperative	Son = exposed to violence; disobedient
Weak; submissive	Strong; tough
Sacrificing	Fighter
Compliant with traditions	Composer of rules
Human face	Logical face

**Another issue with the 'woman as victim' narratives evident in ESM is the over-emphasis of the abused as opposed to the abuser, making the abuse itself the focus and ignoring the abuser in their use of language.** For instance, in cases of rape, it is rare to focus on the perpetrator of the sexual violence. ESM outlets are missing the opportunity to shame the rapist by drawing attention to their actions, and by acknowledging women's right to seek justice against the perpetrators. Instead, such women remain helpless "victims" who need protection against invisible perpetrators, according to most ESM texts.

In the current time of conflict in Syria, many locals perceive early marriage as a means of protecting their daughters from various consequences of the situation, from poverty to rape to death. ESM outlets have attempted to formulate a critique of early marriage, which is welcome, but this critique is inadequate in many cases and needs to be refined and improved. Instead of ex-

plaining why early marriage may end up harming their daughters by subjecting them to human trafficking, violence, death and health issues, one article makes the argument that "early marriage turns boys into men", but cautions "if married early, girls will not know how to manage their family". Other articles state that early marriage is a violation of a woman's human rights without further explanation, failing to give true agency to women beyond the recognition that they have "rights". As well as failing to give a convincing account of what is wrong with early marriage, the latter publication instead continues to reproduce the idea of victimhood and the suffering of the young girls affected. Once again, women are indirectly grouped together as helpless victims at risk of losing their "dignity" and their "future".

#### D. Objects of beauty, incapable of political work

The understanding that a woman's purpose is to serve as an object of beauty is not limited to beauty articles for women, but is also present in articles in children's magazines, as well as articles which identify themselves as following a secular ideology. With a certain children's magazine for instance, pages for an audience of boys were about solving riddles with titles like "The Clever Box X", whereas the pages for an audience of girls were mainly about making handicrafts and women's jewelry, with titles like "The Young Princess", prioritizing the importance of their beauty above all else.

Women may or may not want to emphasize their beauty and be beautiful. What is problematic is the idea that this is what defines them, and the connotation that they are incapable of being active players in Syria's political, economic, cultural and social life. This is

the implication if their primary role is to be beautiful. When women who work in politics, such as Suheir Atassi, are found guilty of wrongdoing, criticism of them is often personalized and focused on their identity as women and on their appearance, instead of focusing on their work. ESM have published criticisms of Atassi's spending on her hair and make-up, when the substantive questions raised were related to her management practices. Men are often also criticized in a personalized manner, but this is rarely focused on their gender or appearance. Another example of this was the ESM criticism of a certain pro-regime woman journalist, who was pictured looking elated in a selfie with a group of dead bodies behind her. Although the article did point out the substantive point on the evident breach of journalistic ethics, it could not resist extending the criticism by objectifying her as a woman and referring to her appearance, stating that "she benefited from her beauty and got what she got". Men are rarely objectified in this manner. Criticism against men which fails to be objective and is personalized can often extend to their women relatives. For instance, one article accusing certain men of corruption claimed that their motivation was "to service the mobile phone bills of their wives and girlfriends". Underlying these statements are beliefs and assumptions that women are incapable of being anything but beautiful, suggesting that they are not remotely suited to political work. One article portrays this vividly by stating that "the local council including women members was suspended while the other local council was not", thus attributing the local council's failure to the participation of women rather than other factors, such as the actions of the council members.

## **So, what do women need according to ESM?**

Portraying women as active signals their strength and agency, but portraying them as victims, as objects of beauty, or totally ignoring their existence and political capacity signals that women need protection, sympathy, advice and help. Is this the intention of ESM outlets? If not, and if they believe that women need to be who they want to be and to become what they are capable of becoming, and if they want to facilitate women in having these choices and creating an enabling environment to do so, there is a need for more critical analysis on how women are framed in ESM. Some of these pitfalls have already been highlighted in Chapter 4.

### **5.2 Trends & Narratives: What do women do in ESM, and what is done to them?**

It is noted that women in ESM are around three times more likely to be passive (having things done to them) than active (doers). As reflected in the representation of women's identity, women are mostly having things done to them as victims of violence, including rape, torture, death, detainment, ransom and human trafficking. Women are also portrayed as being subject to society's judgments and its patriarchal order, to sexual blackmailing, to displacement and at risk of becoming refugees, to early marriage, and to social, economic, cultural and political exclusion. Verbs and adjectives commonly used in parallel with this portrayal include 'struggling', 'serving', 'feeling helpless', 'grieving' and 'needing'. When portrayed as doers, women in ESM are revolutionaries, decision-makers, intellectuals, professionals, entre-

preneurs and mothers. Verbs commonly used in parallel with this portrayal include 'deciding', 'insisting', 'working', 'studying', 'objecting', 'resisting', and 'persisting'. One article eloquently portrays women's agency in resisting and working against all the odds in the face of the tyranny and oppression of the regime, extremist forces, and society itself. Another article highlights this resistance of women when they are active, saying: "Syrian women are destroying the traditional image drawn for them".

As for the verbs used, women in ESM are portrayed as mainly being engaged in material and verbal processes that are about doing and saying. To a lesser extent, women are shown as engaged in behavioral processes related to feeling and dreaming. There are also a few portrayals of women engaged in mental processes of realizing and noticing. Only in rare cases are they depicted as engaging in relational and existential processes of being and becoming, and this often tends to be in a manner that is limited to traditional roles, or to the conflict.

**Unless they are "dreaming", "aspiring to" or "hoping", women in ESM are rarely engaged in processes that allow them to "be" or to "become".**

When further examining each verb or process related to women in our ESM sample, it is observed that:

- When they are "doing", women are fighting and resisting, gaining an award, studying, working; on other occasions they are talking, crying, praying, or paying the cost of violence.
- When women are "saying", they are allowed to be assertive (accompanied by verbs such as 'indicate', 'insist', 'comment', 'agree', 'see',

'decide', 'show', 'announce'). However, this is only to add to a particular narrative rather than to direct it. Portrayals of women as assertive in the texts under review included a mother ordering her child to "go", and Mountaha Al Atrash, a woman leader from Syria's history, making a particular demand. When women are portrayed as expressive in ESM texts, they are found to be talking and showing feelings of weakness, happiness, sadness or gratitude.

- When engaged in behavioral processes, women in ESM are mainly depicted feeling sad, grieving, happy, surprised, or else they are "dreaming": of economic participation and financial independence, of continuing their education, of participating in building Syria, of working in a certain area, or simply of surviving for another day.
- When engaged in mental processes women, are mainly shown as realizing and noticing rather than thinking.
- When they are engaged in relational and existential processes, women are mainly being and becoming: part of a family or society, mothers, fighters, detained or martyred.

### 5.3 Photographs as Text Women in ESM Photographs

#### Mohan Dehne

*"Randomly open any magazine. If you find a photo of a women, she will likely be a refugee. Her face will be hidden and so will her opinion" (ESM producer)*

With developments in technology, the visual language has become an essential element in media and communication in all its forms. Today, we commu-

nicate and deliver news prominently through photographs. The photograph has become a significant part of our daily life.

Visual language can be understood in terms of a visual code which the reader must decode to understand the content. According to Ferdinand de Saussure: "To understand a photo, we must decode the symbols and meanings it contains, and read the photo as we read a written text to figure out the meaning". According to him, each symbol has significance, and ultimately, as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words.

The visual language has its own grammar and symbols which are used to convey an idea or to report a specific incident. This can be done independently or within a text in combination with a certain context. Each photograph has a visual form that we can see, as well as a content that is meant to be delivered to the receiver. The choice of form has an impact on the appropriate delivery of the content, and affects the understanding of the photograph. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand the context from which it came, as otherwise the photograph remains two-dimensional and loses its third dimension. This concept is based on the photographic analytical work of the writer and photographer Ton Hendriks in his book *Beeldspraak: Fotografie als visuele communicatie* (2003) on the semiotic theory of the philosopher and writer Roland Barthes, as expounded in his *Elements of Semiology* (Barthes, 1964).

Looking at all three dimensions of the ESM photographic samples studied for this research, there is evidence of a deficit and a lack of knowledge on the concept of visual language, particularly in the field of printed and digital media. There are problems in the selection

process and signs of a lack of photographic experience. This may be related to misconceptions about the function of the affixed-to-text photograph, which is often deemed secondary and complementary to the text. At times, the photograph is only used in production to fill an available space.

It is hard to tell if this situation can be attributed to the ESM editor or the photographer themselves. Another possible explanation may be insufficient funding available for visual task experts. According to the writer and teacher in higher education Wolters-Noordhoff, in his book *The Fundamental Rules of Journalism*, editors are researchers and creative managers whose job is not limited to arranging and formatting the article, but extends beyond that to ensuring that an affixed-to-text photograph is:

- Able to provide journalistic and news value
- Catchy
- Providing information
- Adding an interesting look to the page to attract the reader

In comparison with these criteria, the photographs under review tend to be generally inclusive rather than specific. For instance, most photographs of Syrian women in ESM are stereotypical and display the conservative Sunni segment of the Syrian society, as can be seen in Photo 1. Furthermore, as well as continuously portraying women as victims of the war, most of the photographs under review portray women victims who are veiled and from the same excluded socio-economic background. This type of image has become one of the clichés of ESM photography, as has the image of the broken woman struggling to meet the needs of her children. Although these are genuine photographs, nonetheless their ubiquity represents a generalization about Syrian womanhood. All Syrian women do not

look like this most common image, but the frequency of this visual representation creates a certain image of Syrian women. As Susan Sontag wrote in *On Photography*, "To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge (...); it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed." (Sontag, 1973).

There is no doubt that the cultural and ideological background of the editor plays a vital role in the selection of images. It is difficult for them to deal with the matter objectively. This is demonstrated by the choices made when publishing images of Syrian Kurdish women, where a contrast is evident vis-à-vis other photographs of Syrian women. That shows an attempt – which may be unconscious – to denote women's affiliation in the typical published photograph.



**Photo 1**

Furthermore, the preference and expectations of the reader will certainly also be taken into consideration when selecting photographs for publication that are supposed to represent women and their role in the Syrian revolution. Many attempts are made to depict and explain the role of women in the revolution through photography, but many of the visual selections in ESM clearly fail to represent the positive aspect of women's role as an active element within this public movement. An example of this can be seen in the photo below, where we cannot see the faces of the women in the picture. Although

it is clear that their faces were hidden for security purposes, in some way, the function is to obscure their agency as



**Photo 2**

well as their identity.

Returning to the form and content of the photograph, if the form is not selected correctly, the content will be inappropriate to the context of the text. The task of the photographer is not only to document an incident photographically, but also to provide the details which are not included within the text. The text and the photograph are complementary elements to tell the story appropriately and in its entirety.

Another issue is the re-use of photographs, meaning that that a single photograph is used for the context of two different texts. Some photographs are used many times for different subjects in different contexts, as was the case with Photo 3, and sometimes a photograph may be borrowed from another context, and then attached to an unrelated text. The purpose may be to fill an available space in the production/layout, or because an editor is obliged to attach a photograph, and specifi-



**Photo 3**



cally a photograph of a women. Photographs are generally considered to be credible and authentic by the viewer, as they have been taken at a specific moment in real time. Hence they are considered to be real and to be documenting a fragment of reality. However, in ESM, as in photographic media in general, we are not allowed to know what happened outside of the frame of the photograph with which we are presented. We only have a partial view of this reality, as exemplified by Photo 4. In this photograph of a Syrian woman looking alone and exhausted with her three children, we do not know whether her husband or partner is standing by, just outside of the frame. In short, the elements selected by the photographer when shaping a photograph are significant in reporting a specific situation to the receiver. In many cases, the difference between a man and a woman editor/ photographer is evident from the choices made about the form and other aspects of a particular photograph. For example, when an editor is a man, women are more likely to be marginalized or absent in the selected photographs. This marginalization is not necessarily deliberate.

It is important that an editor is knowl-

edgeable and experienced in the use of the visual language and the function of the photograph inside the text. They need to know how to deal with photographs properly, and not only to use them to fill available space or to beau-



Photo 4

tify the publication..

It is critical to recognize the opportunity that the photograph offers to printed journalism, especially as a means to attract readers and holding their interest. Thus, it is necessary to invest properly in both men and women photographers to ensure that they are professional and have specialized knowledge in this area. It is not enough to tolerate the use of any old photograph alongside the text; nor is it acceptable to ask journalists to capture any available image without receiving the proper training.

## Concluding thoughts and Recommendations: “Whalla2 la Wain?” Where to from here?

*“...women suffered from the small dictator residing in the patriarchal logic too. While the Arab Spring came to trigger change, this change will remain incomplete and freedom will remain embarrassed if the revolution does not tackle the patriarchal notions nested in our minds”*

*Quote from an ESM outlet, 2015*

At the end of her movie “Whalla2 la Wain”, Nadine Labaki beautifully portrays the success of two different sides in avoiding the divisions of the civil war which have affected the rest of the county, using a series of events both happy and sad, easy and difficult, and complex and simple. However, in the end, the two sides reach a turning point as they walk together to bury one of their dead, as custom dictates that he can only be buried on one side of the village and not the other.

The analogy here illustrates that whether or not we can determine how we are affected by the external context, and while we can have an impact on our own production of discourse, there is a bigger issue. This is the failure of our own discourse to challenge structural injustices and hidden relations of power in order to create an improved context for discourse and improved methods of discourse production. For this reason, we end this report by drawing attention back to the tools discussed in the Critical Discourse Analysis and throughout the report. These should be used as a starting point for critical thinking and discussion on the issues raised in this report.

The ESM producers interviewed offered plenty of critical analysis, and came up with the following recommendations on how to move forward:

### Recommendations of ESM

- **Triggering more depth when dealing with women's issues, and more brave and even radical solutions are needed if real change is to take place.** According to one ESM producer: "if we deal with topics related to detained women, we don't solve them – she would be tortured and beaten while detained, but would be consumed not with this physical pain but with the fear of her husband divorcing her when she is released".
- **Targeting topics related to women at both men and women audiences.**
- **Treating women as independent and as having their own agency.** They should not be grouped with children and the elderly; their role does not need to be traditional or that of the victim. This narrative contributes to the violations against women.
- **Expanding coverage of women beyond events and occasions.**
- **Encouraging more critical thinking in order to move beyond the obsession with a women's body and virginity,** which is linked to the dignity of society in an illogical manner.
- **Providing more media support for women in their struggle both at the institutional level and at home.** As a Syrian blogger wrote: "what media support is there for women who have become head of their household?"
- **Ensuring topics related to women are not primarily covered by men** as women's opinions, voices and viewpoints will then remain unheard.
- **Ending the portrayal of women as merely followers; women are capable; they can think; they can do; and they can be and can become what they want to be. They can exist and become fully realized in their own right.**

While this report is targeted mainly at the ESM, some recommendations for local civil society groups and international and regional donors were also forwarded:

### Recommendations for Civil Society Groups

- **Being gender-sensitive in their work and discourse and encouraging critical thinking in terms of gender issues.**
- **Where applicable, training ESM workers to be gender-sensitive in their media coverage.**
- **Working with ESM on untangling hidden and unjust relations of power in society , especially in term of those related to women.**

### Recommendations to Donors

- **Considering the local context and ESM circumstances while supporting the ESM, to ensure efforts to encourage women participation and coverage on women are meaningful to local actors.**
- **Providing technical and financial aid that supports ESM in understanding and thus promoting gender equality in their work.**

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: CDA Codebook

---

### Context Level

#### **What social practices affect and are affected by ESM discourse?**

Examples of questions to ask:

- What are the locally held beliefs on the identity and role of women?
- How do these beliefs parallel or conflict with beliefs on the identity and role of men?
- What social relations between men and women are reflected in ESM?
- What are the social relations between the text producer and the ESM audience?

#### **What historical context affects and is affected by ESM discourse?**

Examples of questions to ask:

- What are the ideologies used / followed?
- What contextual factors could have influenced the production of the ESM text?
- Who is the perceived audience of the text under review?
- What contextual factors could have influenced the interpretation and local buy of the ESM text?
- How do non-state actors on the ground affect ESM discourse?
- Could the text under review have been produced earlier? Is it an old nationalist/religious discourse?
- Could the text under review have been produced in a context other than that of Syria?

### Production-Level

Examples of questions to ask:

- What and where are the hidden relations of power in terms of gender (at the stages of production, consumption, editing, etc.)?
- Who is exercising power in the text, and whose discourse is it (with a specific focus on men versus women)?
- What is the ideology of a given ESM?
- Who is solicited for quotes?
- Who is the ideal audience?
- What is the author trying to tell us/do?
- Does the text tie into any historical event or moment? If so, what does this imply?

## Text level

Examples of questions to ask:

1. How is women's identity represented?

- How are women vs. men characterized and what are the strategies used?

2. How are women's actions represented?

- How is the passive voice used?
- What are the verbs used (material, mental, behavioral, relational or verbal)?

3. Give examples of what is concealed in the text and what is taken for granted.

Examples of questions to ask:

- Would alternative wording result in a different discourse?
- How are the events presented?
- What knowledge is needed for this text to be clear and understood as intended?
- Make it strange: would an outsider find anything strange in what is being said?
- Subject/theme: why did the authors choose this specific subject, and how else could it have been presented?

4. What are the lexical choices made?

Examples of questions to ask:

- What are the key words?
- What is the vocabulary?
- Why are these words used and not others?
- What are the wording patterns?
- What discourse/theme is used?
- How is the structure presented?
- Is colorful, descriptive language used to highlight discourse? How?
- Parallelism – which comparisons and contrasts go side by side?

5. What is said and what is left unsaid?

Examples of questions to ask:

- What can we add to the text(s) for them to make complete sense?
- What is the intended message of the author? What are they trying to do?
- Why was this particular picture chosen?
- What repetition is there from this text to other texts?
- What professional media practices have assisted with this particular discourse?
- Fill in what is not being said, but is assumed?
- What is said/not said? What perspective is being communicated?

## Appendix 2: The Evaluation Survey<sup>15</sup>

### A. About your media organization

1. What is the name of your media organization?

10 words maximum

2. How old is it?

Under 1 year	1 year	2 year	3 year	4 year	5 years or over
--------------	--------	--------	--------	--------	-----------------

If "over 5 years", end the questionnaire with the message: "Thank you for your time, as your organization is not an emerging one, the questionnaire is now complete".

3. What type of media organization is it **mainly**? (Click one)

Radio If clicked go to question 4	Newspaper If clicked go to question 7	Magazine If clicked go to question 7	None of these Please Specify
--------------------------------------	--	---	---------------------------------

If "none of these", end the questionnaire with the message: "Thank you for your time, as your medium is not one of the research targets, the questionnaire is now complete".

### Questions for the Radio Option

4. What is your media coverage?

A. Medium	B. How often - live?	C. What is your yearly outreach (number of people)	D. What % of it is your audience?	E. In which governorates inside Syria?	F. Do you cover out of Syria?
Broadcast (Tick all that applies) <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> FM  Other, Specify <input type="text"/>	Never	0 -1,000	0 - 5 %	Al-Hasakeh	Yes
	0.5 - 2 hours per day	1,001 – 10,000	6 - 10%	Al-Raqqah	Specify country
		10,001 – 100,000	11 - 20 %	Aleppo	
	2- 6 hours per day	100,001 – 250,000	21 - 30%	As-Suwayda	No
	7- 11 hours per day	250,001– 500,000	31 - 40%	Damascus	
		500,001 – 750,000	41 - 50%	Daraa	
	12 - 16 hours per day	750,001 -1 million	51 - 60%	Deir Ezzor	
1.1 – 2 million		61 - 70%	Hama		
Over 16 hours per day	2.1 – 5 million	71 - 80%	Homs		
			81 - 90%	Idlib	
		91 -100%			

15. N.B: Sentences in blue are those used for programming the online survey on Survey Monkey.

A. Medium	B. How often - live?	C. What is your yearly out-reach (number of people)	D. What % of it is your audience?	E. In which governorates inside Syria?	F. Do you cover out of Syria?
		<input type="checkbox"/> 5.1 – 20 million <input type="checkbox"/> Over 20 million <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Latakia <input type="checkbox"/> Quneitra <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Damascus <input type="checkbox"/> Tartous <input type="checkbox"/> Specify city	
Online	The number of your overall total website visitors in 2014 was				

5. Do you have a specialized program on women? (Answer only one yes/no option)

<b>Yes</b>	Name of Program (s)
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
<b>No</b> , but there are episodes in other programs dedicated to women issues	Name of Episode(s)
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
<b>No</b> , there is no specific program or episode on women in our radio	

6. Around how many reports and interviews on women issues did you produce in the past five-six months, i.e. since January 2015

None	1 – 10	11 - 25	26-50	51 - 75	76-100
101-200	201-300	Over 300	Not Sure		

[Go to question 11](#)

### Questions for the Newspaper and Magazine Option

7. What is your media coverage in print?

How often?	What is your rough yearly distribution	Which governorates do you cover?	Do you cover another country?
Daily	0- 100	Al-Hasakeh	Yes
Bi-weekly	101 -250	Al-Raqqah	Specify country
Weekly	250 – 1,000	Aleppo	No
Bi-Monthly	1,001 – 2,500	As-Suwayda	
Monthly	2,501 – 5,000	Damascus	
Quarterly	5,001 – 7,500	Daraa	
Semi-Annually	7,501 – 10,000	Deir Ezzor	
Annually	10,001 – 15,000	Hama	
	15,001 – 20,000	Homs	
	20,001 – 30,000	Idlib	
	30,001 – 40,000	Latakia	
	40,001 -50,000	Quneitra	
	More than 50,000	Rural Damascus	
	Unknown	Tartous	
		Specify city	

8. Do you have a website?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, continue to question 9, if no, go to question 10

9. Did you use your website to produce a material on women you could not publish?

Yes	Please specify why you could not do so ( 50 words maximum)
No	

10. Roughly, around how many units of work (reports, interviews, columns) on women issues did you produce in the past five-six months, i.e. since January 2015?

None	1 – 10	11 - 50	51 - 100	101- 200	Over 200
Not Sure					



11. How many staff members work in your organization?

	Paid – Full time	Paid - Part time	Volunteer	Total
Male				
Female				

If total number of **female staff** is 0, go to question 14, else continue. If your organization is a radio, go to question 12, if it is a magazine or newspaper go to question 13.

12. Please fill in the number of female staff in your radio. (Answer all that apply, then go to question 14)

Function	Founder	Number of <b>Junior</b> female staff	Number of <b>Senior</b> female staff
Radio Director			
Programs Manager			
PR Manager			
Department Manager			
Broadcaster			
Broadcasto			
Correspondent			
Language Editor			
Photographer			
Translator			
Sound Engineer			
Program Produce			
Website Manage			
Marketing			
Finance Manager			
Other (Specify)			

13. Please fill in the number of female staff in your magazine or newspaper. (Answer only what applies to you)

Function	Founder (yes /no)	Number of <b>Junior</b> female staff	Number of <b>Senior</b> female staff
Chief Edito			
Managing Edito			
Public Relations Manager			
Editing Secretary			
Editor			
Correspondent			
Language Editor			
Photographer			
Translator			
Producer / ggraphic designer			

Function	Founder (yes /no)	Number of <b>Junior</b> female staff	Number of <b>Senior</b> female staff
Other (Specify)			

## B. Coverage of Women Issues

14. Please rank your coverage of the following in order of highest frequency. Please, answer what applies and give a "1" to the highest frequency and "6" to the least.

Areas Covered	Score
Politics	
Business and Economy	
Social Issues	
Crime and violence violations	
Arts, celebrities	
Health	
Sports	
Asylum and refugee matters	
Others	

15. To what extent are women issues covered in your production?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Not Sure
(0% women focus in coverage)	(< 10% women focus in coverage)	(11%- 40% women focus in coverage)	(41% - 75% women focus in coverage)	(76- 100% women focus in coverage)	

16. Please rank the following on topics you would like to cover regarding women issues versus what the Syrian context imposes on you. You can choose five options from the list below. Please give a "1" to the highest interest and "5" to the least.

Women issues in regards to:	Your personal interest - Score	Your media organization's interest - Score	What the context imposes - Score
Women and the Family			
Sexual and Reproductive Health of women			
Love Relationships of women			
Women Success Stories			
The negative impact of the current situation women			
Women as victims of violence			
Roles women are playing New			
Women as leaders			
National policies & women rights			

Women issues in regards to:	Your personal interest - Score	Your media organization's interest - Score	What the context imposes - Score
The situation of women in refugee camps			
Religion			
Cooking			
Fashion			
Fitness and Beauty			
Other (Specify)			

### C. Background Information

17. I am 

Male	Female
------	--------

18. My age 

< 16	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41- 45	46-50	51-55
Over 55								

19. I live 

Inside Syria	Outside Syria
Drop down list of governorates	Drop down country list

### 20. My current occupation

<b>Radio</b> [ Drop down list]	<b>Newspaper and Magazines</b> [Drop down list]
Radio Director	Chief Editor
Programs Manager	Mranaging Edito
PR Manager	Public Relations Manager
Department Manager	Editting Secretary
Broadcaster	Editor
Broadcasto	Correspondent
Correspondent	Language Editor
Language Editor	Photographer
Photographer	Translator
Translator	Producer / ggraphic designer
Sound Engineer	Other (Specify)
Program Producer	
Website Manager	
Marketing	
Finance Manager	
Other (Specify)	

#### D. Evaluation Suggestions (optional section)

21. What are the main issues with the objectives of this research, which you think should be covered, that have not been covered here? Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

50 words maximum

## References

- Allan, S. (ed.) (2005). *Journalism: Critical Issues*. Maidenhead and New York: Open University Press.
- Abu-Lughod, L. (2013). *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* United States: the President and Fellows of Harvard College.
- Beyrly, C. and Ross, K. (2006). *Women and Media: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Blommaert, J. and Bulcaen, C. (2000). Critical Discourse Analysis. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 29, 447–466. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/223428> [Accessed 09 Apr. 2016]
- Bloomaert, J. and Jef V.(1998). *Debating Diversity: Analyzing the Discourse of Tolerance*. London: Routledge.
- Bloor, Meriel, and Thomas Bloor. (2013). *The Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis: An introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Boyle, H. (2012). Rape and the Media: Victims' Rights to Anonymity and Effects of Technology on the Standard of Rape Coverage. *European Journal of Law and Technology*, Vol. 3, No. 3.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power* (2nd ed.). New York: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media Discourse*. London: Arnold. New York: Longman.
- Fairlough, N., & Holes, C. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1996). Technologicalisation of Discourse. *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*, 71-83.
- Fairclough, N. and Wodak, R. (1997). *Critical Discourse Analysis*, in T. van Dijk (ed.), *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction: Vol 2: Discourse as Social Interactions*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Gee, J. P. (2014). *How to Do Discourse Analysis: A Toolkit*. New York: Routledge.
- Ghazzawi, R., Ramadan, O., & Mohammed, A. (2015). *Peace building Defines Our Future Now: A Study of Women's Peace Activism in Syria*. Turkey: Badael Foundation. Retrieved from: [http://badael.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Syria\\_october22.pdf](http://badael.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Syria_october22.pdf) [Accessed 21 Jun. 2016]
- Gill, R. (2007). *Gender and the Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Goatly, A. (2000). *Critical Reading and Writing*. London: Routledge.

Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE in association with the Open University.

Halliday, M. A. K (1994). Spoken and Written Modes of Meaning. In David Graddol and Oliver Boyd-Barrett (eds.). *Media texts. Authors and Readers*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. 51-73.

Holmes, M. (2007). *What is Gender? Sociological Approach*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Hodge, R. and Gunther K. (1993). *Language as Ideology* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Karlsberg, M. (2005). The Power of Discourse and the Discourse of Power: Pursuing Peace through Discourse Intervention. *International Journal of Peace Studies*, Vol10, No.1.1-25.

Khalaf, R., Ramadan, O., & Stolleis, F. (2014). *Activism in difficult times: Civil society groups in Syria 2011–2014*. Badael Project and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Klein, N. (2007). *The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt.

Lazar, M. (Ed.). (2005). *Feminist critical discourse analysis: Gender, power and ideology in discourse*. Springer.

Macdonald, M. (1995). *Representing Women: Myths of Femininity in the Popular Media*. London: Arnold.

Macdonald, M. (2006). Muslim women and the veil: Problems of image and voice in media representations. *Feminist Media Studies*, 6(1), 7-23.

Machin, D., & Mayr, A. (2012). *How to do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Marhina, N. (2008). Just Representation? Press Reporting and the Reality of Rape. The Lilith project. Retrieved from: [http://i4.cmsfiles.com/eaves/2012/04/Just-Representation\\_press\\_reporting\\_the\\_reality\\_of\\_rape-d81249.pdf](http://i4.cmsfiles.com/eaves/2012/04/Just-Representation_press_reporting_the_reality_of_rape-d81249.pdf) [Accessed 19 Apr. 2016]

McCombs M., Shaw D. (1972). The Agenda-Setting Function Of Mass Media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. Retrieved from: <http://poq.oxfordjournals.org/content/36/2/176> [Accessed 19 Apr. 2016]

Parry-Gill, S. (2000). Mediating Hillary Rodham Clinton: Television News Practices and Image-Making in the Postmodern Age. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*. 205-226.

Richardson, J. E. (2006). *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Searle, J. R. (1995). *The Construction of Social Reality*. London: Allen Lane.

Stefan, T., Meyer, M., Wodak, R., & Vetter, E. (2000). *Methods of text and discourse analysis*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the Subaltern Speak? Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, 271-313. Urbana: University of Illinois Press

The Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression. (2007). *The Case of Media and Freedom of Expression Syria*. Retrieved from: [https://scm.bz/?page=category&category\\_id=78](https://scm.bz/?page=category&category_id=78) [Accessed 09 May. 2016]

The Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression. (2007). *The Case of Media and Freedom of Expression Syria 2007 a Year of Ironic Surveillance*. Retrieved from: [https://scm.bz/?page=category&category\\_id=79&lang=ar](https://scm.bz/?page=category&category_id=79&lang=ar) [Accessed 09 May. 2016]

The Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression. (2008). *Taming of the Internet*. Retrieved from: [https://scm.bz/?page=category&category\\_id=36&lang=ar](https://scm.bz/?page=category&category_id=36&lang=ar) [Accessed 09 May. 2016]

The Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression. (2009). *The Case of Media and Freedom of Expression Syria( 2008 – 2009): the Silence of Crayons and the Noise of Surveillance*. Retrieved from: [https://scm.bz/?page=category&category\\_id=80&lang=ar](https://scm.bz/?page=category&category_id=80&lang=ar) [Accessed 09 May. 2016]

The Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression. (2010). *Syria Ten Years: the Media*. Retrieved from: <https://damascusbureau.org/ar/11657> [Accessed 09 May. 2016]

UNFPA. (2006). *Arab Women and Media: Arab Women's Development Report*.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1999). *Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis* in Christina S. and Anita W., (eds.), *Language and Peace*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Press.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). 18 Critical discourse analysis. In *The handbook of discourse analysis*, 349-371.

Varga, O. (2010). *From women to gender: a diachronic exploration of participant representation in texts from the United Nations*. Finland: Abo Academy University Press.

Wodak, R. (1996). *Disorders of Discourse*. Longman.

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2001). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

## Lead Researcher / Author

Rana Khalaf

## Researchers / Co-authors

Rana Khalaf

Rula Asad

Rua Tawil

## Contributors

Yara Badr

Maurice Aek

Bashar Katrib

## Language editing & translation

Abdulla Fadel

## Design & Layout

Oula A.Haidar

## Project Manager

Rula Asad

## Image Analysis

Mohan Dehne

## Fieldwork

The Female Journalists Network

## English Editing

Paul Baynes

## Infographic

Shadi Jaber

Oula A.Haidar



شبكة الصحفيات السوريات  
Syrian Female Journalists Network



EuroMed Rights – Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network  
EuroMed Droits – Réseau euro-méditerranéen des droits humains  
الأورو-متوسطية لحقوق الإنسان - الشبكة الأوروبية المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان

