

MEDIA USES & TRUST DURING PROTESTS

A working paper on the media uses of Lebanese during the 2019 uprising



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Summary and Highlights

This study examines media uses and trust of Lebanese people during the 2019 popular uprising using the theoretical framework of selective exposure. The study has randomly surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,000 Lebanese during the height of the ongoing protests (December 5-12). It explores which traditional and new media platforms, especially television channels and social media, Lebanese people mainly access and trust for news about the protests, and which media platforms they mainly engage to share news about the protests.

Overall trends

- Two-thirds (65.3%) of Lebanese say they support the protests but only about a quarter (27.9%) say they actually joined the protests in the streets. Only 6.2% of Lebanese say they have had some media literacy training in their life, and almost half of surveyed Lebanese (46.2%) say they are currently unemployed.
- Barely any Lebanese say they are members of political parties (3%) and that their allegiance to their sect is the most important (3.5%), while almost three-quarters say they are neither supporters nor members of any political party (71.4%) and that their allegiance to their country is the most important (72.6%).
- The overwhelming majority of Lebanese follow television for news about the protests, with WhatsApp and Facebook coming in second and third place. Among the television channels, al-Jadeed, LBCI and MTV are the most followed and the most trusted.

Characteristics of protestors

- Compared to those who oppose the protests, Lebanese who support the protests are more likely unemployed, make less than 750,000 LBP per month, are current students and younger than 30, have completed a university degree, and are interested in Lebanese politics. Pro-protests Lebanese are more likely to follow and trust news from social media, to post news about the protests on social media, and to access news through mobile phones.
- Predictably, pro-protests Lebanese are also more likely to have joined the protests at least once compared to none of those who oppose the protests (45.9% vs 0%). They are also more likely to have had some media literacy training, while anti-protests Lebanese are more likely to support or be members of political parties.
- Although men and women are equally likely to support or oppose the protests, more men (34.8%) than women (24.9%) joined the protests in the streets.

Usage of media platforms and television channels

- Three media platforms emerge as dominant sources of news about the protests: Television remains king for almost all Lebanese, with 88.2% of the population primarily following it for news about the protests, while WhatsApp (65.8%) and Facebook (57.6%) come in second and third. Radio (11.7%), blogs (7%), and newspapers (5.6%) barely register any following.
- Three local television channels attract most of the Lebanese audiences for protest news: Al-Jadeed (62.9%) and LBCI (58.4%) compete for the top spot, while MTV (51.8%) lands a distant third. OTV (25.1%), al-Manar (19.9%) and NBN (16.6%) barely capture a quarter of the population.
- One regional television channel dominates: Al-Mayadeen ranks first among Lebanese following news about the protests (19.3%), even beating the local channel NBN and tying with al-Manar. Al-Arabiya (6.4%) and al-Jazeera (6.1%) come in second and third, while the rest barely register any following: Al-Hadath (3.6%), Sky News Arabia (3.4%) and BBC Arabic (2.9%).

Trust in media platforms and television channels

- Television also ranks first when it comes to trust: 88.7% of Lebanese say they sometimes or often trust news about the protests from television, while WhatsApp (69.4%) and Facebook (60.5%) come in second and third place. The least trusted news sources are newspapers (27.5%) and blogs (26.8%).
- Consistently, al-Jadeed (55.5%) and LBCI (54.8%) both register the highest level of trust from the Lebanese public. MTV follows distantly (43.7%). OTV (23.1%), al-Manar (21.2%) and NBN (17%) again barely capture the trust of a quarter of the Lebanese people.
- For regional channels, again al-Mayadeen (17.8%) ranks first when it comes to trust level, while none of the other regional channels exceed 5% of the public's trust.

Posting and sharing news about the protests

- Only about one-third of Lebanese say they engaged in posting and sharing news about the protests on social media. WhatsApp (37.6%) ranks top among social media platforms, followed by Facebook (26.3%). Only about 1 in 10 Lebanese say they used other platforms: Instagram (10.6%), Twitter (9.3%), and blogs (2.8%).
- Lebanese active on social media are starkly divided between pro-protests and anti-protests: 69.3% of Lebanese who support the protests say they published any news that supports the protests compared to 0% of those who oppose the protests, while 39% of those who oppose the protests say they published any news that opposes the protests compared to 0% of those who support the protests.

Characteristics of the main media platforms followed and trusted

- Some trends separate television from social media. Lebanese who follow and trust television are more likely older than 30, not current students, and either support or hold membership in political parties.
- On the other hand, Lebanese who follow, trust and post news on social media, especially WhatsApp and Facebook, are more likely to be unemployed, younger than 30, current students, and hold a higher education degree. Social media also tend to attract those who have been exposed to media literacy training and are neither members nor supporters of any political party.

Characteristics of the main television channels followed and trusted

Two clusters of television channels exhibit common trends:

- Al-Jadeed, LBCI and MTV tend to attract the attention and trust of Lebanese who support the protests, those who joined the protests in the streets, and those who are not members or supporters of any political party. They also tend to attract a higher proportion of Lebanese who are unemployed, have lower income, are younger than 30 (except LBCI), hold a higher education degree (except al-Jadeed), and have been exposed to media literacy training. Al-Jadeed especially attracts a higher percentage of current students.
- OTV, al-Manar, al-Mayadeen and NBN, on the other hand, tend to attract the attention and trust of those who are opposed to the protests, those who never joined the protests in the streets, and those who either support or hold membership in political parties. They also attract more Lebanese who are employed, have higher income, and are older than 30 (except al-Manar). OTV especially attracts a higher percentage of non-students.

Introduction

The Arab uprisings ushered a new era of radical change and unrest in the region. Mass demonstrations that spread across the Arab world in 2010 lead to the fall of governments in Egypt and Tunisia, civil war in Libya, Yemen and Syria, and political unrest in various other countries. Among the countries experiencing the most recent wave of protests, Lebanon presents a unique case study, where largely peaceful demonstrations have sustained a diverse movement for several months, paralyzed the country and its ruling elite, and brought down the clientelist sectarian government.

In such a fluid situation, access to media changes as do daily and social needs. Using the Lebanon protests as a case study, this research examines the media uses of a randomly selected, nationally representative sample of individuals living in Lebanon during the protests.

The study explores the news consumption habits of Lebanese across various types of traditional and new media, including social media. It aims to understand which news media are available during conflict, which media channels and platforms are mainly used and trusted, and which media sources do people prioritize during times of distress. The study also assesses whether media literacy plays a role in encouraging people to produce – and not only consume – information and which criteria they follow in posting and sharing information on social media.

This study is particularly significant and timely given that such theoretical frameworks as media uses and selective exposure have rarely been applied to conflict and unrest situations—a matter surprisingly understudied despite the record number of protests and conflicts globally and the significant role of new media in instigating, sustaining and propelling them.

Literature on the effect of conflict on media uses and media-related needs is scarce, with very little research on the media uses during unrest and fluid political situations (c.f. Dotan and Cohen 1976; Georgiou 2012; Lev-On 2011; Kozman and Melki 2018; Melki and Kozman 2019). As an area plagued by continuous conflict and civil strife, the Arab region is ripe for conflict and media effects research, which offers a better understanding of how news sources can deliver appropriate content to populations during dangerous and uncertain situations.

By employing the theoretical frameworks of media uses and selective exposure to examine media outlets and populations affected by protests and conflict, we hope to contribute to the worthy international body of work in this area. Our objective is to demonstrate that these theories can inform not just media uses and trust among general populations in everyday situations, but also among persons whose everyday lives are marked by uncertainty, and who may nevertheless turn to media for a multiplicity of needs.

This working paper serves as a preliminary report on data thus far collected and analyzed. It is part of a larger international study that examines media uses and selective exposure in other parts of the world affected by protests and unrest, including Chile, Hong Kong, Iran, Iraq, and France. We plan to release other working papers focused on national data, as well as comparative reports, in addition to publishing several journal articles that target the scientific community.

The following sections summarize the methodology and detailed results of the study.

Methodology

The study used a cross-sectional survey of 1,000 individuals currently living in Lebanon and aged 18 and older. Surveys are most compatible with the theoretical frameworks used in this study and are the most effective way to assess the opinions and track the attitudinal trends among a large population. The field work started on December 5, 2019 and concluded on December 12, 2019.

Questionnaire

Two versions of the survey questionnaire (one in Arabic and one in English) were developed and pre-tested. The questionnaire comprised 24 close-ended questions, required approximately 10 minutes to complete, and generated 84 variables. In addition to demographic questions, the questionnaire asked general media uses questions, such as: which media organizations participants trusted and often followed. All media uses variables followed a 4-point ordered response scale measured at the interval level.

The interviewer asked about the total number of residents aged 18 years and above living in the household and then chose the one with the most recent birthday (at the date of the interview) to be the main respondent. If the selected person was not at home, a follow-up up to one time was conducted before declaring a non-response. This method ensured that everyone has an equal chance of inclusion, with no one allowed to self-select into the sample.

If the selected respondent accepted to participate in the survey, the interviewer explained to him/her the objectives of the survey and assured that the questionnaire is voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Face-to-face interviews were then conducted with the selected participants, using tablets. Moreover, 30% of the interviews were conducted with respondents present at the protests' squares in relevant areas.

Sample

An overall sample size of 1,000 participants was calculated based on a population of 6 million, a 95% confidence interval (CI), and a $\pm 3.1\%$ sampling error. The collection of information for the full scope of the study was achieved through conducting a national quantitative survey with a sample of 1,000 Lebanese aged 18 years and above across Lebanon.

The questionnaires were distributed proportionally to the number of residents in each governorate (Mohafaza) of Lebanon (Akkar, North, South, Nabatieh, Mount Lebanon, Baalbeck/Hermel, Beirut and Beqaa). Each governorate was stratified into districts and the capital city of the main districts was selected for the purpose of the survey, in addition to other villages to ensure a proper representation by confession in each caza.

The number of questionnaires assigned to a district was proportionally distributed along the selected sub-areas in each district based on the number of voters at the village level.

The study adopted a multi-stage probability sampling to ensure a random, representative sample for identifying households and main respondents. The first stage consisted of selecting neighborhoods inside each selected city/village in a way to represent the confessional diversity and make-up of the areas. The second stage consisted of selecting households based on a systematic random sample in each selected neighborhood. Finally, the third stage sampled a primary respondent within each household based on the most recent birthday.

Data Analysis

The study used SPSS 26 to conduct frequency distributions and descriptive statistics, in addition to using the chi-square test of independence as an inferential test of significance.

As a result, 51.4% (514) identified as male and 48.6% (486) identified as female. The age distribution was as follows: 18.1% (181) were 18-22 years old, 26.5% (265) were 23-30, 26.7% (267) were 31-45, 24.3% (243) were 46-65, and 4.4% (44) were older than 65. The surveys took place across all Lebanese governorates and were distributed according to Table 1.

Governorate	% (n)
Mount Lebanon	35.4% (354)
North Lebanon	14.6% (146)
South Lebanon	11.7% (117)
Beirut	9.4% (94)
Nabatieh	7.6% (76)
Baalbek-Hermel	7.4% (74)
Akkar	7.1% (71)
Beqaa	6.8% (68)

Table 1: Distribution of participants.

Only 7.7% (77) of the sample completed elementary school or less, while 22.3% (223) completed middle school only, 51.7% (517) completed high school only, and 18.3% (183) completed a university bachelor's degree or higher. At the time of the survey, around one fifth (19.2%, 192) were currently university or school students, while the rest (80.8%, 808) were not.

As for employment, 46.2% (462) said they do not currently work, 16.1% (161) said they worked part time, and 37.7% (377) said they held a full-time job. Income distribution is reflected in Table 2. Lebanese of upper-income level were under-represented, a common issue in surveys.

Monthly Income in LBP	Equivalent Monthly Income in USD (\$1 = 2,000 LBP)	% (n)
Zero	Zero	14% (140)
Less than 750,000	Less than \$375	41.3% (413)
750,000 - 1,500,000	\$375 - \$750	33.7% (337)
1,500,001 - 3,000,000	\$750 - \$1,500	9.7% (97)
3,000,001 - 6,000,000	\$1,500 - \$3,000	1% (10)
More than 6,000,000	More than \$3,000	0.3% (3)

Table 2: Income distribution of participants.

Limitations

The following issues were noted during the implementation of the survey: 6.1% of cases necessitated a second follow up as the relevant respondent was not at home at the time of the interview, 15.3% of approached respondents refused to participate in the survey. The refusal cases are detailed in Table 3.

Governorate	Refusal Cases		
	Males	Females	Total
Mount Lebanon	25	32	57
North Lebanon	13	18	31
South Lebanon	11	15	26
Beqaa	7	9	16
Beirut	6	8	14
Baalbeck-Hermel	9	4	13
Akkar	6	7	13
Nabatieh	7	4	11
Total	84	97	181

Table 3: Refusal to participate cases.

Results

The detailed results of this study are divided into 13 sections. Section A covers general trends about the Lebanese people's support or opposition to the protests, their interest in news about the protests and Lebanese politics, their national or sectarian allegiances, whether they are politically affiliated or not, and whether they actually joined the protests in the streets.

Section B covered the overall media consumption habits of the whole Lebanese population, as well as their trust in various media platforms and television channels, while Section C covered the overall media production habits of the whole population.

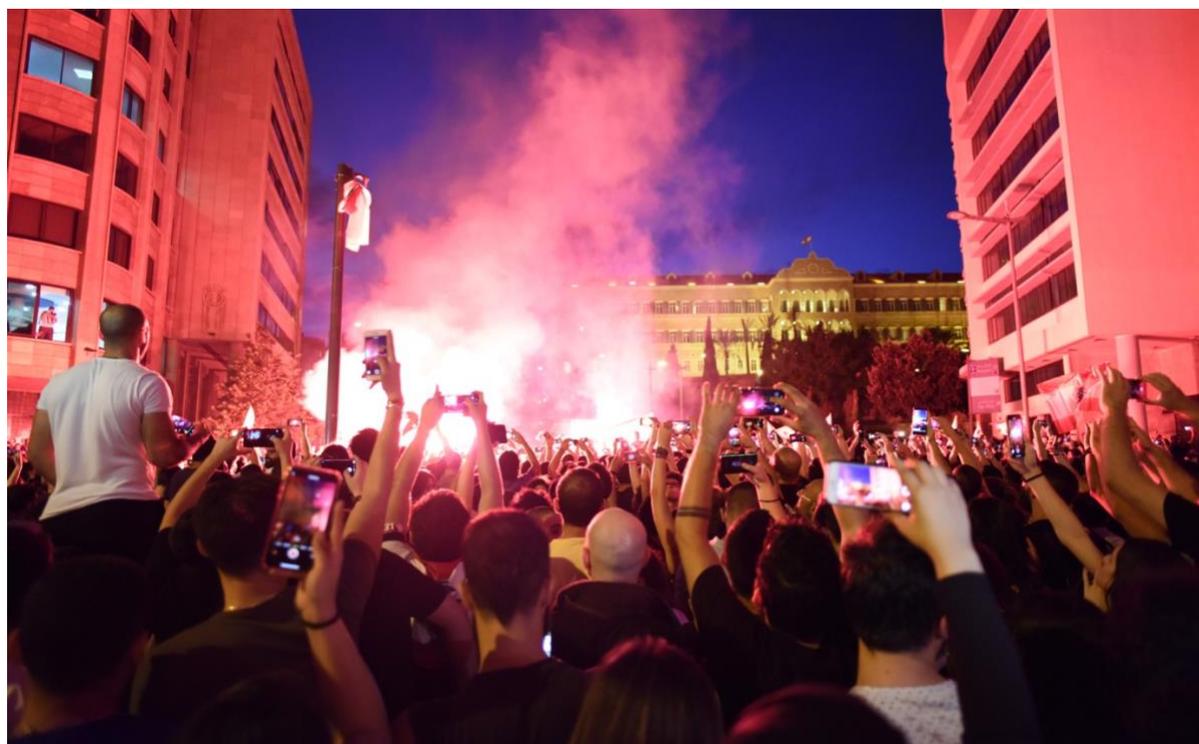
Sections D through M compared media consumption and production habits across various groups.

Section D compared Lebanese media uses between those who supported and those who opposed the protests, while Section E did the same between Lebanese who actually participated in the protests on the streets and those who did not.

Section F examined differences between media habits of employed (both full-time and part-time) and unemployed Lebanese, while Section G conducted the comparison between two income groups: those who make less than 1,500,000 LBP per month (including zero income) and those who make more than 1,500,000 LBP per month.

Section H examined differences in media uses between men and women, while Section I compared media uses between those who were younger than and those who were older than 30. Section J conducted the same comparison between those who have a university degree and those who do not, while Section K compared media uses between Lebanese who are currently enrolled in a school or university and those who are not.

Finally, Section L compared the media uses of Lebanese who said they have undergone any kind of media literacy training and those who said they haven't, while Section M compared Lebanese who said they support or are members of political parties to those who said they are not.



Section A: Attitudes Toward the Protests and Lebanese Politics

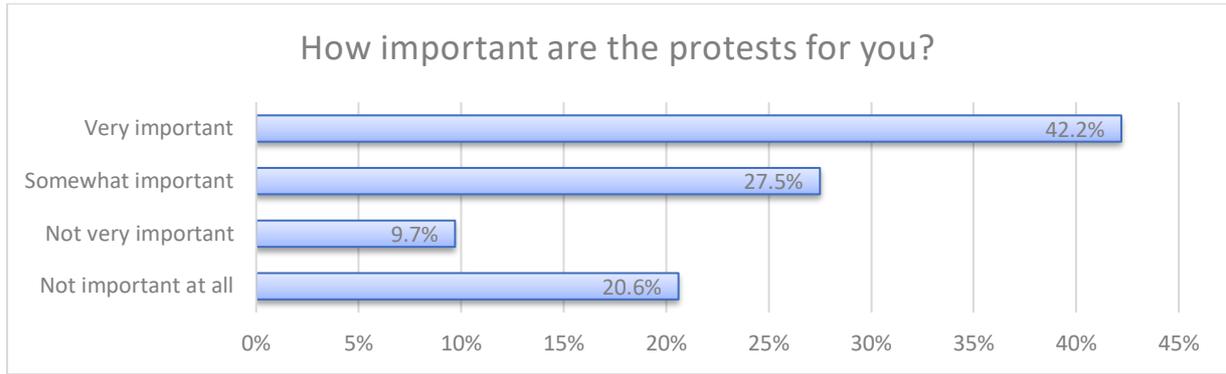


Figure 1: The importance of the protests to Lebanese.

The majority of Lebanese (69.7%) say the protests are somewhat or very important to them, reflecting the prominence of these events in Lebanese life today. Figure 1 also reflects that almost one third (30.3%) of Lebanese say the protests are either not very important or not important at all to them.

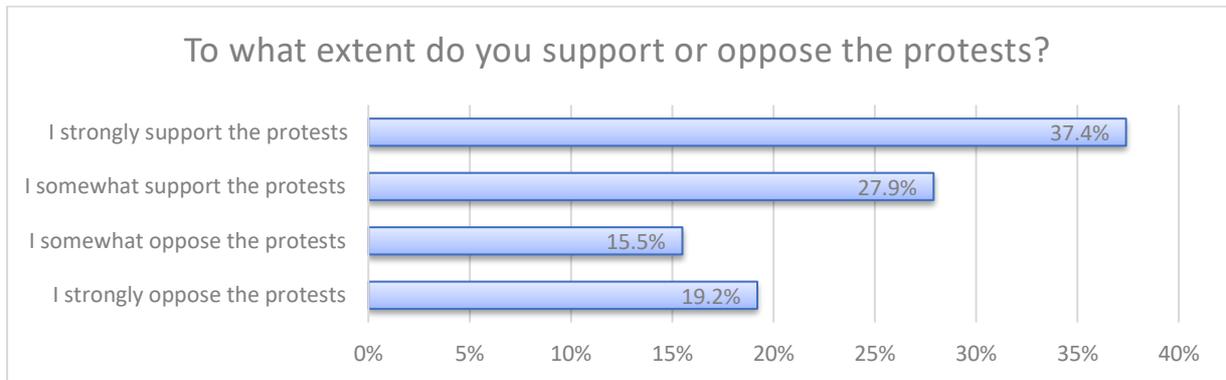


Figure 2: The level of support for the protests among Lebanese.

Similarly, the majority of Lebanese (65.3%) somewhat or strongly support the protests, while about one third (34.7%) somewhat or strongly oppose the protests (Figure 2).

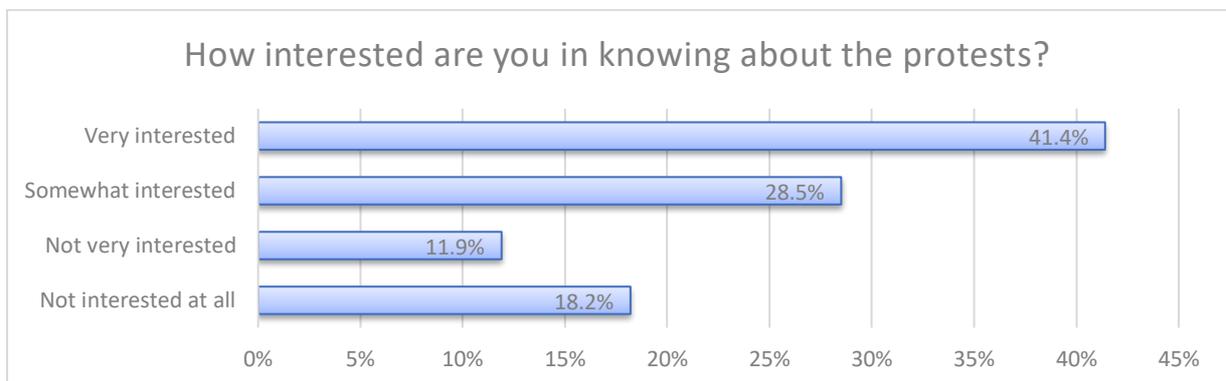


Figure 3: The level of interest of Lebanese in the protests.

Figure 3 shows almost identical responses. When it comes to knowing about the protests, 69.9% of Lebanese say they are somewhat or very interested in knowing about the protests, while 30.1% say they are not very interested or not interested at all.

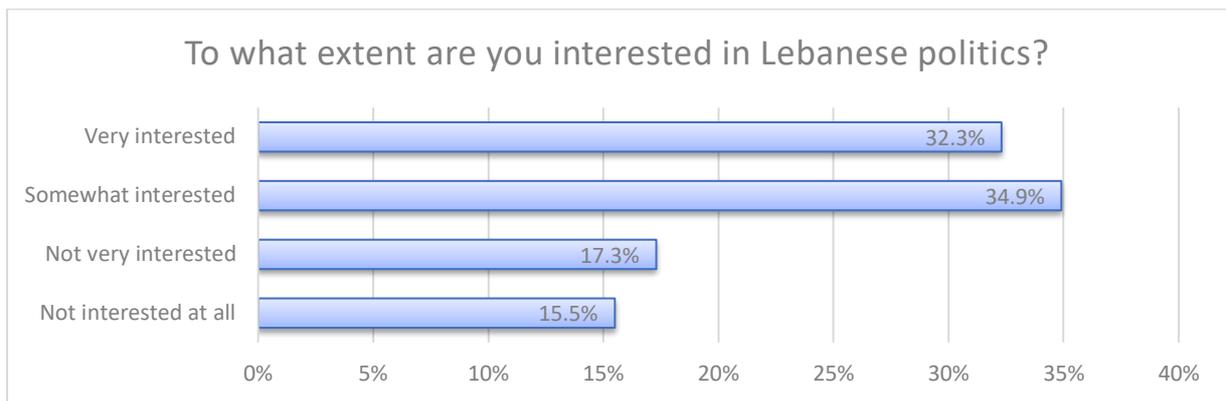


Figure 4: The level of interest of Lebanese people in Lebanese politics.

Consistently, around two thirds of Lebanese (67.2%) say they are somewhat or very interested in Lebanese politics, while 32.8% say they are not very interested or not interested at all (Figure 4).

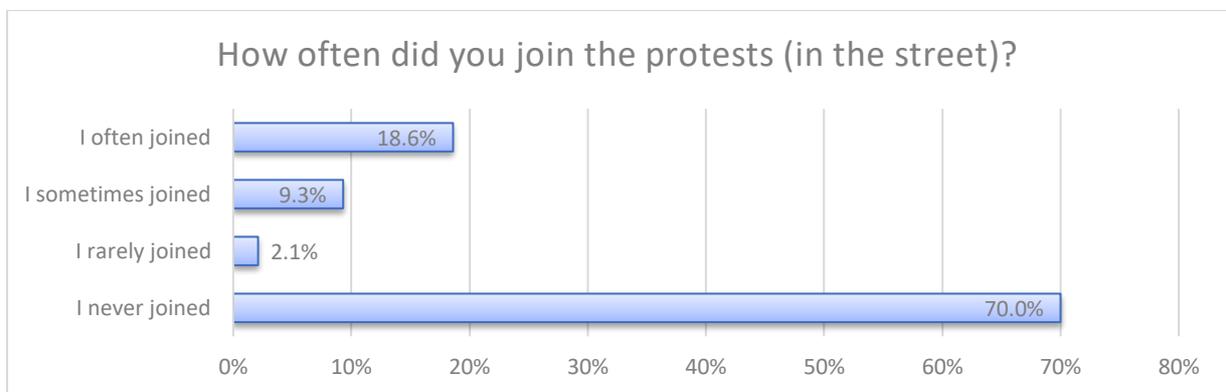


Figure 5: The extent to which Lebanese participated in the protests in the streets.

However, Figure 5 shows that only a minority of Lebanese actually joined the protests: 72.1% say they rarely or never joined the protests in the street, while only 27.9% say they sometimes or often joined.

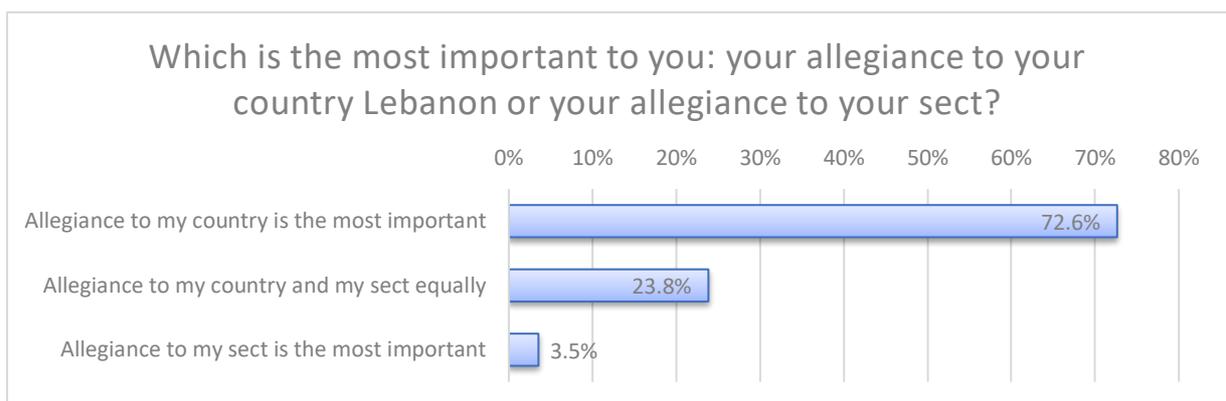


Figure 6: The allegiance of Lebanese to their country and to their sect.

Given the widespread chants against the sectarian Lebanese government system and traditional sectarian political parties, both of which were blamed for many of the country's ills and corruption, the study asked two questions related to political, national and sectarian allegiance. Figure 6 shows that the overwhelming majority of Lebanese (72.6%) say allegiance to my country is the most important and only 3.5% say allegiance to my sect is the most important, while 23.8% equate between allegiance to country and allegiance to sect.

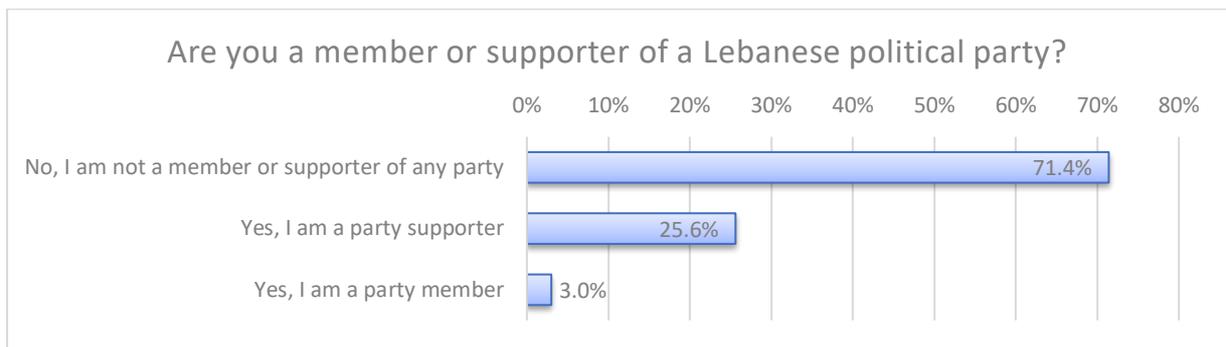


Figure 7: The extent to which Lebanese support or hold membership in political parties.

Similarly, an overwhelming majority (71.4%) say they are neither members nor supporters of any political party, while 25.6% say they support a political party, and only 3% say they are members of a political party (Figure 7).

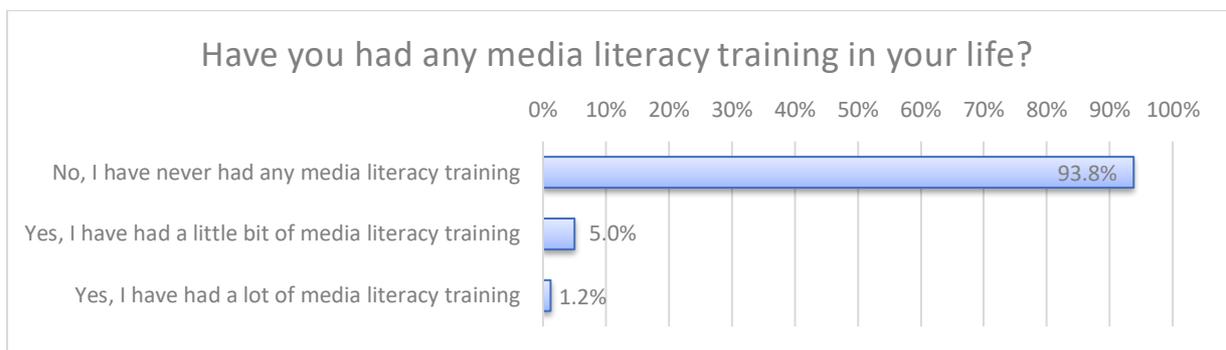


Figure 8: The prevalence of media literacy training in Lebanon.

Finally, when it comes to media literacy, as anticipated, almost all Lebanese (93.8%) say they have never received any media literacy training, and only 6.2% (62) say they had a little bit or a lot of media literacy training (Figure 8). Despite enormous efforts worldwide to introduce media literacy education into schools and universities, Lebanon continues to fall far behind on this critical educational front.



Section B: Media Platforms and TV Channels Used for Protest News Consumption

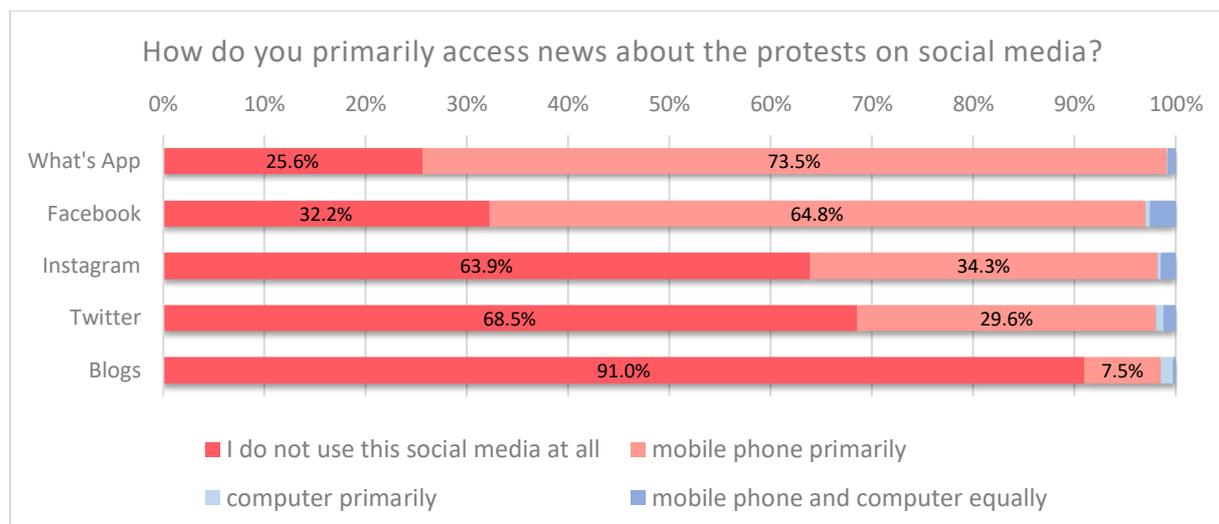


Figure 9: Accessing social media platforms through mobile phones or computers.

Figure 9 shows that almost all Lebanese access social media primarily through their mobile phones, while a tiny minority primarily access them through a computer or equally through a mobile phone and a computer. The same chart shows that WhatsApp is the most widely used social media platform (74.4%), followed closely by Facebook (67.8%), and distantly by Instagram (36.1%), Twitter (31.5%), and blogs (9%).

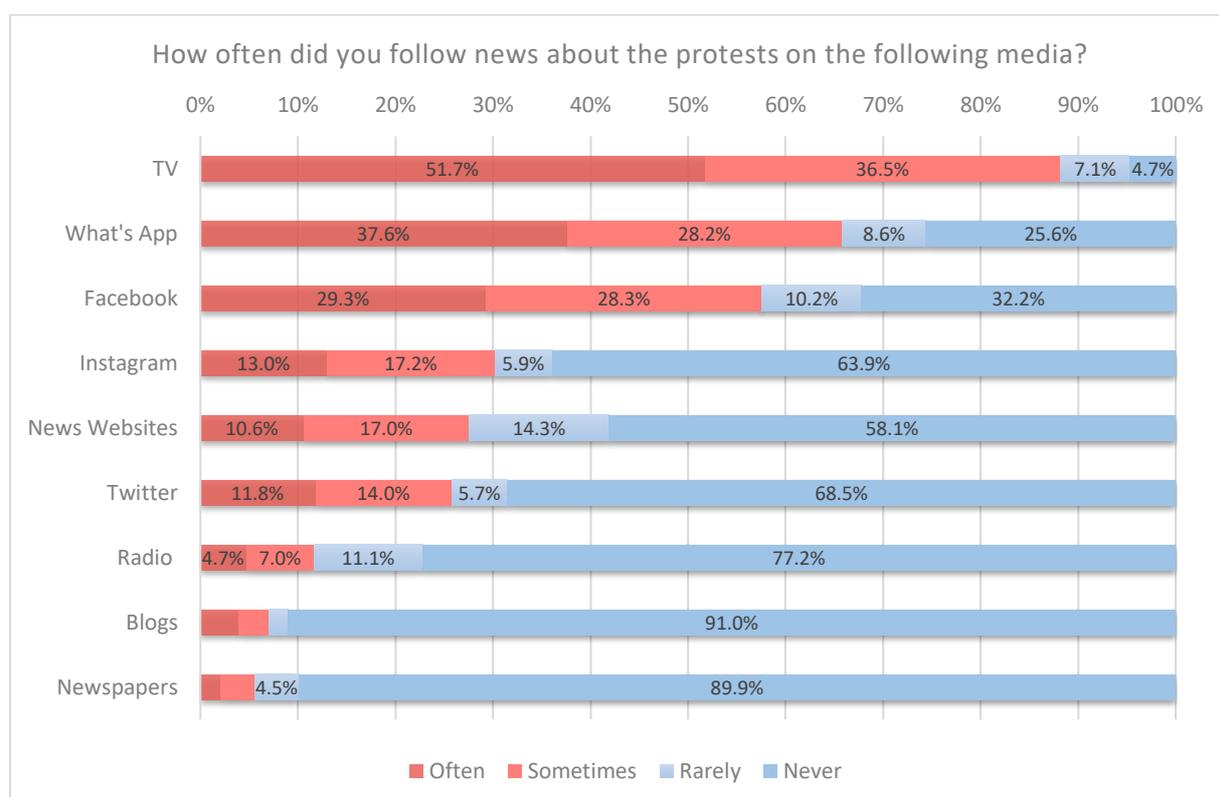


Figure 10: Media platforms mainly used for news about the protests.

As for specific media used to follow news about the protests, television remained the main source of news with 88.2% of Lebanese saying they sometimes or often use it to follow news about protests. WhatsApp came in second at 65.8% and Facebook ranked third at 57.6%, while Instagram (30.2%), news websites (27.6%), and Twitter (25.8%), came in fourth, fifth and sixth place, respectively. Radio (11.7%), blogs (7%), and newspapers (5.6%) were among the least followed news sources (Figure 10).

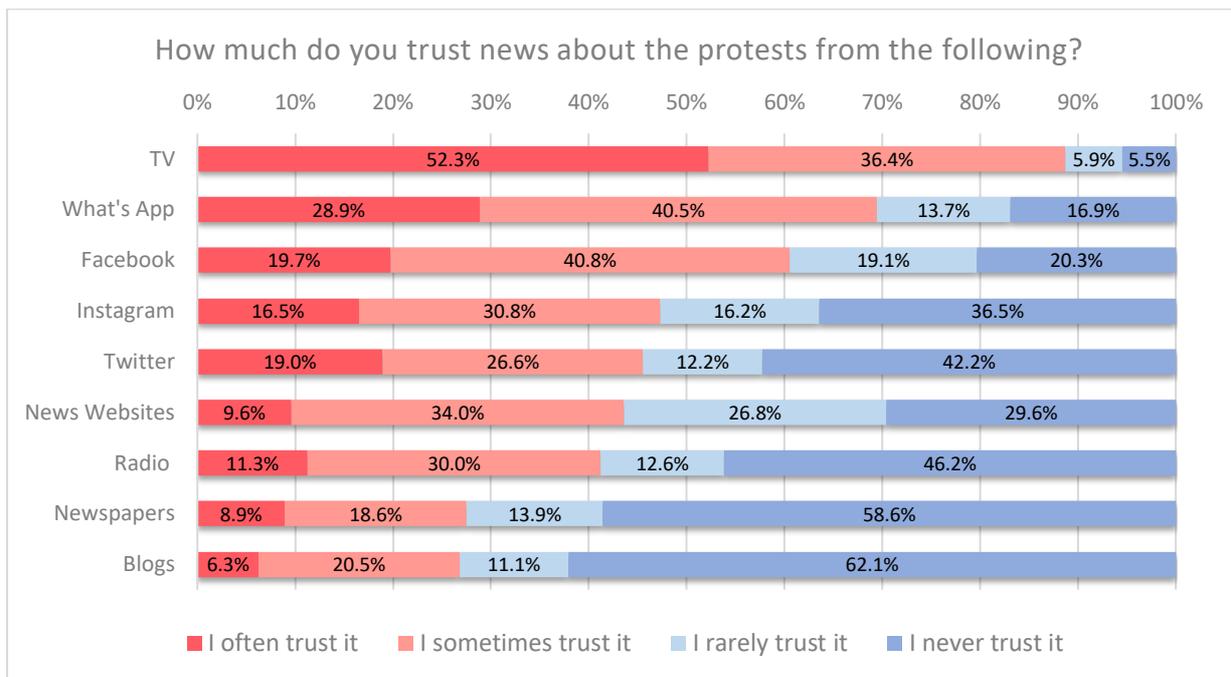


Figure 11: The level of trust in media platforms for news about the protests.

When comparing public trust levels across various news platforms, television also ranked first with 88.7% of Lebanese saying they sometimes or often trust news about the protests from this news source. WhatsApp came in second place at 69.4%, followed closely by Facebook at 60.5%, and distantly by Instagram (47.3%), Twitter (45.5%), news websites (43.6%) and radio (41.2%). The least trusted news sources were newspapers and blogs, with only 27.5% and 26.8% of Lebanese respectively saying they somewhat or often trust news about the protests from these sources (Figure 11).

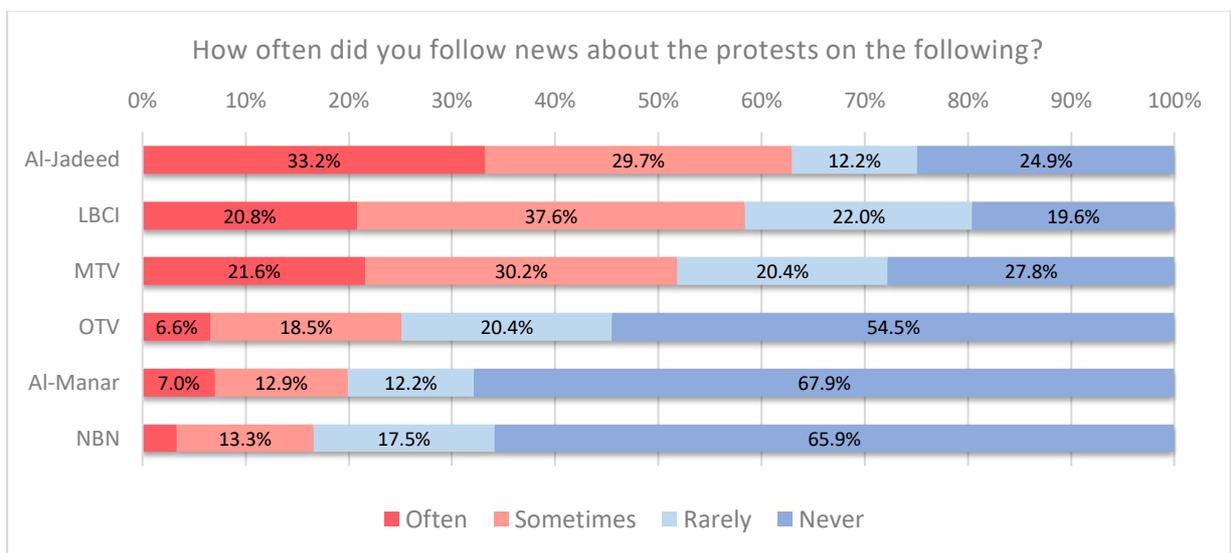


Figure 12: Local television channels mainly followed for news about the protests.

Participants were asked about the main television channels they followed for news about the protests. Three local television stations attracted a significant share of the Lebanese public: Al-Jadeed landed the top spot with 62.9% of the Lebanese saying they sometimes or often follow this station for news about the protests, followed very closely by LBCI at 58.4% and distantly by MTV at 51.8% (Figure 12). OTV ranked a distant fourth at 25.1%, while al-Manar ranked fifth at 19.9% and NBN ranked sixth at 16.6%—the only local television channel to be eclipsed by a regional channel (see al-Mayadeen in the next chart). State broadcaster Tele Liban (TL), the only public television station in Lebanon, was not included in the study because the Information Ministry forbade it from covering the protests. Future TV was also excluded because it closed down a few weeks before the protests.

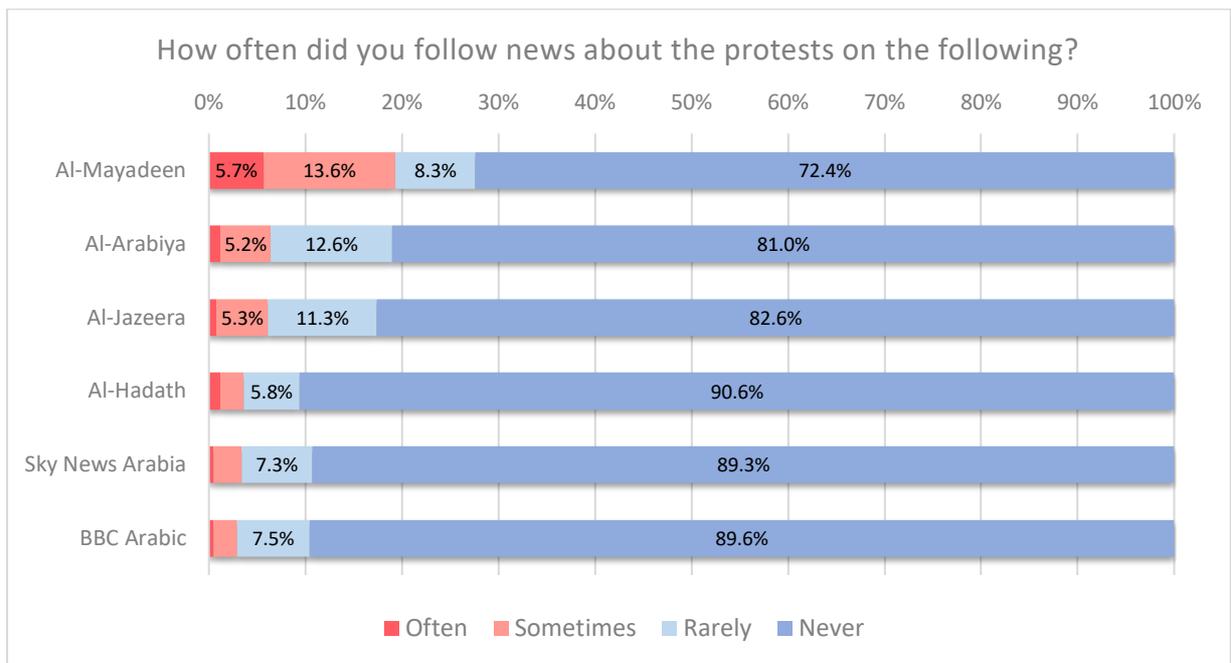


Figure 13: Regional television channels mainly followed for news about the protests.

When it came to regional television channels, al-Mayadeen came in first (even exceeding NBN and almost equating al-Manar, both local television channels) with 19.3% of Lebanese saying they sometimes or often follow this channel for news about the protests (Figure 13). Al-Arabiya (6.4%) and al-Jazeera (6.1%) followed distantly, while most other regional channels barely registered any following, including al-Hadath (3.6%), Sky News Arabia (3.4%), and BBC Arabic (2.9%).

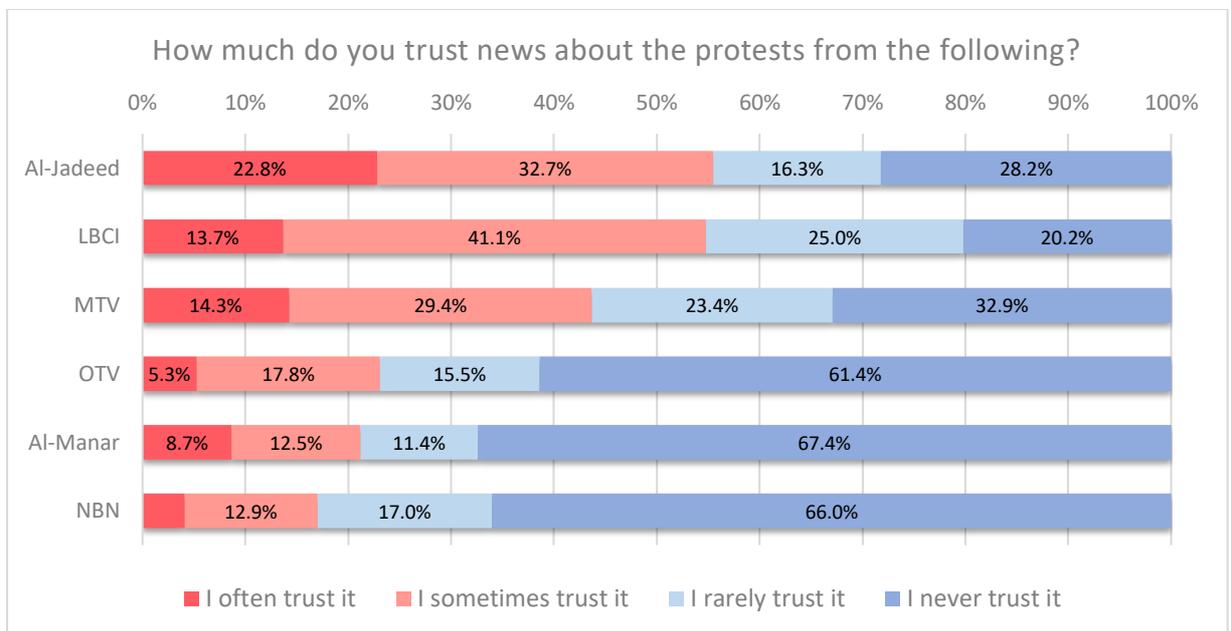


Figure 14: Most trusted local television channels for news about the protests.

Consistently, the same local channels that attracted the most Lebanese also enjoyed a strong level of their trust. Al-Jadeed and LBCI both received almost the same level of trust, with 55.5% and 54.8% of Lebanese respectively saying they sometimes or often trust news about the protests from these two channels (their results being well within the 3.1% margin of error). MTV followed distantly with 43.7% of Lebanese saying they sometimes or often trust this station's news about the protests. OTV (23.1%), al-Manar (21.2%) and NBN (17%) received significantly less trust level than the other three local television channels (Figure 14).

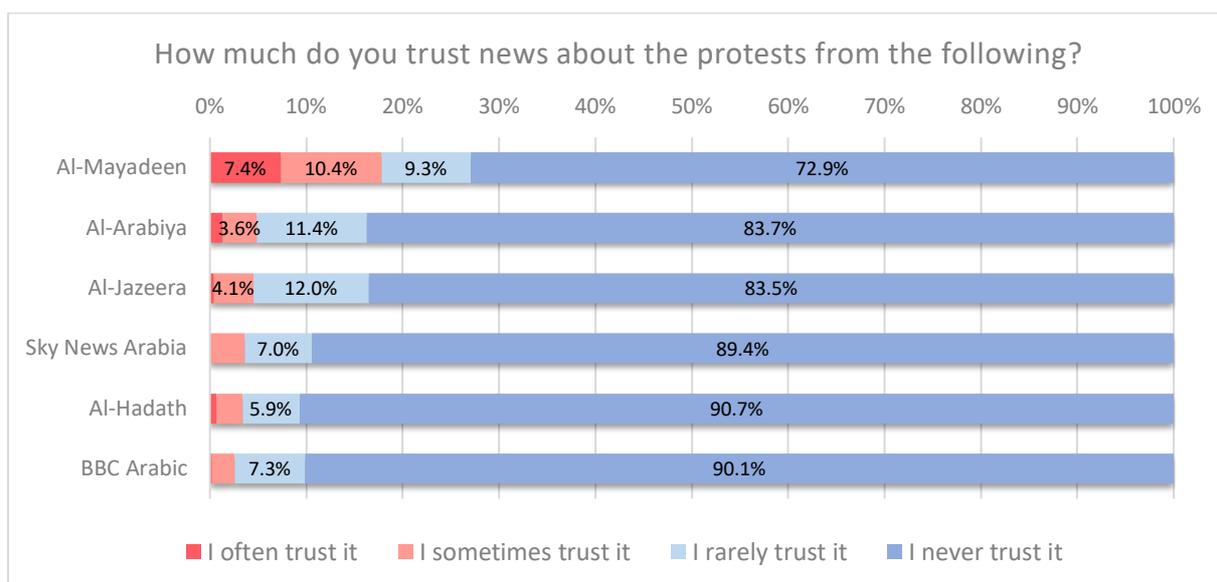


Figure 15: Most trusted regional television channels for news about the protests.

The same applied to regional television channels: Al-Mayadeen ranked first, with 17.8% of Lebanese saying they sometimes or often trust news about the protest from this channel (a level that equates one of the local television channels: NBN). Al-Arabiya and al-Jazeera came in second and third respectively at 4.9% and 4.5%, while Sky News Arabia (3.6%), al-Hadath (3.4%), and BBC Arabic (2.6%) trailed behind (Figure 15).

Which platforms did you primarily use for knowing/news about:

	security matters?	Economic, banking & livelihood matters?	Politicians' Speeches & statements?	Political and government developments?	Places of demonstrations in the streets?	Road closures?
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
TV	77.4% (774)	76.2% (762)	75% (750)	74.7% (747)	58.2% (582)	55.1% (551)
WhatsApp	5.6% (56)	5% (50)	3.4% (34)	5.9% (59)	12.1% (121)	20.5% (205)
Facebook	6.6% (66)	6.9% (69)	7.4% (74)	7.6% (76)	11.1% (111)	9.8% (98)
Talking to people	5.3% (53)	6.6% (66)	4% (40)	4.6% (46)	14.6% (146)	10.8% (108)
Twitter	2.5% (25)	2.6% (26)	8.1% (81)	3.4% (34)	1.1% (11)	1.2% (12)
Instagram	1.9% (19)	2% (20)	1.3% (13)	2.6% (26)	1.1% (11)	0.7% (7)
News Websites	0.7% (7)	0.7% (7)	0.8% (8)	1.2% (12)	1.8% (18)	1.9% (19)

Table 4: Media platforms used for specific news about the protests.

We asked participants which media platforms they primarily use to receive specific information about the protests. By far, television comes in first place for all information categories. Table 4: shows that between 77.4% and 55.1% of Lebanese primarily rely on television for security news, economic news, politician's speeches, political developments, places of demonstrations, and road closures. Aside from television, two social media platforms, Facebook and WhatsApp (both owned by the same company), compete for second place, as well as the oldest form of human communication: talking to people. WhatsApp specifically emerges as an important platform when it comes to knowing about road closures, while Twitter only attracts significant attention when it comes to following politician's speeches and statements, which points to the global phenomenon of politicians communicating directly with people via Twitter. In other categories, Twitter does not attract significant attention, while Instagram and news websites are least followed for all protest news categories.

Section C: Social Media Used for Protest News Posting and Sharing

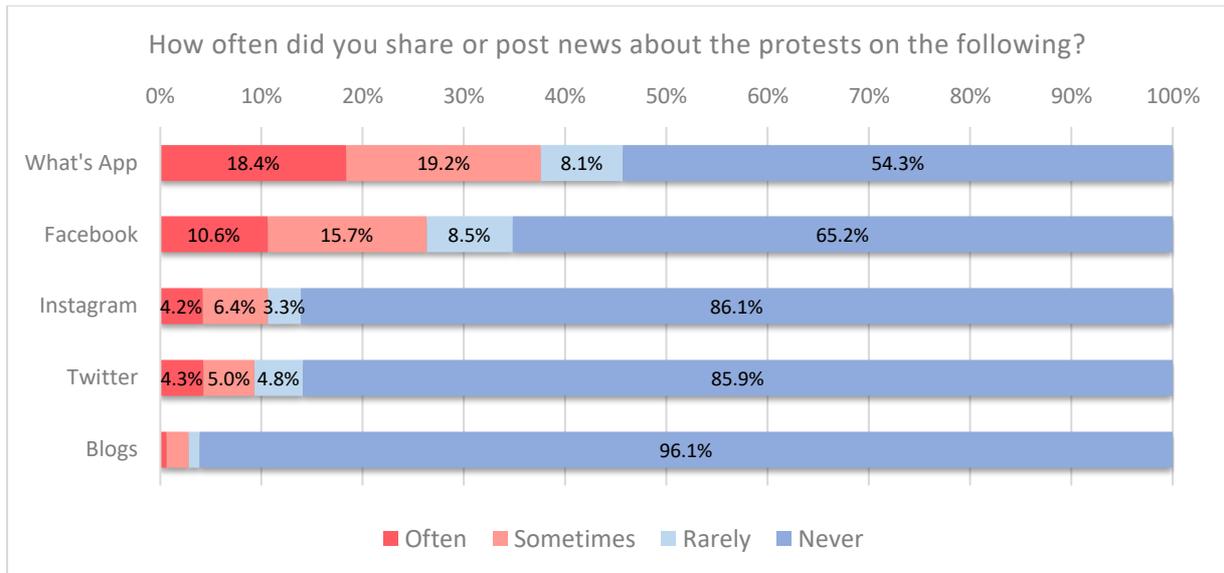


Figure 16: Social media platforms Lebanese used to post and share news about the protests.

We asked participants about their publishing habits on social media in relation to news about the protests (Figure 16). WhatsApp was the number one social media platform used to post news about the protests, with 37.6% of Lebanese saying they sometimes or often share or post news about the protests on this platform. Facebook came in second at 26.3%, followed by Instagram (10.6%), Twitter (9.3%), and blogs (2.8%).

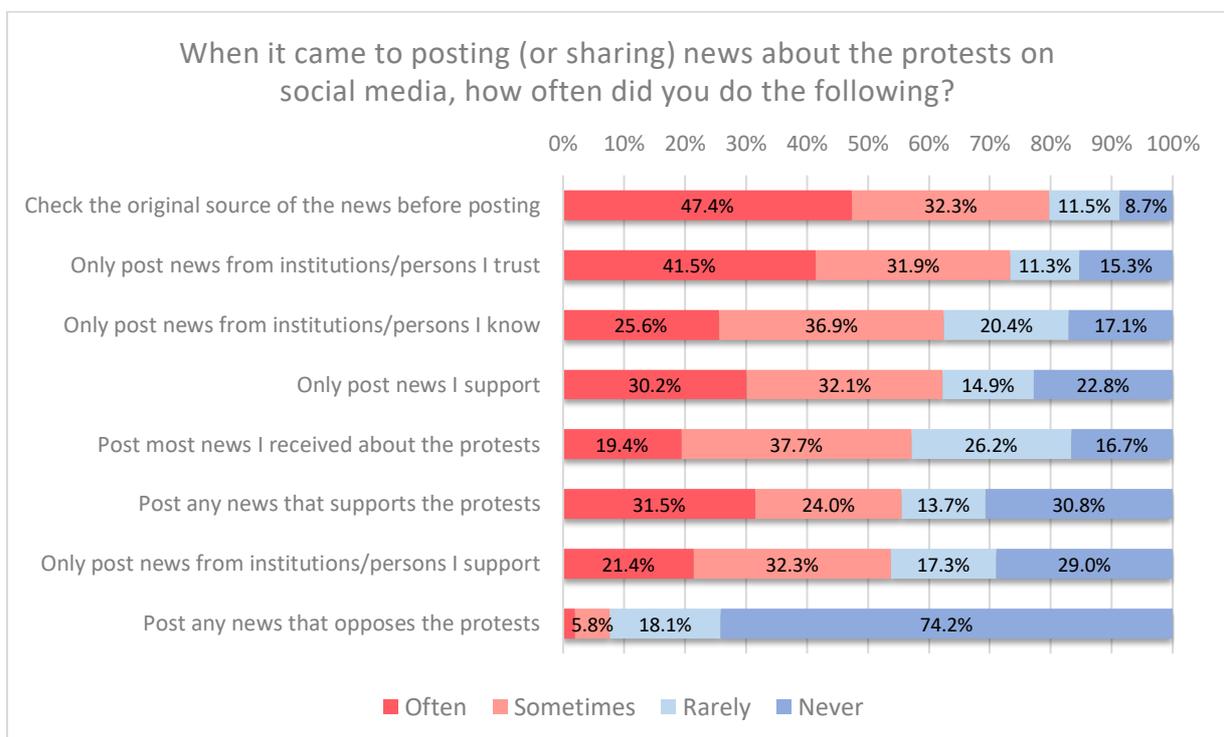


Figure 17: The reported habits of Lebanese when posting and sharing news about the protests on social media.

The study examined the public's publishing habits during the protests by discerning whether Lebanese practice some critical thinking and information verification steps before posting on social media. A positive indication in Figure 17 shows that a majority (79.8%) of Lebanese say they sometimes or often check the original source of the news before posting or sharing, 73.4% say the same for only posting or sharing news from institutions or persons they trust, and 62.5% say they only post or share news from institutions or persons they know. This reflects that

a majority of Lebanese engage in some level of critical thinking before posting or sharing and rely on trustworthy sources. However, a significant majority (57.1%) also say they sometimes or often post or share most of the news they received about the protests, which reflects a less selective and critical manner of dealing with information.

In addition, a majority of Lebanese exhibited evidence of confirmation bias when sharing information that confirms their own beliefs and opinions: 62.3% say they (sometimes or often) only post or share news they support, and 53.8% say they only post or share news from institutions or persons they support. Furthermore, 55.6% of Lebanese say they sometimes or often post or share any news that supports the protests, while 7.7% say they sometimes or often post or share any news that opposes the protests. Since, as stated previously, a majority of Lebanese (65.3%) somewhat or strongly support the protests, while a minority (34.7%) either somewhat or strongly oppose the protests (Figure 2), this seems to be in line with their attitudes towards the protests. Further statistical analysis comparing people’s attitudes towards the protests with their declared behavior when posting or sharing news is presented in the subsequent sections of this report.

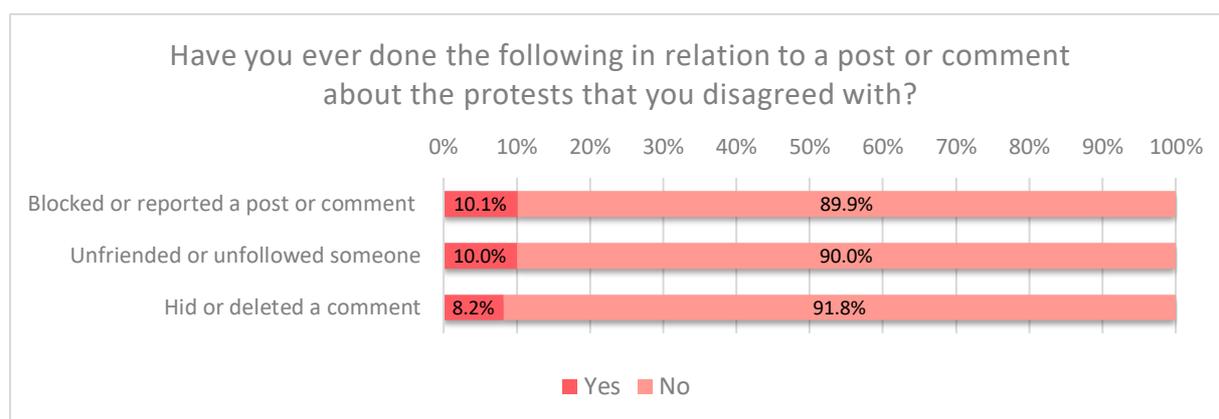


Figure 18: The reported reactions of Lebanese when encountering social media posts with which they disagree.

When asked if they block, report, or unfriend/unfollow a person on social media or delete their comment in response to something posted about the protests with which they disagree, only 8.2% to 10.1% answered yes. Indeed, the data show that roughly 9 in 10 Lebanese do not engage in such activity, which may point to a high level of tolerance towards opposing opinions (Figure 18).



Section D: Comparing Protest Supporters and Opposers

The study compared between those who (somewhat or strongly) support the protests and those who (somewhat or strongly) oppose the protests. Major differences emerged between the two groups.

Pro-protests Lebanese are more likely than those anti-protests Lebanese to be unemployed (48.0% vs 41.2%, $p = 0.021$), to make less than 750,000 LBP per month (58.9% vs 50.7%, $p = 0.014$), to be current students (23.1% vs 11.8%, $p = 0$), to be younger than 30 years old (48.7% vs 36.9%, $p = 0$), and to have completed a university degree (20.7% vs 13.8%, $p = 0.008$).

Those who support the protests are also much more likely to be interested in Lebanese politics than those who oppose them (94.6% vs 23.3%, $p = 0$) and to believe in the importance of the Lebanese protests (96.3% vs 19.6%, $p = 0$). Predictably, those who support the protests are also more likely to have joined the protests at least once compared to none of those who oppose the protests (45.9% vs 0%, $p = 0$), while those who oppose the protests are more likely to support or be members of political parties (35.2% vs 25.1%, $p = 0.001$).

In addition, Lebanese who support the protests are twice as likely as those who oppose the protests to have undergone some media literacy training (7.5% vs 3.7%, $p = 0.027$).

When it comes to information sources, those who support the protests are more likely than those who oppose them to follow news about the protests on Facebook (69.8% vs 34.6%, $p = 0$), WhatsApp (76.4% vs 45.8%, $p = 0$), Instagram (37.5% vs 16.4%, $p = 0$), news websites (33.4% vs 16.7%, $p = 0$), Twitter (28.6% vs 20.5%, $p = 0.006$), and blogs (8.7% vs 3.7%, $p = 0.005$). Pro-protest Lebanese are more likely to trust news about the protests from almost all media platforms: Facebook (70.7% vs 39%, $p = 0$), Instagram (57.4% vs 27.2%, $p = 0$), WhatsApp (78% vs 51.7%, $p = 0$), news websites (52% vs 26.3%, $p = 0$), Twitter (52.2% vs 33.7%, $p = 0$), blogs (31.9% vs 16.4%, $p = 0.003$), and television (90.2% vs 85.7%, $p = 0.042$).

As for television channels, pro-protests Lebanese are more likely to follow news about the protests on MTV (64.8% vs 27.4%, $p = 0$), al-Jadeed (72.3% vs 45.2%, $p = 0$), and LBCI (64% vs 47.8%, $p = 0$), while anti-protests Lebanese are more likely to do so on OTV (34.6% vs 20.1%, $p = 0$), al-Manar (29.4% vs 14.9%, $p = 0$), al-Mayadeen (28.5% vs 14.4%, $p = 0$), and NBN (22.2% vs 13.6%, $p = 0.001$). Pro-protests Lebanese are also more likely to trust MTV, al-Jadeed, and LBCI, while anti-protests Lebanese are more likely to trust OTV, al-Manar, al-Mayadeen, and NBN.

Moreover, pro-protests Lebanese are much more likely than anti-protests Lebanese to post or share news about the protests, especially on WhatsApp (48.9% vs 16.4%, $p = 0$), Facebook (36.8% vs 6.6%, $p = 0$), Instagram (15% vs 2.3%, $p = 0$), Twitter (12.6% vs 3.2%, $p = 0$), and blogs (4.3% vs 0%, $p = 0$). Consistently, pro-protests Lebanese are more likely to say they published any news that supports the protests (69.3% vs 0%, $p = 0$), while anti-protests Lebanese are more likely to say they published any news that opposed (39% vs 0%, $p = 0$).

Finally, pro-protests Lebanese are more likely to unfriend/unfollow (12.9% vs 4.6%, $p = 0$), block/report (13.3% vs 4%, $p = 0$), or hide/delete (10.6% vs 3.7%, $p = 0$) a comment about the protests with which they disagreed. They also are more likely to access social media through their mobile phones and not their computers.

Section E: Comparing Protest Participants and Non-Participants

The study compared those who never joined the protests in the streets to those who joined the protests in the streets at least once.

Although Lebanese who joined the protests in the streets at least once (60.5%) are slightly more likely than those who never joined (54.1%) to make less than 750,000 LBP per month in income or allowance, the difference is not statistically significant ($p = 0.063$). However, protestors are significantly more likely to be unemployed than non-protestors (51.7% vs 43.9%, $p = 0.023$) and significantly more likely to be younger than 30 years old (60.7% vs 37.7%, $p = 0.0$), but no difference in education level registered.

Protestors are also significantly more likely than non-protestors to say they are interested in Lebanese politics (98% vs 57.9%, $p = 0$), allocate more importance to the Lebanese protests (97.7% vs 57.7%, $p = 0$), and have undergone some media literacy training (10.3% vs 4.4%, $p = 0.001$). However, non-protestors are more likely to say they support or are members of a political party (32.6% vs 19.3%, $p = 0$).

Within the realm of media consumption, protestors are more likely to follow news about the protests on Facebook (79.7% vs 48.1%, $p = 0$), WhatsApp (83.7% vs 58.1%, $p = 0$), Instagram (46.3% vs 23.3%, $p = 0$), Twitter (37.3% vs 20.9%, $p = 0$), news websites (37% vs 23.6%, $p = 0$), and blogs (10.7% vs 5.4%, $p = 0.005$), while non-protestors are more likely to use television (90.4% vs 83%, $p = 0.001$). Similarly, protestors are more likely to trust Facebook (77.9% vs 52%, $p = 0$), Instagram (61.2% vs 40%, $p = 0$), WhatsApp (83.7% vs 62.8%, $p = 0$), Twitter (59.3% vs 38.6%, $p = 0$), and news websites (52% vs 39.4%, $p = 0.003$), while non-protestors are more likely to trust television (89.9% vs 85.7%, $p = 0.053$).

When comparing across specific television channels, protestors are more likely to follow protest news on al-Jadeed (69% vs 60.3%, $p = 0.011$), while non-protestors are more likely to follow it on OTV (29.4% vs 15%, $p = 0$), al-Manar (24.1% vs 10%, $p = 0$), NBN (19.7% vs 9.3%, $p = 0$), and al-Mayadeen (22.1% vs 12.7%, $p = 0.001$). Similarly, protestors are more likely to trust MTV (57% vs 38%, $p = 0$) and al-Jadeed (64% vs 51.9%, $p = 0.001$), while non-protestors are more likely to trust OTV (28.7% vs 10%, $p = 0$), al-Manar (26.1% vs 9.7%, $p = 0$), NBN (21.1% vs 7.3%, $p = 0$), and al-Mayadeen (21.7% vs 8.7%, $p = 0$).

As for news production, protestors are more likely than non-protestors to post or share news on Facebook (52.7% vs 15%, $p = 0$), WhatsApp (62.3% vs 27%, $p = 0$), Instagram (24.7% vs 4.6%, $p = 0$), Twitter (22% vs 3.9%, $p = 0$), and blogs (5.3% vs 1.7%, $p = 0.003$).

Predictably, protestors are much more likely than non-protestors to say they published any news that supports the protests, and vice versa: 14.7% of non-protestors said they published any news that opposed the protests, while not a single person (0%) of those who joined the protests at least once said the same. In contrast, 80.7% of protestors and 33.1% of non-protestors ($p = 0$) said they published only news that supports the protest.

Finally, protestors are more likely than non-protestors to access social media through their mobile phones and not their computers. They were also more likely to unfriend/unfollow (16.7% vs 7.1%, $p = 0$), block/report (20.7% vs 5.6%, $p = 0$), or hide/delete (15.3% vs 5.1%, $p = 0$) a comment about the protests with which they disagreed.

Section F: Comparing Employed and Unemployed

The study compared across employment status, which was divided into two groups: Unemployed and employed (whether part-time or full-time).

When comparing between employed and unemployed Lebanese, no significant differences emerged for most results. The exceptions are the following:

More unemployed than employed Lebanese are interested in Lebanese politics (73.8% vs 66.5%, $p = 0.013$), believe the Lebanese protests are important (73.6% vs 66.4%, $p = 0.0136$), support the protests (69% vs 62.1%, $p = 0.021$), and have joined the protests in the street at least once (33.5% vs 27%, $p = 0.023$).

On the other hand, more employed than unemployed Lebanese say they support or are members of political parties (31.6% vs 25.1%, $p = 0.024$).

When it comes to television channels, more employed than unemployed Lebanese follow news about the protests on OTV (27.7% vs 22.1%, $p = 0.041$) and al-Mayadeen (21.7% vs 16.5%, $p = 0.034$), and the same group tends to offer slightly more trust to OTV (25.5% vs 20.3%, $p = 0.056$) and al-Mayadeen (20.6% vs 14.5%, $p = 0.012$).

On the other hand, more unemployed than employed Lebanese follow news about the protests on al-Jadeed (66.7% vs 59.7%, $p = 0.022$) and trust al-Jadeed (60% vs 51.7%, $p = 0.009$).

On social media, more employed than unemployed Lebanese follow news about the protests on news websites (31.8% vs 22.7%, $p = 0.001$), while more unemployed than employed trust news from Facebook (64.9% vs 57.1%, $p = 0.024$), Instagram (54.4% vs 41.2%, $p = 0.001$), and WhatsApp (73.9% vs 65.7%, $p = 0.008$).

As for publishing on social media, more unemployed than employed Lebanese say they published only news they supported (67.8% vs 57.4%, $p = 0.016$), while more employed than unemployed Lebanese say they hid or deleted comments they disagreed with about the protest (10.6% vs 5.4%, $p = 0.003$).



Section G: Comparing Between Income Levels

Similarly, income levels were divided into two groups: those making an income or allowance of less than 1,500,000 LBP per month (including zero income) compared to those making more than 1,500,000 LBP per month.

It is important to note that the sample had very few participants in the higher income category (11%), which may reflect the dire economic situation in the country but also causes a challenge to the statistical comparison due to the under-representation of that group—a common problem in surveys.

When comparing the results between the two income levels, some similar patterns as employment status emerge but most results show no significant differences, with the following exceptions:

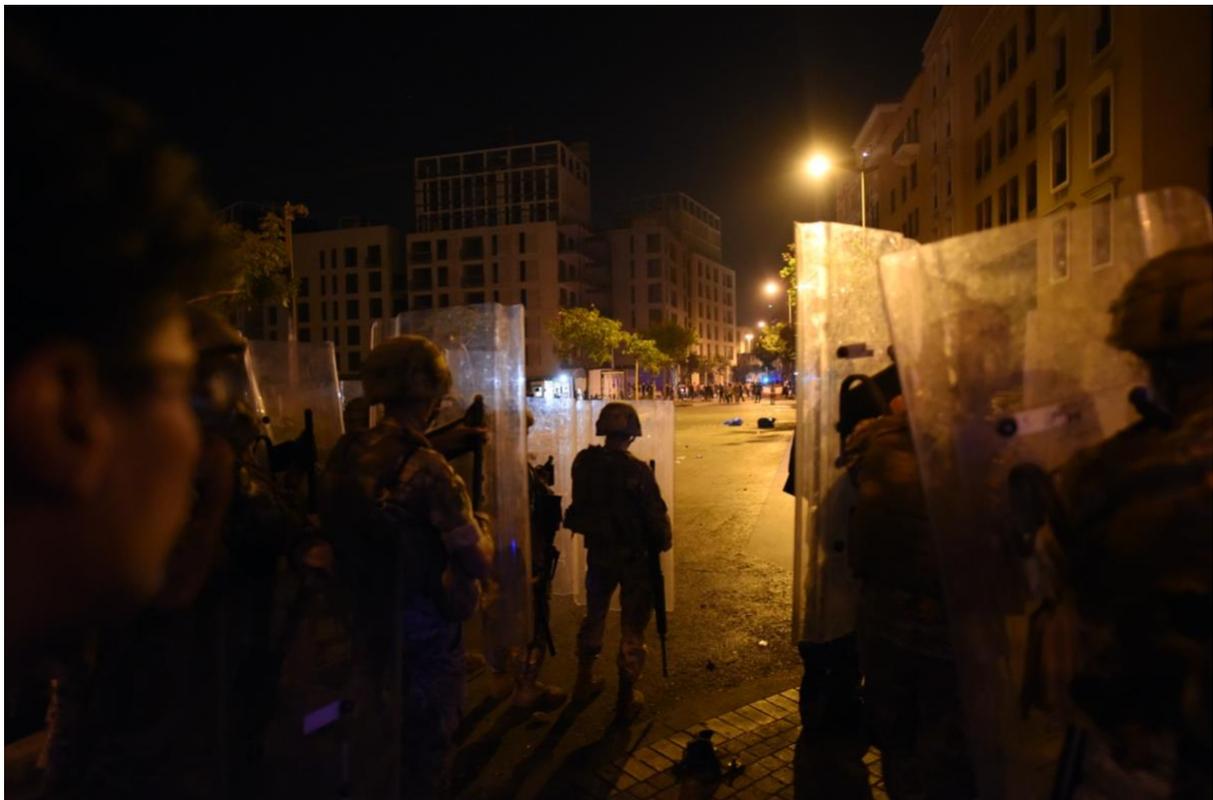
Lebanese in the higher income category (more than 1,500,000 LBP per month) are more likely than those in the lower income category (Less than 1,500,000 LBP per month and including zero income) to be supporters or members of political parties (36.4% vs 27.6%, $p = 0.056$) and to have had some media literacy training (11.8% vs 5.5%, $p = 0.01$).

They are also more likely to follow news about the protests on news websites (35.5% vs 26.6%, $p = 0.051$), radio (23.6% vs 10.2%, $p = 0.0$), OTV (34.5% vs 23.9%, $p = 0.015$), al-Manar (27.3% vs 19%, $p = 0.04$), and al-Mayadeen (30.9% vs 17.9%, $p = 0.001$).

Lebanese in the higher income group are also more likely to trust news about the protests from radio (60.7% vs 38.9%, $p = 0.002$), OTV (34.5% vs 27.7%, $p = 0.003$), al-Manar (30% vs 20.1%, $p = 0.017$), and al-Mayadeen (34.5% vs 15.7%, $p = 0.0$).

Similarly, they are more likely to say that they published any news that opposed the protests (15.4% vs 6.9%, $p = 0.029$).

On the other hand, those in the lower income group are more likely to follow news about the protests on al-Jadeed (64.2% vs 52.7%, $p = 0.019$) and to trust al-Jadeed with such news (56.9% vs 44.5%, $p = 0.014$).



Section H: Comparing Between Genders

The study compared between genders and found that in most cases men and women had the same media uses and attitudes.

When it comes to interest in Lebanese politics, the importance of the protests to them, and support or opposition of the protests, no significant differences registered between men and women. However, significantly more men (34.8%) than women (24.9%) say they joined the protests in the streets at least once ($p = 0.001$).

Similarly, more men (31.5%) than women (25.5%) say they are supporters or members of political parties ($p = 0.036$). But no significant differences registered when it came to allegiance to country or sect and media literacy training.

Other significant differences between men and women emerged. In the category of employment and income, men in our study fared better. Only 30.9% of Lebanese men said they are unemployed compared to 62.3% of women ($p = 0.0$), 43.4% of men said they made no income or less than 750,000 LBP compared to 67.9% of women, and 56.6% of men said they made more than 750,000 LBP per month compared to 32.1% of women ($p = 0.0$).

As for media uses, Lebanese men and women largely follow the same media platforms and television channels, with a few exceptions. More men than women follow protest news on radio (15.2% vs 8%, $p = 0.0$), newspapers (7.6% vs 3.5%, $p = 0.005$), Twitter (29.4% vs 22%, $p = 0.008$), and news websites (30.4% vs 24.7%, $p = 0.045$). Similarly, men and women equally trust the same news platforms, with the following exception: more men than women trust radio (45.9% vs 35.5%, $p = 0.016$).

When it comes to television channels, LBCI is the only station that registered significantly more women than men (62.1% vs 54.9%, $p = 0.02$), while al-Mayadeen registered more men than women (23% vs 15.4%, $p = 0.003$).

As for trust in these television channels, no gender differences emerge except for al-Mayadeen, which had significantly more men than women trust its coverage of the protests (21.8% vs 13.6%, $p = 0.001$).

Finally, when it comes to seeking specific news about the protests, especially regarding places of demonstrations, road closures, and political developments, slightly more men than women tend to rely on WhatsApp and Twitter, while more women than men tend to rely on television.



Section I: Comparing Across Age Groups

Some of the most significant differences emerge when comparing Lebanese who are younger than 30 to those who are older than 30.

When it comes to employment and income, significantly more Lebanese in the younger group are unemployed (52.9% vs 40.8%, $p = 0.0$) and make less than 750,000 LBP per month (66.4% vs 47.6%, $p = 0.0$). The younger group is also more interested in Lebanese politics (76.6% vs 64.4%, $p = 0.0$), attributes more importance to the Lebanese protests (76.5% vs 64.3%, $p = 0.0$), and supports the protests (71.3% vs 60.5%, $p = 0.0$). Moreover, 40.8% of younger Lebanese say they joined the protests while only 21.3% of older Lebanese say the same ($p = 0.0$). In contrast, older Lebanese more likely to hold membership in political parties (31.9% vs 24.4%, $p = 0.009$).

As for media uses, a clear division emerges between the younger group that tended to favor new and social media and the older group that preferred traditional media. Significantly more younger Lebanese receive their news about the protests from Instagram (47.1% vs 16.6%, $p = 0$), Facebook (71.3% vs 46.6%, $p = 0$), Twitter (34.5% vs 18.8%, $p = 0$), WhatsApp (72% vs 60.8%, $p = 0$), and news websites (33.4% vs 22.9%, $p = 0$), while more older Lebanese seek news from radio (16.4% vs 5.8%, $p = 0$) and television (91.7% vs 83.9%, $p = 0$).

The younger generation also tends to trust most of the social media news sources more than the older generation, specifically Instagram (58.1% vs 33.9%, $p = 0$), Twitter (53.6% vs 36.7%, $p = 0$), Facebook (66.2% vs 54.6%, $p = 0.001$), and blogs (32.1% vs 21.9%, $p = 0.03$), while the older generation trusts radio (45.1% vs 36.4%, $p = 0.045$) and television (90.5% vs 86.4%, $p = 0.042$) more than the younger generation.

For specific television channels, four channels tend to attract more of the older generation: OTV (29.8% vs 19.3%, $p = 0$), LBCI (62.3% vs 53.6%, $p = 0.006$), NBN (19.3% vs 13.2%, $p = 0.01$), and al-Mayadeen (21.8% vs 16.1%, $p = 0.023$). As for trusting television channels, only OTV (27.8% vs 17.3%, $p = 0$) and al-Mayadeen (20.8% vs 14.1%, $p = 0.006$) have a higher level of trust among the older generation.

Younger Lebanese are also more likely than older Lebanese to post and share information about the Lebanese protests on Facebook (36.5% vs 18.1%, $p = 0$), WhatsApp (46% vs 30.9%, $p = 0$), Instagram (18.6% vs 4.2%, $p = 0$), Twitter (13% vs 6.3%, $p = 0$), and blogs (4% vs 1.8%, $p = 0.034$). And while younger Lebanese are more likely to say they published any news that supports the protests (59.6% vs 50.4%, $p = 0.039$), older Lebanese are more likely to say they published any news that opposes the protests (5.7% vs 10.3%, $p = 0.057$).



Section J: Comparing Between Education Levels

The study compared two education levels: university education vs less than university education.

Lebanese with a university education are more likely to be employed (76% vs 48.8%, $p = 0$) and make more than 750,000 LBP per month (62.4% vs 40%, $p = 0$). They are also more likely to be interested in Lebanese politics (77% vs 68.3%, $p = 0.02$), attribute importance to the Lebanese protests (76.5% vs 68.2%, $p = 0.027$), and support the protests (73.8% vs 63.4%, $p = 0.008$).

However, no significant differences emerge when it comes to participating in the protests or supporting political parties. University-educated Lebanese, however, are significantly more likely to have undergone some media literacy training (17.5% vs 3.7%, $p = 0$), which points to the fact that media literacy in Lebanon is only taught at the university level, unlike many countries around the world where even elementary schools cover this important field.

Lebanese with a higher education are more likely to follow protest news on news websites (49.2% vs 22.8%, $p = 0$), Facebook (78.1% vs 53%, $p = 0$), Instagram (45.4% vs 26.8%, $p = 0$), WhatsApp (80.3% vs 62.5%, $p = 0$), Twitter (36.6% vs 23.4%, $p = 0$), blogs (80.3% vs 62.5%, $p = 0$), and television (vs 93.4% vs 87%, $p = 0.015$).

However, they are more likely to trust social media than Lebanese with less than a university education, particularly news websites (59.9% vs 38.8%, $p = 0$), Twitter (59.8% vs 42.1%, $p = 0.001$), Facebook (68% vs 58.6%, $p = 0.024$), blogs (35.9% vs 24.2%, $p = 0.039$), and Instagram (55.2% vs 45.2%, $p = 0.039$),

They are also more likely to follow protest news on LBCI (76.5% vs 54.3%, $p = 0$), MTV (65.6% vs 48.7%, $p = 0$), and to trust LBCI (66.1% vs 52.3%, $p = 0.001$) and MTV (54.6% vs 41.2%, $p = 0.001$).

As for producing information about the protests, Lebanese with higher education are overall more likely to post or share than those with less than a university education, specifically on WhatsApp (54.6% vs 33.8%, $p = 0$), Facebook (35% vs 24.4%, $p = 0.003$), Instagram (16.9% vs 9.2%, $p = 0.002$), Twitter (15.3% vs 8%, $p = 0.002$), and blogs (6% vs 2.1%, $p = 0.004$).



Section K: Comparing Between Students and Non-Students

Researchers also explored whether any difference in media usage emerged between Lebanese who are currently school or university students and those who are not, especially that a significant percentage of current students are unemployed (82.3% vs 37.6%, $p = 0$), whether part-time or full-time and more current students compared to non-students (90.1% vs 47%, $p = 0$) make less than 750,000 LBP per month (as income or allowance).

Current students (81.8%) also tend to be more interested than non-students (67.1%) in Lebanese politics ($p = 0$). They also attribute more importance to the Lebanese protests (81.8% vs 66.8%, $p = 0$), are more likely to support the protests (78.6% vs 62.1%, $p = 0$), and are more likely to join the protests (47.9% vs 25.7%, $p = 0$). However, non-students are more likely to be political party members or supporters (30.3% vs 21.4%, $p = 0.013$).

As for consuming news about the protests, current students are more likely to get their news from Instagram (59.4% vs 23.3%, $p = 0$), Facebook (81.8% vs 51.9%, $p = 0$), WhatsApp (82.8% vs 61.8%, $p = 0$), Twitter (40.6% vs 22.3%, $p = 0$), news websites (33.3% vs 26.2%, $p = 0.059$), and blogs (12.5% vs 5.7%, $p = 0.002$). In contrast, non-students are more likely to use radio (13.2% vs 5.2%, $p = 0.002$) and television (89.1% vs 84.4%, $p = 0.068$).

Similarly, students are more likely than non-students to trust news about the protests from Instagram (71.3% vs 39.3%, $p = 0$), blogs (81.5% vs 66.2%, $p = 0$), Facebook (77.1% vs 55.7%, $p = 0$), Twitter (57.4% vs 41.9%, $p = 0.002$), WhatsApp (81.5% vs 66.2%, $p = 0$), and news websites (53.5% vs 40.9%, $p = 0.009$).

For specific television stations, al-Jadeed attracted more students than non-students (71.4% vs 60.9%, $p = 0.009$), while OTV attracted more non-students than students (27% vs 17.2%, $p = 0.005$). In addition, more current students tend to trust al-Jadeed (68.2% vs 52.5%, $p = 0$), while more non-students tend to trust OTV (25.6% vs 12.5%, $p = 0$), and al-Manar (22.8% vs 14.6%, $p = 0.013$).

Students are also more likely than non-students to post and share news about the protests on Facebook (46.9% vs 21.4%, $p = 0$), WhatsApp (52.6% vs 34%, $p = 0$), Instagram (22.9% vs 7.7%, $p = 0$), Twitter (16.7% vs 7.5%, $p = 0$), and blogs (6.3% vs 2%, $p = 0.003$). They were also more likely to say that they published any news that supports the protests (63.4% vs 52.4%, $p = 0.03$).



Section L: Comparing Across Media Literacy Levels

The study compared between Lebanese who say they have had some or extensive training in media literacy and those who have never had any media literacy training.

More Lebanese who have been exposed to media literacy education than those who haven't are interested in Lebanese politics (85.5% vs 68.9%, $p = 0.006$), believe the protests are important (85.5% vs 68.7%, $p = 0.005$), support the protests (79% vs 64.4%, $p = 0.019$), and have joined the protests in the streets (50% vs 28.7%, $p = 0$).

In addition, those who have undergone media literacy training are more likely than those who haven't to follow news about the protests on WhatsApp (93.5% vs 64%, $p = 0$), Facebook (82.3% vs 56%, $p = 0$), blogs (93.5% vs 64%, $p = 0$), news websites (43.5% vs 26.5%, $p = 0.004$), and Instagram (43.5% vs 29.3%, $p = 0.018$). The same group is more likely to trust news about the protests from blogs (54.5% vs 23.9%, $p = 0$), Facebook (85.5% vs 58.8%, $p = 0$), news websites (67.5% vs 42.1%, $p = 0.002$), and WhatsApp (90.2% vs 67.9%, $p = 0$).

For television channels, the media literacy group is more likely to follow news about the protests on MTV (77.4% vs 50.1%, $p = 0$), LBCI (72.6% vs 57.5%, $p = 0.027$), and al-Jadeed (75.8% vs 62%, $p = 0.042$), and Lebanese in this group are also more likely to follow news on regional news stations, including al-Jazeera (12.9% vs 6%, $p = 0$), al-Mayadeen (29% vs 18.7%, $p = 0.045$), BBC Arabic (11.3% vs 2.3%, $p = 0$), al-Arabiya (12.9% vs 6%, $p = 0.031$), Sky News Arabia (8.1% vs 3.1%, $p = 0.083$), and al-Hadath (8.1% vs 3.3%, $p = 0.051$).

The same group is more likely to trust MTV (66.1% vs 42.2%, $p = 0$), al-Jadeed (74.2% vs 54.3%, $p = 0.002$), LBCI (67.7% vs 53.9%, $p = 0.035$), BBC Arabic (8.1% vs 2.2%, $p = 0.005$), al-Jazeera (9.7% vs 4.2%, $p = 0.042$), al-Hadath (8.1% vs 3.1%, $p = 0.036$), Sky News Arabia (8.1% vs 3.3%, $p = 0.051$), but less likely to trust NBN (17.6% vs 8.1%, $p = 0.053$).

The media literacy group is also more likely to post or share news about the protests on WhatsApp (72.6% vs 35.3%, $p = 0$), Facebook (50% vs 24.7%, $p = 0$), Instagram (21% vs 9.9%, $p = 0.006$), blogs (14.5% vs 2%, $p = 0$), and Twitter (17.7% vs 8.7%, $p = 0.018$). Members of this group are also more likely to block/report (21% vs 9.4%, $p = 0.003$) comments about the protests with which they disagree. They also are more likely to access social media through their mobile phones and not their computers.



Section M: Comparing Across Political Affiliation

The study also compared between Lebanese who say they are members or supporters of political parties and those who say they were not members or supporters of any political party.

Ironically, Lebanese with no political affiliation are more likely than those with a political affiliation to say they are interested in Lebanese politics (72.1% vs 64.3%, $p = 0.015$). They are also more likely to believe the protests are important (72.1% vs 64.3%, $p = 0.015$), to support the protests (33.9% vs 20.3%, $p = 0$), and to have joined the protests (68.5% vs 57.3%, $p = 0.001$).

They are also more likely to be current students (21.1% vs 14.3%, $p = 0.013$). However, those affiliated with political parties are more likely to be employed (59.4% vs 51.5%, $p = 0.024$) and to make an income of more than 750,000 LBP per month (52.3% vs 40.7%, $p = 0.001$).

When it comes to following news about the protests on social media platforms or trusting these platforms, no significant differences register between the two groups. However, politically affiliated Lebanese are more likely to follow radio (16.1% vs 9.9%, $p = 0.006$) and television (92% vs 86.7%, $p = 0.02$). For specific TV channels, the non-politically affiliated are more likely to follow news about the protests on al-Jadeed (66.2% vs 54.5%, $p = 0.001$), MTV (54.6% vs 44.8%, $p = 0.005$), and LBCI (60.6% vs 52.8%, $p = 0.023$), and those who are politically affiliated are more likely to follow al-Manar (35.7% vs 13.6%, $p = 0$), OTV (39.5% vs 19.3%, $p = 0$), al-Mayadeen (31.5% vs 14.4%, $p = 0$), and NBN (28.7% vs 11.8%, $p = 0$).

Consistently, politically affiliated Lebanese are more likely to trust radio (50.8% vs 36.1%, $p = 0.001$) and television (91.9% vs 87.4%, $p = 0.04$). Those who are not politically affiliated are more likely to trust al-Jadeed (59.7% vs 45.1%, $p = 0$), LBCI (57.4% vs 48.3%, $p = 0.008$), and MTV (46.1% vs 37.8%, $p = 0.017$), while the politically affiliated are more likely to trust al-Manar (36.7% vs 15%, $p = 0$), OTV (38.5% vs 16.9%, $p = 0$), NBN (29.7% vs 11.9%, $p = 0$), and al-Mayadeen (29.7% vs 13%, $p = 0$).

Slight differences emerge when it comes to posting and sharing news on some social media platforms. Non-politically affiliated Lebanese are more likely to share or post news about the protests on WhatsApp (39.5% vs 32.9%, $p = 0.051$) and blogs (3.5% vs 1%, $p = 0.034$). In addition, politically affiliated Lebanese are more likely to say they publish any news that opposes the protests (16% vs 4.8%, $p = 0$).



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About the study

This study is part of the ongoing Media/War program of the Institute of Media Research and Training (IMRT) at the Lebanese American University (LAU). The Media and War program covers a broad area of research that situates media research within the context of Arab wars, conflicts and politics. It includes researching the relationship between media and terrorism, the media uses of non-state actors and guerilla groups, and the framing of war and conflict.

Institute of Media Research and Training

The Institute of Media Research and Training (IMRT) at the Lebanese American University (LAU) is an interdisciplinary center for media research, training, production and advocacy. It aims to produce and transmit scientific knowledge and media content that examines how media and digital communication systems shape and are shaped by local and regional politics, economics, and cultures; to develop media literacy curricula and programs and offer academic and professional training that advances media education in the region; and to advocate for ethical, professional, and equitable communication laws and practices and a free media environment. The institute builds on media literacy theory that aims to empower citizens with creative and critical thinking skills and digital competencies that help them become civically engaged global citizens capable of innovatively harnessing the power of media technologies to advance human rights, peace, and social justice.

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