Media Freedom in Egypt: A Comparative Analysis of Pre- and Post-Revolution Perceptions

ELAMIRA SAMAH F. SALEH

Assistant professor
Cairo University

Abstract:

Egypt presents an interesting case of Media freedom in that it is an example of a country in which the government, which had been in power for 29 years under a continued state of emergency, attempts to place legal impediments to restrict the Egyptian media, but does not completely succeed in stifling media freedom. While the government has shown itself willing to use the emergency law, harsh press laws and other aspects of the penal code to intimidate, arrest, and imprison journalists, it cannot entirely limit access to information within the country. This is partly because of the persistence of Egypt's journalists and bloggers, who continued to push the envelope by taking on topics that were taboo in the past, and partly because of the country's desire to expand economic growth, Allowing its citizens greater access to different IT. On February 11, 2011, President Hosni Mubarak resigned from the presidency after 29 years in power. Technologies in this☐Egyptian☐revolution☐become a trendy topic. However, lots of concerns have been widely expressed about what has been termed as chaos in media organizations in Egypt & the questions remained: How Egypt political transition to a more democratic system will have major implications for promoting freedom of expression & freedom of speech?. How could we interpret new incidents like blocking "Aljazeera Misr" or the case of a blogger who was handed a jail sentence for criticizing the army? Maikel Nabil, 26, was charged with insulting the military establishment and "spreading false information". Therefore this study tends to offer a☐scientific☐attempt☐to☐monitor the most important☐constraints and☐pressures that impact negatively the☐freedom of Egyptian media after the revolution through examining media practitioner's attitudes towards Media Freedom in Egypt within a wider framework of transitology theory assumptions.

Keywords: Freedom of expression, Egypt, Transitlogy, Practitioners

Introduction:

*"[S]tudies of post-communist societies
have generated an interesting corpus
of works and a passionate field for theoretical debates…[however,] we have
to recognize that nothing essentially has
happened in media theory: no new
theory, no new concepts, no new patterns emerged from the media's evolution
in these countries" (Coman 2000,35)*

Coman cites three reasons why this maybe so (ibid.): in the rapid transitional phase, events often overtook analysis; there has been a general lack of information about these processes; and finally, the difficulty associated with analyzing and ultimately theorizing across the multi country region. Through this paper sections and paragraphs could we reach the same conclusions about Egypt's media case?! As Egypt moves forward into the next stages of its post-Mubarak transition, then it is necessary to measure the scope and scale of this existing consciousness and find some tangible materials to confirm or disconfirm it.

In many countries, those who dare to criticize their governments, speak on behalf of a suppressed minority, or call for political or economic reforms are often portrayed as "traitors" trying to disseminate hatred and hostility and disturb national stability. In such cases, states that are often "equipped" with tailor-made national laws, remaining on alert to punish those who are courageous enough to challenge their governments (Hussein 2008,1) but when a state undergoes a revolution, and the chaos subsides, and the dust of the aftermath settles, the next thing one would expect is change. Change in government, politics, policies, law, and society, change is the goal and expected reward (Geiger & Masri 2012, 1)

There seems to be a general consensus that Egyptian political, social and media systems are bound to change, but there is no agreement as to the direction and form of change. It is the object of considerable debate in interdisciplinary Egyptian scholars whether an authoritarian political order dominated by a strong political faction – regardless whether it was NDP (National Democratic Party) or FJP (Freedom and Justice Party) in Egypt case- can continue to exist in Egypt?

Given the many challenges stemming from internal reform and the impact of cultural forces, Will Egypt eventually turns democratic? and will the uni-party become obsolete and disappear, just as has happened in many other former communist countries passed to transition for example?!.

As Egypt moves forward into the next stages of its post-Mubarak transition, it has become increasingly clear to those who monitor and know Egypt that the media, from its traditional newspapers and broadcasts to online media and the blogosphere, is changing. In Egypt of Hosni Mubarak, a commonly held perception existed that the media played one of two roles: either the mouthpiece of the regime, particularly the state media, or something not worthwhile given the inability to write freely, particularly opposition and independent media. In an Egypt ruled by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) & lately by the Muslim Brotherhood do those notions remain?

One of the major themes of the present study will be media democratization in post-Mubarak Egypt. In this study, I consider media democratization as a series of institutional changes and social movements whether through evolution or revolution, whether dramatic or not, towards the praxis of democracy. It is tempting to argue that, in all past and present authoritarian countries, media liberalization is the first step towards media democratization; and that a large-scale political-or-economic reform movement generated by the indigenous social conditions is vital to foster a media liberalization-to democratization process.

The focus of this paper then is to highlight the changes that took place in the realm of media freedom in post-Mubarak era through the lenses of a sample of Egyptian media practitioners in comparison to Mubarak "s era.

The current environment is one in which there is enormous potential for re-

form. At the same time, the process of reform is anything but smooth, with the demonstrators returning to Tahrir Square on July 8, 2011 to protest against the slow pace of change (Mendel 2011, 1). While the direction of Egypt's political transition is still unpredictable, in the long run, moving towards a new equilibrium of state sustainability will be conditional on whether and to what extent, Egypt will be able to marginalize the old power system. As people increasingly feel that the spirit of the revolution has been lost in the name of stability and socio-economic conditions are not tackled, protests and labor unrest are likely to intensify.

During Mubarak's presidency, the media faced substantial legal and regulatory challenges that Limited their independence and ability to criticize and hold the government to account. These included criminal sanctions under the Penal Code, onerous licensing requirements and significant government control over state-owned media outlets. These controls and media freedom in all its branches is still in danger. In Egypt 2013, prosecution and legal issues, physical assaults, confiscation, censorship, return of inspectors, and besiege creativity are always there!!

Media freedom in age of Mubarak (2006-2010)

Torture, corruption, political suppression, poverty, and peaceful or/and violent protests, all what you need to know about them is to read an independent newspaper or a blog or to watch the space channels. The slogan of "Everything is OK in Egypt" is changed to be "Egypt is not well, let us expose this to find a treatment". The Egyptian government has not changed and its policy is unchangeable also. However, now some are ready to pay the price of changing; they are the Egyptian journalists and bloggers. Being sent behind the bars, or threatened is the price. Six independent newspapers and some blogs play the role of a microscope that enables the Egyptian citizens to see the mere naked picture of

their country. Al Dostor, Al Badeel, Al Masri Al Youm, Nahdat Misr, Al Fagr, Sout Al Ummah and the blogs, such newspapers and blogs are reviving the Egyptian press and leading the parties' newspapers, which were pioneers in the same field, to support freedoms of expression and press. In an attempt to find out the real number of cases launched against journalists in 2007, Gamal Eid the Executive Director of the Arabic Network said:""It is very difficult to define a certain number of such cases. More than one thousand summons and five hundred cases were launched against journalists. These numbers do not include cases against non-syndicate members or the bloggers or artists and men of letters who are not syndicate members".

Before reviewing the events we have to pay attention to some factors affecting the journalist's performances and their role. The most important factors in our point of view were the absence of laws and governmental practices that support transparency and information handling. However, there is much legislation that circumscribes the right to get and publish any information. Even the state-owned newspapers depend on news agencies or on deductions and guessing. Furthermore there was absence and demolishment of a journalistic value and an important tool which is the right to refute any false news. This value is replaced by the so-called "political Hesba" which means that some uninterested personality launches a law suit against any journalist who releases certain kind of information. Some courts accept such law suits and some reject them!(Gamal Eid et al. 2007,6).

"An open war against freedom of expression" is the most precise description of the state of freedom of expression in Egypt in 2008,as silencing voices that the government considered to be "loud" or" crossing boundaries" was its objective. No matter how or by which devices, what has happened and has been happening only confirms the government slogan "the end justifies the means" as the motto of its war.

The most notable factors that negatively affected freedom of expression in Egypt 2008 media status were (e.g) that the chief editors of government-owned papers become members in the ruling NDP violating article 55 of the law which declares that the state-owned newspapers must be independent from the executive authority and all political parties, to be a platform which gathers all opinions and political currents along with voices of all active forces within the society. Also, the Growing Market for "Hesba" Cases, a law Banning Demonstrations in Places of Worship.

However, reality brings in some laws, namely the emergency law, that contains articles and measures that inhibits and criminalizes enjoyers of freedom of expression and opinion. Emergency law articles give authorities the right to suspend newspapers indefinitely, seize issues or even set hardly possible conditions to issue newspapers.

The political situation of 2009 had several impacts on journalists, bloggers and human rights activists. Year 2009 started by the Israeli war on Gaza, during which a series of violations were committed against journalists, bloggers and activists. The first Stop Continued Prosecution of Journalists before Criminal Courts. Six years ago, Egyptians journalists welcomed the presidential promise to abolish imprisonment in publication cases, yet imprisonment and criminal trials are still a hovering threat .Threats against journalists in Egypt range from heavy fines and prison sentences to closure of newspapers.

Second Stop: Extensive travel ban and illegal detention during the year, many activists and bloggers were stopped at the airport by illegal travel ban and arrest warrants. Third stop: denial the right to join the syndicate, the only union for journalists. Fourth Stop: bloggers and State...mutual animosity repressive practices, launched by security services against bloggers, have turned the relationship bloggers state in Egypt to mutual enmity. Fifth stop: Military Sentences against Jour-

nalists, It was striking in 2009 to bring civilians to courts martial. On February 4th, Magdi Hussein, former editor of Al-Shaab weekly, stood before a military court on charges of infiltration to Gaza, after the Israeli war cease fire at the end of January without a permit in the context of solidarity with the cause of the Palestinian people.

In brief, we can say that Egypt's media freedom in 2009 had gone from bad to worse, towards more restrictions, denouncements and trials. Any journalist in Egypt, no matter how distinguished, is not far from being tried and being liable to imprisonment, for disclosure of facts which officials were so keen to conceal from the public and for exercising the press profession which all international legislations provided for its sanctity and respect.

In a revolution that promised freedom for the people, freedom of the press is assumed to be given. While the past year saw a more vivacious and diverse press than Egypt ever knew before

It also became clear that freedom is not a given to a new media in a new society under a new leader, for the old ways of the past seem persistent.

By 2010 many things changed in Egypt. This year had witnessed a despotic environment full of police oppressive practices by the Egyptian state seeking to gag dissidents with the grossly rigged parliamentary elections meant to inherit the power to the son of the former president.

Thorny legal issues in Egypt's media in the second republic:

Under SCAF, members of the media, both foreign and Egyptian, have been arrested, beaten, interrogated, censored, and killed. From the violence at Maspero on October 9, 2011 to the arrests of journalists and influential bloggers over the past months, it seems relevant to ask whether or not the press exhibits any more freedom under SCAF than it did under Mubarak. While the press may appear to

demonstrate a greater sense of freedom, given that everyone is talking more openly in ways they could not before, we argue that little has tangibly changed given the persistent level of suppression within the press when it comes to certain topics. It remains true that the majority of voices within the media are not allowed to speak critically of SCAF or any of its affiliates. For those who have been critical and crossed SCAF?s red line, they have likely seen the inside of an interrogation room if not worse (Geiger & Masri 2012, 5).

When Mubarak resigned, power was handed over to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. Just two days after Mubarak's resignation, on February 13, the Supreme Council suspended the 1971 Constitution. Preparations for a constitutional referendum that would add nine new articles to the Constitution started almost immediately, and the referendum was held on March 19. Although the referendum was opposed by many civil society organizations as not going far enough, it passed decisively, garnering some 77 percent of the vote. The nine new articles focus primarily on governing structures, including who may run for president, the term of office of the president (which is now limited to two four-year terms), the holding of elections for the two houses of parliament (the Shura Council and the People's Assembly), and the process of preparing a new Constitution.

When the Constitutional Declaration, effectively the interim Constitution, was proclaimed by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces on March 23, it included the 9 new articles passed by referendum, 49 articles from the 1971 Constitution and 3 additional articles, namely Articles 56, 57 and 61. The 49 articles from the old Constitution mostly address human rights and the structures of the state, including the parliament, judiciary and armed forces.

?The former Prime Minister, Essam Sharaf, pledged in July 2011 to work towards ending the Emergency Law. Under

the Emergency Law, cases against the media can be pursued in military courts, a procedure that is highly problematic from the perspective of media freedom, as well as other basic due process human rights. How the new Constitution will protect freedom of expression, and in particular whether the new guarantees will be more closely in line with international law, is clearly a matter of great importance for the media and other stakeholders in Egypt (Mendel 2011, 5).

At the same time, some of the new constitution articles are defective because of the use of elastic words or phrases and referring to the law to organize the rights, which grant the relevant authorities space to restrict the rights according to its desire. Some articles are defective also as it exposes clear tendency to a political trend who has the majority in the committee. It is clear in the articles related to the woman rights and its protection from the exercise that could fall in woman trafficking. For example Article no. 4, ignored the repeated decision to stipulate the right of the detainee or the held person to make a phone call to report to whoever it desires in respect of the detention of the arrest. Article (18), The phrase "as long as the said associations and parties respect the national sovereignty" is unclear and therefore it releases the appropriate authorities power to restrict the right in accordance with any definition related to the national sovereignty and what deemed to be inrespected upon its own discrete.

Freedom of opinion and expression experienced, during the transition period experienced by Egypt, sharp declines in the reign of the Military Council, which lasted about 17 months, in spite of issuing Constitutional Declaration, which included two articles supporting freedom of opinion and expression: (Article 12, 13) as this period faced many of severe violations and repressive tactics to freedom of opinion and expression, as: military trials and court ruling of prison and fines for activists, journalists and bloggers, and attacking peace-

ful masses.

With the rise of political Islam trend and its presence as a political influential trend in the country and then a majority in parliament, has intensified violations of freedom of opinion and expression, as "Hisbah" cases raised against artists and creators, and Prosecuted others like Adel Imam, and defamation others such as the artist Elham Shahin, under difficult circumstances President "Mohamed Morsi" start his reign as the first elected president of Egypt after the twenty-fifth of January revolution.

?Monitoring and analyzing early months of Dr. Morsi reign now is another stage to realize how the new regime, "which are forming now" deals with freedom of opinion, freedom of expression and creativity.

Egyptian media system in transition:

In political science, there is a well-established paradigm for studying the shift from dictatorial to democratic regimes. It is usually known, accurately if inelegantly, as "transitology", and it has been developed to explain a wide spectrum of changes from the end of European fascism in the 1970s, through Latin America and Southern Africa to the contemporary problems of post-communism. The most famous, if not the most original, theorist of this school is Samuel Huntington (1991) (Spark,C. 2008, 8).

This approach also strongly influences much of the writing about media informer communist countries. However, the really-existing media of different countries are measured against what has come to be known as the "liberal model" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

Exporting theories for rigorous testing in other geo-political regions under different sets of institutional, political, economic, and social circumstances is the only mean of generating robust theories of mass media. This inquiry is one of these kinds which address not only the individuals' perceptions and personal at-

titudes toward political or social circumstances, but also by placing these findings in a larger, cross-national framework that seeks to contextualize the findings in a multi-level model of media reform in time of transition. The dimension of the media markets, for instance, as conceptualized by Hallin and Mancini is limited to the development of the mass circulation press and its relation to newspaper circulation. This is hardly indicative when applied to some countries, which due to low literacy rates, amongst several other socio-economic factors including cultural differences such as the prevalence of oral tradition, or even the dominance of the electronic broadcasting, either never developed a mass press or have very low circulation rates. Similarly, the dimension of professionalism with the sub-dimensions of autonomy, instrumentalisation, "devotion to public good" and existence of distinctive norms, emerge as normative, difficult to gauge empirically and to label entire systems as less or more professional (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 35–36).Here it is worth addressing the "de facto" rather than just the "de jure" (Fandy, 2007 pp. 67).

According to Carothers five core assumptions define the transition paradigm; any country moving away from dictatorial rule is a country in transition towards democracy. The second assumption is that the transition towards democracy (democratization) unfolds in a sequence of stages. First: there is the "opening", a period in which cracks appear in the ruling dictatorial regime, with the most prominent crack being a cleavage between hard-liners and softliners. Second: there follows a "breakthrough" with the collapse of the regime and the emergence of a new democratic system and the establishment of new democratic institutional structures (e.g. a new constitution). Third: comes "consolidation", a slow process of transforming democratic forms into democratic substance through elections, the reform of state institutions and the strengthening of

civil society. The introduction of elections is crucial, as they will bring about a broadening and deepening of political participation. The fourth assumption is that basic and underlying conditions in the transitional countries – i.e. political traditions, institutional legacies, ethnic make-up, religious beliefs, and cultural background – will not be major factors in determining the outcome of the transition process. The fifth assumption is that democratic transitions are being built on coherent and functioning states.(Carothers, 2002,pp. 6-9).

arothers maintains that most transitional countries do not conform to these assumptions (Ibid). They instead enter a gray zone where they are neither clearly dictatorial nor clearly headed towards democracy. They get stuck in the transition process, so to speak. Two broad political syndromes seem to be common in the gray zone. The first is "feckless pluralism", where political participation extends little beyond voting and democracy remains shallow and shaky. The other is "dominant-power politics". In dominant-power countries there is a blurring of the line between the state and the ruling party and the state's assets (jobs, public funding, information, coercive power, etc.) are at the service of the ruling party.

Understanding the Egyptian "uprising" as an eighteen-day detour that ended up with the ready-made typology of democratic revolutions driven basically from Latin American and East European models, leads to misunderstanding.

Contrary to the predicted path to democratization in most comparative media literature, the Egyptian case demonstrated not only a divergence, but even a reversal, when it came to widely held assumptions regarding state-media relationships in general, and the concept of political parallelism in particular.

For example while the main dimensions of media market, political parallelism, state role and professionalism are key components of media systems and therefore do "travel", some of the contextual sub-

indicators, which in the "Western" context may be useful or may fail to reveal any pattern or insight when applied to the "rest" of the world.

That is mainly because, in Egypt, the main economic, political, and social structures in society did not witness fundamental changes; an active and vibrant civil society was not already in place, and a process of comprehensive political, economic and social change was not underway. Rather, it was public will, as spread through new media outlets, which paved the way for structural change and political reform.

?Furthermore, we should say that this isn't a new phenomenon in the Egyptian media environment; During 1924 to 1952 press freedom in Egypt suffered from constitutional coups and martial laws imposed during the first and second world wars.However, it witnessed much more freedom comparing to the period afterwards and the period of 1952 revolution.

This revival of Egyptian Journalistic Institutions then was a result of two causes:

First: The Overall development that the Egyptian society witnessed in all its economic, social, and political aspects.

Second: the strong competition existed in the Egyptian market then as the one between Al-Ahram and Al-Masri newspapers after the later had joined the market of morning daily newspapers in 1946. (Ghaly, 2009, 157-158).

During 1952 to 1974 the press lost its freedom and independence and turned into one of ruling, domination, mobilization, and orientation institutions. Even when Egypt has turned into multi-party system, Egyptian journalism thrived and state-owned papers gained more freedom and diversity but this freedom was restrained by a series of exceptional laws and Emergency Law rules that are imposed since 1981.

So it can be fairly said that the history of media freedom in Egypt is a part of the history of the Egyptian national movement. According to that the struggle for this freedom didn't stop especially with crises repetition and governments change, starting

from nationalization of papers according to Press Law no. 156 issued in 1960 till transferring journalists to institutions that aren't media-related in 1964, 1966, 1972, 1981, and 1983. (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 2-3).

Therefore, thinking about these problems should "start by assuming that what is often thought of as an uneasy, precarious, middle-ground between full-fledged democracy and outright dictatorship is actually the most common political condition today of countries in the developing world and the post-communist world"(Carothers, 2002, pp. 17–18).

What is truly unique in the Egyptian case is that non-mainstream media activism led the way for structural political change and transformation, rather than the other way around. This was accomplished through popular activism, rather than political parallelism, whereby transformation was led and orchestrated by political activists, both online and offline, who largely represented grassroots, popular movements, rather than organized political institutions or parties.

So, it quickly becomes apparent that the course of events did not follow the programs outlined either by the former dissidents who were now in power nor by the legion of consultants from Western Europe and the USA who were offering them advice as to how to restructure broadcasting and the press.

In fact, what emerged were newspapers that were highly partisan in their orientation and broadcasters that remained closely aligned with the state rather than the public.

Therefore, The only media model that exhibits some features of similarity with the Egyptian media case is, what Hallin and Mancini (2004) described as the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist model: The strong role that the state plays in media affairs under this model, the strong political mobilization of mass media, especially broadcasting, the relative importance of electronic over print media, as well as weak journalistic pro-

fessionalism.

However, other features of this model, such as strong partisanship and the lesser degree of differentiation of media from political institutions, for example, seem to perfectly fit the Egyptian media case also. However, the fact that this model is used to describe countries of relatively late democratization in southern Europe is another element of distinction from the Egyptian media case, which uniquely exhibits the condition of 'transformation without democratization'.

Sahar Khamis (2008) prefer to describe Arab media systems in terms of either the Social Responsibility theory or Development theory given that the media organizations, public or private, should adhere to the ethical and legislative codes of the country proposed a third category that she named "dependency model". To Central and Eastern European countries the fall of communism represented the end of the old media system. As a result, the (then) state controlled mediums of mass communication had to transfer themselves from a communist type to a pluralist one where the differing opinions can be freely voiced. (Khalifa. O, 2012).

Before the eruption of the 2011 revolution, it would have been possible to describe the Egyptian media as representing "a transitional and synergic media model [with] a strong belief in the regulatory role of the state . . . traditional neglect of the market-driven logic and the 'grassroots' societal initiatives [and] 'top-to-bottom' media policy" (Vartanova, 2008, p. 24).

A close look at the Egyptian media landscape before the 2011 revolution reveals that it resembles what was occurring in some of the countries studied by Duncan McCargo (2008, p. 13) in Pacific Asia that are characterized by "the role of clientelism, the strong role of the state, the role of the media as an instrument of political struggle, the limited development of the mass circulation press, and the relative weakness of common professional norms." What is striking about the Egyptian media

case is the different route it has taken to change that.

As McCargo (2008) explains, like many developing countries, Egypt is certainly diverging from, rather than converting to, the standard formula of "Americanization and the rise of a global journalism culture ... and modernization, secularization, and commercialization," as predicted by Hallin and Mancini (2004, p.15).

In fact, the assumption that media liberalization in Arab societies will not happen "unless and until the underlying political system becomes a more liberal and democratic one" (Rugh, 2004, p. 161) has turned out to be inapplicable in Egypt, as well as in a number of other Arab countries undergoing political turmoil (Khamis 2011, 1169).

The falsehood of this assumption is clearly related to the bottom-up, grassroots, and largely leaderless nature of current political movements in many parts of the Arab world.

Another important concept to examine is political parallelism, which has been investigated by Hallin and Mancini (2004) as a process determining the relationship between the press and political institutions, especially political parties, in mostly parliamentary, Western democracies. The Egyptian media case diverts from the concept of political parallelism, as discussed in the countries of early and late democratization in Hallin and Mancini (2004). That's because the Egyptian case clearly negates the earlier claims that, for "media to act as an agent of political change, they must be integrated into the institutions of civil society" (Fandy, 2007, p. 141), and for "the media to have a powerful impact on changes to the political system . . . it will be extremely important to improve their links to civil societies and the political opposition" (Hafez, 2008, p. 4).

Another element that should be examined in understanding the concept of political parallelism and its applicability, or lack thereof, in Egypt is media ownership. Government control over media in the

Arab world, including Egypt, has traditionally taken different forms, including ownership, funding, the appointment of key media personnel, and even licensing regulations (Ibid). Therefore, "in discussing Arab media ownership, the distinction between private and public state media, according to the models developed in Europe and the United States is of little analytical value" (Fandy, 2007, p. 9).

In fact, developments in Egypt since the 25th revolution challenge the so-called transition paradigm, instead the country seems to have entered a gray zone of "dominant-power politics" where it is neither clearly dictatorial not clearly heading towards democracy.

During the process of Egyptian dynamic reforms , it seems that Egypt is undertaking its own transitional course which is likely to involve the process of a zig-zag long march towards democratization. This delicate and complicate process is slow, and could well include a short period of neo- authoritarian rule.

The picture emerging from this analysis of Egyptian media is that of a highly transformative and dynamic system that has both confronted significant challenges over different historical phases and undergone a number of major changes.

The eclectic and paradoxical nature of the modern Egyptian media landscape, which combines the binary opposites of authoritarianism and resistance, public ownership and privatization, official and popular spheres, and secularization and (re)Islamization, offers an interesting case of heterogeneity and divergence, reversing Hallin and Mancini's (2004) hypothesis of homogenization, which predicts that the development of the free press goes with the shift toward democratization and the development of liberal institutions and mass markets, which in many countries beyond Western Europe does not seem to be the case.

The Egyptian revolution revealed that the gap between the increasing margin of

press freedom and the slim margin of political freedom and democratic practice is starting to narrow because of a spillover from the realm of virtual activism into real activism, and vice versa. The country is undergoing a post-revolutionary, transitional stage that can safeguard freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

However, this assumption could be challenged by another more realistic & more recent assumption stating that under Muslim Brotherhood's style of ruling, the circumstances of Egyptian society and within the context of weakening institutions, Egypt may, provide a model of the media regression and backwards levels of freedom of expression and speech which represents a case that offers a new model of transition which Colin Sparks has called "The theory of elite continuity" (Sparks,2008,p.9),

The exact form and pace of this transitional stage, however, cannot be easily predicted in light of the current rapid developments in both the political and communicative landscapes in Egypt (Khamis 2011, 1172) but we could put some remarks that represent a road map to what is already going on at the current stage via the media practitioners themselves via steering some research questions as follows:

1. What does media freedom mean for the ruling elite, Arab media workers, and the public in light of the media practices in the Arab world during the globalization era?

2. If media freedom has two contradicting sides – a bright side in the form of international pacts and local constitutions, and a dark side in the form of legislative restriction and different forms of supervision – what are the manifestations of this contradiction and its impact on media and media workers in the Arab world?

3. What are the social, political, economic, cultural, and legislative obstacles that prevent freedom of speech including media and press freedom in the Arab world?

4. What are the alternatives and new media freedom aspects suggested in the light of political and media multiplicity that are imposed by foreign pressures and results of technological revolution in communication and information fields in the Arab world?

Methodology:
This research is an initial foray into the understanding of the relationship between media and democratization in Egypt after the 25th revolution; however, what conditions are necessary to take full advantage of the democratic potential of the media and enhance its contribution to development? &what policies should be elaborated as issues of concern?

The overall purpose of this research is to present a study of major aspects of post-Mubarak Egyptian media freedom and developments in the field of freedom of expression and speech specifically, in an attempt to explicate the structural changes and dynamic trends in the present period of profound Egyptian political and social transformation. By using the case of freedom of expression as a key indicator, this research paper seeks to show the media institutions state in post-Mubarak era and after they found themselves placed in the forefront of change, redefining their roles and in themselves demonstrating the effect and the process of pluralism and democratization.

Therefore the focus of the study is to detect whether freedom of expression in Egypt was going forward or backward in the months covered, or did not change at all.

In order to measure the pre-revolution period; an extensive literature and legal review had been achieved, including online sources. These sources were supported by a series of structured in depth interviews conducted with different media, law and human rights interest groups and professionals. A sample of (15) interviewers provided rich life-experiences, personal histories, and testimonials.

Interviews conducted by the author in Cairo& used as evidence for analysis. Interviews were conducted with journalists in the Egyptian broadcasting stations, state and independent press, and Internet activists involved in the issue.

This was especially important in terms of making comparisons and contrasts between past and present beliefs, attitudes and practices, among different experiences and governments. Each of the in-depth, semi-structured interviews lasted between 30 and one hour in average.

Given the lack of transparency in some information regarding the treatment of journalists as well as the difficulty to gauge matters such as censorship and self-censorship, the following research attempts to appropriate as much information as possible in order to determine the current situation of media freedom in Egypt. Research methods are primarily grounded in qualitative research and quantitative one.

Therefore, another sample of (176) media practitioners were surveyed. The central topic of this. survey was originally to provide measures of media practitioners' perceptions of media freedom levels in Egypt after the 25th revolution; yet, they provide practitioners' contemporary responses to media freedom challenges &socio-political predispositions.

The combination of these two data gathering techniques increased the depth, comprehensiveness, and validity of the collected data, through enabling the comparison of practitioners' responses across multiple contexts and time periods. The use of more than one method of data collection 'will modify the weaknesses of each individual method and thus greatly enhance the quality and value of interpretative research projects (Van Zoonen, 2004, p.139). Following a brief description of media freedom under Mubarak, the paper detailed the relationship between the new government and the media over the past 9 months, precisely between June 2012 and March 2013.

Some generic considerations in se-

lecting media freedom indicators have been adopt in this paper:

-Using quantitative measurements whenever possible

-Ensuring that indicators are separated out to address one key issue at a time

-Considering the practical implications of cost and time for collecting measurement

This paper suggested six major categories of indicators that had been used to analyze media practitioner's perceptions of media Freedom levels in Egypt. Each category was broken down into a number of component& issues which in turn contained series of broad indicators as follows:

1- Physical attacks, imprisonment...... (Direct threats)

2- Control of media and access to information........ (Indirect threats)

3- Censorship and Self-Censorship

4- State responsibility aiming at the journalists 'development & integrity

5- Judicial, business and administrative pressures

6- Media as a platform for democratic discourse

It was an integral part of this analysis that the categories are taken together to create a holistic picture of the Egyptian media environment. No one category is more important than the other and it is the working assumption of this paper that each is important. Inevitably the indicators taken as a whole are an inspirational picture but an analysis based upon these categories will enable a comprehensive map of the media ecology to be constructed.

?Regarding the statistical procedures of the data, the study depended on studying Media Freedom in Egypt on some indicators of Media freedom:

- A pentagon measure was designed; Its degrees ranged from 0 to 4

(the five levels of the measure to be mentioned here along with the degree of each level)

- Degree number 4 represents the high-

est level of media freedom oppression in Egypt, while Degree number zero represents the highest level of media freedom.

- Using statements of each indicator the weighted mean could have been measured so that the highest weighted mean represents the highest level of Media freedom oppression in Egypt, while the least weighted mean represents the lowest level of media oppression.

- To classify levels of Egyptian media freedom, values of the lower and the upper quartiles for each indicator were used separately so that:

• Values less than lower quartile represent a high level of freedom

• Values between lower and upper quartiles represent a medium level of freedom

• Values higher then upper quartile represent a low level of freedom

- Using the 6 indicators of freedom, as a general indicator of media freedom in

Egypt was calculated. Levels of freedom were classified depending on values of lower and upper quartiles values of the general indicator so that:

• Values less than lower quartile represents a high level of freedom

• Values between lower and upper quartiles represent a medium level of freedom

• Values higher then upper quartile represents a low level of freedom

Findings:

Although it was very difficult to categorize the case of Egypt's media as there may be tensions and paradoxes to define indicators of media development in line with the priority areas of the international levels and indicators, but this study suggested six major categories of indicators that can be used to analyze the Egyptian media freedom level from its practitioners lenses and points of views as follows:

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Weighted Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
Attitudes towards Media Freedom	67.8295	24.40479	49.14
Direct Threats	7.5170	3.69397	49.14
Indirect Threats	15.6818	5.88761	37.54
Censorship and Self-Censorship	14.8068	7.55075	51.00
State Responsibility	6.1193	3.39621	55.50
Judicial, Business and Administrative Pressures	13.9034	5.52468	39.74
Media as a Platform for Democratic Discourse	9.8011	4.17341	42.58

The above table reveals the main elements that limit media freedom in Egypt. Indirect Threats for freedom of speech is the highest rated factor with a weighted mean of 15.6818, followed by Censorship of the State or by In-Charge Persons in Media and Self-Censorship, which includes self-imposed censorship due to long-held restrictions, taboos, and other limits forbidden to be crossed in Egyptian media, with a weighted mean of 14.8068. The third ranking factor is Judicial (in the form of ambiguous legislations), Business,

and Administrative Pressures (13.9034). Other components are Media as a Platform for Democratic Discourse (9.8011), and Direct Threats (7.5170) in the form of physical abuse (assassinations, arrests, injuries, etc.) for media workers. Ranked last among restrictions for freedom of speech is Lack of State Responsibility and its media agencies (6.1193) specifically concerning training and appropriate and continuous preparation of workers of various mass media as a guarantee of freedom of responsible and professional speech.

As shown in the previous paragraph, Indirect Threats is the most restrictive factor, and these include aspects related to State control over freedom of information sources, discrimination in obtaining, exchanging, distributing, and publishing information, journalist freedom to protect source anonymity, and the role of the State in preventing monopoly and centralization of media institutions, if exist.

Table 2
Attitudes towards Classification of Media Freedom Levels

Variables	High		Medium		Low	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Attitudes towards Media Freedom	45	25.6	87	49.4	44	25
Direct Threats	56	31.9	68	38.6	52	29.5
Indirect Threats	49	27.8	80	45.5	47	26.7
Censorship and Self-Censorship	47	26.7	77	43.8	52	29.5
State Responsibility	57	32.4	75	42.6	44	25
Judicial, Business and Administrative Pressures	47	26.7	80	45.5	49	27.8
Media as a Platform for Democratic Discourse	44	25	85	48.3	47	26.7

In Consistency with the previous results, Table 2 illustrates the study sample of journalists' attitudes towards the threats and pressures of freedom of speech Egypt is currently facing. According to the study participants, these threats tend to follow the political status. As explained in Transitology model, Egypt is in a politically gray area - not a democratic system such as what is known in western counties, nor is it a totalitarian system such as the Chinese model, for example.

This gray area appears clearly as media worker attitudes bend towards the gray area concerning all levels of Freedom of Speech in Egypt, on both its general and secondary levels. Although this area of media practice doesn't belong to the red area that represents extreme level of Speech oppression and threats, it could represent real threats via its secondary levels; Direct Threats pose a higher risk than other factors for Journalists. Although this category presents on the medium level, the relative difference between it and the low level is very small. This is the only category where the difference between medium and low levels of risk of freedom of speech is relatively low which alerts to the risk freedom of speech faces in Egypt.

The results refer also to a negative attitude expressed by media workers because of the lack of state care and responsibility to professionally qualify them. Professional qualifying of media workers is extremely important as the Egyptian media faces serious problems concerning quality and professionalism. Salah Elsarwy (Editor in Chief of Ebda'a (The creative) magazine asserted "There are many restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression, the first and foremost is being illegally detained, being tortured, ill-treated or arrested. When you feel that there is a dictatorial rule or a policy which is protected by the police who criminalize specific types of creativity and freedom & it is therefore the ugliest form of oppression, which could face any journalist". (Interview, 18-10-2012)

On the contrary of this point of view, Sameh Mahgoob (Editor & poet at Nile Thematic Channel) remarks *"The level of freedom rose only to include Obscenity, ignorance, and retardation. All what happened is exchanging of taboos, before the revolution we were afraid of breaking religion and sex taboos, but now we are afraid of breaking two taboos religion and politics. Now, they do not terrorize us by imprisonment, detention, or national security of the state, but they do terrorize our freedom of opinions by religious texts, they always wielding the Holy texts in our faces, wielding the authority of religion in our faces".(Interview,4-10-2012).*

As the pressure for media freedom grew in Egypt after the 25th revolution, so did the intensity of hard-line reaction from the authorities. This could be explained in the light of the authority's failure to make a commitment to genuine political & economic reform and the establishment of a democratic system, the

politics of post-Mubarak Egypt has had an erratic and unstable pattern. Therefore, many efforts have been made to maintain the government's dominant position over the media.

While all parties in Egypt should halt the attacks on journalists covering political events, there is an escalated campaign against independent and critical media since the revolution and up till now.

CPJ's survey identified significant changes in the nature of journalist fatalities. Many of them while covering the chaotic and violent confrontations between authorities and protesters during the uprisings that swept the Arab world.□

Abou Deif, - for example- was a reporter for the private weekly□El-Fagr, died from injuries he sustained in a December 5 protest during which he was struck in the head by a rubber bullet fired at close range. Abou Deif was covering protests near the presidential palace at the time of the attack and had filmed Muslim Brotherhood supporters beating up protesters and using live ammunition.

Another journalist, Ahmed Khair, a reporter for the private satellite broadcaster ONTV, was beaten by Muslim Brotherhood supporters while covering the protests near the presidential palace.

Wael Mikhael is another Egyptian cameraman for the Coptic television broadcaster Al-Tareeq, was shot□while filming violent clashes between Coptic Christian protesters and the military□in front of the headquarters of the Television and Radio Union, commonly referred to as Maspero

Ahmad Mohamed Mahmoud, a reporter for the newspaper□Al-Ta'awun, was shot on January 29 as antigovernment protests in Cairo turned violent. His wife, Inas Abdel-Alim, told Al-Jazeera that her husband had stepped on to his office balcony to record video of a confrontation between security forces and demonstrators on the street when security forces□spotted him. Mahmoud died after six days in a hospital in Cairo. His death was the first reported media fatality during the Egyptian uprising

that started on January 25.

Six journalists were detained for four hours. Waleed Salah, a reporter for□Vito□online newspaper said "The police verbally and physically assaulted them and kept them in vans for 45 minutes before taking them to the police station". He said police seized their phones, IDs, cameras, and laptops, and copied the information from the journalists' laptops. Salah posted his□testimony□on□Vito's website.

The journalists, including Sherine El-Kourdy, a reporter for□Akhbar El-Yom, and□Al-Watan's reporter Essam Raafat and photographer Ibrahim Ahmed, were badly beaten by police, according to news reports. A□video□published by□Vito□shows Ahmed being pushed to the ground and hit by soldiers.

Nasser Amin, the Chairman of the Arab Center for the Independence of Judiciary and attorney said: "Requisition and interrogation of any journalist for two hours, four hours, or five hours, is in itself an assault, intimidation we call it intimidation to freedom of opinion and expression, intimidation of journalists even if the investigations ended on nothing, this is in itself unacceptable". (Interview, 14-11-2012)

The law of access to public information includes 58 articles generally ban access to official documents before 15 years after the date of signature if marked "secret" and 30 years if marked "very secret". The draft law also bans access to information that affects negatively competitiveness or related to the internal affairs of corporate employees, local orders, discussions or preliminary proposals. (Press release of EOHR).

The draft law that aims at restriction of the freedom of expression and access to public information was sent by the Egyptian Ministry of Justice to Shura Council directly without having any societal discussions on it or even taking the feedback of the Syndicate of Journalists on it.

The draft law does not comply with the international standards of human rights re-

lated to freedom of expression and free access to public information. This law is contrary altogether with international covenants on human rights, which guarantee freedom of opinion and expression and the right to information, including Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights issued in 1966, which was ratified by the Egyptian government in 1981, as well as the principles of ARTICLE (19) ensuring the right of citizens to information.

Hafez Abu Seada, the head of EOHR (The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights), commented:*"the state employee that prevents citizens from finding information on topics of interest to the public should be taken to accountability. Journalists must not be punished when they discuss issues related to the public affairs and governmental performance".(Interview20-10-2012).*

"I'm abstaining from writing as a remonstration against the Shura Council* in assigning editors-in-chief to national newspapers in Egypt" said Omar Taher, Journalist, in his column in El-Tahrir newspaper at the beginning of August. Other Journalists, including Gamal Fahmy, Mohammed El Ghity, and Karam Gabr, also abstained. As a response of these assignments, some papers, especially independent ones, were issued with blank spaces in protest against the Muslim Brotherhood's attempt to control main press agencies. "I'm against the attack on Freedom of the Press," wrote Mohamed Amin in his Al Masry Al Youm Newspaper column.□Magdy El Galad, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Watan newspaper, also contributed a blank space, explaining, "This space is blank as a protest against (the Brotherhood) to control national press exactly as The Deposed was doing."

fter the January 25 revolution, many deficiencies still exist on the terrestrial broadcasting channels hindering the Egyptian system to reach independency. First, the ERTU lacks economic independency due to the heavy commercial interference, and

through the government subsidy; secondly, management deficiency because of the political interference that is practiced in all the managerial procedures as the system is quite centralized requiring the consensus of the ERTU head who is appointed by the President and has to follow the government agenda, in addition to the bureaucratic mechanistic structure; third, there is a lack of an independent legal framework that guarantees free access to information and help the media to act as a watchdog for the society; accordingly, a lot of the messages are politicized in different programs, such as news, talk shows, current affairs and even sports. Finally, there is no program/content framework that defines the remits (codes or content requirement that meets the democratic, social and cultural needs of the society) by which the broadcasters should abide by for content regulations (Geiger & Masri 2012).

The Egyptian government monopoly over mass media affects the existence of an independent and free system as it intervenes with the number of suppliers and the consolidation of financial resources. Although media monopolies lead to large economies of scale and scope, it has several drawbacks, such as bottlenecks and gateway monopolies (Geiger & Masri 2012).This state ownership leads to many deficiencies in the broadcast industry where the electronic media is centralized, commercial media has been introduced lately, standard of professionalism are not highly adapted or practiced; state ownership is considered a threat because the state plays the role of the owner, the regulator and the controller; main funding comes from the state's subsidy, and accordingly the capacity or the financial resources to sustain growth is often limited (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

Abla El Reweny, Journalist and former Editor-in-Chief of Akhbar Al Adab Newspaper, had an article banned from publishing. She reported that after joining the opinion journalists' August 9th, 2012 boycott that was called for by editors-in-chief

the previous day, she submitted her article entitled "Daylight" for publication, describing in it the reasons behind her abstention. She wished to include the term "Press Brotherhoodization" in reference to the new assignments the Shura council did on Wednesday, August 8th,"*I was surprised by the paper editors claim that the circumstances had changed and some issues were no longer allowed anymore, citing reasons for dismissing the editor-in-chief and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al Akhbar newspaper. When I revealed this surprise at this, they said the article in its current form would be "obstructed", and that it was better to delete the words "Muslim Brotherhood" and "Press Brotherhoodization. When i refused to delete the term, not only was my article banned from publishing, but i was also dismissed from my position that i had held for a year-and-a-half".(Interview 14-10-2012).*

On August 9th, 2012, Ibrahim Abdel Meguid was banned from publishing in Al Akhbar newspaper also. He had written his weekly piece for 18 months, applying the idea inspired by ex-editor-in-Chief Yasser Rizk, in which he dedicated a page for famous writers to freely express their opinions. In his interview with Al-Ahram newspaper, Abdel Meguid expressed his fears saying:*"The recent changes in polices of the newly appointed editors-in-chief may aim at prohibiting opinions that criticize political decisions of the Brotherhood". He added "The policy of the new editor-in-chief is to stop dealing with famous writers who are anti-Brotherhood or anti-military rule."(Interview 14-10-2012).*

"If Our Rulers Understand", an article written by writer, lawyer, and ex-Brotherhood leader Tharwat El Kherbawy on the subject of civil society in Islam, was also banned from publishing. Although Tharwat El Kherbawy's articles appeared every Thursday in Al Ahram Newspaper for quite some time, no reasons were cited as to why the piece was banned.

No sooner has Morsi been elected president of Egypt, Kahlid Salah, the Editor-in-

Chief of Al Youm Al Sab' newspaper and interviewer at ON TV was attacked, August 2012, while he was going into EMPC (Egyptian Media Production City). The attack - crashing Salah's car along with other vehicles - was carried out by some of the members and supporters of the Brotherhood who were demonstrating in front of the city asking for closure of Al Fareen channel. Salah pressed official charges against the president of "Freedom and Justice" Party in October 6th police station. The same group at the same place harassed presenter Youssef Al Hosseiny, threatening to attack him and attempting to prevent him from entering the city.

Later on, Legal pursuit of Islam Afify, the editor-in-chief of Al doctor newspaper happened, using a Hesba case number 255 for year 2012. The claim is that the newspaper defamed Morsi, calling for sect strife and anarchy in society.

The team of Nahark Saed (Have a nice day)show, broadcasting on Nile TV channel, was called for official investigation, Remon Micheal(The program director) said: *"after one of the guests criticized "Freedom and Justice" party, the political arm of the Brotherhood, and their election program Al Nahda (Renaissance) Project, we were surprised of being investigated and the program was stopped. The follow-up report was full of comments about the guest's criticisms to the Brotherhood which was understood to be the same as a criticism of the president!" (Interview 13-10-2012).The team was asked to provide written answers for these comments to explain what happened during this part of the episode. Although they supplied these written answers they were nevertheless called for official investigation.*

Another feature of media freedom status after Egypt's revolution was the increase of what is called: "Undefined" Defamation of Islam's cases.

In light of all the previous interviews, several things are abundantly clear. The first is the very high number of violations in the extremely short time that the study

covers. More so, the study reveals some aspects that happen repeatedly. The first aspect is legal pursuit of every criticism for the Brotherhood, Freedom and Justice Party, and to President Morsi. Ways of pursuit varied between directly pressing charges by the criticized people who are members of the group or the party, Hesba cases made by people claiming to be normal citizens but actually they are members of the group, or administrative investigations inside agencies claimed by employees who either belong to the Brotherhood or those who are with the ruling entity whatever it is and against its critics.

Most serious is the repeated accusations and legal proceedings against citizens for defamation of Islam, these claims began at streets where normal citizens gather to angrily protest against one or more persons that they think insulted Islam or the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him). This is accompanied by improper arresting procedures, unlawful detainment, and inadequate investigating in dealing with such cases. This aspect can only be explained by the existence of an atmosphere rampant of sect strife that makes people eager to misinterpret another's behavior. This general atmosphere can't be separated from the religious talk that dominated and became loud lately. Displaying "innocence of Muslims" movie that defames the prophet Mohammed was taken as an excuse to ignite feelings of the majority and direct it against any different person whether he belongs to a religious minority or sect, a person of opinion, creator, or even a supporter of a political view that doesn't depend on Islam.

The first aspect of legal pursuit represents a continuity of the previous system notorious for its oppressive treatment for those who voice dissenting opinions about the president and his ruling party, the second aspect presents a new pattern of varied practices that oppress freedom of opinion, expression, and creativity. Many times these unpredictable consequences create an atmosphere of terror, and are worse than a direct confrontation between the system and its political opponents.

The results refer also to a negative attitude asserted by media practitioners because of the lack of state care and responsibility for professionally qualifying them. Professional qualifying of media practitioners is extremely important as the Egyptian media face serious problems concerning quality and professionalism, a very obvious feature which appeared during media coverage of events in Egypt before and deeply after the revolution.

Tarik Radwan(Editor in Chief at El-Tahrir newspaper and Moheet news website) satirically commenting on Journalists professionalism in Egypt:*"Percentage of ignorance in journalists is up to 90%, none of them reads. I can count editors for you who you should follow and read. Look to others articles, if you printed their articles out and looked at their vocabulary you will find that they are the same for many long years which means they do not read. For whom can I read! Who is that to read his writings? If you look, for example, on Egypt writers, really it is a regrettable thing. Most of Egypt's writers write about the past." (Interview 19-12-2012).*

Although, the Egyptian (1971) Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, including press freedom, it leaves the responsibility of organizing and regulating this freedom to national legislation.

In spite of the seeming strength of the legal framework, according to a survey organized by the Egyptian Press Syndicate in 2004, 57% of Egyptian journalists consider the press legislation in Egypt to be inadequate. (Hussien, A., 1981).

The following table sheds another light on the nature of mass media agencies ownership patterns which impact on visions and perceptions that media practitioners have concerning mass media freedom levels. The results show significant differences between study subjects concerning their attitudes towards Egyptian mass media freedom levels according to the body they are working for.

The following results indicate that media status is almost the same as it was before Jan 25th revolution. Regardless of the identity and/or affiliations of Egypt rulers or even being came to the power after elections called-to-be free and fair in a lot of its aspects, this government handling with the case of media freedom seemed to be controversial. The minister of information himself, who belongs to The Brotherhood, provoked a lot of controversy and disapproval of Egyptian media practitioners, regardless of their affiliations, because of his statements and comments on them & on the events.

As a result, media practitioners working for state-owned mediums were to express the least level of media freedom perceptions after Jan 25th revolution (33.3%) followed by those working for Egyptian private mediums (25.8%), which means that the private sector enjoys a relative higher level of freedom.

Egyptian Partisans mediums, Arab mediums, and Foreign mediums in Arabic were almost absent because of their lack of representation in the study's sample comparing to state-owned mediums and Egyptian private mediums. The relative freedom that private medium workers feel could be explained by their audiences support as such mediums are more reliable than the state-owned ones.

Many of the literature studies revealed in their results that audiences usually watch Egyptian private channels because of their ability to reveal corruption, expose election forgery, and uncover governments' miss-performance. For example, the government – owned press played a negative role during the crisis between the government and the reformist's judges, by defaming the leaders of the movement. On the other hand, it was only through the independent and opposition press that the judges were able to deliver their message to the public. At the same time, parallel to the journalist trials, there was a huge media campaign, mainly in the government

owned outlets, supporting the imprisonment verdicts stating that "it is prohibited to comment on, or to criticize judicial verdicts" and that this affects the independence of the judiciary! This opened a broad debate in the Egyptian media about the judicial system in Egypt.

?In the absence of an effective role for political parties or any other political organizations, the independent free press is subjected to politically motivate judicial verdicts aiming at hindering its role in revealing corruption, and in supporting the calls for the independence of the judiciary.

?All in all, International press freedom rankings 2013 show that the news media in the Middle East region still operate in a heavily restricted environment. Egypt declined from Partly Free to Not Free due to officially tolerated campaigns to intimidate journalists, increased efforts to prosecute reporters and commentators for insulting the political leadership or defaming religion, and intensified polarization of the pro- and anti-Muslim Brotherhood press, which reduced the availability of balanced coverage.

?More state media employees were subjected to professional investigation under Morsi during the latter half of 2012 than in the entire 18 months of SCAF rule. Typically these investigations targeted those who departed from the script on air, gave airtime to highly vocal critics of the government, or covered the protests against the Muslim Brotherhood in sympathetic terms. Some state media professionals were reprimanded on charges of "indecency" for purportedly breaking social taboos.

it also to be "high". The differences between subjects of study are insignificant concerning their perception of media freedom according to their political affiliations. This result could be explained in the light of the fact that majority of the study sample belong to the category that doesn't have specific political or ideological studies. This result also confirms the flexible nature of the Egyptian media from one hand, and of its practitioners form the other hand; as attitudes of majority of practitioners go along with the ruling authority even if they have other beliefs so they can't express their ideas freely and neutrally regardless whether it will affect their jobs or not. The matter could be even worse when it turns to "fear" of expressing their real beliefs; as an extreme form of self-censorship.

Table 3

Variables	High		Medium		Low	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Perceptions of Freedom level						
Egyptian Private mediums	20	30.3	29	43.9	17	25.8
State –owned mediums	9	12.5	39	54.2	24	33.3
Egyptian Partisans mediums	0	0	1	100	0	0
Arab mediums	3	50	3	50	0	0
Foreign mediums in Arabic	13	41.9	15	48.4	3	9.7
Total	45	25.6	87	49.4	44	25
Pearson Chi-Square	Value 18.223a		Asymp. Sig .020			

Table 4

While the previous table shows the relation between affiliations of study sample of journalists to specific media institutions and their perception of media freedom levels in Egypt after Jan 25th revolution, the following table discusses the effect of Journalist political affiliation effect on his evaluation of media freedom after the revolution. The table columns depict the most prominent Egyptian political affiliations: Islamic, Socialist, Liberal, and unknown.

The results show that the category of journalists who doesn't have specific political or ideological affiliations are those who describe the level of media freedom to be "very low", and the same category describe

Conclusion

No doubt that there are overlapped and different factors piled up during the last half century work on forming a new map in Egypt that is featured by diversity, contrast, overlapping, and dissociation at the same time. Charges were raised against financial factors, economic openness, increasing population, cultural crisis, heritage neglect, following the western lifestyle, simulating "the other", in addition to immigration to oil countries, and finally, education spread. These factors are the main reasons of the culture of fear that the country suffers from, and increasing anxiety and tension levels of the Egyptian citizen.

These factors are highly related to media practices and its influential roles on its audience. Soueif says, for example: "Media is used to allow itself, under the cover of its entertaining nature and under the pressure of its economic aspect, laughing at social parameters.

So this intellectual contribution cares about revealing the reality of the general status of current Arabic media that is controlled by ill and failing political elite that isn't eligible, neither cognitively or politically, to practice the real media rule it's in charge of. Impacts and effects of the latest political and military events that happened after the Arab Spring revolutions have already proved that

Therefore, the media's contribution to the creation and sustaining of functioning democracies and their potential to serve as a catalyst for human development provide the justification for media development efforts. Free, independent and pluralistic media empower citizens with information that enables them to make informed choices and actively participate in democratic processes. They can help enhance transparency and accountability, by facilitating dialogue between decision-makers and the rest of society and by exposing abuse of power. They also play a crucial role in improving the public's understanding of current or emerging issues, events, priorities, and policy pronouncements and options. However, what conditions are necessary to take full advantage of the democratic potential of the media and enhance their contribution to development? What policies should be elaborated in this respect? And how should media development assistance is targeted?

When contemplating the current situation of media freedom in Egypt, we can notice that the Egyptian legislator in legislating freedom of speech, including legal legislation for press and public contact means, gives a higher priority to security and public interest of the ruling system rather than to its values of freedom, participation, and human rights. Both punitive

and non-punitive Egyptian laws regard written journalism, audio and visual broadcasting, and freedom of speech in general as dangerous activities that require a great many restrictions to protect what the legislator imagines to be of public interest, national security, ideological freedom, intellectual and social facts of the nation, etc.

It's also noticed that the legislator is very suspicious about information exchange principle and right of journalists and citizens in obtaining information. The main decision in this matter is almost always prohibition (No permission), and restriction (Not available). This matter made freedom of exchanging information continuously violated in all Arab countries in the forms of censorship, arresting, seizures of papers and magazines coming from abroad, and may reach imposing control on online journalism and banning from connecting the internet. Egypt laws are full of items specifying information that cannot be exchanged or published. One of these prominent laws is section 77, the 7th item of public workers law that prohibits any public worker from talking to press. Also, official documents publishing law number 121 for year 1975 prohibits publishing these documents without permission from the board of ministers. The legislator prohibits publishing any news, information, or documents about The General Intelligence Service (GIS) without written permission from its director. All these items and others mentioned in laws of the Arab countries make constitutional items and laws that state journalists' right is getting and exchanging information valueless.

As the list of cancelled programs and harassed of media figures, journalists, and publications grows, it becomes more and more apparent that democracy is not the end goal of this administration. Famed Egyptian journalist☐Hani Shukrallah summed up the situation with brutal honesty: "We've got an organization that is not interested in democratizing the press, or freeing the press. It's interested in taking it over" (Interview 14-11-2012).

Since Egypt's political transition is

backed by the military and regime loyalists, public authorities will have no interest in tackling crony capitalism and pervasive corruption. Moreover, in so far as Egypt's political situation remains unclear and unstable, this may discourage private and foreign investment. In addition, if the new parliament will be poorly representative, Egypt's future economic and social policies will continue to reflect the interests of a limited number of people, eventually the most conservative forces of the country. This said, in the absence of effective policies that ease the crisis and respond to Egypt's urgent socio-economic problems, social discontent is unlikely to be contained.

Therefore, the way forward is not clear, but several upcoming developments will likely force the issue, for example the election of a new parliament may create a new pressure point for those seeking reform, especially in the legal framework governing the national media. All kinds of actors in Egypt—judges, labor activists, religious scholars—will dust off their legislative plans, prepare to rush to the newly elected parliament and may demand for comprehensive new laws governing their sector of Egyptian society. It is very likely that journalists will be pushy members of that queue. And here they might be supplicants in two different ways: as professionals demanding autonomy and political insulation; and as state employees demanding that their positions and salaries be safeguarded & from practical suggestions, for example, Alam Eldin proposes different forms of rebuilding national state newspapers confirming that "There are many forms of media ownership, including private, civil and cooperative. I think that the latter is more appropriate for the Egyptian media because it allows employees to be partners. Moreover, it is important for the state to pump state funds to support national institutions in their economic crisis. We have to put mechanisms for the appointment of editors and their promotion, setting clear qual-

ifications for selecting editors in chief. If we could achieve such steps, we will make further progress quickly. (Alam Eldin, 2012).

Moreover, it is supposed that the constitutional assembly will have to confront the place of the national media outlets and find a replacement for the anachronistic current position, a jerry-rigged way for the regime to control the press in the aftermath of 1960s Arab socialism. The idea of a press council attached to the Shura Council, an arrangement designed in the Sadat years, makes little sense in the current political and media environment.

Laila Abdel Maguid has mentioned that there's no country in the world that allow Shura council to supervise its mass media. She also asked to reconsider laws and legislations concerning media and freedom of getting information, yet there's sort of media blackout for some issues.

"The number of state-owned channels should be reconsidered. Also, private sector media should be reorganized according to this new phase so as not to replace state domination by capital domination. There should be, as well, a thorough study for all statuses of the Egyptian media and for the legislative framework that controls it via community dialogue, which represents all society orientations".

Maguid asserted that "Variety and diversity have a great importance especially concerning mass media as they guarantee media freedom and neutrality. Yet, there're a lot of negative practices but that doesn't make us ask to impose restrictions. Private sector media plays a good role now and will have a clear and master role in the future but after correcting the course via an outline put by media experts". (Laila Abdelmajeed, 2012, Rosa El Youssef).

But beyond vague suggestions of a BBC model for the Egyptian media, few proposals for political restructuring have been advanced.

Egypt's media cannot operate as it has in the past; it has lost most of its social and

political base, but the path forward is extremely hazy at present: will some media houses go under, will the government continue to set the political tune of the media, can viable new business models be devised, or will a relapsed authoritarian spirit prevail?

References:

1 • Brødsgaard, K. (2011). Western Transitology and Chinese Reality, 8th EastAsiaNet Research Workshop, Asia Research Centre, CBS, Copenhagen Discussion Papers 2011 – 38

2 • Carothers, T. (2002). "The End of the Transition Paradigm." Journal of Democracy 13:1 , pp.5-21.

3 • Coman, M. (2000). "Developments in Journalism Theory About Media "Transition" in Central and Eastern Europe 1990-99".□Journalism Studies□1□(1): 35-56

4 • Egypt: Freedom of Access to Public Information, Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (Cairo) press release , 3 JANUARY 2013 http://allafrica.com/stories/201301040315.html, accessed :28-06-2013.

5 • Fandy, M. (2007). (Un) civil war of words: Media and politics in the Arab world. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger). ·

6 • Gamal Eid (2011). Annual Report on freedom of expression in Egypt and the Arab world 2011, The Arabic Network For Human Rights Information, http://www.anhri.net/en/.

7 • Geiger, K. & Masri, F. (2012).The red line: press freedom in post Mubarak Egypt, IMES Capstone paper series, The Institute for Middle East studies, the Elliott school of international AFFA, George Washington University.

8 • Hafez, K. (2008). Introduction. In K. Hafez (Ed.), Arab media: Power and weakness, (New York: Continuum) , pp. 1–14.

9 • Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press).

10 • Huang, Y. (1993). Media reform and democratization in post- Mao China; A television case study, PhD dissertation, University of Westminster, pp. 235-266.

11 • Hussein, A. (2008). Press freedom in Egypt, M.A thesis, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, The American University in Cairo, pp .6-7.

12 • Khalifa, O., (2012). 'Egyptian Media in Transition: Comparative Analysis for the Role of Egyptian Public Television in Democracy Tran-

sition, Available at: http://prezi.com/ ges8upafpswz/egyptian-media-in-transition-comparative-analysis-for-the-role-of-egyptian-public-television-in-democracy-transition/

13 • Khamis, S. (2011). The Transformative Egyptian Media Landscape: changes, Challenges and Comparative Perspectives, International Journal of Communication 5, pp.1159-1177.

14 • McCargo, D. (2008, September). Remodeling Asian media: Convergence versus divergence. A paper presented at the "Media Systems in Comparative Perspective Workshop," University of California at San Diego.

15 • Mendel, T. (2011). Political and Media transitions in Egypt: A Snapshot of Media Policy and Regulatory Environment, available at: □http://www.internews.org/research-publications/ political-and-media-transitions-egypt.

16 • Rugh, W. (2004). Arab mass media: Newspapers, radio, and television in Arab politics. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger).

17 • Salem, S. (2007). Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Access to Information in Egypt, Pakistan Journal of Library & Information Science , vol. 2007, n. 8, pp. 33-49. □http:// eprints.rclis.org/10439/

18 • Sparks, C. (2008). Media systems in transition: Poland, Russia, China, Journal of Communication, 1:1, pp. 7-24.

19 • Vartanova, E. (2008, September). "Russian media model: Agents of continuity and Change." A paper presented at the "Media Systems in Comparative Perspective Workshop," University of California at San Diego.

20 • Laila Abdel-Majeed(2012). State-owned Media didn't change... and Ministry of Information should be dissolved... Rosa El Youssef... Dec. 10th, 2012. (Arabic)

21 • Mehrez Ghaly (2009). Press Industry in the World (Cairo: Al Dar Al Masrian al Lubnaniah), P. 157- 158. (Arabic)

22 • Mohamed Saad Ibrahim (2008). Media legislations in the light of Information and communication technology. (Cairo: Scientific Book House). P. 2-3 (Arabic).

23 • Mahmoud Al-Eldin (2012). Privatization of national institutions is a failing project, 17 March, Al-Ahram , http://digital.ahram.org.eg/ articles.aspx?Serial=838698&cid=453.