

Media and Parliamentary Elections in Egypt Evaluation of Media Performance in the Parliamentary Elections

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This final report assesses the performance of the media throughout the 2011-2012 Egyptian parliamentary elections, describing how various media outlets covered the electoral process. This report forms part of the project to monitor media coverage of the parliamentary elections carried out by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) as part of the Independent Coalition for Election Observation¹ during the period from October 12, 2011 to January 15, 2012.

The current copy of the report is a translated, condensed version of the original Arabic report, which undertook an in-depth, detailed review of the performance of each media outlet under study, dedicating separate sections to each. In the English version, we decided to suffice with describing the main features of various media, both print (private and state-owned; daily and weekly) and audiovisual (private, state-owned, and religious). The English report also offers a general analysis summarizing the conclusions of the research, but, unlike the Arabic version, it does not review the reports compiled at each stage of the electoral process (candidacy declaration, campaigning, voting).

The methodology of the report divides the electoral process into three major phases. The first phase covers candidacy registration and the formation of polling stations. The second covers the campaigning period, the most important period for both the candidates and media. The final phase covers the polling itself and ballot counting, which is the most important stage for the electorate and the stage in which the impact of the media and campaigning is reflected in the ballot box.

According to the timeline established by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) in early October 2011, candidacy registration (the first phase of monitoring) began on October 12 and ended on October 24. The campaign period (the second phase of monitoring) lasted from October 24 to November 28. The first round of voting (the third phase of monitoring) began on November 28, followed by the second round on December 14, and the third round on January 3, 2012. The People's Assembly elections ended with the declaration of results on January 21, 2012.

During the monitoring period, the CIHRS held three press conferences and released five interim reports on candidacy registration, campaigning, and the three rounds of voting. The current report contains the findings of the entire monitoring period and an overall review of all media outlets during the elections process. Appended to the report are abstracts of each interim report describing the quantitative and qualitative findings of the monitoring of each phase of the elections process.

¹The coalition was established in 2010 by three organizations—CIHRS, the Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement (EACPE), and Nazra for Feminist Studies—to monitor the parliamentary and presidential elections. In 2011, Appropriate Communications Techniques for Development (ACT) joined the coalition. The EACPE carries out field monitoring of the elections, while the CIHRS focuses on media coverage of candidates' campaigns and ACT primarily deals with the status of women in the electoral process, whether as voters or candidates.

Introduction

Democracy is a set of procedures and institutions which enable individuals to participate in decision-making by way of competing in free elections. The United Nations has stated that for elections to be free and fair, the right to freedom of expression and opinion, the right to peaceful assembly, the right to form groups, and the right to freedom of movement, among other rights, must be respected.²

Since elections are a process of selecting one person or a limited number of individuals to represent a large group of people who possess diverse and divergent interests and aims, both legitimate and illegitimate means are often used to resolve the inevitable competition and conflict that results between different representatives of divergent interests. From this context emerged the idea of small groups which would work to protect the system of democratic values and principles by monitoring the different stages of the electoral process and the performance of various participating parties and by publishing, presenting, and disseminating their reports and assessments to the public, with the goal of preserving the wellbeing of society and positively influencing the electoral process. As such, elections monitoring is a complementary part of electoral democracy and constitutes a fundamental pillar of democratic principles, provided that it is carried out in accordance with the law and standardized rules and that it uses a systematic methodology, as it helps to hold parties participating in the electoral process responsible and accountable.

Civil society organizations play an important role in monitoring elections to ensure fairness and transparency and to strengthen respect for the will of the people. The UN has defined the role of civil society³ in this regard as guaranteeing that elections are held in an atmosphere of autonomy, impartiality, and objectivity, facilitating the resolution of election disputes, upholding the integrity of the electoral process, and exposing violence, intimidation, and fraud.

The CIHRS has distinguished experience in this field. In 2005, the CIHRS monitored the media coverage of the campaigns of parliamentary and presidential candidates as part of civil society's elections monitoring efforts. In 2010, the CIHRS, in cooperation with the Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement (EACPE) and Nazra for Feminist Studies, founded the Independent Coalition for Election Monitoring, which conducted media and field monitoring of the elections, and monitored women's representation in the elections and the nature of violations they experienced. The same year, the CIHRS prepared a guide on elections monitoring and coverage in conjunction with several journalists and media figures. The coalition also published several reports evaluating the electoral process that found evidence of electoral fraud and demanded the dissolution of the 2010 parliament.

² <<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/monitoring/chapter14.html>>

³ Ibid.

Media monitoring of Elections..why?

Media freedoms and the independence of media institutions constitute a cornerstone of any transition to democracy. Indeed, it can be argued that freedom of the media must be a top priority for political reform, as it is just as important as judicial independence and the liberation of civil society and political parties. A free media guarantees the presence of diverse political persuasions in society and creates a healthy climate for political competition. The media performs fundamental tasks within contemporary democracies by providing basic information and covering topics of public concern. It is also pivotal in shaping public opinion and facilitates the dissemination of new ideas and a political culture among individuals in the society. The media is a tool of power and influence and, as such, plays a leading role in the political process and in shaping a society's prevailing culture. It also plays the extremely significant role of influencing, and at times manipulating, the views and modes of thought of the masses.

If this is the role of the media under ordinary conditions, it becomes even more significant in exceptional periods, such as during elections. However, elections represent a challenge for the media, putting their impartiality and objectivity to the test. During these periods, information, stories, and opinions are endless, and sources of information multiply. At the same time, the public demand for information increases, even as the public does not possess the capacity to evaluate media content. Thus, elections are a test of the professionalism of media personnel, as well as of their ethical obligations toward the various segments of society, and it is therefore crucial to assess the media's performance during these periods.

In this framework, monitoring media coverage of elections is one guarantee for democratic, fair elections. The popular will is the basis of authority for any democratic government, and this will is expressed at the ballot box and is based on a free, informed choice in fair elections. No democracy can flourish unless citizens possess sufficient information to make such a free, informed choice, which is why it is essential for the media to provide accurate, appropriate information to the people. Monitoring therefore aims to guarantee that political competitors will have fair opportunities to convey their messages to the people through the media.

Media monitoring is crucial in order for the public to have confidence in the media. Whether the findings of monitors reassure suspicious audiences of media's reliability or alert the public to the need to question the information it receives, media monitoring makes a valuable contribution to assessing media performance in a professional, systematic, and impartial way, which is clearly in the public interest.

Fundamentally, media monitoring notes problems that may obstruct the flow of information in an impartial, professional manner. These problems include direct censorship, intentional government manipulation of the media, manipulation by political forces, the interference of special interests, media biases, self-censorship out of fear of threats, accusations or slander, and the corruption of media personnel. Monitoring analysis also focuses on the ability of the media to criticize activities of the government and political parties or lack thereof. In addition, monitoring assesses the media's ability to act independently and examines the way the media educates voters in an attempt to determine its

political neutrality and its capacity to meet the people's need for election-related information. Monitoring the media during election periods offers an independent, impartial observation of media conduct. The analysis includes the activities of all relevant parties to ensure the right of the media to gather information and transmit it to voters.

When the media enjoys certain internationally recognized rights to collect and disseminate information, it incurs responsibilities to the citizenry regarding the information it presents. These responsibilities are compounded during elections. Media messaging is extremely complex: while there can be no good journalism that does not contain the evaluations and perspectives of the journalist, media coverage of elections should be overall balanced and impartial. As this presents a difficulty for the monitor's role in assessing the media's performance, the monitor must ascertain whether standards for media coverage are being followed. The objectives of media monitoring during elections are:

- To examine the degree to which all candidates are allowed their right to fair media access;
- To guarantee objective, fair coverage of party and candidate activities;
- To verify that information about the electoral process and its stages and events is provided to all voters;
- To ensure respect for local and international laws and conventions by all parties to the electoral process;
- To provide accurate, balanced reports which are based on facts and numbers, specify sources of information, and distinguish between facts and rumors;
- To comply with scientific standards when conducting opinion polls;
- To ensure that candidates are presented to voters fairly and impartially in order to allow the electorate to make an informed decision on Election Day;
- To unify standards for the treatment of all candidates, especially in the state-owned media;
- To refrain from confusing opinion and news and to distinguish between the right to voice an opinion and accurate, source-attributed news; and
- To distinguish between media and advertising and to strive to achieve fairness between candidates in paid advertisements.

In this context, the report specified a set of questions to assess media content:

- Did the media succeed in its role as an impartial source of information about candidates and voters, thus achieving a balance between them?
- Did candidates enjoy their right to fair media access?
- Were the candidates presented to voters fairly, impartially, and objectively such that voters are enabled to make an informed choice on Election Day?
- Did the power of capital (ownership) interfere with the content of media messages, both in the private and state-owned media?
- Did the authorities and the press respect local and international laws and conventions for standards of media coverage of elections?
- Was there a unified standard for all candidates regarding paid ads?

Research Methodology

In order to answer these questions, the study adopted a scientific methodology to guarantee the integrity of the assessment of election coverage in accordance with international standards, using two types of analysis: quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative analysis involves translating content into numbers, percentages, figures, statistics, and averages, using these calculations to identify areas of focus and interest, and generating graphs and tables to explain phenomena and significant findings. In the quantitative analysis, the researcher relies on quantitative methods, primarily the allocation of media time and space. Distinguishing features of quantitative analysis include the following:

- Findings are difficult to challenge as they are based on numerical calculations and data. They are strong enough to be used as arguments even on the judicial and legal levels.
- Quantitative findings can be developed and reviewed, particularly if properly documented. New conclusions can always be reached and new points of reference deduced, leading to new findings and studies. Quantitative studies rely on documented, disaggregated, and indexed samples and thus permit review and leave little room for manipulation.

Qualitative analysis attempts to examine the indirect content of media coverage, taking both editorial and production elements into consideration. Distinguishing features of qualitative analysis include the following:

- Qualitative analysis complements and explains the findings of quantitative analysis and describes aspects of coverage that cannot be captured in numbers, such as accuracy, language, factuality, relevance, omission, misleading titles, neutrality of phrases and terms, the spontaneous vs. the staged, selection, ethical issues, and polling standards, etc.
- Addresses aspects perhaps left unexamined by quantitative analysis, such as opinion polls, voter education, women's issues, the campaign moratorium, sectarianism and discrimination, interaction with state agencies, images and slogans, professionalism of media conduct, and the media agenda, etc.
- Gives a general understanding of the media climate, ownership, and media regulations and restrictions. Thus, observation combined with analysis gives a more holistic evaluation of the integrity of media performance in election coverage and offers standards that can be used in coverage of future elections.

The analysis was conducted using two types of survey forms. The quantitative survey focused largely on media space given to the parties and candidates in various governorates (measured by square centimeters for print media and seconds for television channels). Using these calculations, the survey attempted to ascertain the neutrality of a given media outlet toward all political orientations based on whether they all enjoyed roughly equal coverage. The quantitative survey distinguishes direct coverage from indirect coverage. Direct coverage is defined as the space devoted to the candidate or party representative to discuss himself or his party without the editor or television announcer intervening to reformulate the content. In other words, the representative him/herself appears in the media outlet and bears sole responsibility for his/her words. Such coverage is largely comprised of quotes, interviews, articles, and television call-ins, etc. In contrast, indirect coverage includes coverage of a

candidate or party by another entity, which may or may not be a candidate, including newspaper sources, television guests, editors, or announcers, or any person who is not the direct subject of the coverage.

The qualitative survey focused on the professionalism of a given media outlet's performance toward all actors in the electoral process, whether primary actors (political parties, candidates, political currents, voters) or secondary actors (SCAF, the Interior Ministry, the government, the Higher Elections Commission, etc.), evaluated in accordance with several indicators for assessing editorial and production irregularities for each type of media. This is done through a set of questions on editorial and production factors that expose media biases in wording, titles, quotes, diversity of sources or guests, television or press production, photos and captions, equal coverage, the mixing of opinion and news, camera angles, the biases of editors or announcers, the types of questions posed, etc.

The qualitative survey also analyzes the press and television channels' presentation of the image of women in the electoral process as well as of the sectarian dimension of elections, examining the impartiality of the press and television and their interest in various religious groups as related to the electoral process. In addition, it measures media interest in voter education and awareness-raising and the ways through which the media addresses the electorate in order to evaluate the seriousness with which the media undertakes its social responsibilities in this regard.

The observation team included 16 observers—non-partisan media researchers interested in elections—and three data enterers. The observers received intensive training for five days to become familiar with the legislative and political context of the elections, as well as the standards used to assess media professionalism, the tone of coverage (positive, negative, impartial), and the nature of editorial and production irregularities they might observe in elections coverage.

The observers and researchers prepared an abbreviated study of the most widespread and influential media outlets in order to define the sample, being mindful of the standards of diversity and balance between all types of media in terms of their publishing cycles, affiliations, and sources of funding. This resulted in the selection of six daily publications (*al-Ahram*, *Rosa El-Youssef*, *al-Gomhouriya*, *al-Masry al-Youm*, *Shorouknews*, and *al-Tahrir*) and four weekly publications (*Akhbar El-Youm*, *Rosa El-Youssef* magazine, *al-Fagr*, and *Sout al-Omma*). In the field of audiovisual media, researchers chose seven channels (ONTV, al-Haya, CBC, Channel 1, the Egyptian Satellite Channel-ESC, Nile News, and Dream 2) during prime time (6 pm to 2 am).

The increasing sectarian angle of media coverage prompted the idea of monitoring the performance of religious channels, although the rules of media monitoring stipulate that media with known biases should not be observed. Moreover, the subject of the study is political, rather than religious, monitoring. Nevertheless, preliminary monitoring revealed that some religious channels showed an interest in elections that exceeded their public counterparts and also that the coverage lacked professionalism; indeed, at times it went beyond propagating for a particular ideology to accuse those who differed from them of blasphemy. It was decided to monitor three religious channels (al-Nas, al-Rahma, and al-Karma) for two days for each channel and to devote a special section in the report to comment on their electoral content.

In 2009, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Organization of American States Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special Rapporteur on Freedom

of Expression and Access to Information issued a joint statement on media and elections,⁴ noting the primary role of the media in shaping electoral issues and in raising voter awareness. The statement defines a set of measures and rules to combat discrimination in the allocation of political ads, to give all organizational authority to independent bodies, and to release the media of responsibility for publishing any illegal statements made directly by parties or candidates.

The monitoring study defined the standards for evaluation and indicators for media irregularities in accordance with these principles as well as the principles upheld by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression in his 1999 annual report⁵ and the principles established by the European Council⁶ and media monitoring organizations (Osservatorio di Pavia - Italy, Organization for Media Monitoring - Slovakia, and International Media Support - Denmark). These principles are based on the idea that the term “fair elections” indicates not only the integrity of the ballot box but also includes the integrity of the prevailing climate surrounding the elections process, including media coverage. These standards include the following:

- Good media coverage is balanced and impartial overall, although not necessarily in every particular segment. It presents positive and negative assessments simultaneously depending on the various aspects of the phenomenon reported. Balance, impartiality, and objectivity are not embodied in every discrete element, but rather on the level of media content as a whole and within a given newspaper or channel as a whole. Thus, the qualitative survey assesses media outlets generally in terms of the diversity of their programming and news throughout the day or issue. The findings are then compared to determine the orientation of the outlet over the span of a week and then a month. The assessment in the quantitative survey records the monitor’s discrete evaluations, as the audience may not see the entire issue or follow the same channel continuously. Thus, s/he may record her/his impressions of different segments to be evaluated.
- Monitoring is based on the assumption that state-owned media are fully bound to comply with standards of accuracy, fairness, impartiality, and balance in their coverage of electoral campaigns and news about candidates. State-owned media, like other public resources, are the property of the citizenry, which requires that they be used for the public interest and to give a voice all political orientations. They should not be deployed in the political interest of a person or party or become a means by which the government excludes certain parties or political groups.
- Private media also have a responsibility to comply with professional standards and duties during election coverage. Monitoring aims to expose any government intervention in restricting freedom of opinion or pressuring media personnel, while also avoiding media control or monopolization by a narrow sector in order to ensure diversity in ideas and voices presented.
- Voters should be provided with the greatest amount of information possible about various political parties, candidates, campaign issues, and all procedures surrounding the actual vote before the campaigning period begins. Both government-owned and private media should raise voter awareness and provide impartial information about voting procedures, such as when and where to vote, how to register to vote, and how to ensure the confidentiality of the vote.

4 <<http://www.article19.org/data/files/pdfs/press/joint-statement-on-the-media-and-elections.pdf>>.

5 <<http://www.article19.org/pdfs/igo-documents/three-mandates-dec-1999.pdf>>.

6 <<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=419411&Site=CM>>.

- The media should be encouraged to broadcast elections-related programs and publish elections-related material, and there should be no penalties levied on the media for publishing reports that include criticism of the government or ruler. The media should not be subject to prosecution, while guaranteeing the right of response and correction.
- Direct airtime for candidates should be distributed fairly and without bias, and sufficient time should be given to all parties and candidates to present their platforms in order to enable voters to become familiar with current issues, parties' stances on them, and the ability of candidates to address them.
- There must be parity in determining advertisement prices, and no candidate should be preferred over another in the timing of broadcasting advertisements. Ad content should be distinguished from other media content, a gender balance should be achieved in the media coverage of candidates, and no discrimination should take place against candidates on the basis of religion, gender, race, or ethnicity.

Executive Summary

On October 12, 2011, the first phase of legislative elections, candidacy registration, began. The elections were unique not only because they were the first to take place after the revolution and the fall of the Mubarak regime and the National Democratic Party (NDP), but also because they took place in a climate of instability. The administration of the electoral process experienced significant confusion from the beginning, as is visible through the decrees issued by the SCAF, the cabinet, and other relevant bodies. The stance of the Higher Elections Commission (HEC) only stoked the crisis, as it did not release the voter rolls at the appointed time nor did it form an appeals committee for voters. The HEC was also unable to control polling stations during the submission of candidacy papers or the vote itself. All three rounds of the elections showed that the commission possessed insufficient authority to hold accountable those who violated election regulations and decrees.

This chaotic, confused political and legislative environment also affected the media, which already faced legislative restrictions, threats of closure and confiscation, the interference of capital interests, and the controls imposed by their funding. This is in addition to the new challenges posed by the specific nature of these elections, including the complexity and novelty of the electoral system, the new and unpredictable nature of electoral alliances, the plethora of parties and candidates and close similarities between many party names, the length and repetitiveness of the electoral process, and the geographic division of elections, along with events concurrent with the elections that drew media attention away from the electoral process itself.

The media succeeded in increasing political participation through awareness-raising and education campaigns, focusing on voters, and explaining the vote and appeals processes. However, the media failed in its role as a source of objective information about parties and candidates, which is critical to shaping public conduct on voting day. The media fell prey to sensationalism, focusing on coverage of provocative statements more than explaining party platforms or allowing candidates to explain their political visions on various issues. The media did not fulfill its duty to undertake a close review of electoral programs and party perspectives on major issues like the economy, foreign policy, subsidies, etc. Instead, it directed a large portion of its coverage to talk about topics such as bikinis, alcohol, and women's guardianship.

The government media managed to achieve some degree of balance, which had been lacking for years. Perhaps this was due to the absence of any ruling party backed by the state-owned media competing in the elections. The state-owned media was biased in favor of the SCAF, the government, and the Interior Ministry, but not necessarily in favor of any particular political party. In contrast, the funding sources of the private media led to a certain level of partisan bias. Nevertheless, government media consistently attacked anyone who challenged the objectives of the military establishment, whether a party or a political current.

The failures of the media during the elections period can be divided into two types. The first is lapses of professionalism as assessed according to general standards for media coverage, such as mixing opinion with news, lack of accuracy in conveying information, the use of anonymous sourcing, misleading titles, and photos irrelevant to the content, the mixing

of news with advertising, misnaming and unfair generalizations, and the misleading use of decontextualized quotes.

The second type of failure consists of lapses of professionalism linked specifically with the media coverage of the elections. These include:

- The failure of correspondents, journalists, and program editors to understand the most significant features of the legal and political climate surrounding the elections. Journalists confused candidates running for individual seats with independent candidates; they similarly confused party candidates running for individual seats with party candidates on party lists. Correspondents were also unfamiliar with rules for election coverage, which dictate that voters not be asked about the party they will vote for and that correspondents not conduct polls at the doors of polling stations or during the vote. This lack of awareness was also clear in the selection of guests on television programs and the nature of the questions asked.

- The power of capital and funding sources to influence the orientation of media outlets to support or criticize certain political groups in the service of business interests. This was particularly clear in some media outlets such as al-Haya, ONTV, the religious channels, and *al-Masry al-Youm*. Both the quantitative and qualitative indicators revealed the influence of capital on the preferences of these outlets and the type of opponents they attacked according to their capital interests.

- The violation or circumvention of the campaign moratorium. After most election monitoring reports of the first round of elections focused on the violation of the silence by all parties—including the media—most parties to the process confirmed they would comply with it in the second and third rounds. Even though all media outlets referred to their commitment to comply with the period of electoral silence, they all violated it by every possible means (type of guests, nature of topics, ads, questions, on-location reports, etc.).

- The use of women as a tool to support or attack particular political currents, thus undermining their actual role in the electoral process. Women were clearly neglected, as confirmed by the quantitative and qualitative reports over the three-month period under review, although some media outlets took note of this shortcoming in the middle of the process and began to show more interest in covering female candidates and their rallies or interviewing prominent women. Nevertheless, media coverage of women was weak overall. Islamists frequently referred to women in the media, including through statements about women and fatwas on the permissibility of women running for office or voting. Gradually, campaigns for Islamist female candidates began to receive media attention.

- The sectarian dimension of elections was emphasized with no real justification. Newspapers and television channels found the rise of Islamists coupled with the presence of Christian leaders in some parties to be a sensational angle from which to cover the elections. They stressed the idea of a confrontation between the Church and the Islamists, highlighting Coptic fear at the rise of the Islamists and reporting the Church's support for the Egyptian Bloc because it advocated a civil state that would protect Copts' rights - a tendency that was manifested even before the vote took place.

- Attempts to influence public opinion through studies and public opinion polls, polling predictions, premature announcements of results, and voicing expectations that could impact the course of the vote. This was repeated in election coverage in reports titled, "Who will you vote for?" which represented both a professional and legal violation, as these reports included results, indications, and surveys that certainly influenced public opinion, particularly in the run-up to the vote and after the first day of voting. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that these elections took place over three stages, meaning that such practices further

influenced voters in other governorates in later rounds. It should also be noted that these polling studies did not meet even a minimum academic standard. It was undoubtedly the most important tool used by the media to promote certain parties or spread anxiety among the ranks of competitors.

- A lack of fair distribution of media coverage among competing political parties, reflecting the inability of the media to maintain an unbiased position when covering all political parties. Media coverage portrayed the race as a competition between members of the dissolved National Democratic Party (NDP) and the various Islamist trends, while mostly ignoring liberal or leftist parties. The latter were engaged either to comment on the statements of Islamists or to clarify their stance on the remnants of the NDP and the internal purges they were engaging in.

- The unprofessional media coverage of the religious channels, which flouted all standards for election coverage. This was particularly seen in the Islamic channels, which ceaselessly supported Islamist parties. For example, a fatwa issued by one program presenter stated, “Anyone who votes for the Nour Party will earn a 100-year good deed, and he who does not will earn a 100-year misdeed.” The channels disparaged and defamed all other parties, even to the point of declaring them unbelievers and calling for a boycott of them. It was stated that “the secularists are an alliance hostile to Islam, and an alliance with Islamists is a religious duty” and that “if you give your vote to a person who will not apply God’s law, it is tantamount to false witness. You must vote for the honest Muslim and not for someone who is hostile to God’s religion or who will not apply Islamic Law. If the candidates in your district do not include someone who will apply God’s law, go and invalidate your ballot.”

Recommendations

- All measures taken by the authorities to impede or prevent the media from investigating and transmitting information about the electoral process, the vote, and the ballot count should be abandoned.
- The authorities must free the state-owned media from state control by creating an independent agency to administer state-owned media institutions in order to make them genuinely expressive of the people, to whom they ultimately belong.
- Legislation must be developed to regulate media performance during general elections to ensure that coverage will be conducive to a competitive political environment and comply with standards of impartiality and equal opportunity, and the compulsory nature of this legislation should be strengthened.
- The press code of ethics should be developed to include points on the professional principles to be followed during election coverage in a pluralistic political system.
- Laws regulating media in Egypt should be closely reviewed and, in conjunction with the Journalists Syndicate, media personnel, and legal experts, purged of articles that restrict free expression. Prison sentences for publication crimes, whether based on media laws or other laws, must end. Legal and political means must be provided to protect journalists from attacks while performing their work.
- A campaign should be launched bringing together the relevant organizations and media institutions in order to draft a law regarding access to information.
- The role of the Journalists Syndicate and the Media Workers Syndicate should be activated and the syndicate bylaws amended to ensure that the syndicates do their part to defend the rights and freedom of media personnel and journalists and hold accountable those who violate professional regulations.

In particular, we emphasize the need for:

- The guaranteed right of response for any representative of a political party during electoral campaigns, carried out in a timely and fair manner.
- A clear division between programs devoted to elections and other programs and a guarantee that non-political programs—such as on the arts, the economy, or entertainment—do not address the electoral process in any way that contains negative or positive coverage of any political current or party to the electoral process.
- Respect from the print and audiovisual media for its obligation to serve the public rather than political forces; thus, it must maintain administrative and financial independence from political actors.
- Informing the public of advertising, whether published or broadcast, which has been bought. Advertising must be regulated to achieve fairness among candidates and to guarantee financial transparency by disclosing the sources of funding, campaign spending caps, and the cost of ad content to ensure fairness among competitors.

- A commitment to professionalism in transmitting news and information and a lack of bias based on the predilections of the authorities or in fear of them; a distinction between political, media, and advertising work.
- Training sessions to improve the professional performance of media workers and training programs specifically on coverage of electoral campaigns in order to achieve objectivity, fairness, and professionalism.

Part One

The legislative and political environment and
its impact on media coverage of elections

I. Political context of the electoral process and the media

The parliamentary elections took place against a backdrop of confusion and violence accompanied by increased, unprecedented human rights violations and ongoing defamation campaigns against civil society groups. In the run-up to the elections, more than 12,000 civilians, including a number of political activists, were referred to unfair military trials, and excessive force was used to disperse peaceful demonstrations and sit-ins. There was a notable absence of security, as the security forces devoted themselves solely to confronting demonstrations on Mohammed Mahmoud Street with the utmost violence and force, killing more than 40 demonstrators and wounding hundreds.

These events, concurrent with the electoral process, indicated that the elections would take place in a biased, repressive political climate. Indeed, they prompted some candidates to suspend their campaigns, as political forces quarreled amongst themselves and the media was torn between news of the parliament and protests in the square. The events not only upset the course of the elections, but they also impacted the views of voters, the media, leaders, and political parties. Thus, we first need to understand the political and media environment in which elections occurred before analyzing media coverage of elections.

On October 9, 2011, only days before the candidacy registration began on October 12, the Maspero massacre took place, leading to the deaths of 27 demonstrators, most of them Copts and some of whom were crushed under army vehicles. Popular outrage at the incident threatened to postpone the elections. The massacre exposed the reality of the freedom of the private media and the true state of the professionalism and impartiality of state-owned media. In the state-owned media, Egyptian television played an incendiary role, inciting sectarian tensions over the events in front of the radio and television building (Maspero) and broadcasting the situation in a way that was clearly biased toward the armed forces. In the private media, the armed forces raided the offices of the January 25 and al-Hurra channels while they were broadcasting live coverage of the events. The ONTV program “The Final Word” was pressured not to air a segment commenting on a previous program on Dream 2 that had hosted members of the SCAF to discuss the Maspero massacre.

Despite popular unease over holding the poll at this confusing political context, candidacy registration began on October 12 and lasted until October 24, with the campaign period opening in early November. In the midst of campaigning, a sit-in was dispersed following a large demonstration, dubbed the Friday of Victory, which had been called for by Islamist forces on November 19. According to a *New York Times* report, the Friday demonstrations ended the truce between the ruling leadership and Islamists in Egypt shortly before the parliamentary elections, at which point the SCAF attempted to exempt itself from any civilian control.

The Mohammed Mahmoud events ensued following the break-up of the sit-in, further polarizing and complicating the situation. While one camp supported the need for prompt parliamentary elections, the other considered that the square served as its ballot box, by which it had chosen that power should be transferred from the military council before elections. The media swung between supporting and opposing the immediate holding of elections and presented direct and indirect propaganda, both positive and negative, while voters waited to learn the fate of the elections.

In reviewing media coverage of these events, we find that the media indirectly furthered the divisiveness of the situation. Its funding and political biases were revealed in the nature of opinions presented, the guests invited, and the sources used to comment on the events.

The decision of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) not to participate in the occupation of Tahrir Square by national forces offered a new opportunity for propaganda, whether positive or negative, for media outlets depending on their objectives. While some considered the MB position to be motivated by its commitment to a swift democratic transition, others saw it as irrefutable proof of the group's alliance with the SCAF and as a selfish attempt to achieve political gains at the expense of the national interest.

Amid these disputes and divisions, and although the media had largely suspended coverage of the elections and candidates in favor of covering the clashes between security forces and protestors, the events did give several political currents an opportunity to win over a new base of supporters and to undermine competing forces. Similarly, media coverage of events reflected their stances on the competing electoral parties. Although the media ostensibly suspended campaign coverage, media outlets invited political parties and their representatives to comment on the events and allowed them to speak about their parties' stance toward the SCAF, the Tahrir revolutionaries, the demonstrators in Abbasiya, the Interior Ministry, and the government, which naturally led to discussion of the elections. The stances of these parties had a significant effect on voter turnout, whether due to their positive or negative reactions. Our analysis reveals that media outlets selected their guests and sources in accordance with their preferences in the elections, intentionally excluding those that contested their views and without upholding minimum professional standards that guarantee the right of response and the expression of alternative views.

For example, some satellite channels known for their liberal orientation and their persistent attacks on Islamist forces repeatedly aired a paid ad noting that the Egyptian Bloc had suspended its campaigning out of respect for the martyrs of Tahrir and would not enter parliament while protestors were dying in the street. The channel would follow this directly with a paid campaign ad by the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP).

The state-owned media used the first round of voting as a means to build bridges between voters and the military, focusing on the success of the army in securing the vote, praising the security imposed by the Interior Ministry, and lauding the first round as a success for the government. However, the sense of reconciliation did not last long. No sooner had the second round of voting ended on December 15 than the events at the Cabinet building erupted in protest at the selection of Kamal al-Ganzouri as prime minister. The political landscape was again tainted by blood, and political forces were again divided into two camps between supporters and opponents. Disputes over the continuation of elections began anew, whereupon successful candidates from the first rounds intervened to exacerbate the divisions. The media described this division as "the legitimacy of the square vs. the legitimacy of the parliament."

With the approach of the third round of voting, conflict again arose, this time between the SCAF and civil society organizations, which had highlighted military abuses in the square both before and during elections, refusing to laud the military's security abilities or its wisdom in suppressing demonstrations and protests in Mohammed Mahmoud and at the Cabinet. The raid on 17 civil society groups in late December was a new attempt by the military to win popular trust and support on the pretext of preserving national sovereignty and protecting the country from American interference after the bloody events throughout the elections had stripped the military of many of its supporters. It is important to note that some of the organizations raided had been given approval by the authorities to monitor the elections, in an implicit recognition of their presence and role.

II. Legislative framework of the parliamentary elections

The confused political situation was also reflected in the legislation regulating the electoral process. The opacity and tardiness of the issuance of regulations was a defining feature of these elections, representing a continuation of the lack of transparency that has characterized the entire transition process. The SCAF leaked laws defining the electoral system to the press and media to gauge the pulse of the street; if it sparked a wave of opposition, the SCAF would disavow it, claiming that it had not been issued by the SCAF.

This is indeed what ended up happening. The press reported that the new system would be a mixed system combining individual seats and party lists, with two-thirds reserved for the former and one-third for the latter. This was later amended—also via media leaks—to make the share half and half, until a constitutional declaration was issued on September 25, 2011, setting a mixed system of individual seats and seats allocated to closed party lists, with one-third of seats reserved for the former and two-thirds for the latter.

Not only were election regulations opaque, but legislation was issued at an extremely late date. It is only logical that the electoral system be made known sufficiently ahead of elections so as to be clearly understood by all. Electoral districts also be clear, especially to candidates, to enable them to know their strengths and weaknesses in the districts in which they will compete, to determine their electoral alliances, and to identify the number of proxies and agents they will need in the elections. However, this was not the case. The final law regulating the process, Decree 132 amending some provisions of Law 73/1956 on the exercise of political rights, was issued on November 23, 2011, adding a new election regulation by order of the president of the republic to allow voting to occur over two days. The law was issued less than one week before the first round of voting, slated for November 28, 2011, more than six weeks after candidacy registration closed.

This is not the only case of untimely legislation. Only four days before the candidacy registration period began, on October 8, 2011, the SCAF issued Law 123/2011 abolishing Article 5 of Law 120/2011, which prohibited party candidates for running for individual seats. In addition, the law apportioning electoral districts was issued only one month before the first round of voting, just four days before the candidacy registration period began. Indeed, the statute that would define the electoral system and the proportion of list and individual seats was only issued on September 25, 2011, when it was released as a constitutional declaration published in the Official Gazette, no. 38.

Review of legislation regulating elections

The constitutional declaration of March 30, 2011, upheld citizens' rights to vote and run for office in Article 39, which states, "The law shall define the conditions to be met by members of the People's Assembly and Shura Council and elucidate the provisions for elections and referendums. A high judicial commission shall fully oversee elections and referendums, starting with voter registration through the announcement of results, as defined by law. Voting and ballot counting shall be conducted under the supervision of members of judicial bodies, nominated by their higher councils. Their selection shall be published by a decree of the high commission [HEC]." Article 40 of the declaration gives the Court of Cassation the authority to adjudicate the validity of membership in the People's Assembly and Shura Council.

Article 38 of this constitutional declaration was amended to define the form of the electoral system and assign one-third of parliamentary seats to the individual candidate system and two-thirds to closed lists. Article 39 (*bis*) was added giving Egyptians residing abroad the right to vote in elections and referendums for the first time, pursuant to a ruling from the

Administrative Court. Following this amendment, Law 130/2011 was issued,⁷ containing provisions regulating the vote of Egyptians abroad. Article 1 of the law affirms that the state upholds the right of Egyptians residing abroad to exercise their right to vote in general elections and referendums. Article 2 regulates the practice, stating, “Egyptians residing abroad who are registered to vote and who wish to exercise their right to vote and to voice an opinion shall express their wish in an application presented to the consulate of the Arab Republic of Egypt in the country in which they reside...In every consulate a registry shall be established to register these applications, including via electronic registration. The Presidential Elections Commission or the Higher Elections Commission shall issue a decree with registration dates, procedures, the manner in which voter rolls shall be prepared and presented, and the date and place of presentation. Voters named in this article shall have the right to vote and voice an opinion in allocated polling stations outside the Arab Republic of Egypt.”

Article 41 of the constitutional declaration sets a date for procedures for elections for the People’s Assembly and Shura Council within six months of the date the declaration enters into force. Amendments to Law 38/1972 on the People’s Assembly, Law 120/1980 on the Shura Council and Law 73/1956 regulating the exercise of political rights were made with Law 108/2011,⁸ 109/2011,⁹ and 110/2011¹⁰, respectively.

This legislation permits the administrative authorities, represented by the Interior Ministry, to intervene in the electoral process. For example, no clear standards are established for the apportionment of electoral districts, either in terms of population blocs or geographic distribution. Instead, the Interior Ministry has full discretion in establishing districts without reference to any fundamental rules. At the same time, this legislation neglected to equip the HEC with a cooperating administrative apparatus or a police force under its supervision throughout the electoral process. Indeed, it stipulated no mechanisms by which the HEC could implement its decisions on the organization of elections.

Electoral system for the People’s Assembly

Under Article 56 of the constitutional declaration, the SCAF introduced several amendments to the People’s Assembly law, including to modify the electoral system. Article 3 of the law¹¹ states, “Two-thirds of members of the People’s Assembly shall be elected through closed party lists and the remaining one-third through an individual candidate system. The number of members in each governorate elected by closed party lists shall be equivalent to two-thirds the number of seats allocated to that governorate, and the number of members elected as individual candidates shall be equivalent to one-third the number of seats allocated to each. The Arab Republic of Egypt shall be divided into 46 districts for the list system, while the republic shall be divided into 83 districts allocated for the election of individual candidates. In each district, two members shall be elected, at least one of whom shall be a worker or farmer. A law shall be issued defining the boundaries of each district for the election of individual candidates and lists, the administrative components of each district, and the number of members representing each of the districts allocated for lists. While observing the provision of Article 16 of this law, the number of candidates on each list must be equivalent to two-thirds the number of seats allocated to the district, provided at least half of them are workers and farmers. Care shall be taken to not place a non-worker or non-farmer candidate after another non-worker or non-farmer. In all cases, each list must include at least one female candidate. One list may include candidates of one or more parties.”

7 Published in the Official Gazette, no. 46 (*bis*)(b), Nov. 20, 2011.

8 Published in the Official Gazette, no. 28 (*bis*)(b), July 19, 2011.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Amending Law 120/2011, published in the Official Gazette, no. 38 (*bis*)(b), Sept. 26, 2011

This was not the first time a combined list-individual system was used. The same system was instituted under Law 188/1986,¹² which was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Constitutional Court.

As can be observed in the foregoing, the apportionment of districts for the People's Assembly elections prejudiced the right of candidates for individual constituencies, as it required them to run in larger districts than list candidates, although it is established practice that elections using the list system involve larger districts, while elections under the individual candidate system are run using relatively small districts. This is done because individual systems rely on individual candidates, whose more limited financial and campaigning capacities are less effective in geographically large districts.

Although the district apportionment law drew individual districts in a way incommensurate with established procedures for this type of electoral system, the HEC did not rectify the problem when defining campaign periods as might have been done by extending the campaigning period for candidates for individual seats.

The districting problem went beyond unfair partitioning of individual constituencies to take on a quasi-unconstitutional status. On February 12, 2012, less than two months later, the High Administrative Court referred a challenge to the Supreme Constitutional Court contesting Article 3 of the People's Assembly law after its amendment by Law 120/2011, which permitted party candidates to run for individual seats as well as on lists while denying independent candidates for individual seats the right to run on party lists. This bolstered the opportunities for parties and undermined the principles of equality between citizens and equal opportunity.

Also noteworthy is that the new electoral system did not establish rules for the placement of women on party lists. After the quota system used in the 2010 People's Assembly elections was abrogated, many women's groups demanded that women's representation in the revolutionary parliament be given due consideration. This could have been achieved if the law had specified the placement of women on lists by, for example, stipulating that the no. 3 slot was reserved for female candidates or by mimicking the Tunisian system, which required lists alternating between men and women. As a result of the lack of any specific rules for the placement of female candidates on lists, their representation was meager and in no way commensurate with their role in the revolution, due to the tendency of some groups, particularly Salafis, to place female candidates at the end of their lists to minimize their chances for victory.

The HEC

Article 39/2 of the constitutional declaration stipulated that a high judicial commission assume complete supervision of elections and referendums, starting with voter registration through the announcement of results, as regulated by law. It mandated supervision of voting and ballot counting by judicial personnel nominated by their higher councils and publication of their selection by decree of the high commission. Article 3 (*bis*)(a) of Law 73/1956 on the exercise of political rights called for the formation of the Higher Elections Commission, and Article 3 (*bis*)(f) enumerated the prerogatives of this commission.

In reality, the HEC was marginal and ineffective throughout the electoral process, although it is charged with organizing the entire process. This was a result of legislative flaws impeding its fulfillment of its role, limiting it to simply rubber-stamping election decrees and regulations issued by other bodies such as the SCAF. Evidence of the HEC's weakness came during the first round of elections and was seen in the general chaotic climate surrounding the

12 Amending some provisions of Law 38/1972 on the People's Assembly and its amendments; published Dec. 31, 1986.

process. For example, some polling stations opened late on the first day, while others did not open all. Judges and polling chiefs arrived late, and the delivery of phosphoric ink was delayed. In a press conference held on the first day, Judge Abd al-Ezz Ibrahim blamed the chaos on various bodies, including the Ministry of Local Development and the Interior Ministry, noting that he had no prerogatives or authority over these bodies.

In addition, the HEC failed to perform its role in other areas, including organizing the two-day vote, the securing of ballot boxes, and the overnight closure of polling stations. These duties were assumed by Judge Ahmed al-Zind, the president of the Judges Club, as announced during a press conference in which he described how these procedures would be carried out. Even the decree itself was not issued by the HEC, despite the fact that, as an organizational decision, it should have fallen under its jurisdiction, but rather by the SCAF.

The HEC was also silent about numerous violations during elections, including during the second round of voting when military police assaulted a group of judges in charge of polling stations and shocked them with electric batons. The HEC took no appropriate measures and did not even issue a condemnation of the action. Rather, the Judges Club issued a statement threatening to boycott the elections if these actions were repeated.

The HEC's failures were not limited to the vote itself; during the campaign period, the commission similarly failed to perform its role. Although it issued Decree 21/2011 on campaigning regulations, which set rules on candidates' campaigns and a financial and time cap on campaigns, it took no action against violators of the campaign rules. Some candidates launched their campaigns even before the candidacy registration period, and most exceeded the financial cap, set at LE500,000. Not only did the HEC do nothing, but it failed to take appropriate measures to regulate campaign spending, such as requiring the opening of an independent bank account for campaign expenses, similar to that mandated by the Presidential Elections Commission (PEC).

The HEC possessed insufficient authority to hold accountable those who violated the rules and regulations of the elections it was ostensibly supervising. No rules were established to bring accountability to violators who used houses of worship or state-owned offices and property for campaigning purposes, and no rules were set to combat various forms of electoral bribes.¹³

Election observers

The HEC insisted on calling election monitoring "election observation," arguing that the commission is comprised of judges not subject to oversight, in complete disregard for the tasks of these judges, whose work is purely administrative and subject to the oversight of society and the judiciary. The HEC issued rules for election observation by civil society organizations in Decree 20/2011¹⁴ and Decree 24/2011, as follows:

- The HEC gave observation rights to Egyptian civil society groups registered and operating in Egypt under Law 84/2002, or international groups approved by the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, pursuant to special licenses obtained by the HEC, in accordance with the licensing rules and procedures, provided that the activities of these groups included political development, democracy promotion, or human rights.¹⁵

- By election observation, the HEC meant the observation and monitoring of all phases of the electoral process without interfering in its course, impeding it, influencing voters, or campaigning for candidates or political parties. It also covered all procedures for nomination,

13 Report of the field monitors issued by the EACPE, a member of the Independent Coalition for Election Monitoring.

14 Published in the Official Gazette, no. 247 (a) ff, Oct. 27, 2011.

15 Article 1 of Decree 20/2011.

campaigning, voting, ballot counting, and the declaration of results. Observers were authorized to issue reports on the electoral process and inform the HEC or other competent state bodies of their observations so necessary measures could be taken.¹⁶

- The HEC required organizations to submit an application for a permit to observe elections with the HEC, using a prepared form, giving the name of the organization, its registration number, its activities, and the names of monitors, their status, ID numbers, a recent photo, their observation location, and their academic credentials. Non-Egyptian organizations were required to submit their names, and the names of monitors, their status, their nationalities, copies of passports, a recent photo, and a permit from the Foreign Ministry to pursue their activities.

- The applications were to be submitted to the National Council for Human Rights at least two weeks before the vote. The council registered applicants, examined applications, and referred them to the commission within 24 hours of receipt. The HEC gave applicants who met the conditions permits that enumerated the monitors' scope of action and rules for operation. The organizations were required to comply with all electoral laws, regulations, and decrees related to the elections, to carry out observation in accordance with the commission's rules, to prepare accurate information based on objective, verifiable events, to refrain from predicting results in advance, and to explain the ways in which information was gathered and announce all information obtained as dictated by the laws, regulations, and decrees in the election observation code of ethics issued by the National Council for Human Rights.

- The HEC rules for election observation limited monitoring to groups registered with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Justice, thus excluding a broad swathe of unregistered groups from election monitoring. They also required that submission of monitoring applications be done through the Egyptian National Human Rights Council rather than directly to the HEC.

- These rules reflect the HEC's view of civil society, which differs little from the view of the state as represented by the government and SCAF. These elections coincided with a ferocious attack on advocacy groups in particular due to their receipt of foreign funding and operation without a license. These rules are at odds with international standards for election monitoring, which stipulate the participation of civil society not only in monitoring the vote, but in formulating elections rules, organizing voter turnout, and contributing to district apportionment and require the facilitation of access for civil society to information about voters and electoral districts. These standards dictate that the registration of monitors not be overly complex, discriminate based on the legal status of organizations, or distinguish between national and international groups.

¹⁶ Article 2 of Decree 20/2011.

III. Legislation regulating the media

The legislative structure undergirding media and journalistic activity in Egypt is filled with restrictions and vague language which extend to criminalize numerous related acts, despite the fact that the constitutional declaration issued on March 30, 2011 upholds freedom of opinion and expression in Article 12, which states, “Freedom of opinion is guaranteed, and every person may express his/her opinions and publish them in speech, writing, images, or other means of expression within the limits of the law. Self-critique and constructive criticism guarantee the integrity of the national structure.” Article 13 of the constitutional declaration affirms the freedom and autonomy of the press to fulfill its mission and prohibits censoring, warning, suspending, or abolishing it by administrative means.

An examination of the foregoing articles reveals that they permit freedom of opinion and expression and media and press freedoms, with the sole restriction being that this be undertaken “within the limits of the law.” Usually, the constitutional drafters leave the regulation of these rights to the law, allowing the ordinary legislator to place legal impediments to limit their exercise.

For example, the Egyptian Penal Code (Law 58/1937 and its amendments) criminalizes forms of expression of opinion, including press and media freedoms, as seen in Articles 171-200 and others. This is in addition to the restrictions imposed by the Press Law (Law 96/1996), the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU) Law (Law 13/1979), and Law 8/1997 on investment guarantees and incentives regulating satellite broadcasting. The legislator was careful to place additional impediments on media and press work, particularly when it comes to election coverage.

We shall review some of the legislation that impacts media freedom and that was amended prior to elections, as well as rules set by the HEC regulating media coverage of elections.

Amendments to the law on the exercise of political rights

The SCAF issued Law 124/2011 amending some provisions of Law 73/1956, including amendments to the chapter on election crimes. All of them stiffened the penalties for these crimes, and they introduced two new articles, Article 50 (*bis*) and Article 50 (*bis*)(a). Among the articles that stiffened penalties was Article 48, which we believe constitutes a restriction to press and media freedoms.

The legislator stiffened the penalty for the crime described in Article 48 of the law on the exercise of political rights (Law 73/1956), paragraph 4, amended by Law 124/2011, described as “knowingly publishing or broadcasting false speech or news about the elections or referendums, or about the conduct of a candidate or his/her ethics with the intent of influencing the outcome of the elections or referendums.” The penalty for such a crime was raised from at least six months in prison and a fine of no less than LE1,000 and no more than LE50,000 to become at least one and no more than five years in prison and a fine of at least LE10,000 and no more than LE100,000.

What constitutes publishing or broadcasting false news about elections is unclear. A statement that elections saw violations or fraud, contrary to the decision of the HEC, could be considered false news punishable under this article, and stiffening the penalties in the article may have been aimed at intimidating the media into refraining from criticism of the HEC.

SCAF Presidential Decree 193/2011 amending provisions of Presidential Decree 126/2010 on the emergency law

Although the SCAF pledged to lift the emergency law as soon as the curfew was lifted and stated that elections would not be conducted under emergency law, the president of the SCAF issued a decree on September 10, 2011 (193/2011) amending Presidential Decree 126/2010 on the emergency law. The amendment expanded the scope of the emergency law to include action against “the intentional dissemination or broadcast of false news, statements, and rumors,” which we believe was introduced specifically to intimidate the media and silence journalists and media personnel.

HEC decrees and press and media freedoms

The official HEC website published certain restrictions on media coverage by local and international journalists and broadcasters that impeded media coverage. The HEC required journalists to obtain a permit from it via a unified list submitted to the HEC from the Journalists Syndicate. This list was required to contain a copy of the journalist’s national ID, a copy of his/her Journalists Syndicate card, and a letter from his/her media institution. It also required media personnel with the ERTU to submit a copy of their ERTU card. The HEC required Egyptian personnel with satellite channels to submit a unified list after obtaining the approval of the General Authority for Investment (GAFI).

Thus, the HEC decree required that journalists covering elections be registered with the Journalists Syndicate, giving state-owned newspapers an advantage. Moreover, the HEC did not consider the incapacitating conditions set by the Journalists Syndicate for membership, with the result that most working journalists are not registered on the syndicate’s rolls.

As for television coverage, personnel with private satellite channels were required to obtain the approval of GAFI, while ERTU personnel had only to submit a copy of the ERTU card. Thus the HEC established a double standard, giving state-employed media the right to cover elections simply by submitting their union card—given to any working member of the ERTU—while requiring those with private channels to obtain the approval of GAFI. Moreover, the HEC was not authorized by law to establish these conditions. In Article 3 (*bis*)(f) of that law, the legislator enumerates the specific prerogatives of the HEC, which do not include drafting regulations for the issuing of permits to report on polling stations. Although the HEC has the right to establish rules to regulate the electoral process, setting restrictions not enumerated by law constitutes an arbitrary use of the commission’s authority.

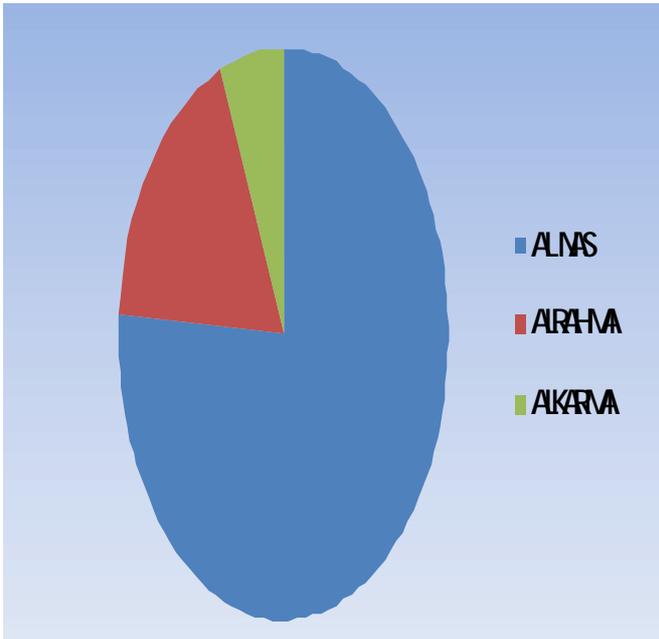
Part Two

Print media: A general comparison

The sample under study included three state-owned daily papers and three private daily papers, as well as two state-owned weekly papers and two private weekly papers. The selection of this sample attempted to account for the diversity of the press and to strike a balance between state and private-owned papers as well as between daily and weekly publications in an attempt to examine the orientation of the print media during the parliamentary elections of 2011-12.

During the period under study, the private press was generally more interested than the state-owned press in the electoral process, contributing 55% of their press coverage to elections. Private papers also gave more direct coverage to actors in the electoral process, devoting 21% of its space to direct coverage, compared to 18.5% in the national papers. It is worth noting the relatively meager space devoted to direct coverage in the press in general, indicating a need for journalists to rely more on primary sources and carry direct coverage of sources.

Type of NewsPaper	Direct Coverage (cm ²)	Indirect Coverage (cm ²)	Total (cm ²)
Private	111642.89	410692.99	522335.88
State-owned	79564.65	350093.54	429658.19



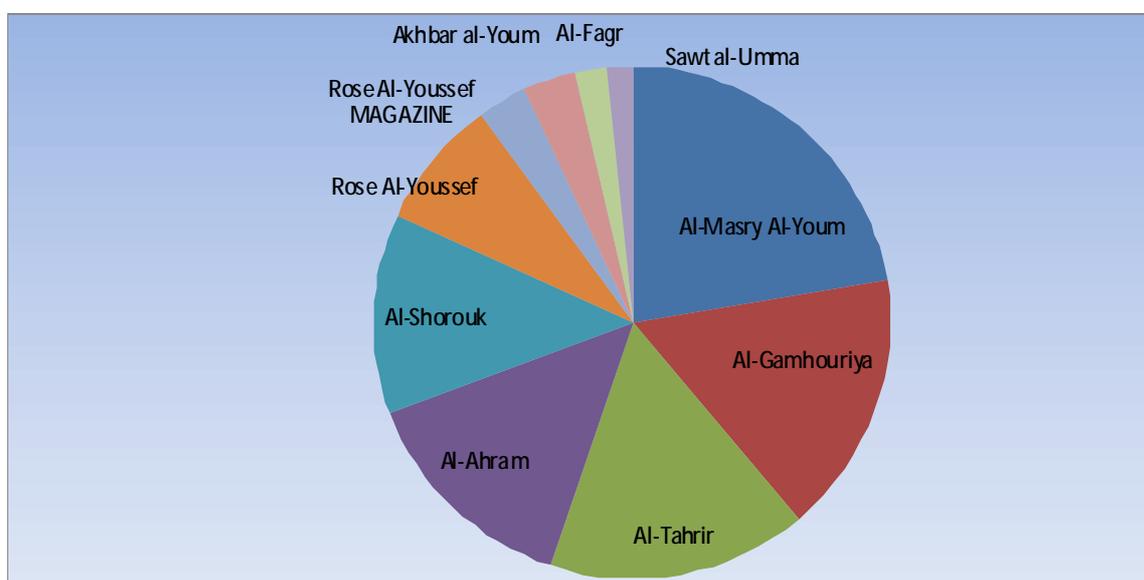
Obviously, daily papers exceeded weekly publications in the total space allotted to elections. Weeklies account for only 10% of the total press coverage of elections. While their concern was limited largely to voting, they were rich in analysis. Weeklies also differed from dailies in their preferences and diversity of topics covered.

The weekly *Rosa el-Youssef* magazine publication increased its election coverage during the final phase of the elections, namely voting, jumping from last place to first place among weekly publications to become the weekly publication with the most election coverage, followed closely by *Akhbar el-Youm*. Last among weekly publications was *Sout al-omma*.

Among daily papers, *al-Masry al-Youm* and *al-Gomhouriya* competed for first place in terms of coverage of elections. *Al-Gomhouriya* led in coverage during the period of candidacy registration, while *al-Masry al-Youm* led during the second stage, campaigning. The voting phase put *al-Masry al-Youm* ahead by a large margin. The daily publication *Rosa el-Youssef* was the least focused on elections throughout the periods under study, among both state-owned and private daily papers, while *Shorouk* carried the least coverage as compared to only other private daily papers.

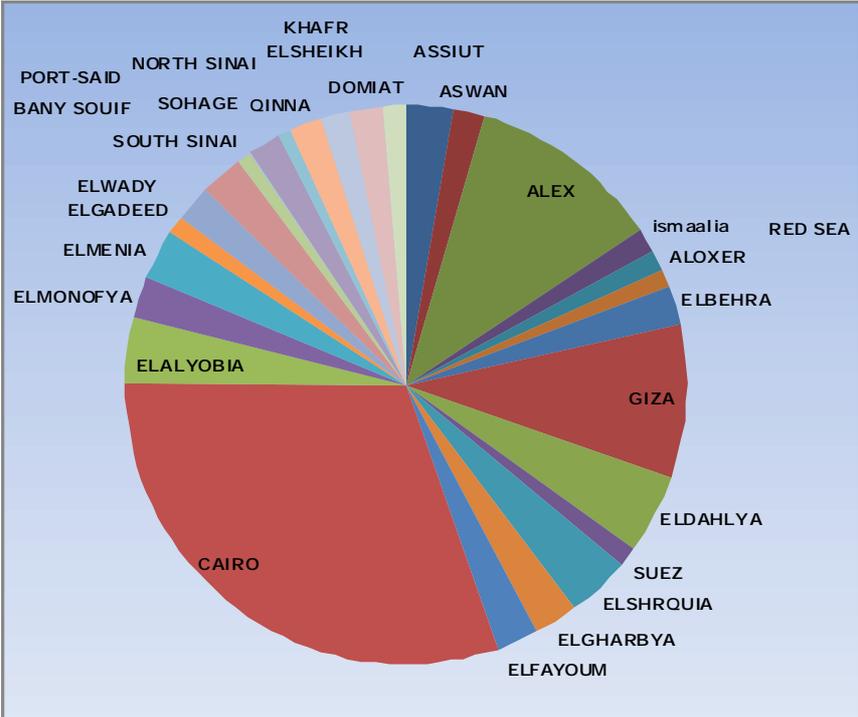
<i>Rates of newspaper election coverage</i>			
Newspaper	Direct Coverage (cm ²)	Indirect Coverage (cm ²)	Total Coverage (cm ²)
Al-Masry Al-Youm	55801.49	156456.75	212258.24
Al-Gomhouriya	26163.5	131287.88	157451.38
Al-Tahrir	25842.95	129118.29	154961.24
Al-Ahram	19972.65	114293.25	134265.9
Al-Shorouk	24624.45	95842.6	120467.05
Rosa el-Youssef	18187	59379.89	77566.89
Rosa el-Youssef magazine	8395	21901.77	30296.77
Akhbar el-Youm	6846.5	23230.75	30077.25
Al-Fagr	3286	16032.6	19318.6
Sout al-omma	2088	13242.75	15330.75

The state-owned papers led the private press in their coverage of voters and voter education. The average space devoted to voters in the state-owned press was 16 % of coverage, while the average in the private press did not exceed 13 %. In general, *al-Ahram* and *Rosa el-Youssef* carried the most coverage of voters among the daily publications, with 17% of the papers' election coverage being dedicated to elections, while *al-Masry al-Youm* trailed the list with 11%. Among the weekly publications, *Rosa el-Youssef* magazine devoted the most space to voters, with 16% of the magazine's total election coverage being dedicated to elections, while *Sout al-omma* came in last on the list with 6%.



Press coverage of women as actors in the electoral process was very limited, with only 5.3% of total election coverage devoted to women on average, in both public and private papers. Nor did this coverage reflect a genuine interest in the role of women in elections, as a large part of this coverage consisted of deployment of the issue of women by the press as a means to attack Islamists and report sensationalist statements and fatwas on the status of women as candidates or voters.

<i>Press Coverage of Women</i>			
NewsPaper	Total Election Coverage (cm ²)	Coverage of Women (cm ²)	Percentage of Election Coverage focused on Women
Al-Masry Al-Youm	212258.24	10029.95	%5
Al-Gomhouriya	157451.38	8673.5	%5
Al-Ahram	134265.90	8624	%6.5
Al-Tahrir	154961.24	7767.4	%5
Rosa el-Youssef	77566.89	5247	%7
Al-Shorouk	120467.05	4962.75	%4
Al-Fagr	19318.60	2562.5	%13
Rosa el-Youssef magazine	30296.77	1312	%4.5
Akhbar el-Youm	30077.25	1074	%3.5
Sout al-omma	15330.75	740.2	%0.05



Newspapers do not generally mention the governorate specific to the news item, sufficing with noting the name of the candidate and his/her election status, which represents a shortcoming in election coverage. In general, however, the governorates most covered in election news were, from most coverage to least: Cairo, Alexandria, Giza, Daqahliya, and Qalyubiya. The governorates least covered were North Sinai, South Sinai, Red Sea, Suez, and Luxor. This finding was largely repeated in coverage of all three rounds of voting.

Newspapers were generally more interested in parties than in individual candidates, whether party candidates or independents. Indeed, the press relied on party leaders and presidents as sources of news about candidates more than the candidates themselves. Overall, parties and the non-candidate party leadership received 74% of total election coverage in newspapers.

In terms of candidates, the press focused more on party candidates than independent candidates, with the former receiving 15% of coverage and the latter only 11%. *Al-Tahrir* devoted the most coverage to news of independents, while among the state-owned press *al-Gomhouriya* led. *Al-Masry al-Youm* and *al-Gomhouriya* showed the most interest in party candidates.

Status	Direct Coverage (cm ²)	Indirect Coverage (cm ²)	Total (cm ²)
Parties	142865.49	559975.28	702840.77
Party Candidates	26027.30	116715.10	142742.40
Independents	21110.25	80038.90	101149.15

All newspapers covered independent candidates who were former members of the dissolved National Democratic Party (NDP). The tone of coverage of these candidates varied from one paper to the next, but quantitatively, the space devoted to them in both the state-owned and private press was very similar. The weeklies carried more coverage of former NDP candidates and were more aggressive in their coverage, particularly *Sout al-omma*. In general, the press focused on former NDP personnel running as independents while largely ignoring the parties with leadership formerly involved with the NDP.

It is difficult to present a unified picture of the distribution of party and coalition coverage in all the papers, but the distribution of coverage of parties and alliances was remarkably similar among the state-owned papers, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and there was more variation in the distribution of coverage among the private papers.

All newspapers had different relations with the competent election authorities (the SCAF, government, Interior Ministry, and HEC), but in general the state-owned press showed more bias to these authorities. *Al-Ahram* reported SCAF statements most consistently, while *al-Gomhouriya* defended the government most prominently and *Rosa el-Youssef* criticized and attacked the Interior Ministry most fiercely. Among the private papers, *al-Masry al-Youm* devoted the most coverage to the relationship between the military and the MB, while *al-Tahrir* most aggressively attacked the government and Interior Ministry and *al-Shorouk* maintained the most impartiality toward all authorities.

All papers committed infractions that compromised the professionalism of their election coverage, most importantly violations of the campaign moratorium, unbalanced news sources, reliance on indirect statements more than primary sources, and the publication of opinions and surveys that did not meet international standards for surveys and polls. The violations of each individual paper were addressed in more detail in the Arabic version of this report.

I. Assessment of the performance of state-owned daily papers

The media performance of the state-owned dailies (*al-Ahram*, *al-Gomhouriya*, *Rosa el-Youssef*) was largely similar, showing only a slight difference in the numbers. This may be attributable to their common source of funding, which endows the government media with a single perspective, leads to the same conclusions, and permits only very limited variation among them.

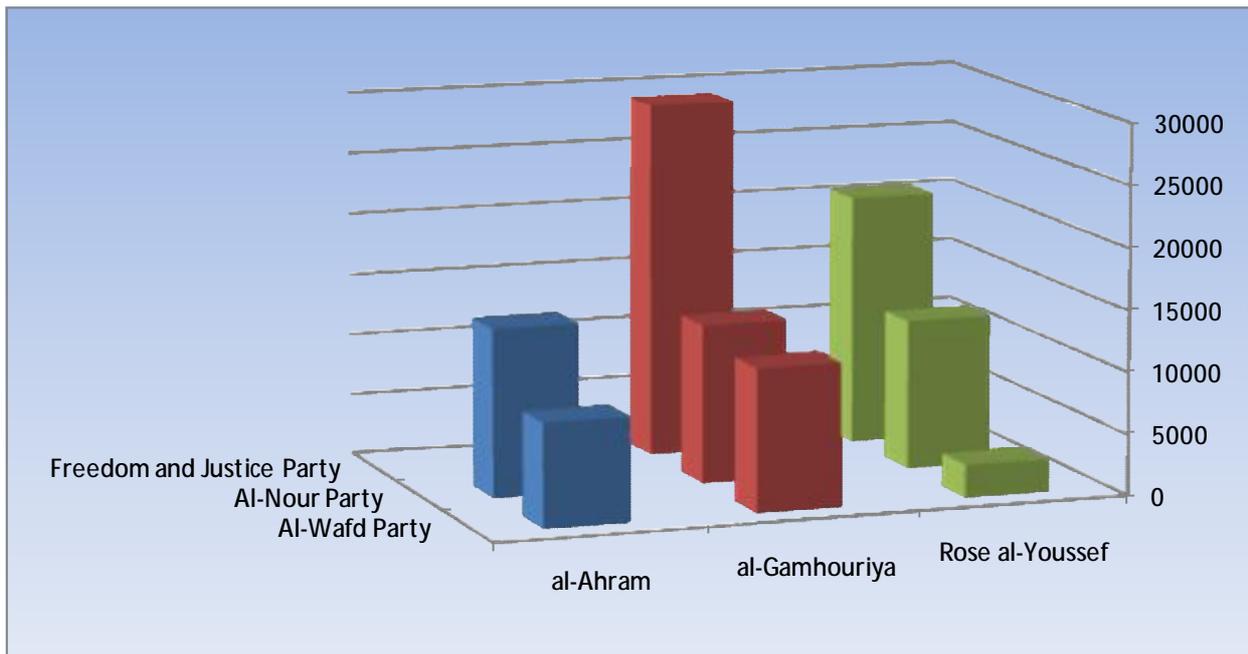
Quantitatively, the national press carried less election coverage than the private press. *Al-Gomhouriya* had the most coverage of the elections among them, while *Rosa el-Youssef* came in at the bottom of the list with about half the coverage of *al-Gomhouriya*.

The state-owned press carried good coverage aimed at educating voters, providing them with notable coverage in this area. The state-owned press also relied on cartoons and illustrations to educate voters about the electoral process, as well as on news and opinion polls.

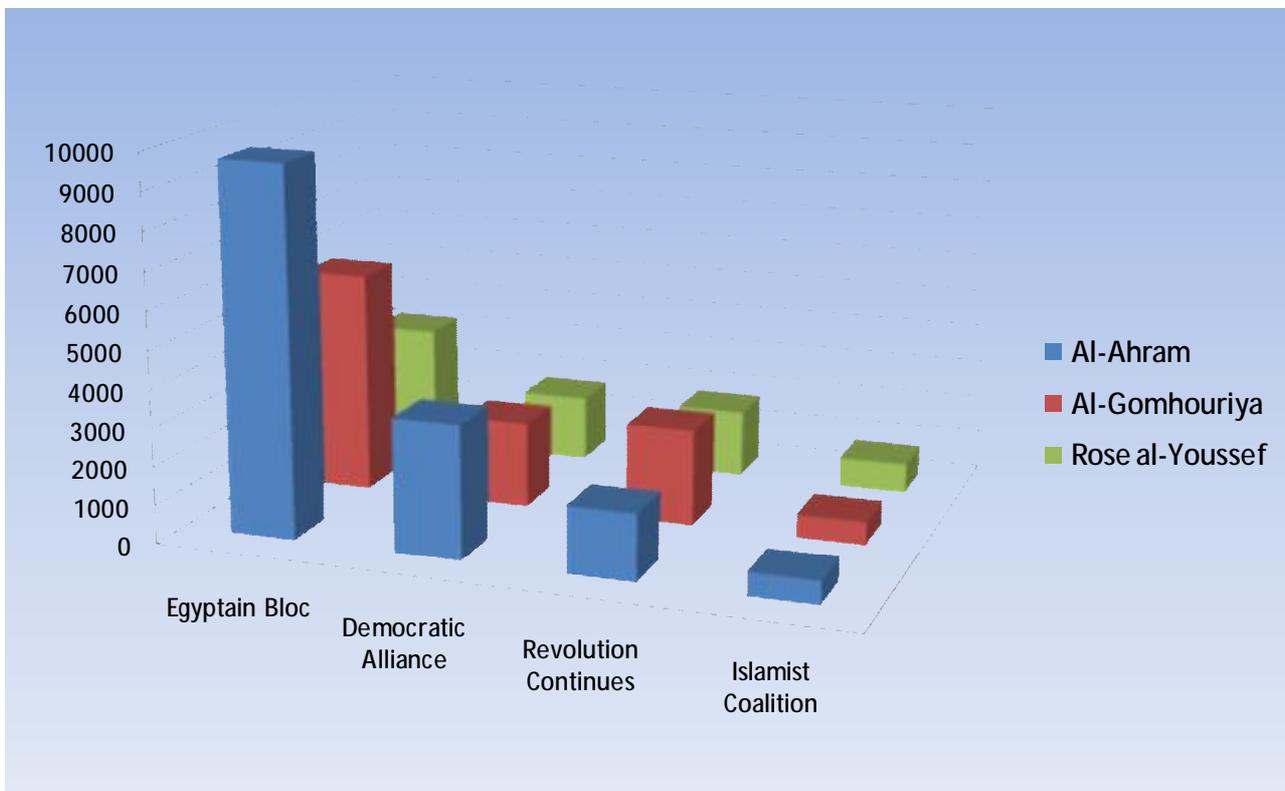
In general, the performance of state-owned daily publications can be assessed as follows:

- The state-owned papers carried markedly more indirect coverage of all parties and independents than direct coverage, indicating that they rely largely on non-news sources. In other words, they present the news through the perspective of sources other than the newsmakers themselves.
- FJP received the most coverage among parties in all the state-owned papers and it maintained its advantage throughout all three rounds of voting. Although it received the most coverage in *al-Ahram*, it received the least direct coverage in that paper (14% of election coverage), as it received slightly more direct coverage (18%) in *al-Gomhouriya* and *Rosa el-Youssef*.
- In terms of coverage in the state-owned papers, the Nour Party came in second. It again received the most coverage in *al-Ahram*, although that paper devoted the least direct coverage to it. The Wafd Party came in third place in terms of coverage, trailing substantially behind the forerunners; it received the most direct coverage from *Rosa el-Youssef* (20 % of election coverage).
- While the state coverage of Islamists appeared news-based, the papers attempted to use production and editorial elements to turn public opinion against them, using titles or linking their campaign styles with that of the NDP. Even during the vote, the state-owned papers continued their covert attacks on Islamist groups.

Distribution of Party Coverage in the Three State-Owned Daily Papers



- In coverage of electoral alliances, the Egyptian Bloc came first in the state-owned newspapers, followed by the Democratic Alliance and the Revolution Continues with only slight differences between them. The Islamist coalition came in last, with the most coverage coming from *Rosa el-Youssef*.



- On average, the state-owned papers devoted 13% of election coverage to party candidates, with *al-Gomhouriya* carrying the most. FJP candidates received the most coverage, while candidates with the Nour Party and the Egyptian Bloc came in second and Wafd Party candidates came in third in all three state-owned papers.

- Among the state-owned papers, *al-Gomhouriya* gave the most coverage to independent candidates, with *Rosa el-Youssef* carrying the least. Among independent candidates, Amr Hamzawy received the most attention in all three papers, while George Ishaq, Gamila Ismail, and al-Badri Farghali were most covered in later rounds.

- *Al-Ahram* devoted the most coverage to independent candidates from the former NDP, followed by *Rosa el-Youssef* and *al-Gomhouriya*. However, all the coverage was indirect, and they received no direct representation in the national press.

- The state-owned papers largely used the term *feloul* (old regime remnants) in their headlines. In the body of the news story, however, they used the term NDP, without appending the word “dissolved” after it, and they only used this terminology with independent candidates, not parties and their presidents. The attack on former members of the NDP was directed at independents more than parties, which were treated as regular political entities without reference to their association with the NDP.

- The coverage of women in the state-owned press was marginally acceptable. *Rosa el-Youssef* devoted the most coverage to women, giving 7% of its election coverage to women, while *al-Ahram* and *al-Gomhouriya* devoted no more than 6% of their.

Election coverage to women.

Paper	Total Space Dedicated to Election Coverage	Coverage Space Dedicated to Women	Percentage of Election Coverage Dedicated to Women
Al-Gomhouriya	157451.38	8673.50	5%
Al-Ahram	134265.90	8624.00	6.5%
Rosa el-Youssef	77566.89	5247.00	7%

During the candidacy registration phase, the state-owned press did not devote substantial coverage to the SCAF and its relationship with the elections process, perhaps because that period saw several other newsworthy events, most importantly at Maspero. However, during the campaign and vote phases, the state-owned press focused on the role of the SCAF in securing the elections, SCAF’s desire to hold elections at the scheduled time, and SCAF’s authorization of Egyptians living abroad to exercise their right to vote, which was presented in a positive way. The only issue on which the national press attacked the SCAF was its failure to issue a political exclusion law. In addition, during the events in Tahrir, the national press carried opinions critical of the military while muting them with sedate headlines and minimizing the force of the attack through the use of production and editorial elements.

The state-owned papers’ coverage of the Interior Ministry focused on its ability to secure the elections, both at home and abroad, and its reassurances that the ministry would not interfere with the process and would only secure it. *Al-Gomhouriya* and *Rosa el-Youssef* carried more news of the Interior Ministry than *al-Ahram*, which totally disregarded Interior

Ministry news. In general, the national press carried little coverage of the government in connection with elections, and with few exceptions, this coverage contained little in terms of opinions or analysis and was limited to strictly news.

The state-owned press also refrained from focusing on the sectarian dimension of elections, noting the religious identity of candidates only by appending the word “Coptic” or “Salafi.”

All the state-owned newspapers violated the campaign moratorium in various ways, most significantly through interviews with party leaders or candidates on the eve of the vote and through advertisements or advertorial news. *Al-Gomhuriya* and *Rosa el-youssef* were the worst violators of the moratorium and the most prone to violate international standards for election coverage, particularly through publishing non-scientific polls, leaking results, and publishing expected results liable to influence the elections.

II. Assessment of the performance of private daily papers

In contrast to the national papers, evaluations and findings vary for the private press. Indeed, it is difficult to identify common features of the performance of the private media, which may be attributable to their various sources of funding, different editorial policies, and divergent goals of coverage. We will thus review the similarities among the private papers (further details of each outlet's performance were included in the additional segments on each outlet in the Arabic version of this report).

Quantitatively, the private papers carried more election coverage than the state-owned press. *Al-Masry al-Youm* carried not only the most coverage, but covered all the major actors in the process, including parties, candidates, independents, and voters. *Al-Shorouk* comes in last in terms of its coverage of the elections process and its major actors.

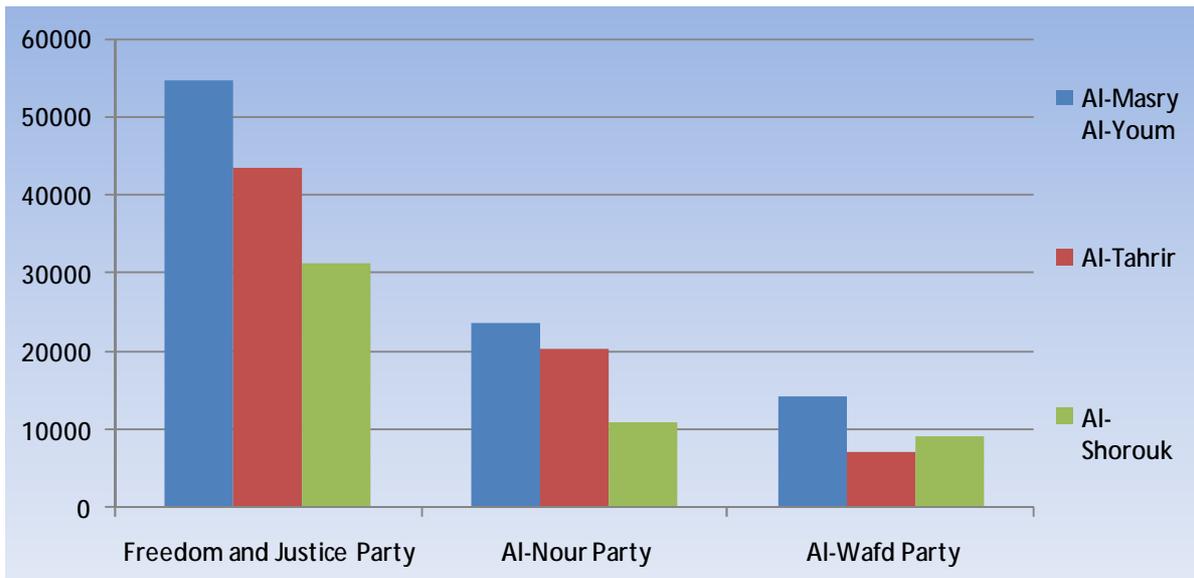
On average, the private press devoted 13% of election coverage to voter education and awareness-raising. *Al-Shorouk* carried the most coverage of voters with 15 % while *al-Masry al-Youm* came in last with 11%.

Newspaper	Total Election Coverage (cm ²)	Coverage of Voters (cm ²)	Percentage of Coverage Dedicated to Voters
Al-Masry Al-Youm	212258.24 cm ²	22886.90 cm ²	11%
Al-Tahrir	154961.24 cm ²	20193.15 cm ²	13%
Al-Shorouk	120467.05 cm ²	17845.00 cm ²	15%

Like the national press, the private daily papers carried more coverage of parties as entities and their non-candidate members and representatives than coverage of candidates, whether those affiliated with parties or independents. However, they did pay more attention to direct coverage of candidates and parties and interviews with them (21% of coverage on average). In general, we can assess the performance of the private daily newspapers as follows:

- *Al-Shorouk* carried the most direct coverage (23% of its total coverage). It took the most care quoting the sources in news stories and in refraining from attributing news to them without the use of direct quotes. It also took care to avoid indirect coverage without offering the right of response or comment, despite the fact that this paper carried the least election coverage of the private dailies.
- FJP received the most coverage of all parties in all the private dailies as well as the most direct coverage, with the press choosing to quote the party's candidates and members in its pages rather than indirectly talking about them.
- The Nour Party received the second greatest coverage in the private newspapers. It was covered the least by *al-Shorouk*, while it received the most coverage (23,599 sq. cm.) and highest proportion of direct coverage (28) in *al-Masry al-Youm*.
- The Wafd Party came in third in terms of total coverage in privately owned papers. *Al-Tahrir* carried the least coverage of the party while it received the most coverage in *al-Masry al-Youm*.

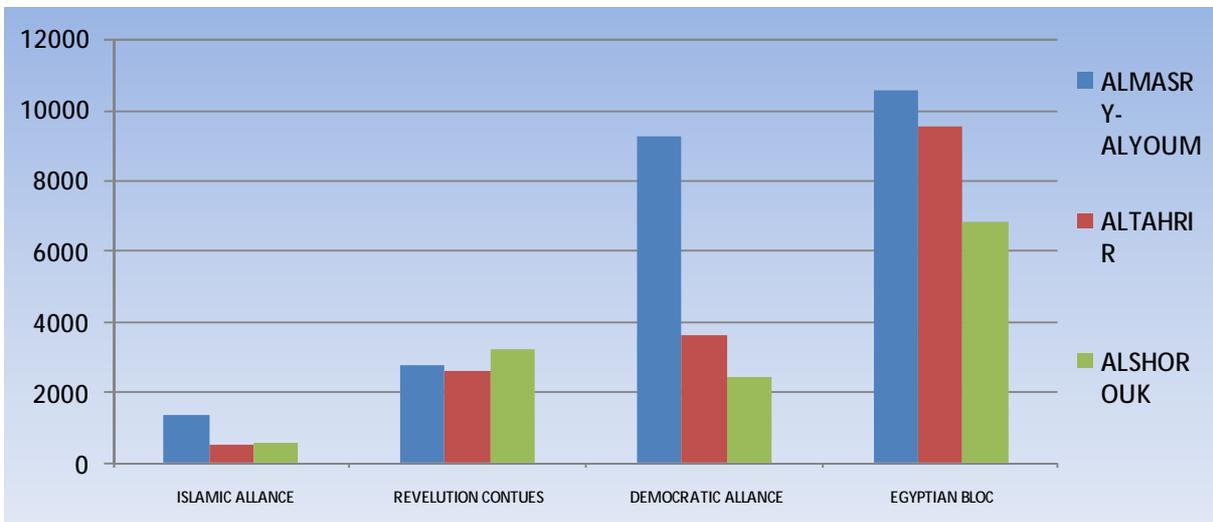
Space Dedicated to Party Coverage in Private Papers



The press treatment of Islamist groups by private papers was always negative and hostile, with such commentary being presented not as coming from the editor, but from the perspective of sources. For example, private papers intentionally attacked Islamist groups from the inside by highlighting an MB attack on the Salafis and vice-versa. The private press also drew direct links between the FJP and the MB, usually dubbing the FJP “the party of the Brotherhood” and referring to its candidates as “Brotherhood candidates” rather than FJP candidates.

The MB was the most prominent actor in election coverage of the private press. The papers not only carried one daily story about the group, but devoted entire pages to it in the parliamentary section (on average five stories a day in each paper). The newspapers also chose the most inflammatory headlines, taken from the statements of Salafi sheikhs, resulting in consistent derision of their beliefs.

Among electoral alliances, the Egyptian Bloc received the most coverage in the private press, while the Democratic Alliance and the Revolution Continues competed for second and third place with slight differences between them. The Islamic Alliance trailed the list. *Al-Masry al-Youm* carried the most coverage of the Islamic Alliance, while *al-Shorouk* carried the most for the Revolution Continues.



On average, the private newspapers devoted 15% of their election coverage to party candidates. FJP candidates received the most coverage, while candidates with the Egyptian Bloc, Nour Party, Wafd, and Revolution Continues competed for the following slots, differing in order from paper to paper.

On average the private press devoted an average of 11% of its election coverage to independents, while devoting more space to direct coverage of independent candidates (23% on average).

Among the private papers, *al-Tahrir* gave the most attention to independents, dedicating to them 14% of its coverage, followed by *al-Masry al-Youm* and *al-Shorouk*, whose coverage of independents hovering at 10%. Amr Shobaki and Amr Hamzawy competed for top coverage, with Hamzawy leading in *al-Shorouk* and al-Shobaki leading in *al-Masry al-Youm* and *al-Tahrir*.

Independent candidates who were formerly members of the NDP received the most coverage in *al-Tahrir*, followed by *al-Masry al-Youm* and *al-Shorouk* by a slim margin. Unlike in the state-owned press, however, former NDP independents received direct coverage in the private papers, which invited them to speak about their programs, most significantly in *al-Masry al-Youm*.

In general, the private newspapers exposed the NDP affiliations of candidates in the various governorates, whether running as independents or on party lists or with other alliances. The papers not only noted the NDP affiliation of the candidates, but examined their positions and roles in the dissolved party.

On average, coverage of women did not exceed 4.5%. *Al-Masry al-Youm* and *al-Tahrir* carried the most coverage of women, but the private press was more careful to offer direct coverage of women in their news instead of discussing them through other sources or from the perspective of editors (average direct coverage was 27.5%). The private press also covered news of female candidates on lists or as candidates.

Newspaper	Total Space Dedicated to Election Coverage (cm2)	Election Coverage of Women	Percentage of Election Coverage Dedicated to Women
Al-Masry Al-Youm	212258.24	10029.95	5%
Al-Tahrir	154691.24	7767.40	5%
Al-Shorouk	120467.05	4962.75	4%

The private newspapers were more impartial in their coverage of SCAF's role in the elections, simply reporting the news whether it was in favor or against the council without clear editorial interference. The coverage of SCAF was largely news-oriented with the exception of a few articles that showed support or opposition. The Interior Ministry received very little coverage in the private press, and the coverage of the government in relation to elections was largely limited to coverage of government decrees or personnel, but it also included several articles that overall attacked the government.

All the private newspapers violated the campaign moratorium in various ways. *Al-Tahrir* was the greatest offender, publishing its "We Choose for You" supplement on the eve of the vote containing its candidate endorsements.

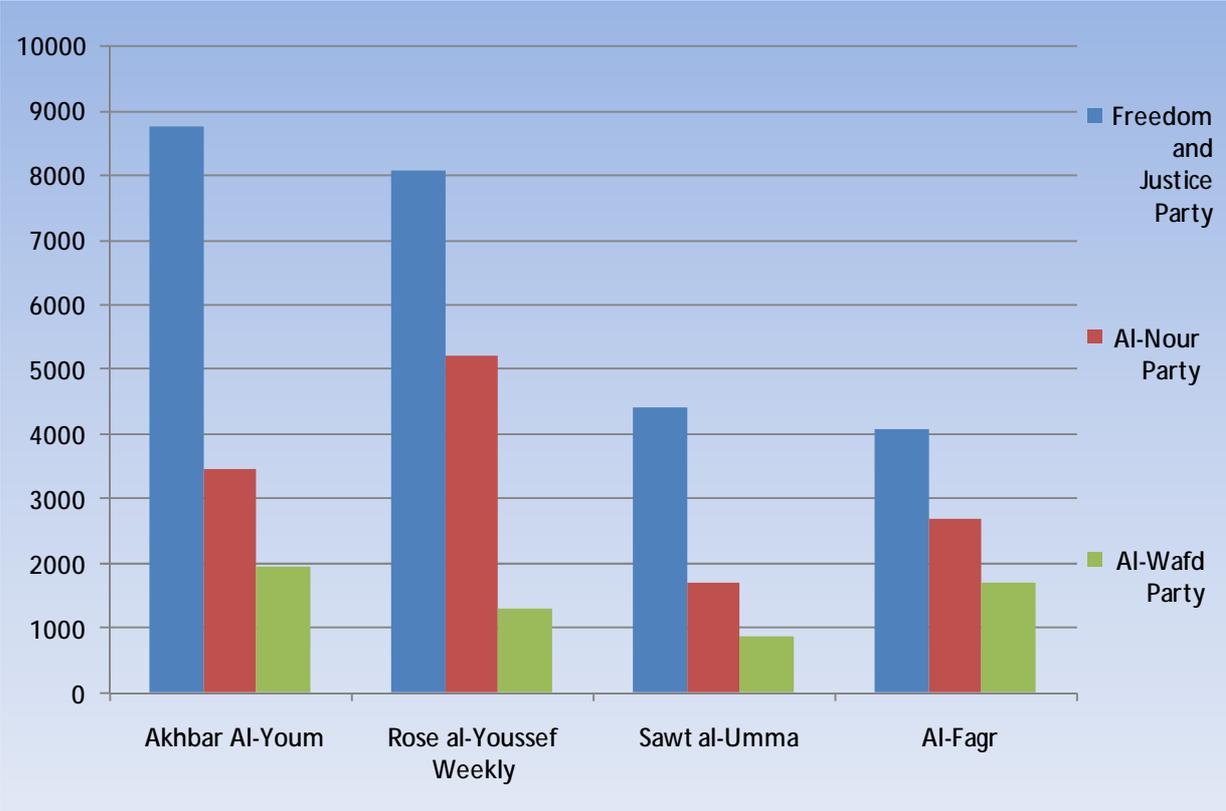
III. Assessment of the performance of weekly papers

The weeklies carried the least coverage of elections in the print media (average 10%). The state-owned weeklies carried more election coverage than the private weeklies, in contrast to the daily press, where the coverage of the private papers exceeded that of the national papers. The weeklies carried acceptable coverage of voters and voter awareness-raising, which is often neglected by weekly press, with on average 11% of coverage dedicated to voter issues.

It is difficult to find a common assessment for the weekly press, as the papers differ in their ownership, orientations, and editorial policies. It is also difficult to place the weekly papers in the same comparative framework with the dailies, which, as might be expected, carried more election coverage quantitatively and more variety qualitatively.

Oddly, the quantity of coverage among the four weeklies was very similar, and these papers resembled the daily press in the type of coverage they carried. The FJP received the most coverage in all weekly papers studied, followed by the Nour Party, with the liberal parties trailing far behind, the best being the Wafd Party, which usually occupied third place. The weeklies differed in terms of the direct coverage of parties in their pages, and their focus on women, voters, and independent candidates.

Space Dedicated to Party Coverage in Weekly Papers

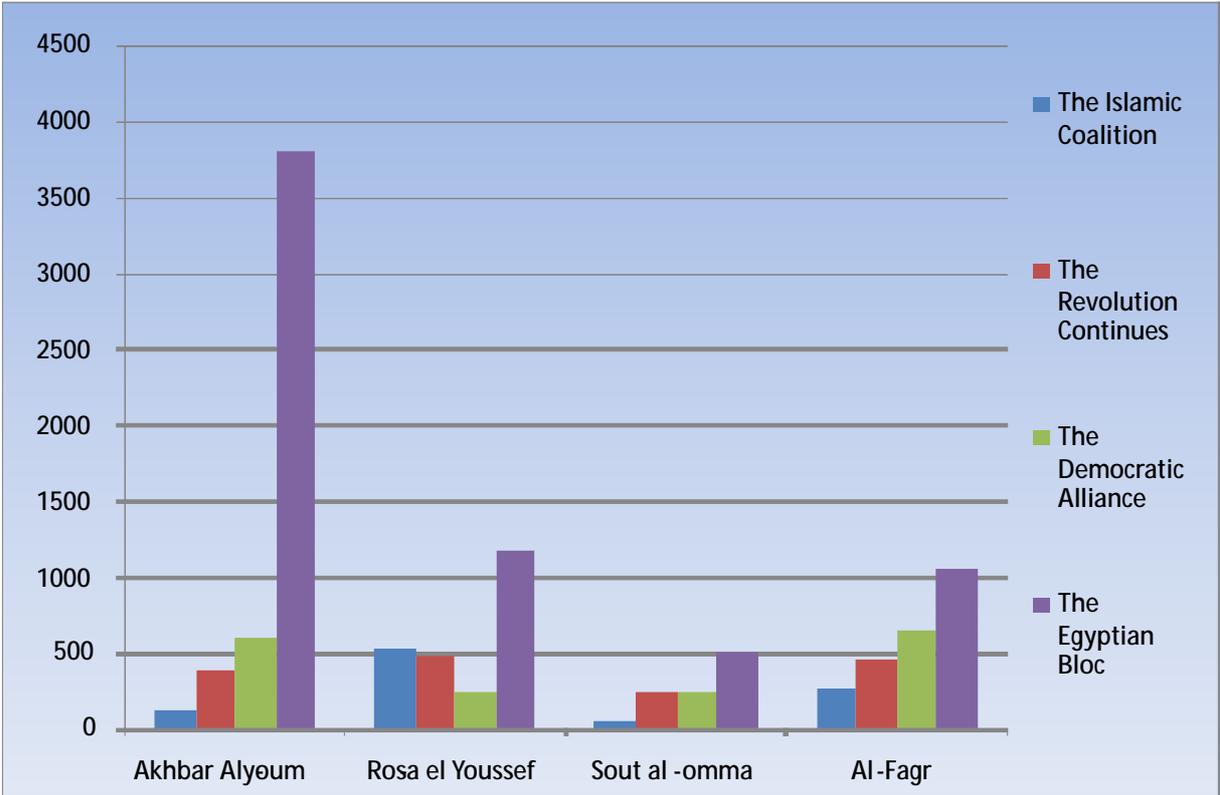


Like the private and state-owned dailies, the weeklies attacked Islamist parties and confused their party affiliations with their ideological or religious affiliations, and they neglected news of violations committed by liberal parties. However, similar differences in the severity and style of attacks were noted in the weeklies as in the dailies. Some weeklies, including *al-Fagr*, used women as a means of attacking Islamist groups, while others, such as *Rosa el-Youssef* magazine, intentionally linked them to the dissolved NDP. Negative

descriptions and labels and sensational headlines were also noted, as in *Akhbar al-Youm*, while in other papers, including *Sout al-omma*, photos and cartoons were used to mock them.

This is in addition to repeated professional lapses, such as the failure to quote sources within these groups, a reliance on criticism from unbalanced sources, the use of extra large photos and captions designed to highlight the negative, and the use of color as a means to highlight news about the MB or the Salafis, particularly attention-grabbing red.

Among alliances, the Egyptian Bloc received the most coverage in the weeklies, with the Democratic Alliance and the Revolution Continues vying for second and third place by small margins, with the exception of *Rosa el-Youssef* magazine, where coverage of the Islamic Alliance outweighed that of the Democratic Alliance and the Revolution Continues.



The weeklies varied in their preferences for candidates, whether party members or independents. Notably, the weeklies were careful to note the identity of independent candidates if they were former members of the NDP and to report that the presence of former NDP members on party lists had led to divisions and splits. Often the weeklies devoted prominent pages in their issues to news of *feloul* or Islamists.

Despite the substantial coverage of women in the weeklies, most of it only addressed the status of women in Salafi or Islamist thought in general, thus not expressing any genuine interest in women’s issues. Some of the weeklies, however, defamed the image of women amid their criticism of Salafis in particular. *Al-Fagr* devoted the most coverage to women (13%), while *Sout al-omma* trailed the list with only 00.05% of its election coverage devoted to women.

The weekly press did not discuss the sectarian dimension of the elections, although sectarian issues in general were covered (Maspero, the law on houses of worship). All the weeklies violated the campaign moratorium in various ways, most significantly through printing interviews with party leaders or candidates on the eve of the vote, but without ads.

Part Three

Audiovisual media: A comparative perspective

The sample under study comprised three state-owned channels, both local and satellite (Channel 2, Nile News, and ESC) and four private channels of varied orientations (ONTV, CBC, Dream 2, and al-Haya), in order to guarantee a balance between state-owned and private media. After the initial sample periods, three religious channels were added (al-Nas, al-Rahma, and the Christian al-Karma), including both Islamic and Christian channels. This step was taken after an initial viewing revealed the channels' focus on election coverage and their influence on the views of some segments of the electorate.

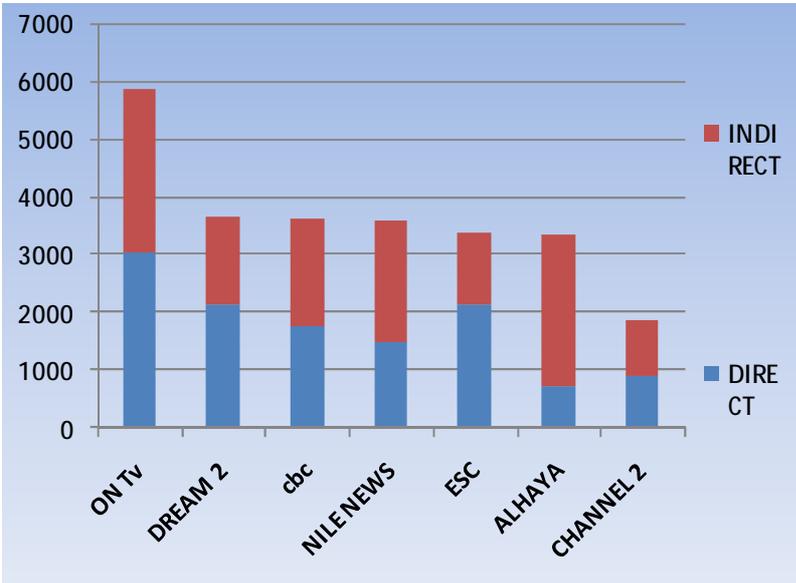
The research, which lasted for three months, examined quantitative and qualitative aspects of the performance of the audiovisual media in its coverage of the 2011-12 parliamentary elections, with the goal of clarifying the media's commitment to professional as well as international standards for fair elections coverage.

Throughout the period under study, election coverage by the private media exceeded that of the state-owned media, accounting for 62% of audiovisual coverage of elections. The state-owned media, however, was more careful than the private channels in balancing direct and indirect coverage of party representatives and candidates on its screens.

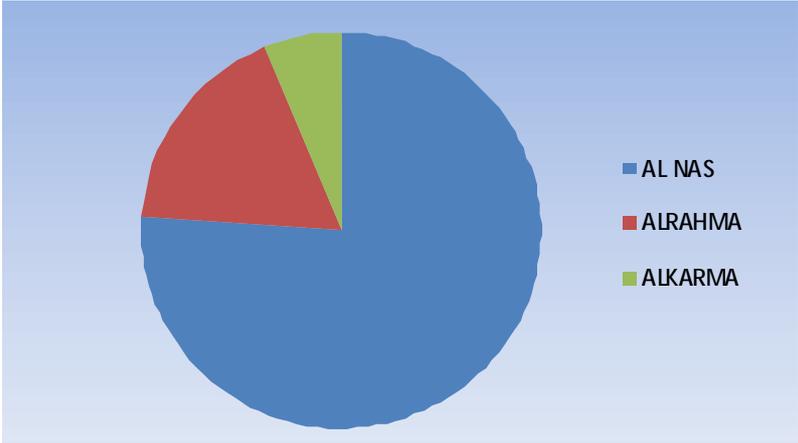
The government media hosted more diverse guests, more consistently guaranteed the right of response and comment, and avoided attacks on parties not present or guaranteed their right to comment. Direct coverage on public channels came in at 51 % of total elections coverage, compared to 46.6% on private channels.

The religious media only contributed 5% of the of the total television election coverage under review, but though small, it contained the most violations of standards for television election coverage, as will be discussed in detail in the section on the religious media.

Type of Channel	Direct Coverage (min.)	Indirect Coverage (min.)	Total
Private	7688	8791	16479.23 min. (62%)
State-owned	4542	4288	8830 min. (33%)
Religious	580	702	1282 min. (5%)

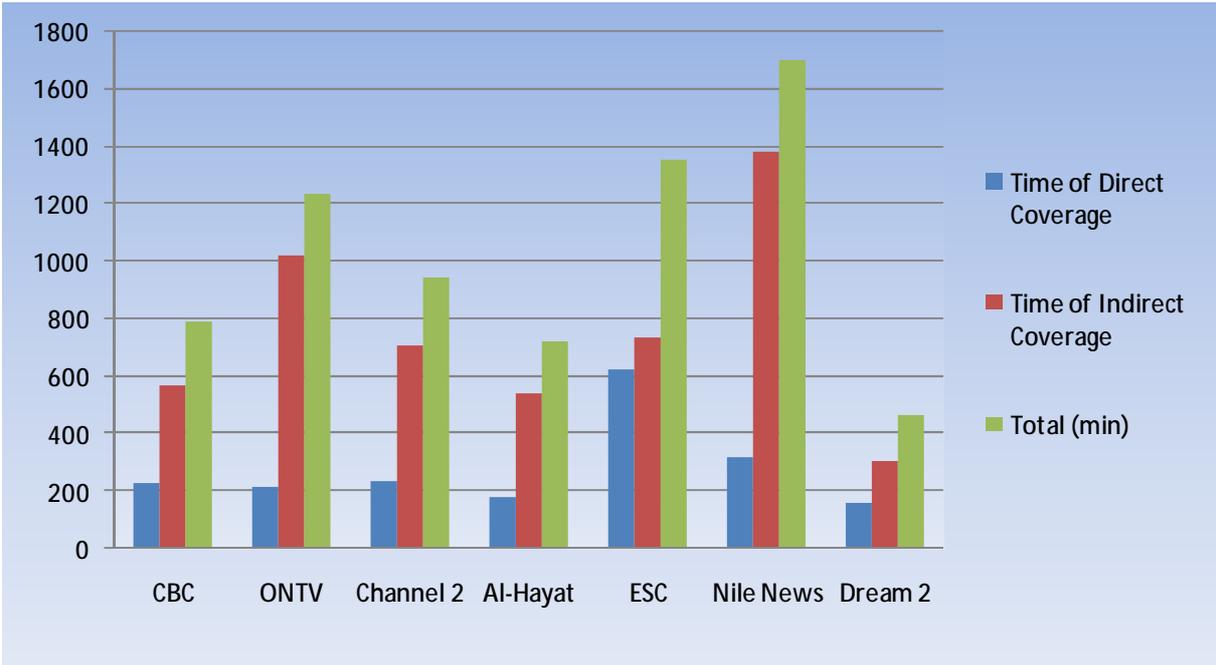


Among both public and private channels, ONTV devoted the most time to election coverage, accounting for 22 % of all television coverage of elections under study, with Channel 2 coming in last. ESC bested all other channels in the amount of direct coverage it devoted to primary actors in the electoral process and represented the only channel whose direct coverage reached 63.6% of its total election coverage, the main reason that state-owned channels outperformed private channels in this regard.



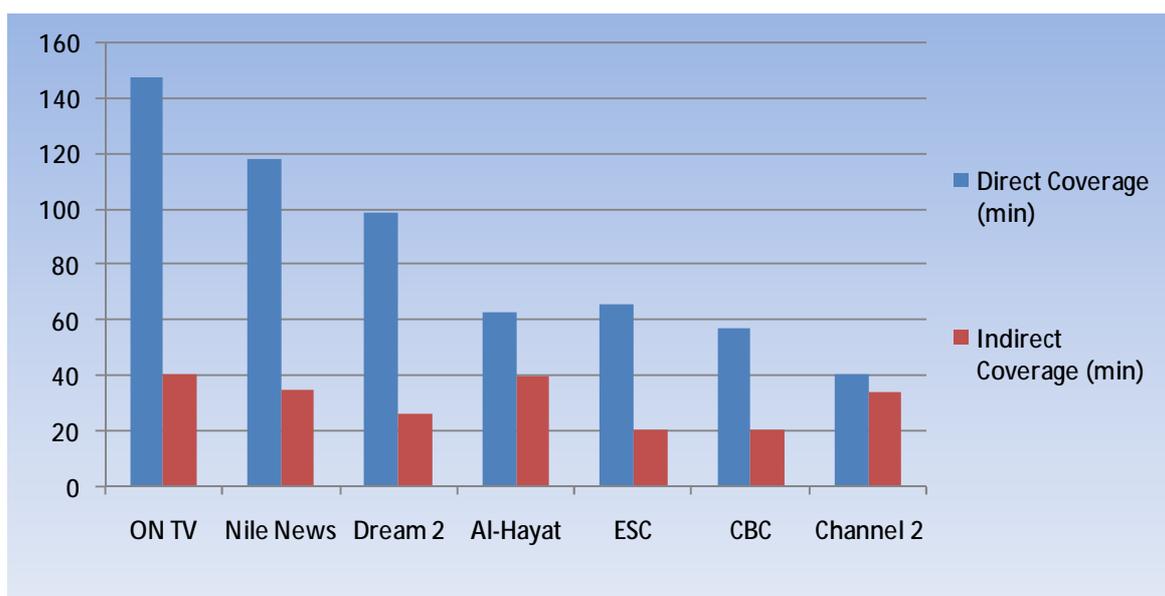
Among the religious channels, al-Nas carried the most election coverage. The religious channels' biases in terms of parties, alliances, party candidates, and independents varied, with no common features except their lack of professionalism and the use of a religious discourse to discuss political content.

In general, the ongoing voter education campaigns were the most positive aspect of media coverage of elections, particularly in the final run-up to the vote. All audiovisual media explained how to vote, the meaning of spoiled ballots, and the need to check for stamped ballots and the proper paperwork, as well as urging the electorate to cast their ballots and not sell their votes. The state-owned channels outperformed the private channels in this respect, devoting more coverage to voters and voter education. Indeed, the voters received the largest share of their election coverage (an average of 48%), compared to an average of 19% on the private channels. Channel 2 carried the most coverage of voters, while Dream 2 carried the least.



The coverage of women on both state-owned and private channels reflects a clear failure in the media's treatment of women as a major political actor in the electoral process. On average, coverage of women constituted only 3.2 % of total election coverage.

The state-owned channel devoted more attention to women's role, with women garnering the most coverage on Nile News and Channel 2 and the least on CBC. However, the private channels devoted more direct time to women to talk about themselves, carrying more direct coverage of women.



Channels do not usually identify the governorate in which their story is based, only noting the name of the candidate and his/her electoral status, representing a clear shortcoming of their election coverage. The news items in which the governorate was named constitute only 29% of election news, most of it during the vote itself. Generally speaking, governorates that received the most coverage were, in order of coverage: Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, and Sharqiya.

The governorates that received the least coverage were: Marsa Matrouh, South Sinai, and North Sinai; less than 10 minutes of coverage was devoted to these governorates over the entire period under study. This finding was largely repeated throughout all three stages of the elections.

The channels generally focused more on party news and invited party representatives more than candidates, whether party-affiliated or independents. Indeed, the media relied on party leaders as news sources about candidates more than on the candidates themselves, with parties and non-candidate party leaders garnering 80% of election coverage on the television channels under study.

Private channels carried more coverage of candidates than state-owned channels, but they covered party candidates more than independents. Party candidates received 11.5% of total television coverage, while independents received only 8%. Dream 2 carried the most coverage of both party candidates and independents.

Partisan Coverage	Direct Coverage (min)	Indirect Coverage (min)	Total (min)
Coverage of Parties	9609.5	11619	21228.5
Coverage of Party Candidates	1168.5	3082	3082
Coverage of Independent Candidates	1239.5	900.5	2140

All channels covered independent candidates who were former members of the dissolved NDP. The tone of coverage varied from channel to channel, but quantitatively, the amount of coverage was very similar. Notably, the channels focused largely on independents and most ignored parties whose leadership was comprised of former NDP members.

The channels varied in their focus on parties and electoral alliances, with each channel's preferences differing. In general, however, private channels devoted more coverage to alliances and their candidates, while government channels focused more on parties than alliances, whether liberal or Islamist.

The channels also evinced different attitudes in their relations to the competent election authorities (the SCAF, government, Interior Ministry, HEC). In general, however, the government channels devoted more coverage to the SCAF and its role in the elections, while both private and state-owned channels carried more impartial coverage of the government and Interior Ministry.

Both public and private channels devoted keen attention to the HEC, reporting on all its news, statements by its members, its most significant decisions, and its press conferences, and publishing the address of its website and how to access it. Both types of channels also repeatedly broadcast the HEC's public service announcements. However, the HEC was not the object of any criticism on the government channels, while private channels permitted a narrow margin for criticism of the HEC through guests. The media coverage of the HEC was largely news-based.

Neither private nor government channels devoted marked attention to the sectarian dimension of elections except within the narrowest bounds, focusing mainly on describing candidates as Coptic, Salafi, or MB, discussing religious slogans and the "civil state" motto versus "Islam is the solution," and reiterating the need for the parliament to represent all segments of society, with some exceptions.

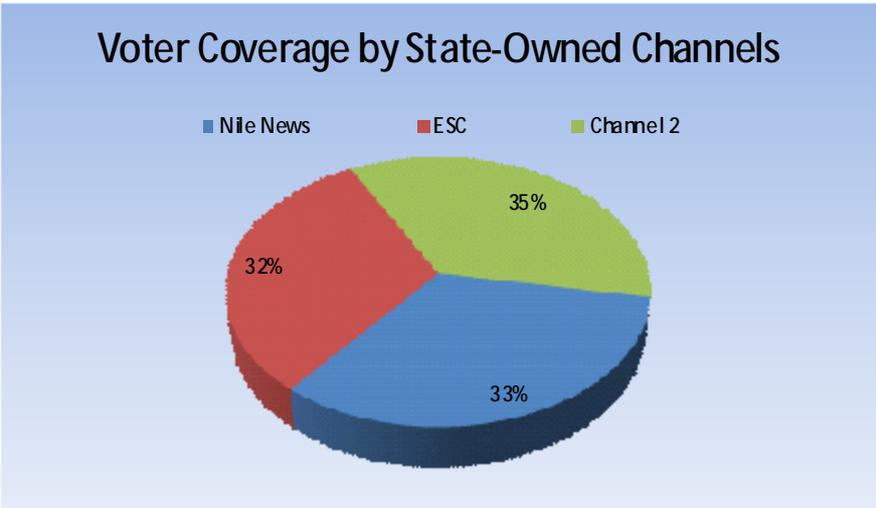
All channels committed violations that undermined the professionalism of their coverage, most significantly violating the campaign moratorium, conducting non-scientific opinion polls and broadcasting them during the vote, and predicting results before they were announced. Although the public channels and some private channels took much care to comply with the campaign moratorium, they did not completely succeed. The channels hosted party leaders on the eve of the vote to discuss non-election related topics, but the appearance of these guests at that time and their discussion of any topic represents an explicit violation of the moratorium ("Ten O'Clock" and "The Truth" on Dream 2 on January 2 and 3 and ESC and Nile News on January 1).

I. Assessment of the performance of state-owned channels

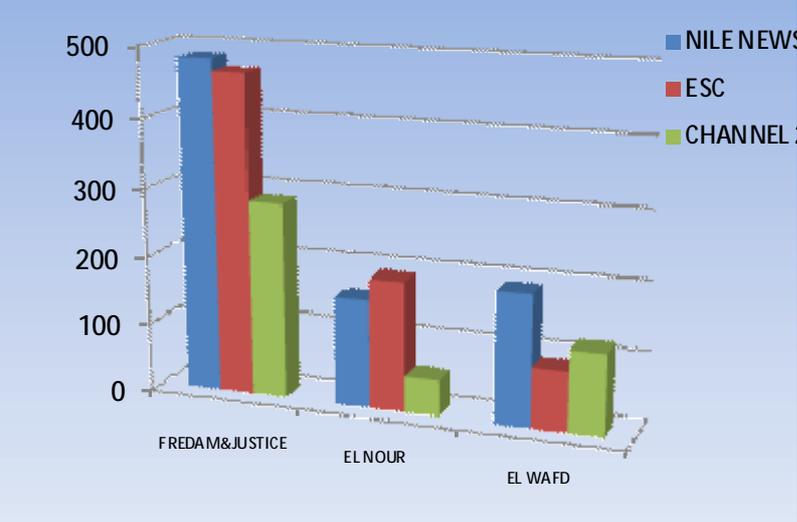
Coverage by state-owned channels constituted 33% of total televised election coverage. Some 51% of this was devoted to direct coverage by bringing party representatives, candidates, and the major election players to television screens.

Of the public channels, Nile News carried the most election coverage, accounting for 40.6% of coverage on state-owned channels, while Channel 2 carried the least coverage, representing 21%. ESC carried the most direct coverage among the public channels, with 63.6% of its coverage being direct.

Channel	Direct Coverage (min)	Indirect Coverage (min)	Total (min)
Nile News	1494	2095	3589
ESC	2153	1231	3384
Channel 2	895	963	1858



All the state-owned media gave good coverage to voter education, accounting for approximately half of their election coverage. Although Channel 2 carried the least election coverage, it paid the most attention to voters, while ESC devoted the least time to voter coverage among the state-owned media.



Among parties, FJP received the most coverage on all three-state owned channels. The Wafd and Nour competed for second and third place on Nile News and Channel 2, while ESC gave more coverage to the Tagammu, Free Egyptians, and the Front than to the Wafd. ESC gave the most coverage to the Nour Party (5.6% of its coverage), and Channel 2 gave the most to FJP (15.3% of its coverage) and the Wafd(6.4% of its coverage).

The government channels permitted Islamist parties to appear on the screen but only to comment on issues not directly related to the elections. For example, they hosted Essam Darbala, a member of the Gamaa al-Islamiya’s consultative council and the secretary-general of the Nour Party in Alexandria to comment on the Silmi Document. At the same time, they hosted critics of Islamists when the segment was devoted to elections (Ammar Ali Hassan, the Wafd Party). Like all media, the state-owned channels focused on violations by Islamist parties during the vote. Anchors purposefully cut off Islamist guests and did not give them appropriate time to respond, while hosting representatives of various parties to critique the MB and focusing on condemnations by all parties and groups, including the Salafis, of attempts by the MB to display their influence.

Among electoral alliances, the Egyptian Bloc received the most coverage by state-owned channels, with ESC giving it the most coverage (2.5% of its election coverage). The channels’ coverage of the three other alliances varied.

On average the state-owned channels devoted 4.45% of their election coverage to party candidates, with ESC giving the most and Channel 2 the least. Channel 2 devoted the most time to independent candidates, giving them 5.9% of its election coverage, with Nile News trailing the list with 1.7%.

State-owned channels devoted more coverage to women than private channels, but overall it did not reflect their real importance in the elections. On average, the state-owned channels devoted 3.6% of their coverage to women, with Nile News carrying the most coverage (4.3% of its election coverage) and ESC the least (2.5%).

Channel	Direct Coverage of Women (min)	Indirect Coverage of Women (min)	Total (min)	Percentage of Election Coverage Dedicated to Women
Nile News	118.36	34.84	152.2	4.3%
ESC	65.27	20.19	85.46	2.5%
Channel 2	40.51	33.99	74.5	4%

The state-owned channels covered the SCAF to varying degrees depending on the nature of their programming. Overall the coverage was positive, stressing the council’s role in the election process and its commitment to successful completion of the transition (Nile News on October 26 and 27, and November 20, 22, 23, 24, 27, and 30).

They also stressed popular support of the military through on-location reports of citizens praising the military’s performance, supporting its decisions, and affirming its role in elections (Channel 2 on October 29-31 and November 23). These channels permitted no criticism of the military on their screens except within very narrow bounds while guaranteeing a response to the attack through on-location reports or the balance of guests (segment on the electoral landscape on Channel 2, November 20), or through the anchors themselves (the anchor balked at criticism of the military on social media during a segment on the electoral landscape on Channel 2 on November 3, on Nile News on November 21, the anchor interrupted Mamdouh Hamza’s criticism of the military and affirmed its important role and presence in the transitional period).

State-owned channels also reported Field Marshall Tantawi’s statements, his pledges to secure elections, and his call to citizens to vote on most of their newscasts and in many of their commercial breaks. Similarly, they focused on SCAF statements on the elections and repeatedly broadcast them.

State-owned channels' coverage of the government focused on a set of issues, most importantly the Silmi Document, Egyptians voting abroad, the resignation of the Sharaf government, and the appointment of the Ganzouri government and its impact on the elections. Their treatment of these issues was largely impartial, although they took pains to defend the Ganzouri government before its critics and to host government representatives. The government channels also gave notable coverage to the Interior Ministry, repeatedly stressing its role in securing the elections and attempting to confirm its capabilities through supportive guests and commentators. They refrained from questioning the role of the Interior Ministry as much as possible.

II. Assessment of the performance of private channels

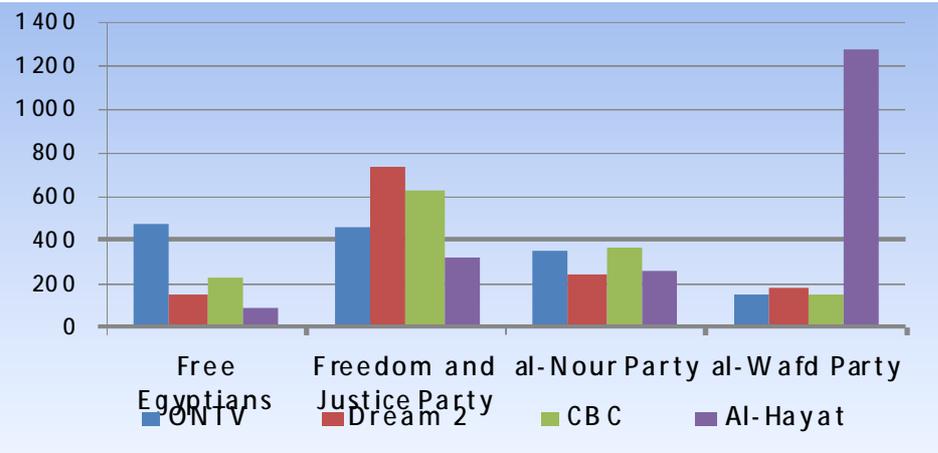
Private channels carried more election coverage, accounting for 62% of total television coverage of elections. However these channels carried less direct coverage of candidates and party representatives, dedicating to them 46.6% of their election coverage.

ONTV carried the most election coverage while al-Haya carried the least. Meanwhile, Dream 2 carried the most direct coverage of news sources (58.9% of its coverage) and al-Haya carried the least (21.9% of its coverage).

Channel	Direct Coverage (min)	Indirect Coverage (min)	Total (min)
ONTV	3035.64	2927.29	5862.93
Dream 2	2149.76	1499.95	3649.17
CBC	1773.68	1863.66	3637.52
Al-Haya	728.93	2600.14	3329.07

Private channels devoted less attention to voter education, dedicating to voters roughly 20% of their election coverage. Nearly all the channels gave voter issues 21% of their coverage, with the exception of Dream 2, which only devoted 12% to voters.

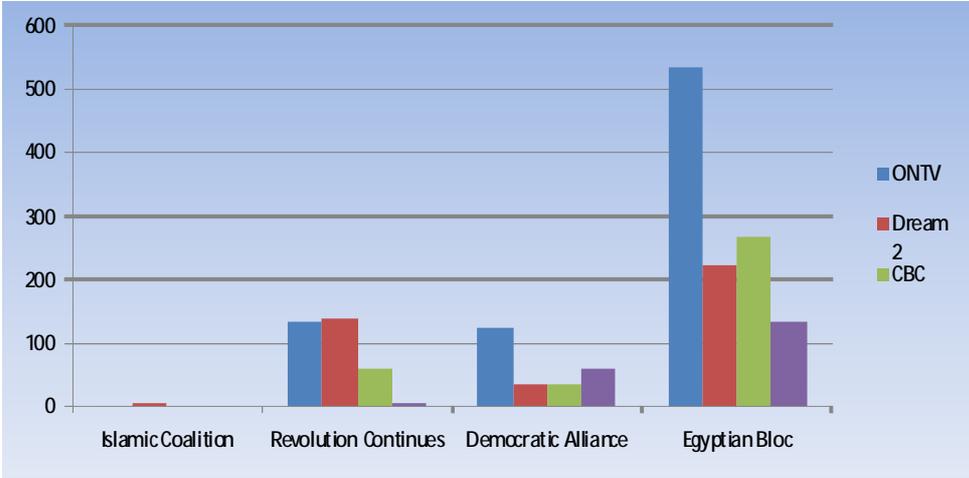
Channel	Total Election Coverage (min)	Election Coverage Dedicated to Voters (min)	Percentage of Election Coverage Dedicated to Voters
ONTV	5862.93	1238.60	21%
Dream 2	3649.17	466.22	12%
CBC	3637.52	793.07	21.8%
Al-Haya	3329.07	722.13	21.6%



Private channels gave different amounts of coverage to parties, with preferences varying from one channel to the next, but in all cases four parties competed for the top coverage spot: Free Egyptians, FJP, Nour, and Wafd.

All private channels attacked Islamist currents, but they differed in their approach. Some, such as CBC, used guests, while others, like, ONTV, relied on anchors, while still others, including al-Haya, produced opinion polls or field studies. In general, however, private channels brought on more Islamist and Salafi guests, such as Mohammed Hassan, the

president of the Nour Party (CBC on the program “Possible”) or Tareq al-Zumur (“Ten O’Clock” on Dream 2). Nevertheless, these interviews often focused on sensational issues (status of women, tourism, views on alcohol) instead of addressing electoral platforms or political analysis.



There was also no unified coverage of electoral alliances among private channels, with preferences varying from channel to channel among the four alliances.

On average, private channels devoted 14% of their election coverage to party candidates. Dream 2 covered party candidates the most, giving them 18.3% of its election coverage, while al-Haya gave the least coverage to party candidates, dedicating to them only 10.2% of its coverage.

The same pattern holds for coverage of independent candidates, with Dream 2 giving them the most coverage (13.7% of its coverage) and al-Haya only 5.6% of its election coverage.

Private channels devoted less coverage than public channels to women, with the average of their coverage of elections dedicated to women coming in at 3.2%. Dream 2 covered women the most with 3.4% of its election coverage, while CBC came in last with 2.1% of its coverage devoted to women.

Channel	Direct Coverage of Women	Indirect Coverage of Women	Total Elections Coverage	Percentage of Elections Coverage Dedicated to Women
ONTV	147.81	40.45	188.26	3.2%
Dream 2	98.43	25.89	124.32	3.4%
CBC	57.26	19.96	77.22	2.1%
Al-Haya	62.80	39.42	102.22	3%

Private channels’ coverage of the SCAF varied. While some devoted only limited attention to the council, others focused markedly on SCAF statements and news. While some criticized and attacked the SCAF through their programs or guests, the private channels seemed reluctant to recognize the success of the military and keen to stress their revolutionary credentials during the vote.

Private channels devoted less attention than public channels to news of the government, its statements, and its election preparations. Although they focused on the same kind of issues as the public channels, they covered them less. The private channels devoted only very limited coverage to the role of the Interior Ministry in the electoral process, particularly on ONTV and CBC.

III. Assessment of the performance of religious channels

Although the religious media contributed only 5% of audiovisual coverage of elections, analysis reveals several points worthy of study and consideration. The professionalism of the religious channels also needs to be reconsidered and requires regulation of their operations, which must meet the standards of professional, objective media despite its religious nature.

Al-Nas carried the most election coverage, while the Christian al-Karma carried the least. Although the religious channels were primarily focused on parties rather than candidates, al-Nas carried more coverage of independent candidates (17.2% of its election coverage), while al-Rahma carried the most coverage of party candidates (27% of its coverage).

Channel	Election Coverage (min)	Coverage of Parties (min)	Coverage of Party Candidates (min)	Coverage of Independents(min)
Al-Nas	975.92	556.67	251.15	168.1
Al-Rahma	224.82	151.15	60.86	12.81
Al-Karma	81.34	60.87	19.97	0.5

The religious channels under study (al-Nas, al-Rahma, and al-Karma) evinced a distinctive style of advertising, education, and their areas of focus. Although they differed from the other channels, they shared some common features:

- Religious channels devoted attention to voter education and awareness-raising by producing songs that urged political participation, including “My vote is for the pure age, my vote is not for sale,” “Your vote is a trust,” and “Vote for the man with religion who will implement God’s law.” They devoted adequate space to voters in their coverage.
- Religious channels generally devoted less coverage to women in the electoral process. Al-Nas carried the most coverage of women, although it only accounted for 4.8% of its election coverage, while al-Karma devoted the least, with no more than 2.5% of its coverage, or 2 minutes.
- Mutual recriminations were the most prominent finding of an analysis of the religious media discourse. Al-Karma accused the military leadership of loyalty to Islamists, while al-Rahma accused the army of loyalty to liberal currents (November 18). The Christian channels urged Copts to take part in elections to thwart the rise of the Islamists, while al-Rahma spurred Muslims to vote to prevent the dominance of secularists and liberals (November 15).
- The only channels that respected the campaign moratorium were the religious channels. Al-Nas and al-Rahma suspended broadcast of the Nour Party song and the anchors stopped discussing particular parties, although the moratorium was violated indirectly as anchors urged viewers to vote to “not leave the field to leftists, liberals, and corrupters” and to only give their votes to those who would implement God’s law.
- In criticizing others, the religious channels crossed the line into accusations of blasphemy and of moral corruption and dissoluteness. Both Christian and Islamic channels persistently rejected the other, each considering the other its most dangerous enemy.

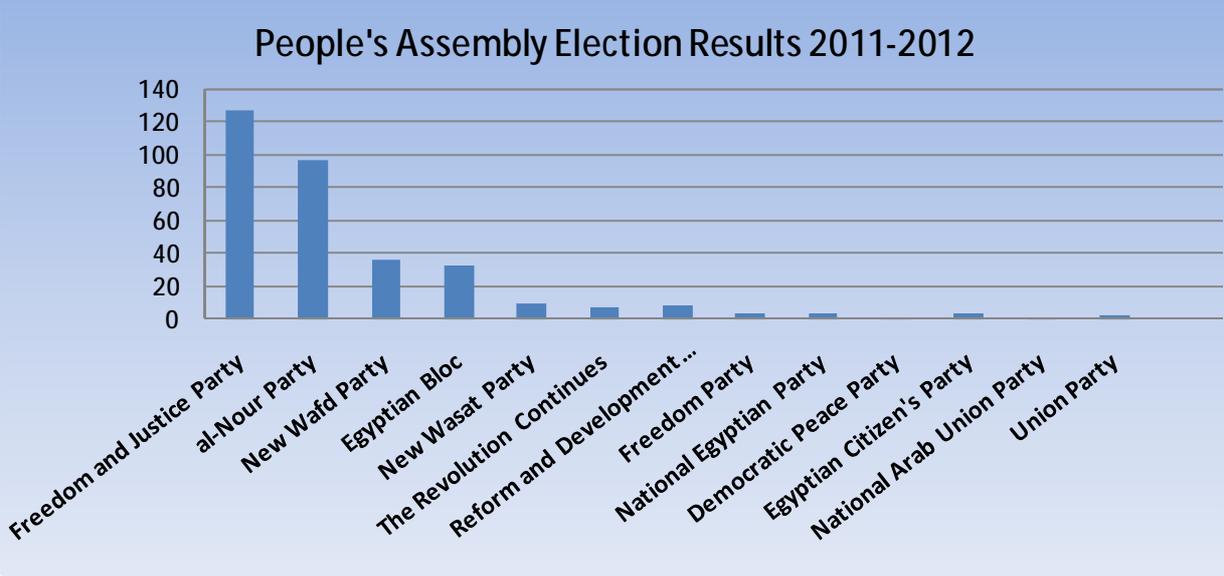
- After Islamists took the biggest share of seats in the first two rounds of voting, the religious channels no longer needed to attack other camps with the same vehemence seen in the run-up to the vote. They began a new stage based largely on exclusion and marginalization or disregard for the presence of other currents. Al-Rahma and al-Nas began treating the outcome of the third round of the vote as a sure victory and started thinking about how to administer Islamic rule. All its debates at this point were Islamic-Islamic, focused on the distribution of roles, the opposition, and how to implement Islamic law. As “The People” program on al-Rahma stated, “Should there be an opposition, or is consultation among Muslims sufficient to administer the affairs of the country?”
- Like other channels, the religious channels carried reports asking voters about their preferences, but the standards and choices on these channels differed. Sheikhs on al-Nas and al-Rahma opined that “if you vote for one of those who corrupted political life in the past, you have sinned; instead, vote for those who will implement God’s law and care for the country, those with clean, white hands.”
- Religious channels covered violations during the elections, but from their own perspective. On the first day of the vote, al-Karma only reported violations by FJP and the Salafis and clashes between them and Copts in some districts. Meanwhile, al-Nas reported that members of the Free Egyptians were distributing toys in some districts and focused on violations by FJP.
- The channels deployed clerics to encourage viewers to vote, stating on al-Karma, “The Church and the Lord have a claim on us to go out and vote.” Sheikhs on al-Nas asked Muslims to vote “to not leave the field to the leftists, liberals, and deviants.”
- Religious channels carried various degrees of coverage of parties, alliances, and independent candidates. While the Islamic channels focused on Islamist parties and excluded liberal ones, the Christian channel focused on liberal currents and criticized Islamists.

Conclusion

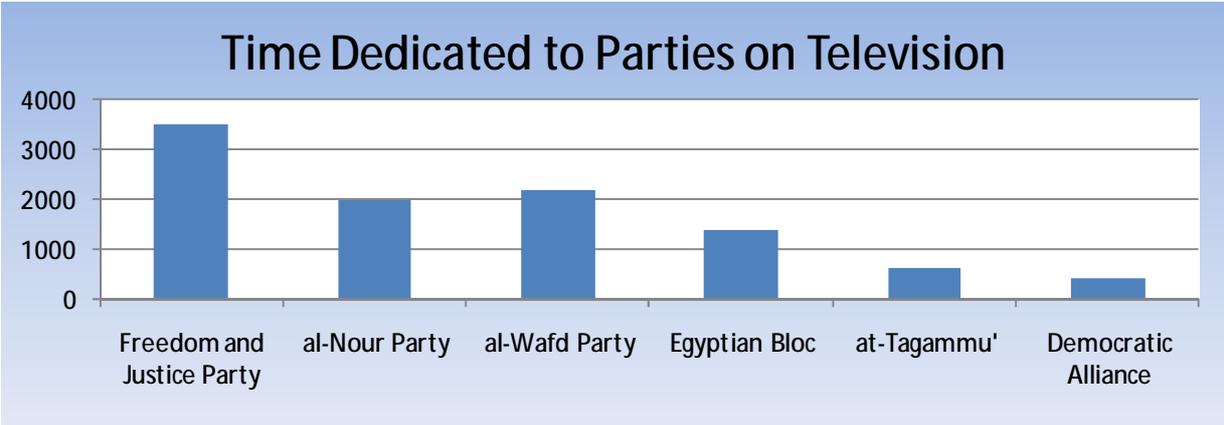
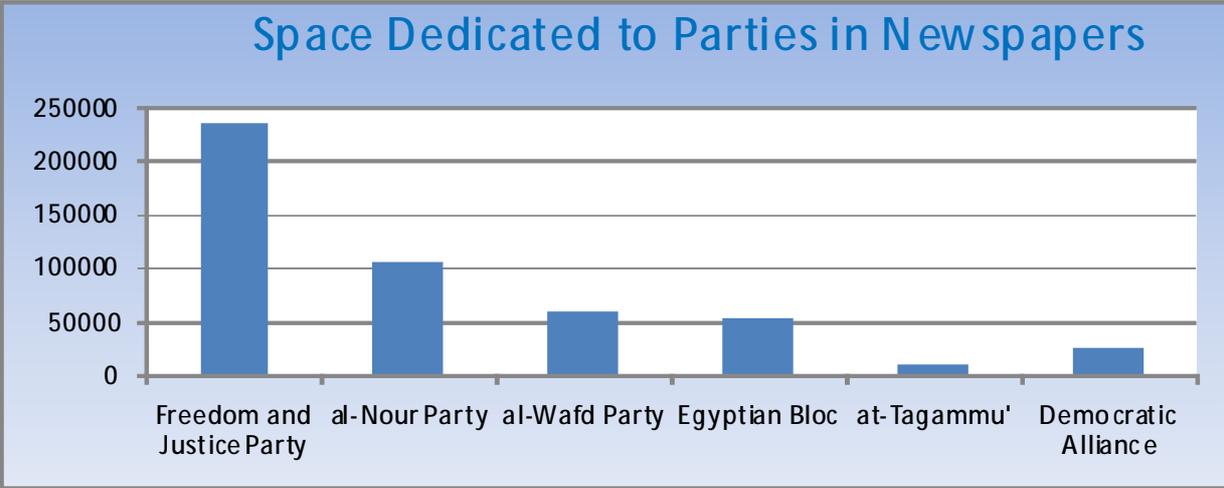
On January 23, the parliamentary elections ended and the People's Assembly convened its first session following the announcement of results. Although some media violations were documented during the ballot count and in the run-up to the official announcement of the final results, the most important general observations on the media coverage of the 2011-12 parliamentary elections are as follows:

- Generally speaking, the media succeeded in launching a massive public service campaign to encourage voters to participate, and they innovated new methods to educate and raise voters' awareness and disseminate an awareness of election procedures and results.
- The government media performed better than in previous elections, not because of any genuine development of the media system, but due to the absence of the control of the NDP. Anchors, correspondents, and program presenters committed numerous professional shortcomings, yet they were not related to political bias but rather a lack of professionalism.
- There was no oversight of campaigns in the media. Although some parties exceeded campaign-spending caps and numerous reports were sent to the HEC in this regard, there was no review or examination of campaign spending in the media.
- The HEC appeared to have no authority or understanding of media monitoring. Although it established standards for media coverage compulsory for journalists and media personnel, it did not monitor or evaluate media performance and took no action on violations documented in reports from various bodies, including the media assessment committee in the Ministry of Information.
- Media personnel, particularly on state-owned channels, continued to perform poorly, interfering with the formulation of their questions, interrupting guests, and failing to maintain a balance in their selection of guests or the time devoted to them.
- The private media was notably influenced by the perspective of their funders. Although private media workers were more adept at remedying this influence, it was nevertheless apparent, particularly in advertising and campaigning.
- Media personnel were not sufficiently familiar with the legislation regulating elections, the electoral system, and the apportionment of districts, which led them to give erroneous information to voters.
- In general, media coverage of marginalized areas, governorates far from the capital, and border areas was weak; all coverage of these areas tended to follow the same tack, entailing a degree of discrimination (tribal, religious, ethnic, etc.).

In the final results, FJP won the largest number of seats in the People’s Assembly with Nour coming in second and the Egyptian Bloc and Wafd closely competing for third place, as seen below:



A review of the quantitative findings of monitoring of 20 media outlets over the three months of elections reveals a very similar result, as illustrated by looking at which parties received the most coverage space (in square centimeters) in the press and the most of television coverage (in minutes).



This strong similarity is not an indication that the media influenced voters, as it may appear at first glance; indeed, the qualitative analysis yields the opposite hypothesis. Most of the coverage of Islamist currents (FJP and Nour) was negative, but they nevertheless received the most votes. Much of the coverage of the Egyptian Bloc was limited to comments by liberal parties on statements by Islamists, comments on the rise of the Islamists in the first rounds of voting, or explanations of their stance on *feloul* and the political exclusion law. Qualitatively, this coverage does not reflect any explanation of the programs or objectives of liberal parties, which would ostensibly enter into the calculations of the electorate when voting. Most of the coverage of the Wafd Party is due to the fact that al-Haya channel was part of the sample and is not an indication of the party's strong media presence.

Thus, the most important finding of this study is that after the January 25 Revolution, the public lost confidence in many state agencies and institutions, including the media, and lost faith in a private media long dominated by capital and its interests. It is difficult especially in this period to read public opinion and understand how it is formed by looking solely at the media, as there are numerous other factors that shape voters' views during elections. We cannot ignore the role of direct or personal contact—discourses in houses of worship, squares, election rallies—in influencing voters, or the role of the electronic media, which has assumed more importance since the revolution. In addition, radio has a major impact on voters' views and has recently regained ground and influence.

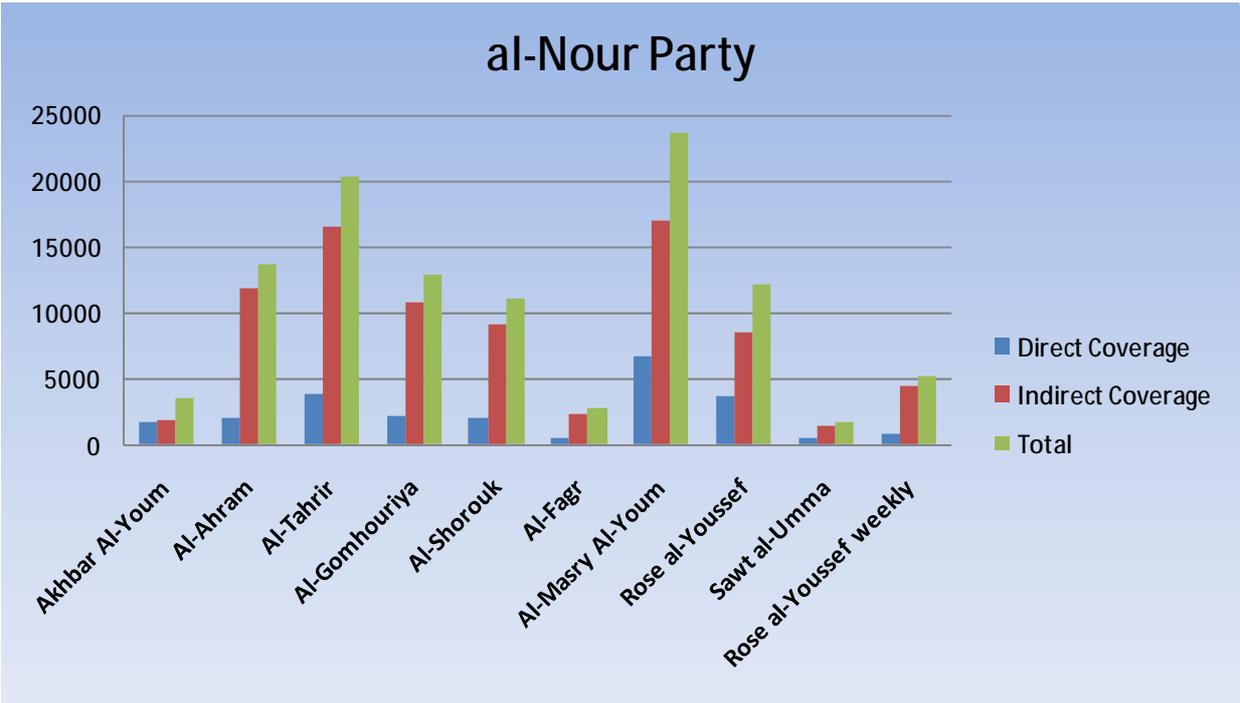
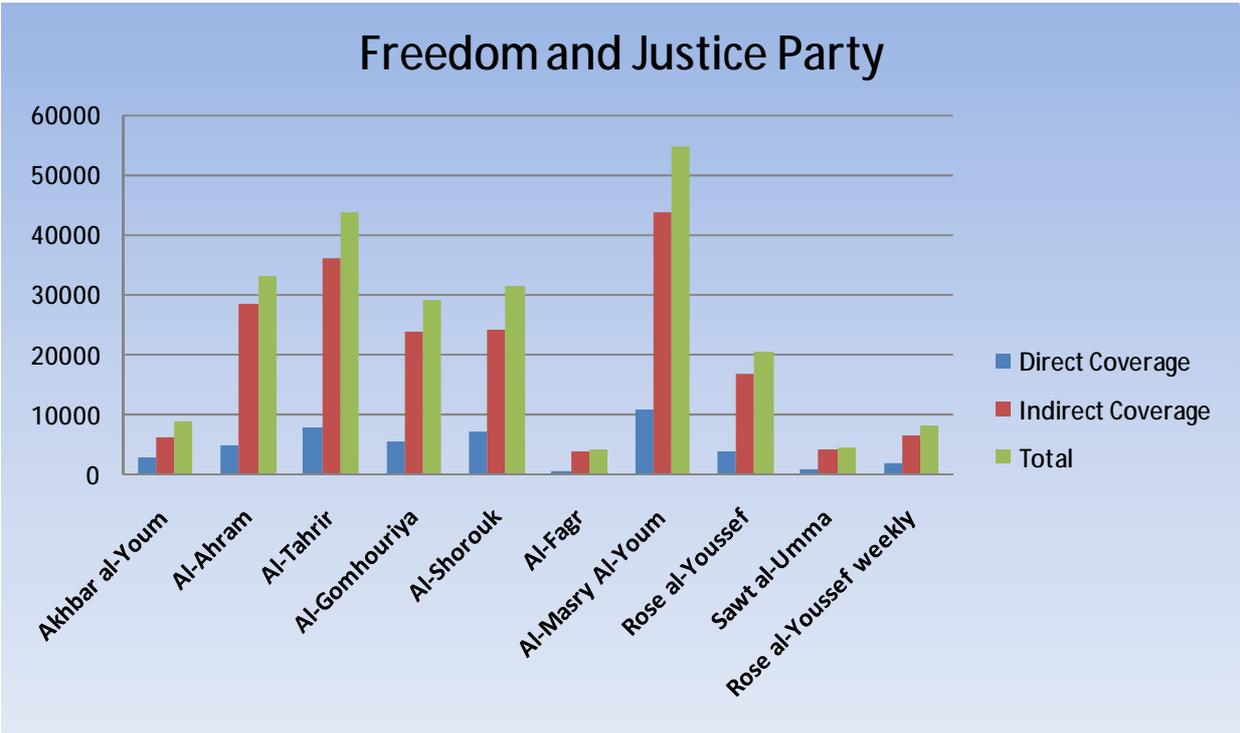
Moreover, the traditional media's persistent negative coverage of Islamist groups may have stoked audience sympathy for the party under attack, prompting them to support the media underdog at the ballot box, contrary to the media's intentions and preferences.

The media, then, did not succeed in its role of helping to shape public opinion during elections because it did not act as an impartial source of information about candidates' platforms or give voice to the needs and concerns of voters in a way that would shore up its role and influence after the revolution. Indeed, it fell into the trap of sensationalism and limited its performance to issues that did not express voter concerns or the real platforms of candidates.

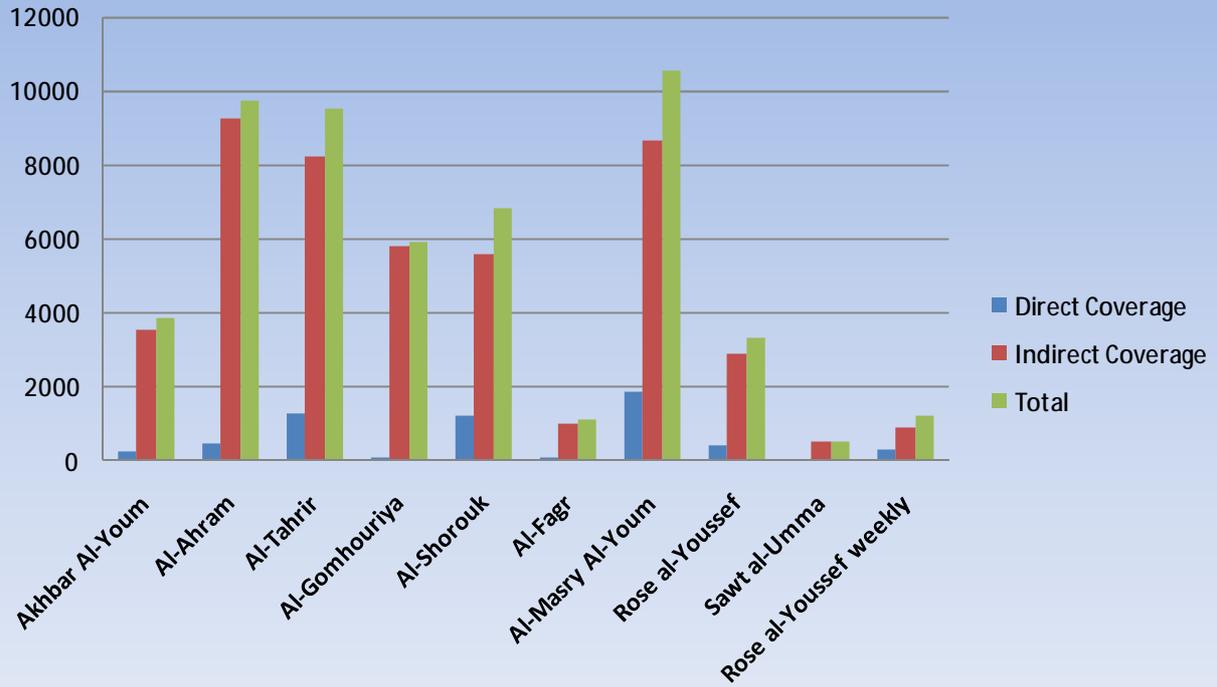
Appendices

I. Coverage of winning parties in the print and audiovisual media

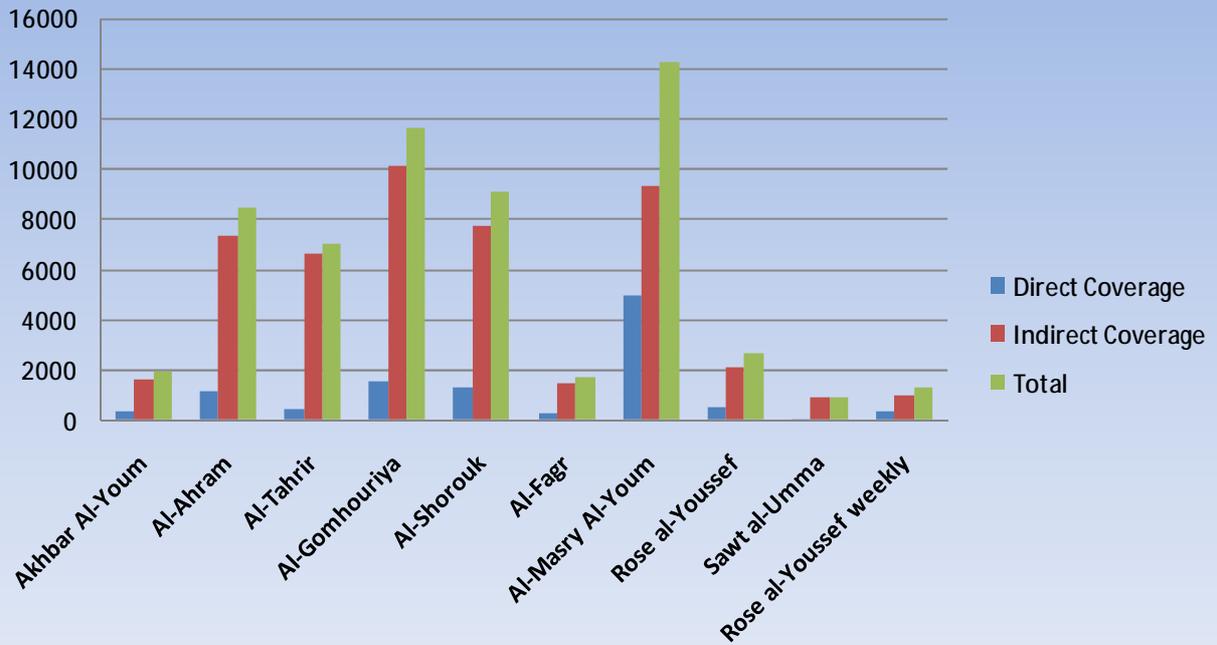
Print media:



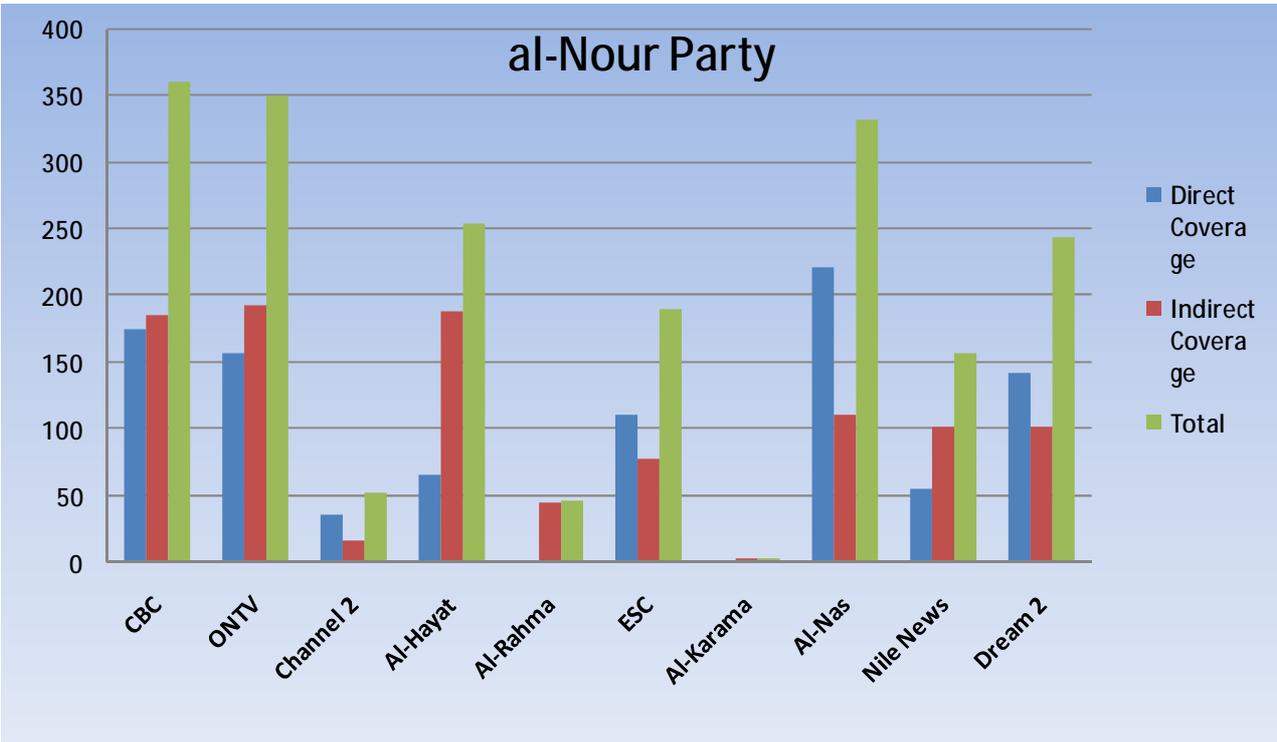
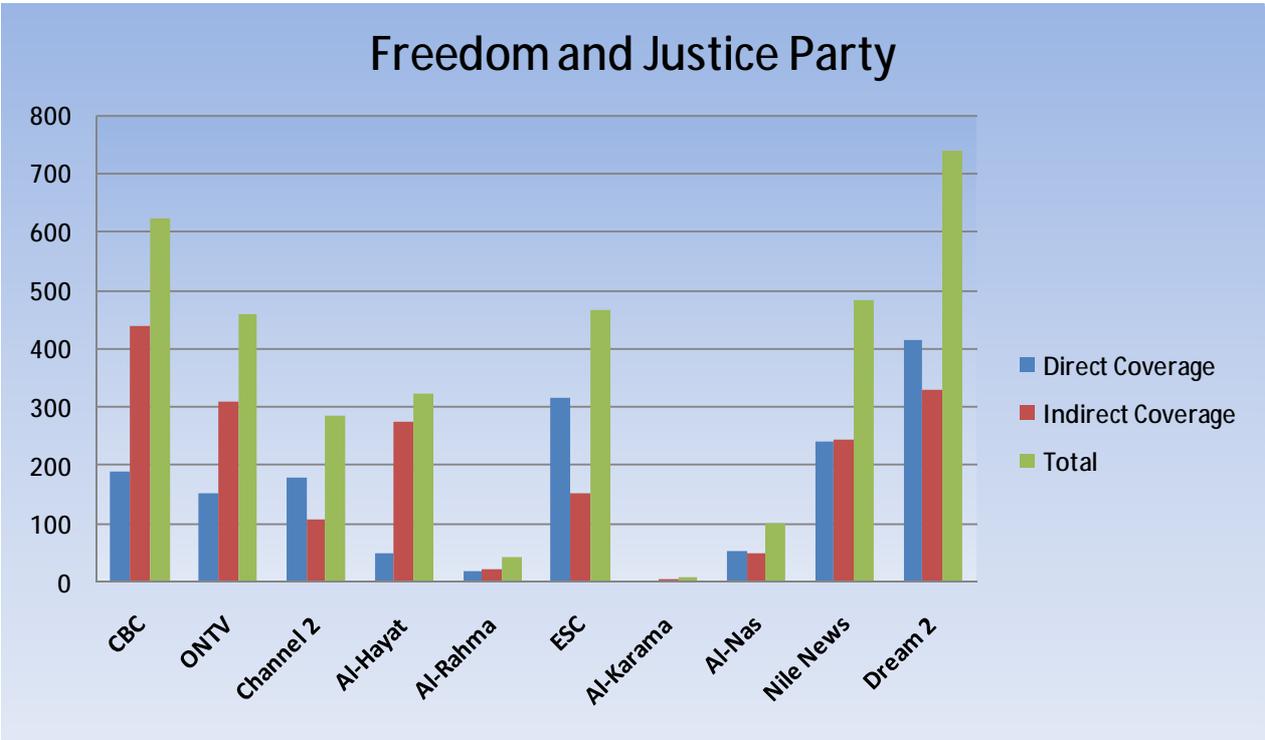
Egyptian Bloc



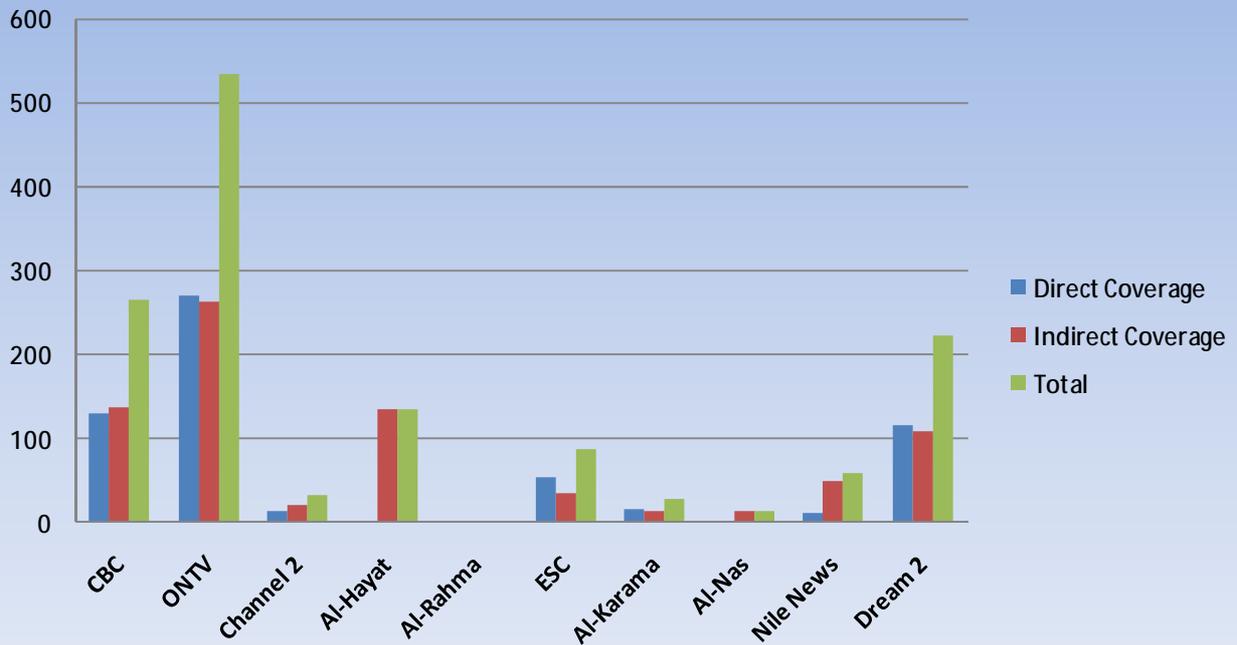
New Wafd Party



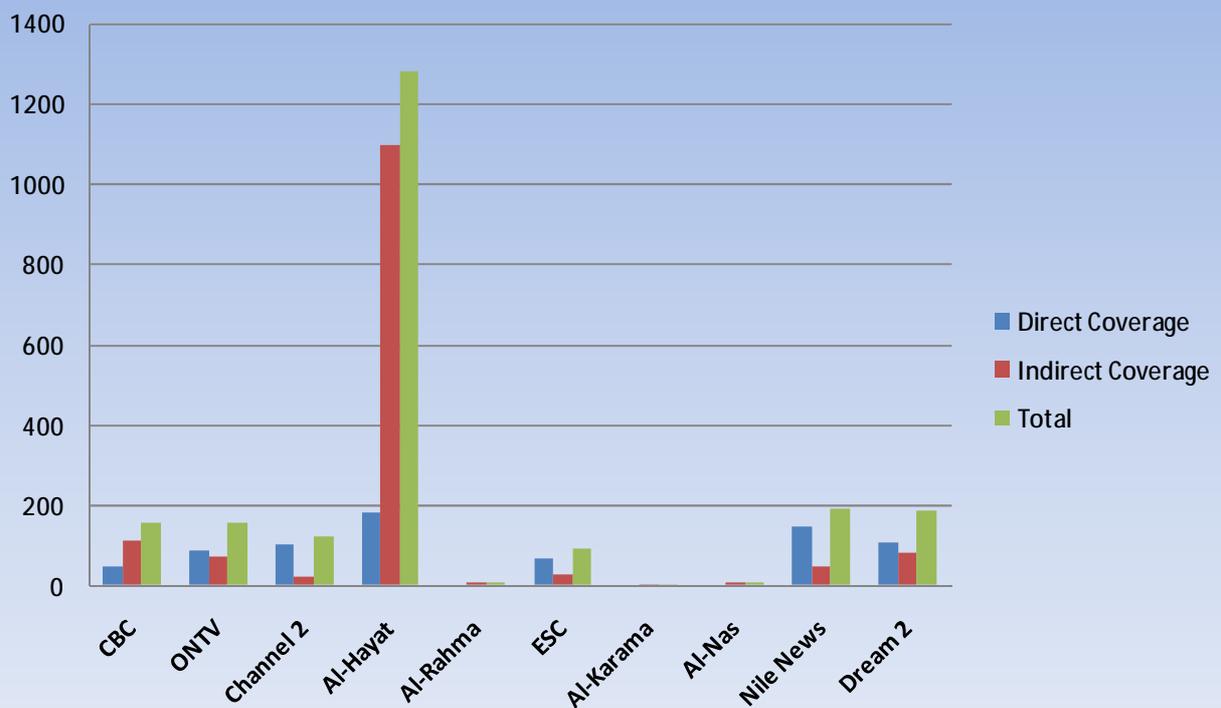
Audiovisual media:



Egyptian Bloc



New Wafd Party



II. Survey forms used in the research

Quantitative survey of the press

Name of monitor:

Newspaper:

Date:

Page	Section	Actor	Type	Governorate	Direct coverage	Indirect coverage	Assessment

Quantitative survey of television

Name of monitor:

Channel:

Program:

Broadcast Date:

Type of coverage	Actor	Type	Governorate	Direct coverage		Indirect coverage		Assessment
				Min.	Sec.	Min.	Sec.	

Qualitative survey of the press

Name of monitor:

Newspaper:

Date:

Elections (dimensions and parties)

1. Did you observe bias (positive or negative) toward any of the following agents or their use in a biased manner in election coverage?

- SCAF:
- Interior Ministry:
- Government:
- Political Parties Committee:
- al-Gamaa al-Islamiya:
- Judiciary:
- Muslim Brothers:
- Clerics:
- Public figures:
- Thugs:
- *Feloul*:
- Advocacy organizations:
- HEC:

2. How did the paper present women as an agent in the electoral process?

Positive

Negative

Neutral

Disregarded them

3. How did the paper present the sectarian dimension of the electoral process?

Positive

Negative

Neutral

Disregarded it

4. Did the paper include voter education and raise awareness of the electoral process, its development, and its news?

Somewhat

Not at all

Very much

5. How did the paper cover members of the dissolved NDP?

Covered it somewhat

Strongly focused on it

With a negative bias

With a positive bias

Editorial elements

6. Did you observe the use of any of the following editorial elements in a distinctive way (positive or negative) toward a party to the electoral process? Please explain the coverage.

- Formulation of news:
- Formulation of headline and its relationship to the content:
- Photo caption and its relationship with the topic:
- Paper's focus on all actors in the electoral process:
- Fairness of distribution of coverage among parties to the news:
- Diversity of sources and inclusion of different viewpoints:
- Use of anonymous sources:
- Mixing of opinion and news:
- Choice of quotes:
- Background information:
- Other elements:

Production elements

7. Did you observe the use of any of the following production elements in a distinctive way (positive or negative) toward a party to the electoral process? Please explain the coverage.

- Placement of story in the paper:
- Placement of story on the page:
- Size of story:
- Size of headline:
- Photo angle:
- Size of photo:
- Colors used in production:
- Other elements:

Qualitative survey of television

Name of monitor:

Channel:

Date:

Elections (dimensions and parties)

1. *Did you observe bias (positive or negative) toward any of the following agents or their use in a biased manner in election coverage?*

- SCAF:
- Interior Ministry:
- Government:
- Political Parties Committee:
- al-Gamaa al-Islamiya:
- Judiciary:
- Muslim Brothers:
- Clerics:
- Public figures:
- Thugs:
- *Feloul*:
- Advocacy organizations:
- HEC:

2. *How did the channel present women as an agent in the electoral process?*

Positive

Negative

Neutral

Disregarded them

3. *How did the channel present the sectarian dimension of the electoral process?*

Positive

Negative

Neutral

Disregarded it

4. *Did the channel include voter education and raise awareness of the electoral process, its development, and its news?*

Somewhat

Not at all

Very much

5. *How did the channel cover members of the dissolved NDP?*

Covered it somewhat

Strongly focused on it

With a negative bias

With a positive bias

Production elements

6. *Did you observe a bias (positive or negative) in the use of any of the following elements in election coverage?*

- Camera angles:
- Studio décor:
- Ad breaks:
- Distribution of time:
- Selection of images on the screen:
- Directing of on-location reports:
- Ordering of news or segments:
- Other:

Editorial elements

7. *Did you observe a bias (positive or negative) in the use of any of the following elements in election coverage?*

- Quotes on the screen:
- Anchor question and interventions:
- Diversity of guests and their expression of diverse views:
- Other: