

Media and Parliamentary Elections in Egypt

Evaluation of Media Performance in the Parliamentary Elections

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Table of Contents

Work Team	4
Introduction	5
Research Methodology	6
Summary of Findings	9
Recommendations	11
The Industry of Fear Report :Media and the 2010 Parliamentary Elections	13
Quantitative Analysis	27
Qualitative Analysis	69
Results of the Parliamentary Elections	77
Annexes	78
Annex1: Professional Code of Ethics for Media Coverage of General Elections	79
Annex2:Press Release from the Forum of Independent Human Rights Organizations on Electoral Corruption	85
Annex3:Press Releases from the Independent Coalition for Election Monitoring Issued during Elections	89

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Introduction

The final report evaluating the media's performance during the 2010 parliamentary elections in Egypt documents how various media addressed the entire electoral process. The report is based on media monitoring of the elections carried out by the CIHRS in the period between October 28 and December 15, 2010.

During the documentation period, the CIHRS convened three press conferences during which it released two interim reports as well as a press statement before the conclusion of the monitoring period and after the runoffs. The first interim report was issued on November 13, 2010, following two weeks of documentation. The second was issued on November 27, 2010, on the eve of elections. The press release of December 6 was issued one day after the runoff races and covered previous findings as well as practices that occurred during elections and in the immediate aftermath.

This final report contains previously released findings, as well as more detailed commentary, conclusions, analysis, and explanatory graphs. It also includes a report detailing the vicious attacks on the media that directly preceded the parliamentary elections, as well as the obstacles and setbacks faced by media and media personnel during the elections themselves.

Research Methodology

The primary objective of media monitoring of election coverage is to help answer the following questions:

- Did political parties and candidates have fair access to the media?
- Was coverage of party and candidates' activities objective and fair?
- Did the authorities and the press respect the law and local and international conventions during the campaign?
- Were citizens able to obtain sufficient, unbiased information through the media that would help them make an informed decision to vote for a particular candidate on Election Day?

In order to answer these questions, the team monitored media coverage of the parliamentary elections published or broadcast from October 28 to December 15, 2010. A sample of 16 daily and weekly newspapers and magazines was chosen, including seven national or state-owned papers (al-Ahram, al-Akhbar, al-Gomhouriya, al-Ahram al-Masai, Roz al-Youssef magazine, Roz al-Youssef daily paper, and al-Musawwar,) and nine private or independent publications (al-Masry al-Yom, Nahdat Misr, al-Dostor, al-Usbua, Sawt al-Umma, Watani, al-Shorouk, al-Fajr, and al-Yom al-Sabia), as well as eight television channels (1, 2, Nile News, Dream 2, Mehwar, Hayat 1, al-Farain, and ONTV).

For our purposes, not all election-related content was monitored; relevant material included any media treatment of candidates, parties, and competing political forces in the elections. As such, a substantial portion of the material published or broadcast in connection with elections was intentionally disregarded.

Press messaging is an extremely complex phenomenon and thus evaluating it is equally difficult and complicated. Good journalism necessarily entails making value judgments, whether negative or positive; without these, much of its value is lost. Readers are not only searching for the truth, but want some help to interpret the facts. Good journalism is balanced and impartial overall, but not in all of its particulars. In other words, good journalism offers positive and negative evaluations as a consequence of the different perspectives it takes on its topic or through its presentation of various views of a phenomenon or an implicit opinion. The balance, impartiality, and objectivity that we seek in the press are not attainable on every level of the material, but in the story or article as a whole, or in the newspaper or television channel. We thus established the following guidelines for the monitors to aid them in evaluating the material they were monitoring in a unified, systematic fashion.

1. The bare facts: with the exception of those few cases in which it is possible to make a clear evaluation of the nature of the media material, the monitor must ask himself if the story related by the journalist actually happened. If the event occurred, the journalist must present it to his readers or viewers or he is being professionally negligent. Presenting an event as it happened is impartial conduct on the part of the journalist.
2. Importance of the event: nevertheless, just because an event actually happened does not mean its coverage can be described as impartial. The monitor must ask additional questions, most importantly whether the event covered is actually significant and linked to the elections or whether it was a regular event covered to create certain negative or positive impressions.
3. Impartiality of expressions and terms: did the journalist's coverage of the event include judgmental expressions, whether negative or positive, that may influence the reader or viewer's impression of the event or its impact on him?
4. Spontaneity versus manufacturing: did the event occur spontaneously or did the journalist seek to manufacture it? For example, did the journalist interview certain figures for their opinions and thus influence the views of the reader or viewer? Did he select events that happened in the past or material from the archive that has little direct connection to the elections? Attempting to manufacture an event or using archival or historical material to convey a particular impression qualifies as bias.
5. Selectivity: the journalist always has the opportunity to choose the events and incidents to focus on, and this ability to select gives him the opportunity to be impartial, positive, or negative. Selectivity is at work when the journalist focuses on positive or negative incidents in an event—a campaign rally, for example—that lasted for several hours.
6. Impression of the average reader: as a general rule, one can rely on the impression of the average reader about the media content and the way it was covered to determine whether the coverage should be classified as positive, negative, or impartial.
7. Implicit message: as an alternative measure, if it is difficult to judge the impressions of the average reader or viewer, we can rely on our impressions of the implicit message that the journalist attempted to convey in the coverage.
8. Reliance on impartial coverage: if the monitor is in doubt as to whether a particular media item is positive, negative, or impartial, he must ask himself how it would have been covered in a completely impartial manner and if this manner is consistent with journalistic norms.
9. If in doubt, impartiality is the rule: as a general rule, an impartial evaluation is the safest and fairest. If the monitor is unsure whether the media item should be classified as positive or negative, an evaluation of impartial is the safe choice, following the legal precept that it is better to let a thousand criminals escape justice rather than convict an innocent person.

This report relies on the methodology applied in dozens of countries, using two types of evaluation: a precise quantitative evaluation of the space devoted to election coverage of various political actors in different media outlets, and a qualitative evaluation of the

way the media addressed various issues, particularly voter education, its concern with women's issues, and the representation of various forces and the presentation of their views.

To monitor television coverage, each channel's daily broadcast was recorded during the monitoring period, in this case prime time, which we defined as between 7 pm and 1 am. Using a stopwatch, the monitor timed each news item, story, or segment about a political actor, candidate, or party. The researcher then determined whether the coverage was direct or indirect. This is primarily determined by whether the coverage allowed the candidate to both appear and speak (direct) or only to appear or speak (indirect). The researcher then evaluated the material as negative, positive, or impartial using several indicators established by the project supervisors. Positive coverage attempts to present a positive image to the public by explaining the achievements or attractions of a particular candidate or party in an attempt to burnish their image. Alternatively, the segment may deal with a candidate or party in a negative manner by highlighting distasteful dimensions that may prompt the viewer to reject the candidate for some reason or that may act as indirect propaganda for another person. Impartial media coverage entails presenting the facts about a candidate without positive or negative distortion.

For the press, the monitor measured the size of the news item, coverage, or story about a political actor, candidate, or party in square centimeters, including the headline and any photos used in the piece. The monitor may even devote a separate analysis to headlines and photos. The monitor then evaluated the press coverage as negative, positive, or impartial.

For the qualitative analysis, the team relied on relevant media content as they attempted to respond to the aforementioned questions, in order to provide a comprehensive report that does not only offer quantitative data, but also attempts to interpret the data and understand whether it reflects the reality of coverage or if there is a difference between quantitative measures and the actual content and message behind this coverage. The qualitative analysis also addresses several election-related issues, such as the role of civil society in the electoral process and the role of the media in educating voters. Moreover, it attempts to understand the editorial policies of various media and asks whether media ownership (public or private) has an impact on the editorial line and the degree of professionalism and impartiality shown in election coverage.

Summary of Findings

1. The focus on certain political groups, such as the National Democratic Party (NDP), the Muslim Brothers, and the Wafd Party, came at the expense of the political and electoral education of the voters. In general, media coverage of the 2010 parliamentary elections was biased toward the NDP and its candidates.
2. Press coverage of political parties was markedly unbalanced. The NDP, the Wafd, and the Muslim Brothers combined received 74.2% of all coverage, while the NDP alone received 47.8% of the total press coverage, most of which was positive. Roughly half of the coverage was positive, compared to 13% negative, 89.5% of which came from the private press.
3. In general, biased media coverage of elections took the form of negative coverage of the Muslim Brothers, particularly in the national state-owned press.
4. Television coverage of the 2010 parliamentary elections was generally meager. Television channels did not devote sufficient time to covering the electoral process, contrary to expectations. The NDP and its candidates received the most television coverage, nearly half (46.5%) of the airtime devoted to elections. Of the state-owned channels, Channel 2 devoted the most time to coverage of the NDP (56.6% of its total election coverage), 1% of it negative and 71.6% positive. Among the private channels, al-Farain devoted the most time to the NDP and its candidates, with the NDP receiving 70% of the channel's election airtime, 3.6% of it negative and 69% positive.
5. Of the state-owned press, al-Gomhouriya exhibited the most pro-NDP bias, giving the party 68.8% of its total election coverage, only 1.5% of which was negative. Among the private press, al-Yom al-Sabia showed the most pro-NDP bias, devoting 57% of its election coverage to the NDP, 12.7% of it negative and 58.5% positive.
6. The private press continued to have an impact on the media landscape in Egypt, limiting in some ways, and as much as possible, the bias of the official media.
7. The private press in particular was subject to greater security harassment during the elections, in an attempt to pressure it to adopt certain policies.
8. Media coverage, especially coverage in state-owned papers, showed a marked interest in state figures, particularly ministers and governors.
9. There was a focus on the women's quota at the expense of other women's issues and women's rights.
10. A prominent issue addressed by the media was the monitoring of elections and the role of civil society in the process, seen as a local alternative to international monitors, which were rejected by some and supported by others.

11. Virtually all media outlets raised the issue of presidential elections, which cast a shadow over discussions of parliamentary elections.
12. Various Egyptian papers published conflicting results for the elections in several districts. Indeed, there was no universally accepted result published in the press for several days after the announcement of the final results.

Recommendations

1. Achieve media independence from the state, reformulate laws regulating media ownership, and administer media institutions to guarantee their impartiality and professionalism.
2. Exercise care to select press leaders from among independent journalists, establish the necessary legal regulations to achieve this, and include these regulations in the journalist code of ethics.
3. Reconsider the regulations governing state-owned television and radio broadcasts, and develop them so as not to restrict vital, competitive, and objective media coverage.
4. Develop legislation regulating media performance during general elections that is suited to a competitive political environment and standards of neutrality and equal opportunity, and reinforce the compulsory nature of these statutes.
5. Include state-owned papers in the laws and standards associated with the media and elections.
6. Campaign laws should prohibit the government from issuing decrees, announcing policies, or inaugurating public projects that may be seen as campaigning for members of the government, the president, or the ruling party during the campaign period, and the state-owned media should abstain from covering such decrees during the campaign period.
7. Legal and political instruments should exist to protect journalists from assault while doing their jobs.
8. Develop the journalist code of ethics to include provisions on the professional principles that must be honored during election coverage in a pluralistic political system, particularly the following:
 - A clear distinction between news related to the activities or tasks of the president or cabinet members and news coverage of them as candidates.
 - The public should be made aware of paid ads, both on air and in print.
 - Guarantee the right of timely response to any candidate or political party deserving of it.
9. Animate the journalist code of ethics and the role of the Journalists Syndicate in monitoring and developing professional performance.
10. Organize training sessions to improve the professional performance of media personnel.
11. Develop training programs specifically for election coverage to guarantee objectivity, fairness, and professionalism.

The Industry of Fear Report

Media and the 2010 Parliamentary Elections

Written by /Amr Salah

“The censor who now dwells inside me is difficult to describe to you. He’s a strange mixture of the police officer, the fanatical sheikh, and the unyielding priest; a mixture of burly stick and lash; of the cavalry officer armed with a Sudanese bullwhip and the lowly foot soldier; of the informer concealed in a gallabiya and an overcoat or hidden behind dark, gold-rimmed Ray-Bans. A censor with a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousands arms.”

*“A pause before the descent,” from the papers of an Egyptian intellectual, 1952-1982
Alaa al-Dib*

Introduction

The aim of this report is to shed light on the vicious assault on media that directly preceded the parliamentary elections in 2010. The report was originally finalized in mid-December 2010. The events that followed in Tunisia, then Egypt, delayed the publication of this report. However, it is believed that this report is relevant as it builds the pictures of the policies of the former regime during its last days, particularly with regards to freedom of expression.

In the run-up to the elections, several blows were directed at media and media professionals, which in the space of four weeks led to an almost complete restructuring of media freedoms in Egypt. The campaign spread a climate of fear and anxiety and fostered self-censorship among media professionals, which was further sharpened by subsequent measures. Some interpreted the campaign as the regime’s desire to impose a full media blackout on the electoral process.

The campaign sought to achieve its objectives by striking mortal blows at certain individuals or outlets. The consequences of which would be sufficient to create a climate of fear and impose a ceiling on media. The fear would be heightened through indirect messages and warnings sent to private media owners or workers who dared push through this ceiling.

Sketching the broad outlines of this plan was a difficult task, from accurately describing the genuine state of fear that dominated media and press workers to attempting to document and link the phases, elements, and features of the plan. The researcher relied on interviews with writers, analysts, journalists, and media professions. Some openly challenged the constraints preventing them from discussing their view of events. Others were fearful, refusing to talk frankly when they discovered the topic of the report or

evading contact after answering the initial telephone call. Another set repeatedly bowed out of prearranged interviews.

We owe special thanks to the following people:

1. Abdullah al-Sennawi, editor-in-chief of the Nasserist *al-Arabi*
2. Ahmed Ragab, journalist with *al-Masry al-Youm*
3. Alaa al-Aswany, novelist and former columnist for *al-Shorouk*
4. Ammar Ali Hassan, political analyst and writer at *al-Masry al-Youm*
5. Asadallah al-Sawi, BBC correspondent
6. Emad al-Din Hussein, managing editor and writer at *al-Shorouk*
7. Hisham Kassem, publisher and founding member of *al-Masry al-Youm*
8. Hussein Abd al-Ghani, media expert and former head of al-Jazeera's Cairo bureau
9. Khaled Ezz al-Arab, BBC correspondent
10. Nader Gohar, chair of CNC for media services
11. Rami Ibrahim, head of the Kuwaiti *al-Jarida* bureau in Cairo and former head of the CNBC bureau
12. Salah Nasrawi, Associated Press Correspondent
13. Samir Omar, al-Jazeera's Correspondent, Cairo bureau
14. Tareq al-Shami, head of al-Hurra's Cairo bureau
15. Wael Qandil, managing editor and writer at *al-Shorouk*

In their interviews, these individuals provided valuable analysis, interpretations, and information. We also wish to thank five other sources who preferred to remain anonymous. They also provided us with extremely useful analysis and helped crystallize the overarching picture described in this report.

The first steps of the plan started by striking a series of mortal blows at specific targets, among them was Amr Adib and the program "Cairo Today," one of the most well-known talk shows in Egypt with a substantial impact on public opinion and debate.¹ Media Production City, the owner of the studios from which the program is broadcast, decided in September 2010 to suspend the program, citing outstanding debts to the studio and financial arrears with the company that owned the television channel. Amr Adib insisted that the decision was political, particularly since the company that owns his program offered to settle the debts only a few hours after the program was suspended, but Media Production City refused to claim the payment. Adib said that his show was suspended for reasons connected with Egyptian politics.² Sources within Media Production City refused to comment on the decision, saying only there were internal reasons, the details of which it would not discuss.³

The second strike was directed at Ibrahim Eissa, perhaps most critical Egyptian journalist of the former regime. After Ramadan, the former editor-in-chief of *al-Dostor*

¹ Taped interview with novelist Dr. Alaa al-Aswany.

² Amr Adib, "Asbab siyasiya wara' ikhtifa' 'al-Qahira al-yawm," CNN Arabia, Oct. 1, 2010, <<http://arabic.cnn.com/2010/entertainment/10/1/Amr.orbit/index.html>>.

³ We repeatedly contacted one of the most important staff members of the program for an interview, but were always rebuffed with polite apologies and excuses.

was removed from ONTV, where he hosted one of the most audacious talk shows as a result of pressures put on the owner of the channel to remove Eissa.⁴ After the channel announced in a statement that Eissa had left the channel to devote himself to his editorial duties at *al-Dostor*, the channel's owner, Naguib Sawirus, told Lamis al-Hadidi in an interview that he had removed Eissa because of problems with advertisers on Eissa's show, "Our Country in Vernacular," which he co-hosted with Reem Maged. These problems arose because Eissa crossed the red lines.⁵

The fiercest blow, described as "the decapitation of the wolf," came when the new owners of *al-Dostor* dismissed Eissa as editor in chief on October 4, 2010, sending a stark message to the entire media.⁷ In such cases, however, capital does not act alone; rather, it relies, directly or indirectly, on a green light from the security and political authorities, who were keen to impose a climate of calmness and compliance paving the way for the parliamentary and the subsequent presidential elections to ensure a peaceful transfer of power,⁸ undisturbed by the uproar created by then newspaper that daily attacked former President Mubarak and his succession plan and supported political and opposition movements by opening up its pages to them.

"For the apparatus currently planning the administration of upcoming elections, the solution is not to stop election rigging, but to stop talking about rigging. This is why we're seeing steps like curbing the satellite media—and this goes beyond program hosts themselves, to guests, news reports, and telephone call-ins. The press' turn is coming soon; some will get the soft touch while others will face crude interference."
Ibrahim Eissa⁶

The Supreme Press Council later announced that it had no reservations about *al-Dostor* being issued without a chief editor who would be responsible for its policies and management,⁹ effectively confirming that the state had given a green light for Eissa's removal and a shift in the paper's editorial line. Gamal Fahmi, a member of the board at the Journalists Syndicate, told the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) that the paper was issued for two weeks without a chief editor, which is entirely unprecedented. Ibrahim Mansour, journalist, said that issuing the paper under the supervision of the executive editor is in fact illegal under Egypt's press law.¹⁰

⁴ Taped interview with publisher Hisham Kassem.

⁵ "Qarar jadid bi-ighlaq arba' qanawat Misriya wa tahdhir ithnayn," Elaph, Oct. 13, 2010, <<http://www.elaph.com/Web/arts/2010/10/603488.html>>.

⁶ "Ta'limat al-nazaha," *al-Dostor*, Oct. 3, 2010, <<http://dostor.org/editorial/10/october/3/30895>>.

⁷ "Qarar jadid bi-ighlaq arba' qanawat Misriya."

⁸ Salama Ahmad Salama, "Ra's al-dhi'b al-ta'ir," *al-Shorouk*, Oct. 11, 2010, <<http://www.shorouknews.com/Columns/Column.aspx?id=311688>>.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Phone interviews with Gamal Fahmi and Ibrahim Mansour, former executive editor of *al-Dostor*. Article 54 of the press law (Law 96/1996), in the second section on ownership and the issuance of newspapers, states that "each newspaper must have a chief editor responsible for exercising effective oversight of published content, as well as several editors each responsible for exercising effective oversight of a particular division of the paper." The article goes on to state, "If this provision is violated, the paper shall be suspended for a period not to exceed six months, pursuant to a request from the Supreme Press Council. If the cause of the violation is not rectified within this period, the license shall be considered revoked."

The removal of Ibrahim Eissa in this manner was a strong message to the entire media sector, indicating that similar measures may be taken against other independent newspapers.¹¹

These elimination measures created a climate of fear and doubt that blanketed media circles. Even those who did not face similar measures began to feel anxious, gingerly approaching every step, every news report, and every news piece and carefully considering the reactions it might bring. The best example of this was a statement by Mona al-Shazli, the host of one of the most prominent talk shows, quoted by several newspapers; referring to the removal of Ibrahim Eissa, Shazli said, “You were the first, we’re next.”

“I can tell you that all Egyptian media professionals are carefully feeling out every step they take ... they are feeling out where they’re going. There is a state of doubt, apprehension, and waiting to see where the next blow is coming from.”
Wael Qandil

The situation led to increased self-censorship, prompting the chief editor of one well-known private newspaper to express his concern that any pretext might be used to shut down his paper. At the same time, an internal conflict shook the paper, with the editorial board split between those who wanted to cling to the former ceiling of freedom and another camp that believed that the restrictive climate compelled a retreat. One staff member at this same paper told us that he personally felt the birth of his own self-censor upon learning of Eissa’s dismissal, but he agreed with his page editor that they would stick to the former ceiling as much as possible. The same source said that of all the state’s plans to restrict the media, this was the smartest: every media worker he met had begun to self-censor, and many op-ed writers had decided to put limits on their articles.¹²

“Al-Shorouk is being blackmailed these days—factories are being shut down and secret messages sent warning of greater losses to the interests of [publisher] Ibrahim Muallim. This led to the withdrawal of Alaa al-Aswany and Hamdi Qandil.”
Abdullah al-Sennawi

At *al-Shorouk*, novelist Alaa al-Aswany said that the paper had been under pressure for quite some time, and that meetings had been held where this was explicitly stated. Everyone was being pressured, even non-contentious writers.¹³

Self-censorship in the independent and private press began to play a vital role. Writers themselves became careful not to write an article that the paper might ban or demand changes to, or they began writing on philosophical issues that dealt with only generalities.¹⁴ “I believe the tone has calmed down at most papers,” said Ammar Ali Hassan. “Or we’re seeing that papers are using the excuse of not enough space, or that an article didn’t arrive on time, or

“There’s a fierce assault on freedom of speech. They’re turning off the light because they’re going to steal. They are going to engage in an unprecedented rigging of elections.”
Alaa al-Aswany

¹¹ Source made anonymous upon his/her request.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Taped interview with Dr. Ammar Ali Hassan.

that someone else had submitted an article earlier that took up more space. They have maneuvers they use to respond, but no one tells you the truth.”¹⁵

On October 12, 2010, the General Authority for Investment (GAFI) issued an order closing several satellite channels, among them al-Khalijiya, al-Hafiz, al-Sahha wa al-Jamal, and al-Nas, claiming they had violated licensing and advertising conditions. ONTV and al-Farain received warnings of licensing violations. In a statement, the head of GAFI said the decision was made after it was observed that these channels were violating the conditions of their license, saying that freedom of expression does not mean presenting material that incites strife and hatred. Atef Abd al-Rashid, the president of both al-Hafez and al-Sahha wa al-Jamal, said that the channel management received no advance warning, either in writing or by phone, cautioning them about a particular program; no one had ever complained about the channel’s policy. Albert Shafiq, the president of ONTV, said that the channel had received a warning that their news ticker was prohibited, with no clear reason given.¹⁶

“This is the first time I’ve heard that you need a license for the news ticker.”
Albert Shafiq, president of ONTV¹⁷

A few days after the decision, the management of the Egyptian satellite company NileSat closed down 12 satellite channels until such time as they could rectify their status and alter their media message to comply with the terms of their contracts, observe the principles of religion, and stop inciting sectarian strife and tensions. Another 20 channels were also required to comply with their contracts.¹⁸ On November 27, 2010, the Administrative Court suspended the order for four of these channels. The ruling stated that the conduct of NileSat in temporarily or permanently suspending three of the channels, the failure of GAFI and the media free zone to protect compliant investors, and their consent for the suspension of a legitimate activity without cause was invalid, violated the constitution and law, and constituted an abuse of rights and liberties.¹⁹ The violations of the other channels affected by the decree were sufficient to maintain their closure. These included breaches of either regulations governing activities inside the media free zone in Sixth of October City or the Arab code of media ethics approved by Arab information ministers and widely applied in the region.²⁰ The code includes extremely flexible and vague provisions, requiring, for example, consideration for the principles and etiquette of dialogue and compliance with the religious and moral principles of society.

In issuing these decrees, state institutions seriously overstepped their prerogatives. The executive authority crossed all constitutional boundaries and virtually leaped over the principle of the separation of powers, making and implementing decisions while

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ “Tasa’ud ma’rakat al-i’lam: ighlaq 4 qanawat wa indhar li-ONTV wa-l-Fara’in,” al-Masry al-Youm, Oct. 13, 2010, <<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=273239&IssueID=1922>>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ “Hay’at al-istithmar tughliq qanawat al-nas wa-l-hafiz wa-l-Khalijiya wa-l-sihha wa-l-jamal,” al-Masry al-Youm, Oct. 13, 2010, <<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=273232&IssueID=1922>>.

¹⁹ Ruling issued in case no. 4861/65Q.

²⁰ Decree Q/294-DA/40-2007/6/20.

completely ignoring the legislative and judicial branches, which are ostensibly charged with these tasks. The pretexts it used—rectifying and correcting the course or confronting sectarianism—were belied by the evidence, which indicated that the goal was entirely different. For one thing, the state itself allowed television channels, radio, and press and publications to incite religious hatred. Indeed, these channels were under surveillance by State Security, and no sheikh was allowed to appear on any of them without its explicit approval.²¹ In addition, the authorities paid no mind to protests by intellectuals and writers who believe in a civil state, but nevertheless protested the closures.

The sudden closure of such a large number of channels, without preface or warning, had a frightening impact on the confidence of other private channels, including among owners, technicians, and media workers. This was reflected in the general performance of private channels, especially talk shows. The step aimed to narrow the margin of freedom given to these channels in previous years in order to eliminate a worrisome outlet that had helped expose irregularities and violations in the 2005 elections.

While preparing this report, an attempt was made to collect the impressions of workers at several private channels through taped interviews. Interviews were indeed arranged with a group of workers on important talk shows, but they proved repeatedly unable to make the appointment. Others evaded requests for interviews, and some later refused to answer their telephone after having been informed of the topic of the report during the initial phone conversation. Those who agreed to talk refused to go on the record and did not allow the interviews to be taped, even for purely documentary purposes, or speak in the presence of their colleagues.

A female announcer at ONTV who refused to meet us said, “I have nothing to do with that topic. You can talk to someone else at the channel.” Another worker at the same channel said, “We’re terrified,” pointing to the two warnings it had received and saying who knows what would happen after the third; perhaps the channel would shut its doors. This would mean, he said, “that people would be out of a job.” Asked how the channel had avoided the third warning thus far, he said that management had not simply complied with the text of the warnings—that is, to suspend the news ticker—but had engaged directly with the unstated political demand behind the warnings: lightening the tone of the news ticker and refraining from reporting news that could be embarrassing to the government.

A worker at Dream TV said, as he constantly looked at the door to his office to ensure it was closed lest his colleagues hear, “There are a lot of security pressures, and they’ve increased more and more this month.” During interviews, even when we asked non-contentious questions, many people would be gripped with fear, their eyes regularly darting in every direction to ensure that none of their coworkers or colleagues

“I think that in Egypt, and it’s one of the most centrally governed states since the days of the Pharaohs, the saying ‘Strike at the tethered horse and the one on the range will fear’ applies. The space wrested away by the independent press, with the support of civil society and human rights groups, is being ceded.”
Hussein Abd al-Ghani

²¹ “al-Shaykh Safwat al-Hijazi: al-qanawat al-diniya kulluha tabi’a li-mabahith amn al-dawla,” Sawt al-Umma, Oct. 28, 2010, <<http://waelebrashy.com/forum/t20682.html>>.

would hear them. A well-known female announcer in Egypt who works at one of the best-known private channels told a friend that she was under severe pressure and feared losing the respect of the audience because of repeated demands that she avoid important subjects, discuss trivial matters, or relinquish her impartiality. According to her, “They don’t want even the limited margin [of freedom].”²²

A worker at a state-owned television channel said that the minister of information ordered him not to air any story related to elections or host any person on a program about elections without first giving notice and waiting for instructions. Digressing, he said that he hoped to take a sabbatical until elections were over. “Work is no longer comfortable,” he said. “We don’t know exactly what’s permitted and what isn’t, so what we’re doing isn’t enjoyable, even for the producers.” A talk show producer on another channel said that the minister of information had started to see himself as the chief editor of the two most well-known talk shows, “Egypt Today” and “From the Heart of Egypt,” arrogating to himself the right of veto over even the most minor details.

On November 9, 2010, the National Democratic Party (NDP) published a news item on its website saying that the party had filed a complaint regarding infractions on the “Ten O’clock” show. The NDP submitted a complaint with the chair of the Committee to Observe and Rectify Audiovisual Media and Campaign Coverage of the People’s Assembly Elections about what it described as a violation of the rules and standards of objectivity on an episode of the show that aired on November 7, 2010. The NDP complained that the show employed a negative approach that included an attack on an internal party matter.²³ Muawwad Khattab, an NDP member of the Shura Council, also submitted a proposal asking for an investigation and immediate action in response to the same episode of the talk show.²⁴ The episode in question, which discussed the NDP parliamentary candidates, hosted two editors from state-owned newspapers. The program was forced to suspend broadcast for several days, including over the Eid al-Adha holiday.

The al-Hayat channel also received a warning because of a program that discussed restrictions on the press. The free media zone, part of GAFI, sent a strongly worded letter to al-Hayat, noting that the program producers of “Life Today” should not repeat their criticism of the Supreme Judicial Council, citing an episode about the decree banning cameras in courtrooms. In the letter, the free media zone threatened to escalate measures if this “error” was repeated.²⁵

*“Some channel owners advised talk show hosts to quiet down until the storm passed because the directives in this matter were clear.”
Ammar Ali Hassan*

The directives sent out to satellite channels by the Information Ministry stipulated that when discussing the People’s Assembly elections, channels comply with the Uniform

²² Ibid.

²³ “al-Hizb yataqaddam bi-shakwa bi-sha’n tajawuzat barnamaj al-‘ashira masa’an,” NDP website, Nov. 9, 2010,

²⁴ “Na’ib bi-l-shura yutalib bi-ijra’at radi’a didd al-‘ashira masa’an,” al-Youm al-Sabia, Nov. 11, 2010, <<http://www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=303432>>.

²⁵ “Indhar li-qanat al-hayah bi-sabab barnamaj naqash al-quyud al-mafruda ‘ala-l-sahafa,” al-Masry al-Youm, Nov. 4, 2010, <<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=275901&IssueID=1944>>.

Principles and Norms for Audiovisual Media Coverage of the People’s Assembly Elections. These directives were some of the gravest ever released and constituted a clear warning and a threat to all media workers. The code, which more closely resembles a list of security and political orders, required media workers on screen to comply with provisions that encroach on freedom of opinion and expression. It was described by media workers as “a scandal by any measure.” The directives banned the broadcast of any material liable to undermine citizens’ confidence in the electoral process at any stage or diminish its importance. This article alone was sufficient to punish and criminalize anyone who dared to expose irregularities or violations in the elections, which already promised to be a farce. The code suggested that anyone who did this, even this report itself were it covered by the media, would be held accountable.²⁶

The code also warned against speaking out against the electoral competitors or infringing on their reputations—another flexible article to criminalize and punish the media’s exposure of the corruption of candidates, on the grounds that this may besmirch their reputation. More seriously, the document stipulated that if the Committee to Observe and Rectify Audiovisual Media and Campaign Coverage²⁷ observed a violation, it had the right to intervene as it saw fit and issue actionable recommendations to officials.²⁸

The objectives of the plan were to forestall a repeat of the 2005 elections, when news channels, using the free flow of information and exploiting the relative margin of freedom, played a fundamental role in supporting the political ferment at the time. Through live coverage of the elections, these channels were able to expose some of the widespread abuses, including police intervention, assaults on judges, voters being barred from reaching the ballot boxes, and the inaccuracies in the voter rolls.

“The primary objective of the directives, warnings, and threats of the Radio and Television Union, known as the Uniform Principles and Norms, is to prevent the media from exposing rigging, the stuffing of ballot boxes, thuggery, and bribery.”
Wael al-Ibrashi²⁹

Hussein Abd al-Ghani, the media expert and former head of al-Jazeera’s Cairo bureau, discussed this point: “During al-Jazeera’s coverage in 2005, I had a live studio operating for one month, covering the elections in the first, second, and third stages with all the run-offs. We were broadcasting live from six locations, and we provided public opinion with a free flow of information and a critical spirit, airing all the violations we filmed, from blocking Brotherhood and opposition voters, to police interventions, attacks on judges, the inaccuracy of voter rolls, the bias of state media, and the harassment of civil

²⁶ “Nanshur nass al-wathiqa: fadihat al-kataluj,” Sawt al-Umma, Nov. 21, 2010.

²⁷ The Committee to Observe and Rectify Audiovisual Media and Campaign Coverage of the People’s Assembly Elections is a government committee formed by decree of the Minister of Information. The task of the committee, operating from Oct. 30, 2010, until the declaration of all final election results, was to identify and correct media and candidates’ campaign coverage as broadcast on all audiovisual media to ensure that it conformed with the principles and norms established by the committee.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ “Nanshur nass al-wathiqa.”

society representatives to prevent them from monitoring what was really happening.”³⁰ This became impossible to repeat under the new regulations.

The regime realized from its earlier experience that live coverage was the long arm of a media interested in exposing irregularities in the electoral process; in order to tighten its control over the flow of information, it needed to close this platform. This is indeed what happened. The National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) sent a letter to media services companies renting out SNG equipment³¹ to news channels and channels that owned their own SNG equipment requiring them to move SNG units from their offices in central Cairo, near the location of demonstrations and other important events, and place them in Media Production City.³² It also unilaterally revoked permission granted to owners of these companies and channels to use radio and television broadcast frequencies through SNG units as of October 15, 2010. The same letter said that if these frequencies were still desired, the company must submit a new application accompanied by written consent from the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU), threatening that legal action would be taken in the event of non-compliance with the decision.

The ERTU permit given to companies and channels that requested a new license was accompanied by conditions that effectively prevented live coverage of elections. The permit required coordination between the users and ERTU on locations, and required users to comply with the article prohibiting coverage of topics liable to harm national security and social peace. Live footage given to sports and political programs required written consent from ERTU. In addition, channels were required to inform ERTU and obtain prior consent before using an SNG unit, specifying the purpose of its use.³³ The user’s approval of these conditions also gave ERTU the right to revoke the license at any time without cause or liability.³⁴

In an attempt to arrange an interview with the owner of a media services company in Egypt, his personal secretary told us after learning the purpose of the interview that there were “obstacles and difficulties” that precluded the interview.

Nader Gohar, the owner of CNC, said that the decree had a political dimension. After it was issued, his company was forced to recall all its live broadcast equipment and rent it to Egyptian television during the elections, which meant that it could not supply units to foreign correspondents and satellite channels. “The television told us, as long as we’ve rented this equipment from you, you haven’t sustained any financial losses,” Gohar said. But the media loss far surpassed the material loss in Gohar’s opinion because it meant

³⁰ Taped interview with Hussein Abd al-Ghani.

³¹ Satellite News Gathering (SNG) refers to equipment and technology that enables live coverage of news through mobile units sending a feed using satellite signals for transmission.

³² “Qarar tanzim al-bathth al-mubashir yuhaddid nazahat taghtiyat al-intikhabat,” al-Shorouk, Oct. 20, 2010, <<http://www.shorouknews.com/ContentData.aspx?id=323952>>.

³³ The CIHRS saw copies of two letters sent to an SNG user, the first from the TRA canceling the permit to use radio and television frequencies through SNG, and the second from ERTU on the conditions for renewing the SNG permit.

³⁴ Ibid.

that every foreign correspondent would be compelled to turn to Egyptian television to obtain a broadcasting unit.³⁵

Gohar and his company, CNC, were prosecuted in 2008 on charges of using live broadcast equipment without a permit, a crime punishable by six months in prison. He was charged after al-Jazeera rented a live broadcast unit from CNC and used it to air the labor strike in Mahalla on April 6 and transmit images of dozens of workers tearing up pictures of Mubarak. The court acquitted Gohar,³⁶ but the case was a stern warning to Gohar about the consequences of crossing the regime's red lines.

The second step was to halt permits for filming from the streets, even though as it was, such permits were only granted after the completion of a rigorous obstacle course starting with State Security and National Security and passing through General Security and other bodies. The process also required the approval of the senior officer at the district level security headquarters, who would first inquire as to the subject matter to be filmed, the time of filming, and the reason. In the end, permission might be granted or denied, but even these measures were not enough to guarantee access. Media workers risked arrest any time they took the camera out into the street.³⁷

“Right now, I’m still operating, but I’m threatened with jail at any time on charges of breaking the law.”
Nader Gohar, owner of CNC

This decision preceded a statement by al-Sayyed Abd al-Aziz, the chair of the Supreme Elections Commission (SEC), on filming by the media. “The commission’s decisions prohibiting filming are final,” he said.³⁸ No explanation was given for the decree, which in the end guaranteed the lack of media documentation of many instances of fraud observed by monitors from human rights groups and independent media.

At the same time, directives for coverage by the Egyptian media constituted yet another official, declared restriction standing before the private media. Shortly before elections, the SEC said that during the People’s Assembly elections, it would not grant entry to polling stations to media workers who did not have a permit from the commission, a Journalists’ Syndicate identification, or an ERTU press card. The SEC also made the freedom to report from inside polling stations and to cover the ballot count dependent on permission from the chair of the general or branch station, while prohibiting loitering or waiting inside the polling station. The situation was even more difficult for private Egyptian satellite channels. The SEC stated that personnel with these channels who wanted to cover the vote and the ballot count in polling stations were required to submit an official application to the commission containing a list of the names of applicants and their positions and appended with a photocopy of their national identification card and two photographs of each applicant. In any case, entry to polling

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Anonymous source.

³⁸ “Ra’is al-‘ulya li-l-intikhabat: mamnu’ al-taswir niha’iyan,” al-Masry al-Youm, Nov. 23, 2010, <<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/printerfriendly.aspx?ArticleID=278249>>.

stations was still dependent on permission from the chair of the general or branch station.³⁹

In the run-off races, SEC chair al-Sayyed Abd al-Aziz Omar persisted in banning film or still photography, or even mobile phone cameras, during the vote all over Egypt's provinces. In a statement, he said that the decision to ban filming was occasioned by a previous SEC decree to protect the right of voters to cast their ballot in full freedom and secrecy without any interference from any body or any sense of media pressure. The decision came after the first round of elections, when mobile phone cameras had captured ballot stuffing and the clips had been posted on Facebook and YouTube.⁴⁰

During the elections, BBC Arabic came under serious pressure. For example, one episode of a new program, "The Hour of Judgment," was slated to focus on the Egyptian general elections. The Egyptian authorities' insistence on disqualifying certain guests from the program prompted the channel to cancel the episode.⁴¹ Technical support companies under contract with the BBC in Egypt also came under pressure, being threatened by a senior official in the official Egyptian media to withdraw their equipment from BBC or have it confiscated. Two BBC news segments on the election day, at 6 and 8 pm GMT, part of which hosted guests from Egypt live on air, were distorted and the channel's television signal was intentionally blocked. A correspondent with the channel in Egypt expressed his grave concern upon receiving a telephone call from a person who described himself as part of a security body, warning him that he was under close surveillance.⁴²

On November 19 2010, the NDP had criticized on its website the BBC because of what it described as its non-compliance with professional standards during its coverage of elections and its failure to air different points of view. That morning, the BBC had aired a report on the rules announced by the SEC for civil society groups seeking to monitor the upcoming People's Assembly elections. Hassan Salama, introduced as a member of the National Coalition for Election Monitoring, was interviewed and said that the commission's rules were prejudicial and limited the ability of civil society to perform its role. He justified his opinion by noting that the conditions required election monitors to have a clean record, be unaffiliated with any political party, have no relation to a candidate in the district being monitored, and refrain from interfering with the committee supervising the elections.⁴³

³⁹ The directives for Egyptian media coverage of elections, The Supreme Electoral Council

⁴⁰ "Man' kamirat al-talafiziyun wa-l-hawatif al-naqqala min al-taswir bi-lijan al-iqtira'," Dec. 5, 2010, al-Arabiya, <<http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2010/12/05/128487.html>>.

⁴¹ The BBC bureau in Cairo had taken all measures to start filming the first episodes of the program, and several guests had actually come to the studio for taping, among them Osama al-Ghazali Harb, the president of the Democratic Front Party, Muslim Brotherhood leader Hilmi al-Gazzar, and Mona Makram Ebeid, a candidate for the Wafd Party. Filming was cancelled only a few minutes before it was scheduled to begin. See <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=19413>>.

⁴² "Bi Bi Si tahtajj 'ala-l-dughut al-lati ta'arrad laha fariquha fi Misr," BBC, Dec. 1, 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2010/12/101201_bbc_arabic_egypt_elections.shtml>.

⁴³ "al-Hizb al-watani yantaqid taghtiyat 'Bi Bi Si' li-intikhabat majlis al-sha'b," al-Shorouk, Nov. 19, 2010, <<http://www.shorouknews.com/ContentData.aspx?ID=337378>>.

Government censorship of mobile phone text messages was yet another step. The TRA imposed new restrictions and regulations for news and advertising text messages sent by various companies. On October 11, 2010, several media institutions received a warning from companies offering news SMS services saying that pursuant to new communications directives, media institutions must receive permission from the Information Ministry and the Supreme Press Council to send out news text messages over mobile phone networks. The letter suggested that such permits be obtained in a timely fashion “to preserve the continuity of service.”⁴⁴ The decree required companies offering such text message to obtain a permit. Both the license and permit contained articles requiring these companies to refrain from offering the service to users until they received approval for the message content from the competent government bodies, among them the National Security Apparatus. They were also directed to save user information, interactions, and message content for one year and submit it to the TRA, its agent, or the security apparatus upon request. The decree further allowed the TRA and security bodies to engage in on-site monitoring of these companies.⁴⁵

*“Censorship of written content was abolished in 1974, and now today, 36 years later, you’re going to come and impose censorship of digital content?”
Hisham Kassem*

The TRA indicated that “in the case of any content causing strife, impacting the stock exchange, or disseminating incorrect religious opinions, each body with a relation to the content will be held accountable after determining liability, including any intermediate company or the body that issued the content.”⁴⁶ What officials did not discuss was that many opposition parties and movements rely on text messages to maintain communications with their base and the Egyptian citizenry and disseminate some political content—for example, urging them to take part in a peaceful demonstration, informing them of a stance on the parliamentary elections and urging them to support it, or criticizing government policies.⁴⁷ The decree, which violated basic human rights, was suspended on November 27, 2010, with a ruling from the Administrative Court. The court ruled that the decree restricted freedom of expression and violated the right to communication and knowledge, both closely linked to the freedom of information, the right to development, and the right to life.⁴⁸

Repressive measures were not limited to the press and visual media. There were indications that the state was trying to restrict alternative media as well, which many activists declared their intention of using to expose the expected violations in the

⁴⁴ “al-Hukuma tafriid raqaba ‘ala rasa’il al-mahmul al-ikhbariya,” al-Masry al-Youm, Oct. 12, 2010, <<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/printerfriendly.aspx?ArticleID=273071>>.

⁴⁵ “Qira’a qanuniya fi hukm mahkamat al-qada’ al-idari bi-waqf qarar fard quyud raqabiya ‘ala rasa’il al-mahmul al-mujamma’a,” Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression, Dec. 12, 2010, <http://www.afteegypt.org/right_to_know/2010/12/12/210-afteegypt.html>.

⁴⁶ “Tariq Kamil li-l-Misry al-yawm: taqin awda’ khidmat al-rasa’il al-ikhbariya la yastahdif al-raqaba ‘alayha,” al-Masry al-Youm, Oct. 13, 2010, <<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/printerfriendly.aspx?ArticleID=273190>>.

⁴⁷ Michele Dunne and Amr Hamzawy, “Media Freedom Restricted as Egyptian Parliamentary Elections Approach, Oct. 25, 2010, <<http://carnegieendowment.org/publications/?fa=view&id=41792>>.

⁴⁸ For more on the court ruling, see the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression, Dec. 12, 2010, <http://www.afteegypt.org/right_to_know/2010/12/12/210-afteegypt.html>.

elections. On October 26, 2010, Gen. Mahmoud al-Rashidi, assistant interior minister and director of the Information and Documentation Department, stated that a new law on countering electronic crimes would soon be drafted in coordination with the Ministries of Justice, Interior, and Communications, and experts in information technology and communications.⁴⁹

Attempts to shut down the two largest Egyptian Facebook groups, which together had more than 600,000 members, only days before elections raised concerns that measures would be taken against social media, widely used among Egyptian youth. The two Facebook groups played a prominent role in exposing human rights abuses in Egypt, defending democratic demands and political reform, and calling for demonstrations and events to support these demands.

Facebook managed to reinstate the two pages, We Are All Khaled Said and Mohamed ElBaradei's page, a few hours after they were shut down late in the night on Thursday, November 25, 2010. No cause was given for the shutdown and an apology was issued to the page administrators.⁵⁰ The administrator of the We Are All Khaled Said page said that it was logical that the page would be a target for hacking. "There were many attempts, especially on the day when the page was shut down," he said. "Of course, I also receive threats that I'll be beat up and what happened to Khaled will happen to me."

In a telephone conversation with Bassem Fathi, an administrator of the U Shahed project (You're a Witness),⁵¹ he told us that over the last six years activists had successfully extracted a margin of freedom of expression through alternative media, although the regime was quite displeased with this. "So now they're trying to get it back," he said. "The NDP has electronic rooms with paid staff who coordinate with the Interior Ministry and State Security. They write up reports about influential groups to bring them down, and they did increase their efforts directly before elections." From his point of view, "There are constant attempts to reclaim this margin, but they don't necessarily succeed."⁵²

Israa Abd al-Fattah, an activist with the same project, said that the closure of the two Facebook groups might have been attributable to technical issues with Facebook itself, or it could have been a warning from the NDP, which had suggested that its youth cadres file reports on certain groups to have them shut down. She believed it might have been a message from security saying, "The sole means in your hands now after we've restricted the media? We're going to shut that down, too."⁵³

From a reading of all the foregoing pieces of evidence, it seems clear that the independent and private media in Egypt faced its most serious test in years. The regime cleverly managed to restrict visual and written media in a matter of weeks. It started with

⁴⁹ "al-Intiha' min siyaghat qanun khass li-muwajahat al-jara'im al-ilaktruniya qariban," al-Shorouk, Oct. 26, 2010, <<http://www.shorouknews.com/ContentData.aspx?id=322002>>.

⁵⁰ "Safahat Khalid Sa'id wa-l-Baradi'i ta'ud mayyita ba'd iqaf hisabat mudiriha," al-Shorouk, Nov. 26, 2010, <<http://www.shorouknews.com/ContentData.aspx?ID=342158>>.

⁵¹ An initiative from the Development Institutionalization Support Center that seeks to support popular participation in the monitoring of Egyptian elections through the use of mapping technology and by supplying elections information to interested media workers, researchers, and various political parties.

⁵² Phone interview with alternative media activist Bassem Fathi.

⁵³ Phone interview with alternative media activist Israa Abd al-Fattah.

the cancellation of Amr Adib's "Cairo Today" program and the dismissal of Ibrahim Eissa from the editorship of *al-Dostor* and from presenting a program on ONTV. It then shut down religious channels and issued warnings to several private channels before imposing restrictions on live coverage and issuing arbitrary administrative measures and decrees, most of which were illegitimate. These measures spread a climate of fear and intimidation and fostered self-censorship among media workers and owners in order to foreclose as much as possible any genuine coverage of parliamentary elections and perhaps beyond. The regime went out of its way to deny any complicity or involvement in the execution of this plan, but more than one government body (NileSat administration, the TRA, the SEC, and the Ministry of Information and its committee) issued decrees in a fashion that suggests they were all coming from a higher authority. This indicates that a central leadership was in fact making these decisions and managing the campaign, and that it possessed a specific design to be implemented step by step.

The synchronicity of these measures, combined with hints from those close to the regime that certain steps would be taken⁵⁴—and were in fact taken—confirms that the timing of all these measures shortly before elections was no coincidence.

All that remains is to link this plan, which was implemented within a short period of time, with the larger scenario. The elimination of judicial supervision of elections in Egypt through the constitutional amendments of 2007 was not an isolated incident, but rather consistent with and complementary to subsequent measures and events, such as the amendment of the law on the exercise of political rights and the municipal and Shura Council elections, both of which were accompanied by widespread violations undertaken to guarantee an absolute majority for the NDP. The final phase was the People's Assembly elections, which needed to be conducted in darkness without international oversight, using the pretext of national sovereignty. This phase required restrictions on civil society to prevent them from monitoring the elections, which were marred by flagrant rigging, violence, and thuggery that undermined the legitimacy of the virtually opposition-free assembly. The final step was restructuring media freedoms in order to eliminate any source of tension at a critical political moment when regime factions were struggling with one another and the regime lacked any genuine democratic mechanism for the honest, safe rotation of power.

⁵⁴ Taped interview with Ahmed Ragab, a journalist at *al-Masry al-Youm*. One day before the dismissal of Ibrahim Eissa, Abdullah Kamal, the editor-in-chief of *Rose al-Youssef*, known for being close to the regime and its security services, published an article speculating about what might happen to Eissa. In the article he expected that certain journalists and media workers in the private press might be shuffled around and the situation would not be like 2005, when there was growing, unprecedented political ferment in Egypt. Kamal said in the same article that transformations would lead to changes in 2011, which would in turn lead to the disappearance of *al-Masry al-Youm* in 2012. See "Li'bat jaridat al-dustur," Oct. 4, 2010, <<http://www.abkamal.net/News/News.asp?id=72099>>.

Quantitative Analysis

The media plays a major role in keeping the citizenry abreast of current events and raising awareness of various issues in any society. It also has an extremely significant impact on the public's views and way of thinking. The media is the primary means through which public opinion is shaped and at times manipulated. If this is the media's role in the normal course of events, it becomes even more vital in exceptional periods, one of which is electoral junctures, when the media becomes a primary player. Elections constitute a basic challenge to the media, putting its impartiality and objectivity to the test. The task of the media, especially national media outlets, is not and should not be to function as a mouthpiece for any government body or particular candidate. Its basic role is to enlighten and educate the public and act as a neutral, objective platform for the free debate of all points of view.

Following the media-monitoring project for the 2005 parliamentary elections, we found that despite the bias in the visual media and press for the National Democratic Party (NDP), both qualitative and quantitative, there was a marked improvement in the media's performance during the 2005 campaign. Overall, the elections carried the promise of genuine change. The Ministry of Information issued several sets of rules and codes regulating the media, particularly television, as part of its bid to set standards for media neutrality during the elections⁵⁵. Aspects of the 2005 experience were repeated in the 2010 elections. The pro-NDP bias was still evident, not only in the official media, but in the private media as well, though the content of the coverage varied.

Nevertheless, clear disparities in media coverage of different parties and candidates remained a primary feature of the media's performance during the 2010 People's Assembly elections. A second important feature, which began to emerge in the previous elections, was the role of the private media, both the press and television. Just a few years after its establishment, the private media has managed to gain a firm foothold on the Egyptian media landscape, becoming an influential and vital part of the media equation. It has managed to limit the bias that characterizes the official media, although it has not completely eliminated it. At the very least, it has forced a change in media norms and guidelines, despite the restrictions imposed by the Ministry of Information in the run-up to elections, the aim of which was to hinder the ability of the private media to transmit election events as they saw fit. These restrictions included a decree limiting the use of SNG equipment for live on-site broadcasts, a measure aimed to harass private television channels and pressure them to implement certain policies⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ For more information, look:

- "Media and Presidential Elections, Monitoring the Media Coverage of Egypt's Presidential Elections, (17 August – 4 September 2005)", Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, 2005, PP 16 – 17. Available at: <http://www.cihrs.org/Images/ArticleFiles/Original/80.pdf>
- "Media and Parliamentary Elections, Monitoring the Media Coverage of Egypt's Parliamentary Elections, (27 October – 3 December 2005)", Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, 2005, P 19. Available at: <http://www.cihrs.org/Images/ArticleFiles/Original/76.pdf>

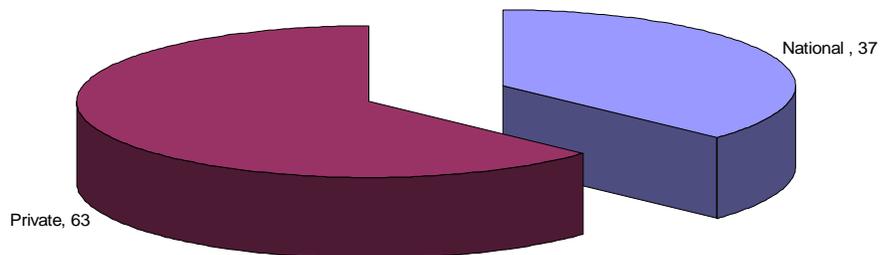
⁵⁶ For more information, please go back to "Industry of Fear Report", P 12.

I. Performance of television channels

Contrary to the expectations of some, election coverage did not dominate television content. Indeed, the relatively meager amount of airtime devoted to coverage of the parliamentary elections was one of the principal findings of the monitoring of eight terrestrial and satellite channels from October 28 to December 15, 2010. During this period, 107.35 hours were devoted to elections, an average of 2.2 hours a day on all eight channels, which is less coverage than received by the elections in 2005⁵⁷.

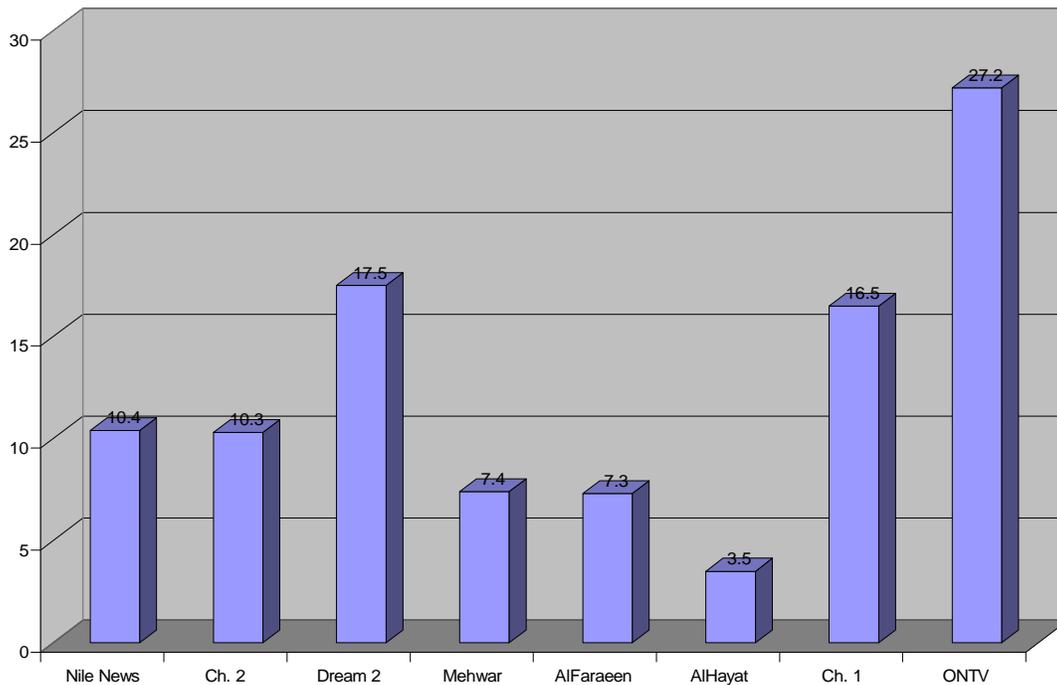
Notably, ONTV led the other channels in the hours devoted to election coverage, accounting for more than a quarter of the total time (27.2%), followed by the private satellite channel Dream 2 with 17.5% of the total coverage, Channel 1 (16.5%), Nile News (10.4%), Channel 2 (10.3%), Mehwar (7.4%), al-Farain (7.3%), and finally al-Hayat (3.5%). Clearly, the parliamentary elections were of less concern to government channels than private satellite channels. The three state-owned channels, among them one devoted solely to news, offered only 37.2% of the total hours of election coverage in the period under review, while one private satellite channel, ONTV, accounted for 27.2% — two-thirds of the time allotted by all three official channels combined.

Distributing Coverage Between National and Private TV Channels



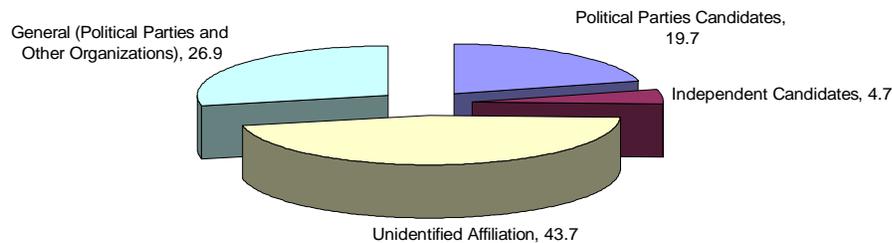
⁵⁷ For more information, look: "Media and Parliamentary Elections, Monitoring the Media Coverage of Egypt's Parliamentary Elections, (27 October – 3 December 2005)", Ibid.

Percentage of Media Coverage for Every TV Channel from Total Coverage



Regarding the distribution of coverage among candidates, there was a marked degree of imbalance. Party candidates received 19.7% of the total airtime although as a whole they were a minority of candidates, while independents received only 4.7% of the airtime, though they comprised the largest candidate bloc. Candidates whose political affiliation was unclear received 43.7% of the total television time devoted to elections. The heavy amount of coverage devoted to candidates without mention of their political affiliations points to one of the most negative features of media coverage in Egypt and indeed a negative feature of the Egyptian media in general: the failure to provide full information to the public. Often the media simply offers content without making an effort to expose basic facts connected to the news item. As a result, the news item functions as propaganda, intended or not, for well-known candidates, both independents and party candidates. On the other hand, television channels should be lauded for the coverage they devoted to covering the electoral process and educating voters beyond the focus on candidates alone. Television channels devoted 26.9% of total election airtime to discussions of parties and relevant bodies and their role in politics.

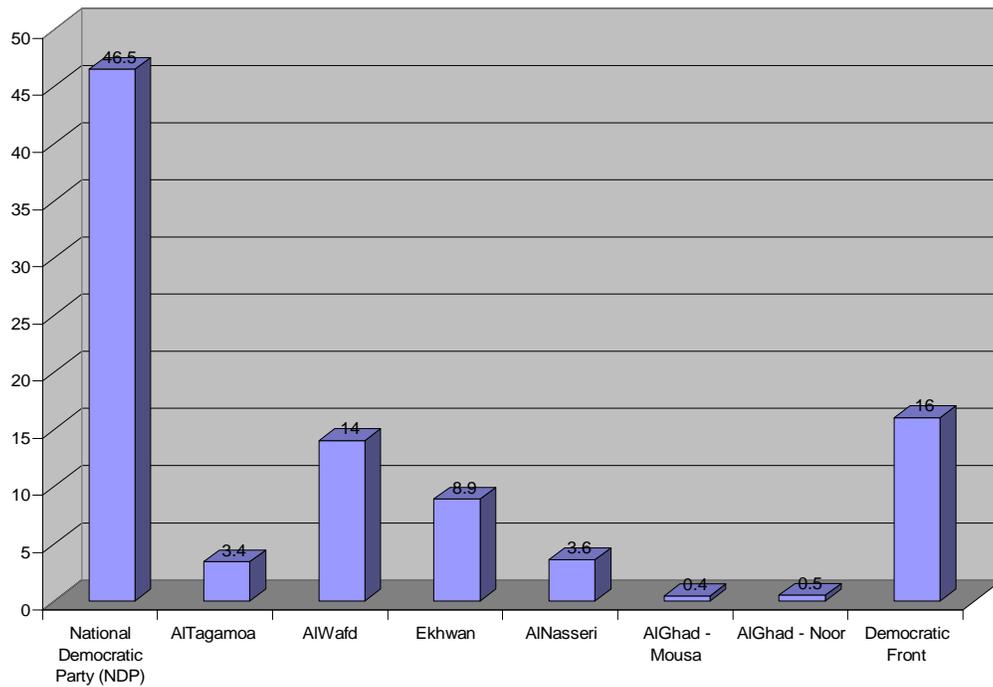
Distributing Media Coverage Between Political Parties Candidates and Independent Candidates



Regarding the specific parties and political forces covered, the NDP and its candidates received the most coverage, garnering nearly half the total airtime, or 46.5% of election coverage. The remaining parties and political forces received 53.5% of airtime, led by the Wafd Party, which received 14% of total airtime, followed by the Muslim Brothers with 8.9% of total time, the Nasserist Party (3.6%), al-Tagammu (3.4%), the Democratic Front (1.6%), and finally al-Ghad with 0.9% (0.4% for Moussa and 0.5% for Nour)⁵⁸.

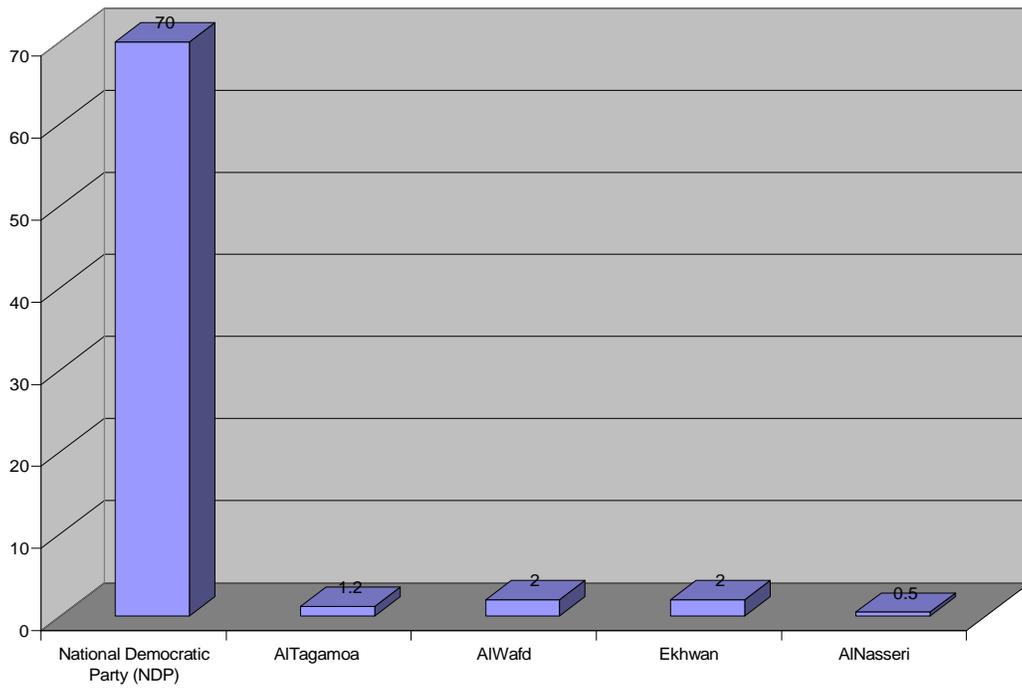
⁵⁸ In 2005 there was a split inside AlGhad party, between the Ayman Nour front, led by Gamila Ismail, and between mass Moussa Moustafa Moussa and Ragab Hilal Hamida front. This took place after Mossa decided to expel the party leader and most of the high board, in contradiction to the Party's internal regulations, which led to the issuing a counterattack decision with Mossa's expelling, and who ever he kept inside the party. After the imprisonment of Ayman Nour, in the case of forged procurations for establishment of the party, two party general assemblies were held; both issued conflicting decisions by the Presidency of the party. Things escalated, and by late 2008 and the burning of bullying incidents to the headquarters of the party by Mossa's front. This led to the division of the party and the presence of two partisan structures claiming that each party is AlGhad party, and speaks in his name.
http://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A8_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%AF

Distribution of TV Coverage Among Various Political Parties

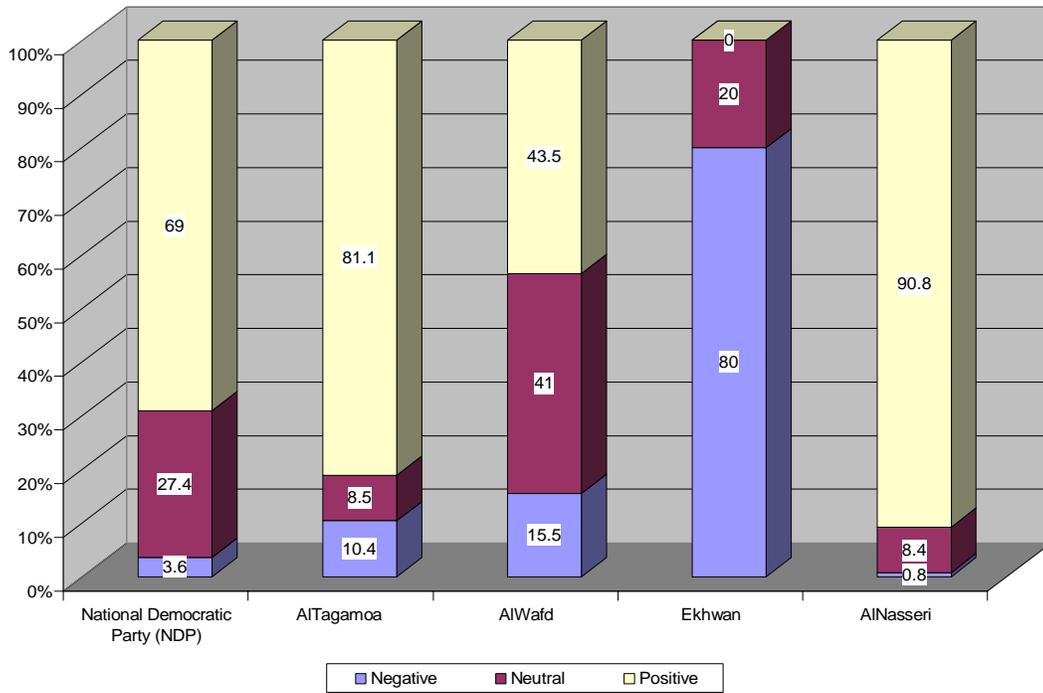


On the private satellite channels that were monitored, the NDP received 70% of total airtime devoted to elections on al-Farain, 3.6% of it negative and 69% of it positive. The Wafd and the Muslim Brothers each received 2% of the relevant airtime on al-Farain, with no positive coverage for the latter and 43.5% of the coverage devoted to the Wafd Party positive. The Tagammu Party received 1.2% of the coverage on the channel, 10.4% of it negative and 81.1% positive, while the Nasserist Party received 0.5% of the election airtime, 0.8% of it negative and 90.8% positive.

Distributing AlFaraeen Channel Coverage Between Various Political Parties

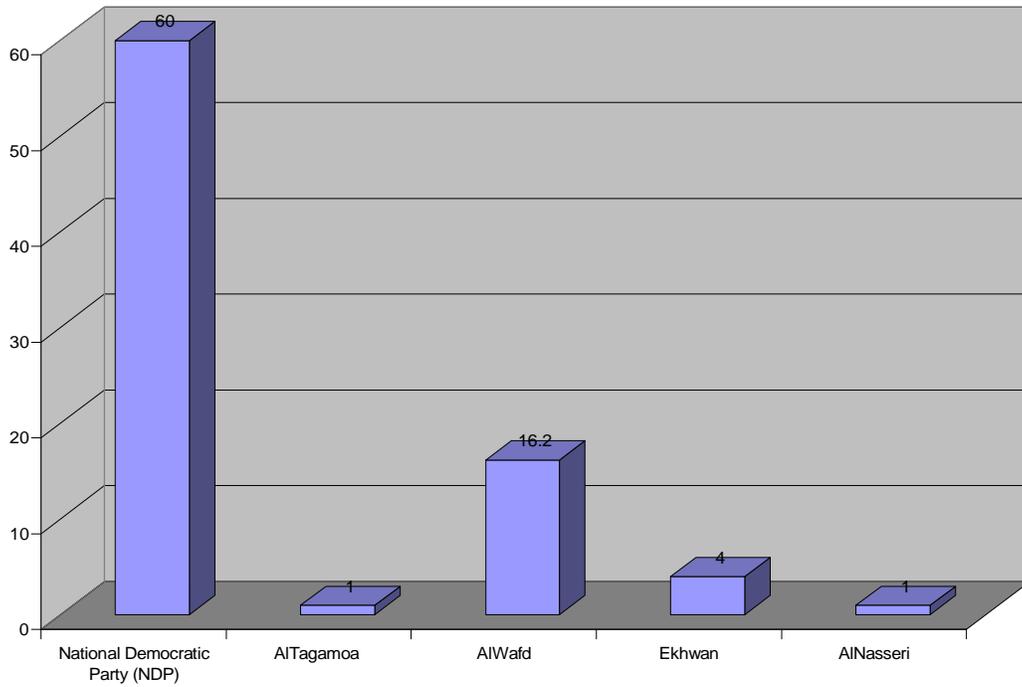


Assessment of AlFaraeen Channel Coverage for Various Political Parties

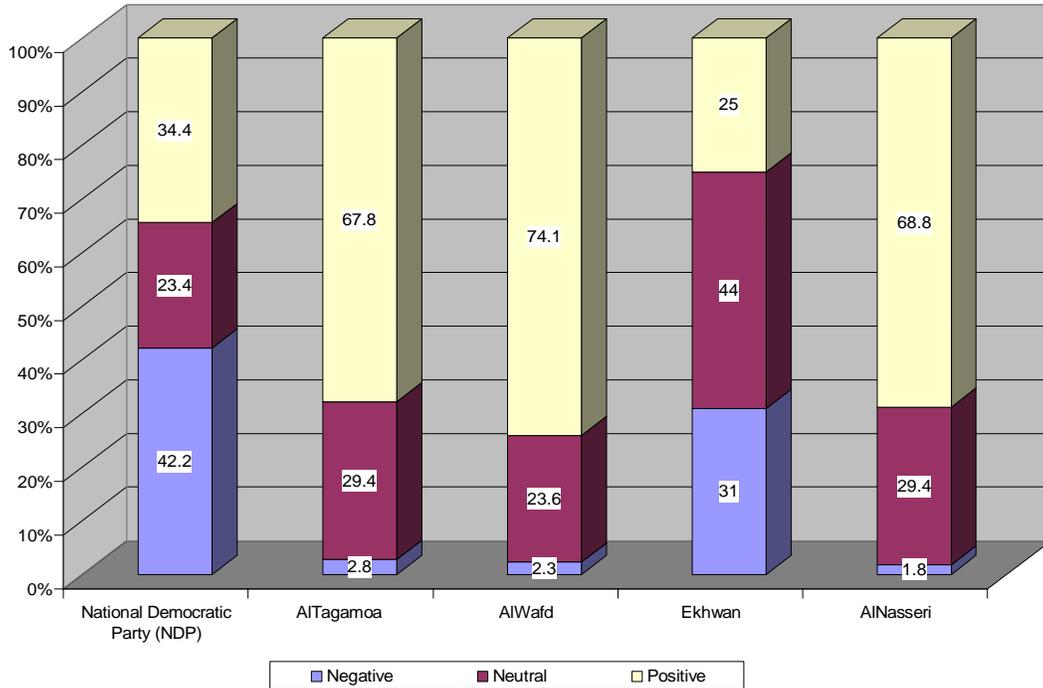


The NDP garnered 60% of the airtime devoted to elections on Dream 2, 42% of it negative and 34.4% positive. The Wafd received 16.2% of the channel's airtime, 2.3% of it negative and 74% of it positive. The Muslim Brothers received only 4% of the coverage on Dream 2, 31% of it negative and 25% positive, while the Tagammu and Nasserist Party each received 1% of the airtime. A total of 2.8% of the coverage of the Tagammu was negative while 67.8% was positive, whereas 1.8% of the airtime devoted to the Nasserist party was negative and 68.8% positive.

Distributing Dream 2 Channel Coverage Between Various Political Parties

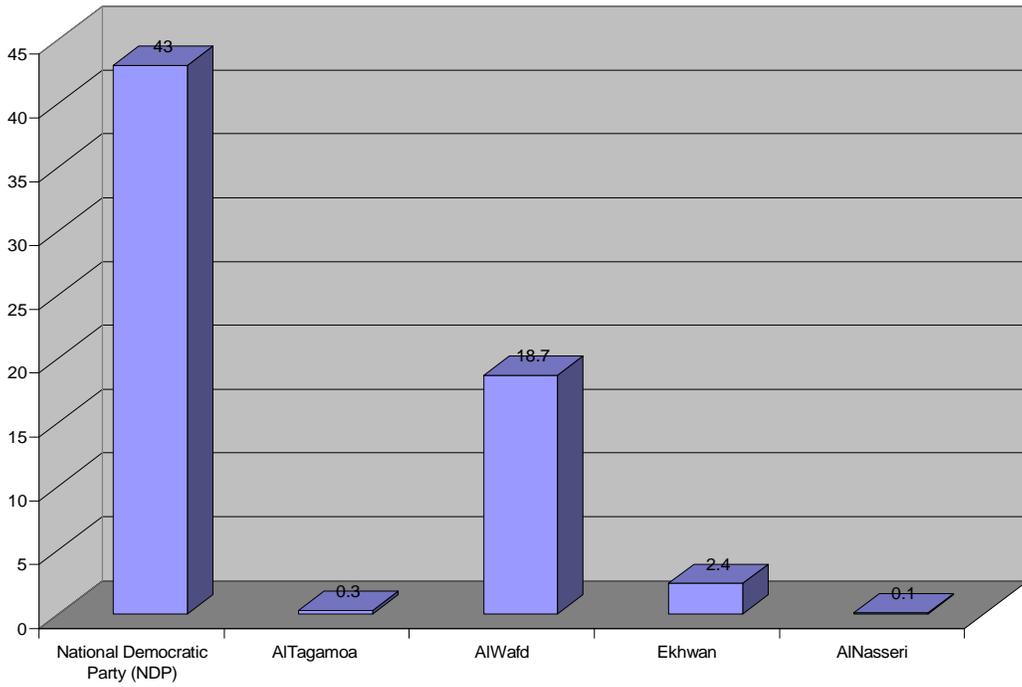


Assessment of Dream 2 Channel Coverage for Various Political Parties

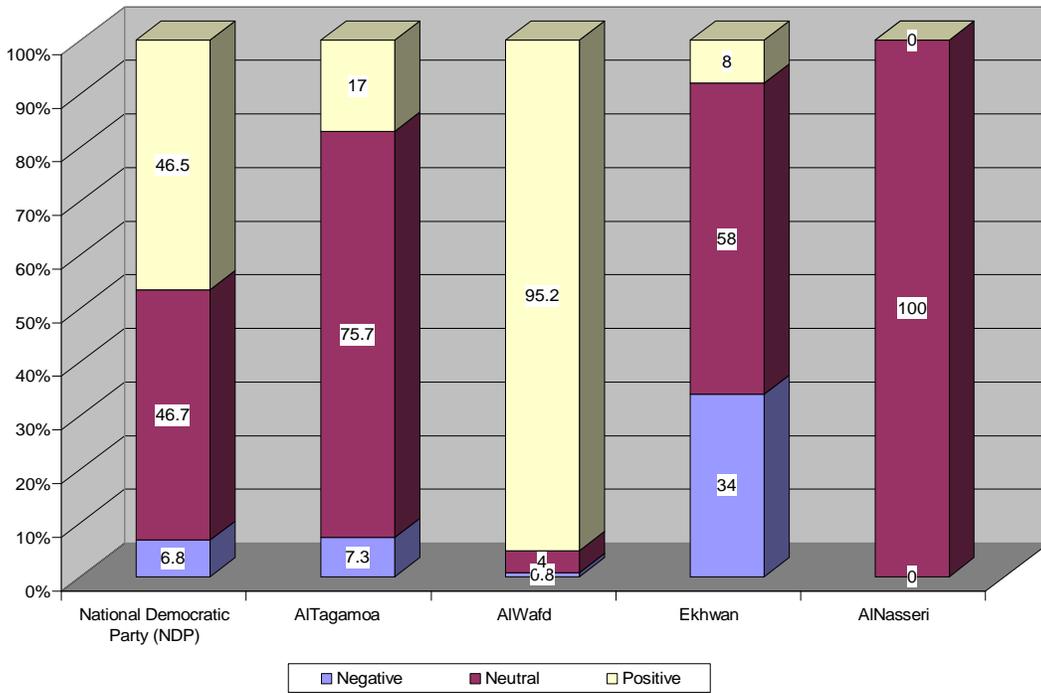


The NDP was the subject of 43% of the election coverage on al-Hayat, 6.8% of it negative and 46.5% positive. The Wafd received 18.7% of the channel’s election airtime, only 0.8% of which was negative compared to 95.2% positive. The Muslim Brothers garnered 2.4% of the airtime on al-Hayat, 8% of it positive and 34% of it negative, while the Tagammu received 0.3% of the coverage, 7.3% of it negative and 17% positive. The channel devoted only 0.1% of its election coverage to the Nasserist party, all of it impartial.

Distributing AlHayat Channel Coverage Between Various Political Parties

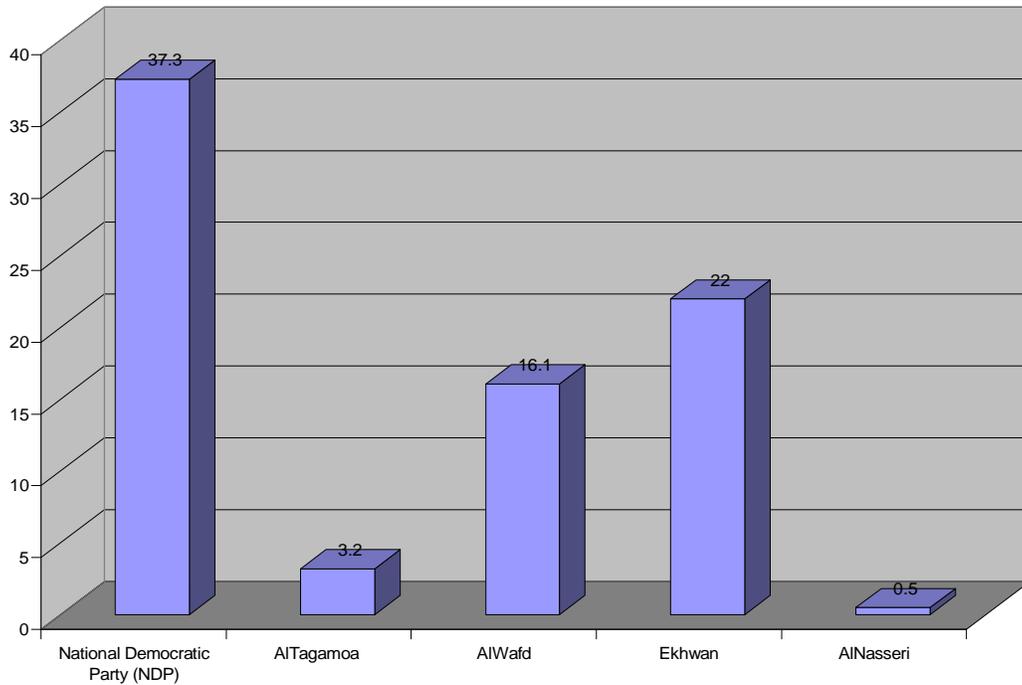


Assessment of AlHayat Channel Coverage for Various Political Parties

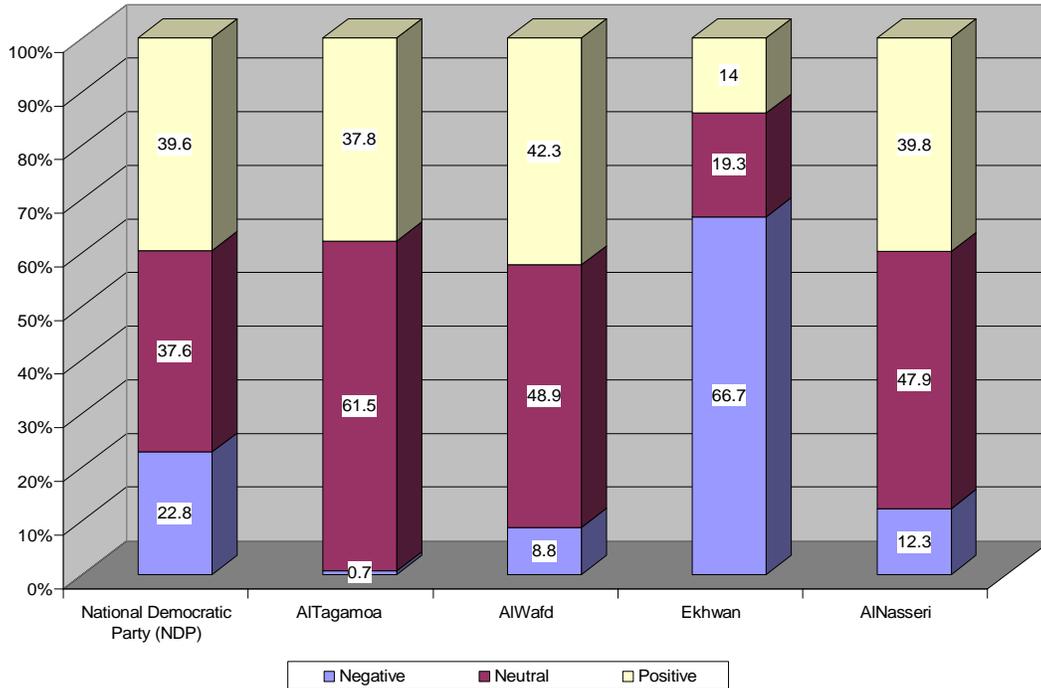


ONTV devoted 37.3% of its total election coverage to the NDP, 22.8% of it negative and 39.6% of it positive. The Muslim Brothers received 22% of the airtime — the highest%age on any television channel — with about two-thirds of the coverage (66.7%) negative and 14% positive. A total of 16.1% of the election airtime was devoted to the Wafd, 8.8% of it negative and 42.3% positive. The Tagammu received 3.2% of the total airtime, 0.7% of it negative and 37.8% positive, while the Nasserist Party received 0.5% of election airtime, 12.3% of it negative and 39.8% positive.

Distributing ONTV Channel Coverage Between Various Political Parties

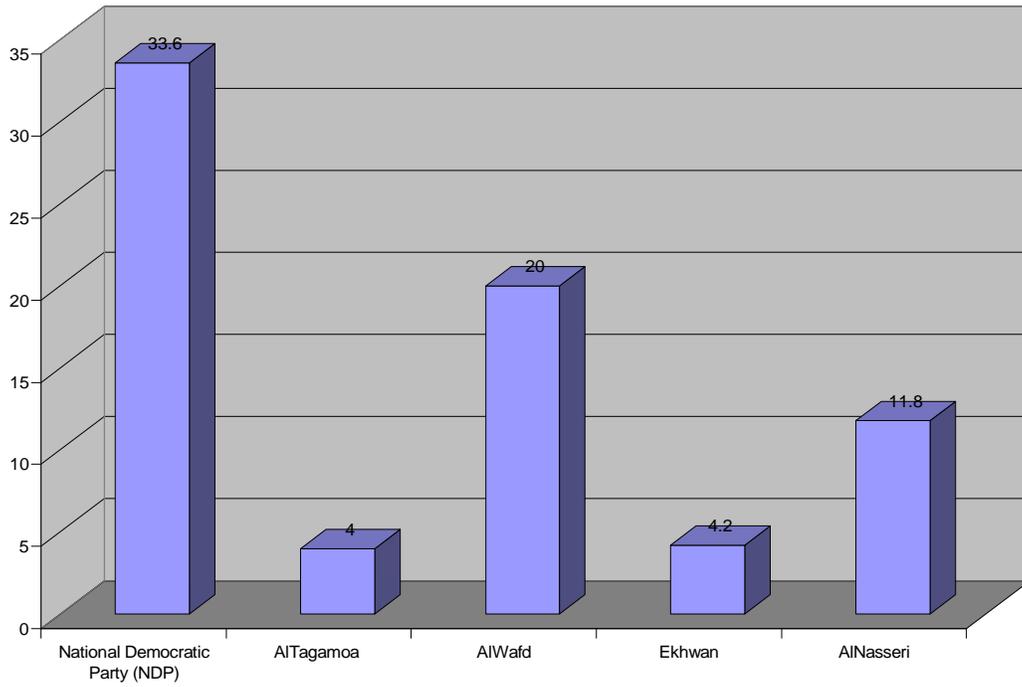


Assessment of ONTV Channel Coverage for Various Political Parties

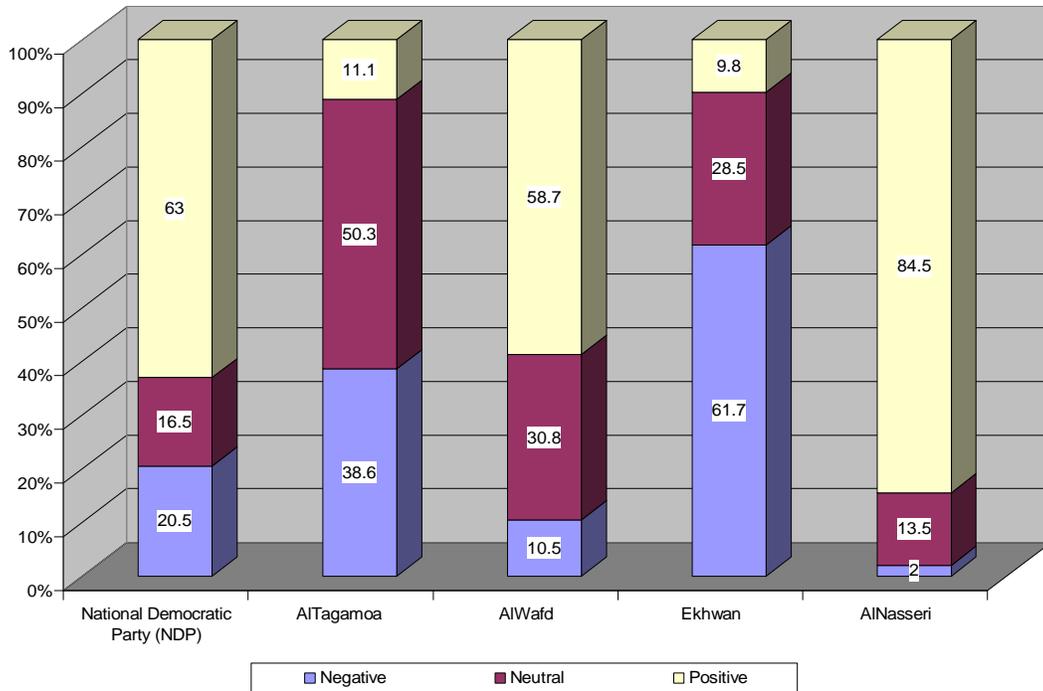


On the Mehwar channel, the NDP was the focus of 33.6% of election coverage, 20.5% of it negative and 63% positive. The Wafd followed with 20% of the channel's election coverage, 10.5% of it negative and 58.7% of it positive. The Nasserist Party garnered 11.8% of the airtime, 2% of it negative and 84.5% of it positive. The Muslim Brothers were the subject of 4.2% of the total election coverage on the channel, 61.7% of it negative and 9.8% of it positive. The Tagammu received 4% of the airtime, 38.6% of it negative and 11.1% positive.

Distributing Mehwar Channel Coverage Between Various Political Parties

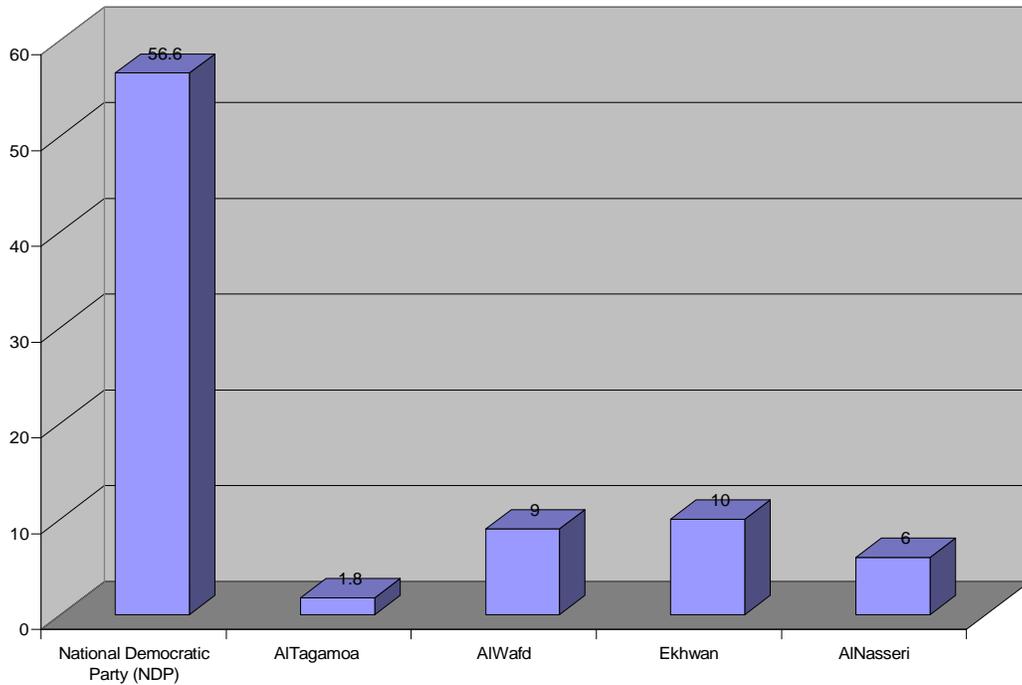


Assessment of Mehwar Channel Coverage for Various Political Parties

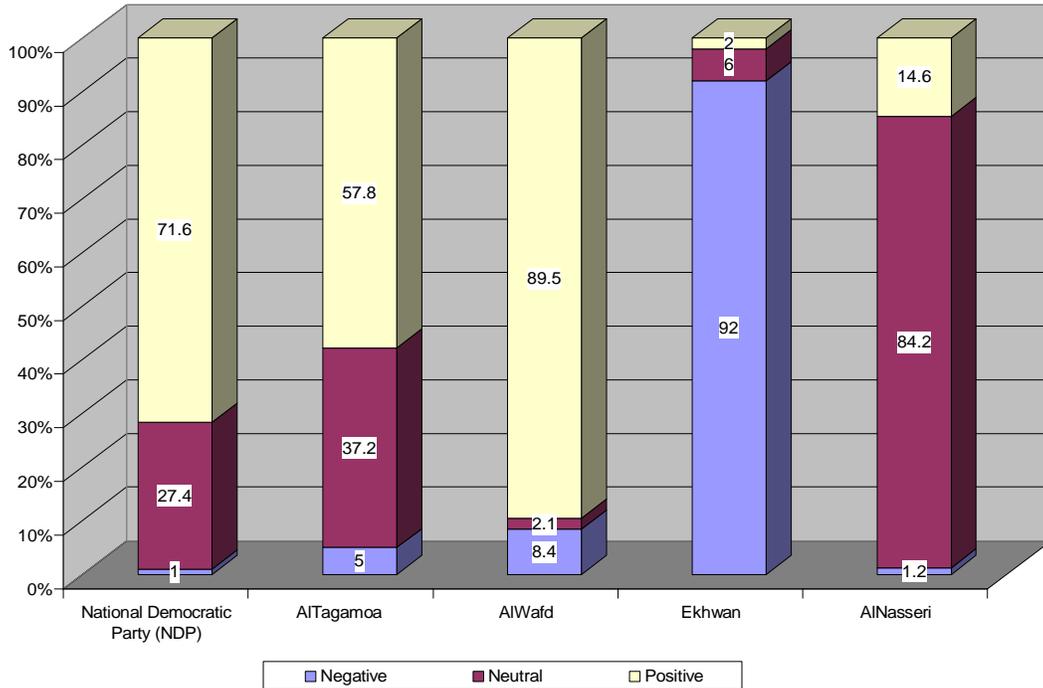


Turning to state television channels, the NDP received 56.6% of Channel 2's election coverage, only 1% of it negative while 71.6% was positive. The Brothers were the subject of 10% of the channel's coverage, only 2% of it positive and 92% negative. The Wafd received 9% of airtime on Channel 2, 8.4% negative and 89.5% positive, while the Nasserist Party received 6% of airtime, 1.2% negative and 14.6% positive. The Tagammu received the least amount of airtime—only 1.8% of the total, 5% of it negative and 57.8% of it positive.

Distributing Ch. 2 Coverage Between Various Political Parties

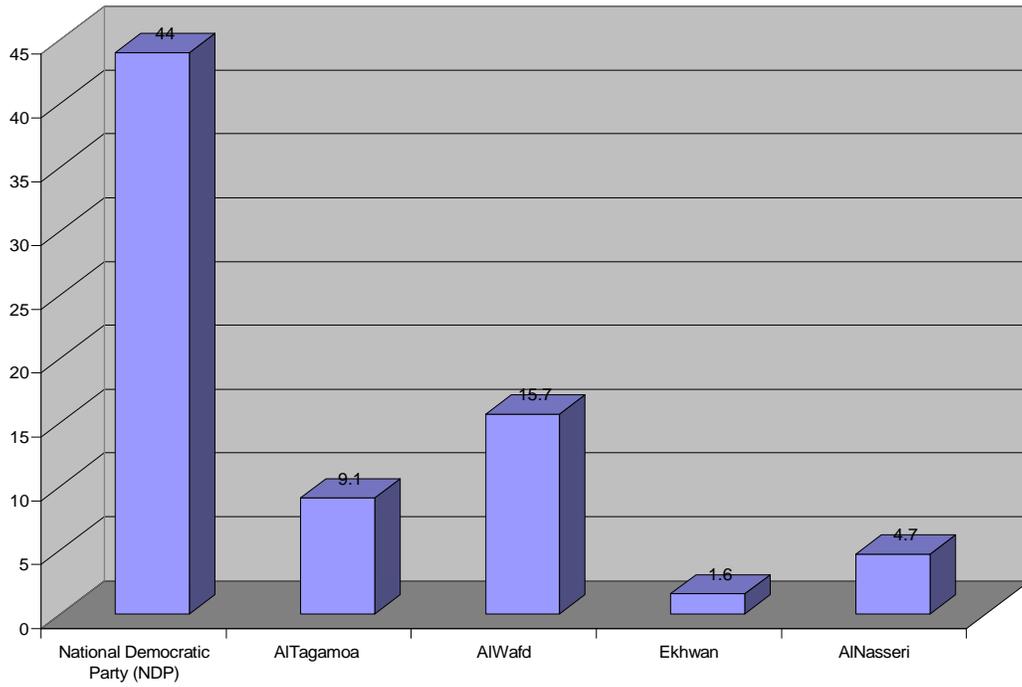


Assessment of Ch. 2 Coverage for Various Political Parties

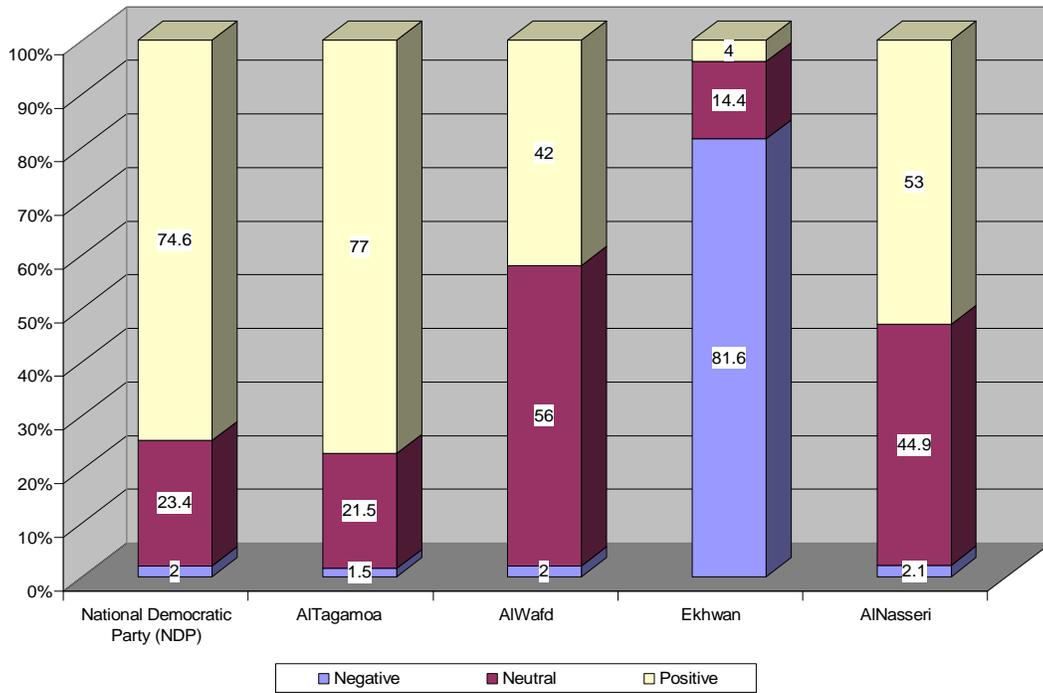


On Channel 1, the NDP was the subject of 44% of the channel’s election coverage, only 2% of it negative compared to 74.6% positive. The Wafd followed with 15.7% of the channel’s airtime, 2% of it negative and 42% positive. The Nasserist Party received 4.7% of the airtime on Channel 1, 2.1% of it negative and 53% of it positive, while the Muslim Brothers received only 1.6% of the total coverage, only 4% of it positive, compared to 81.6% negative. Channel 1 devoted more airtime to the Tagammu Party than any other channel, giving it 9.1% of its election airtime, only 1.5% negative and 77% positive.

Distributing Ch. 1 Coverage Between Various Political Parties

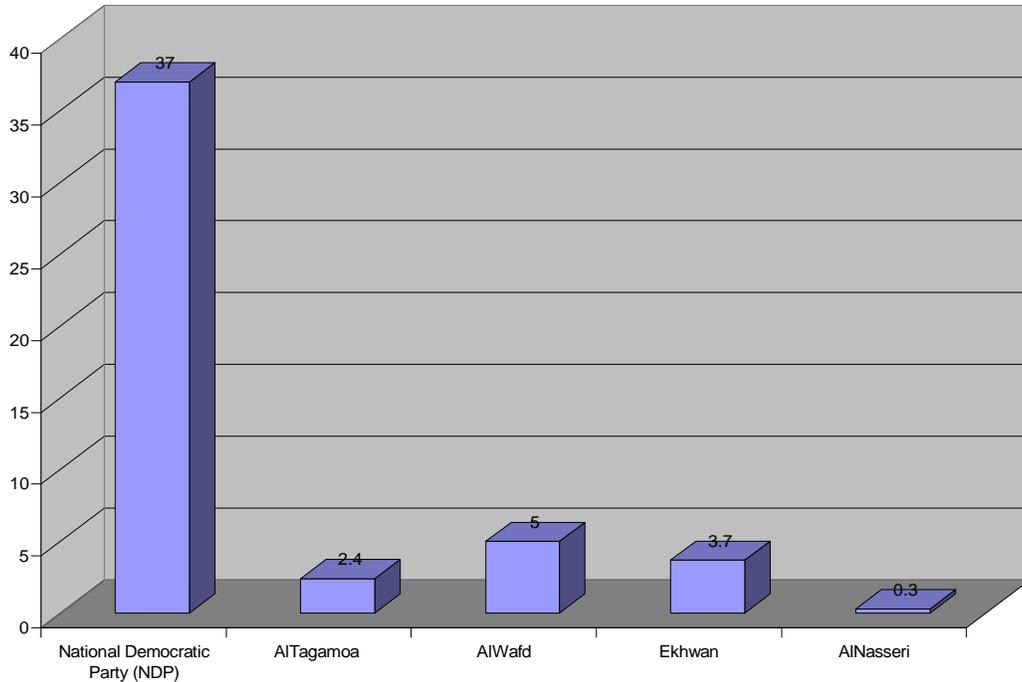


Assessment of Ch. 1 Coverage for Various Political Parties

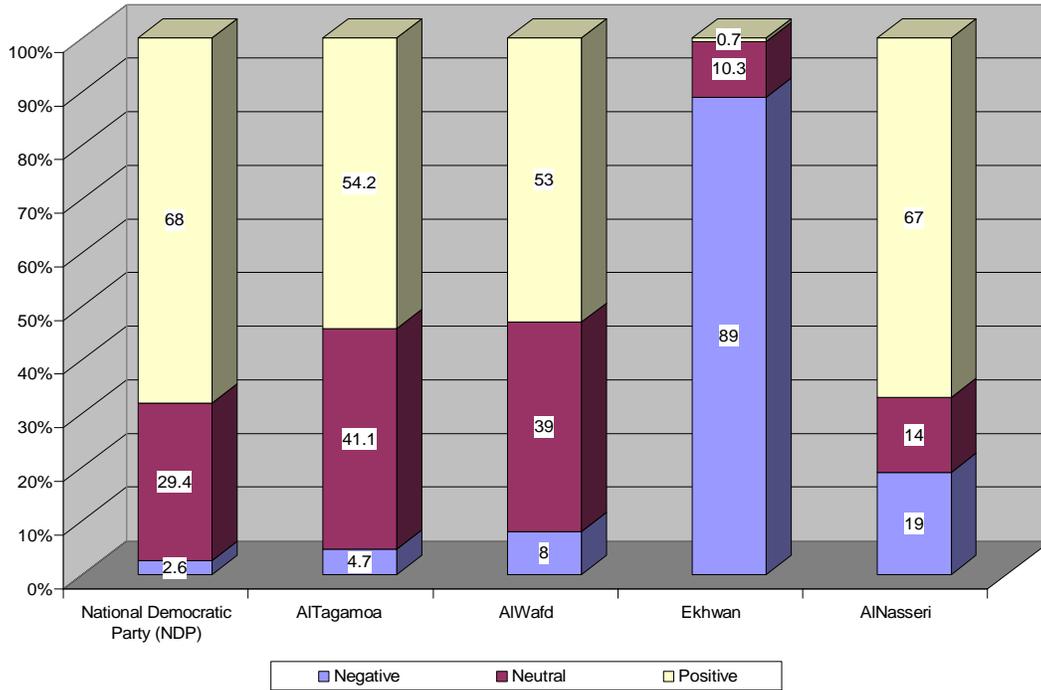


The NDP received 37% of the election airtime on Nile News, only 2.6% negative and 68% positive. The Wafd garnered 5% of the Channel's total airtime, 8% of it negative and 53% positive while the Muslim Brothers received 3.7% of the coverage, less than 1% of it (0.7%) positive, compared to 89% negative. The Tagammu was the subject of 2.4% of the coverage, 4.7% of it negative and 54.2% positive. The Nasserist Party received 0.3% of the total election airtime on Nile News, 19% of it negative and 67% positive.

Distributing Nile News Channel Coverage Between Various Political Parties

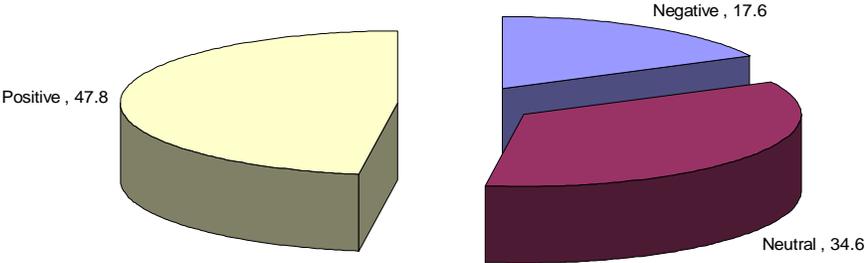


Assessment of Nile News Channel Coverage for Various Political Parties

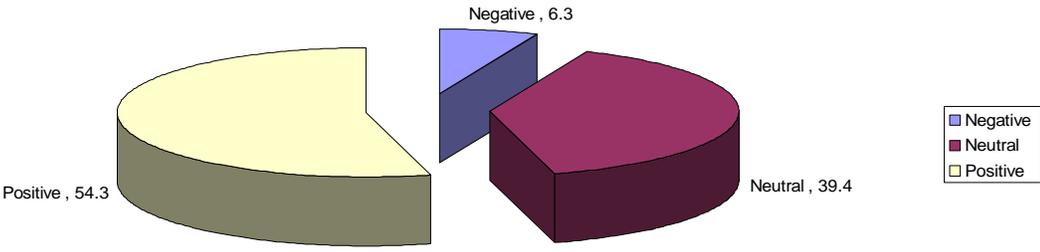


To provide a better-rounded picture, we must also look at the nature of the coverage provided by these channels. For the most part, television coverage of various candidates and political forces was positive, with 47.8% of election coverage positive, compared to 34.6% impartial and 17.6% negative. Coverage on official television channels tended to be either impartial or positive, with positive coverage accounting for 54.3% of the airtime on the three state-owned channels, compared to 39.4% impartial coverage and only 6.3% negative coverage. On the five private channels, positive coverage accounted for 44% of the total, while 31.7% of the coverage was impartial and 24.3% was negative.

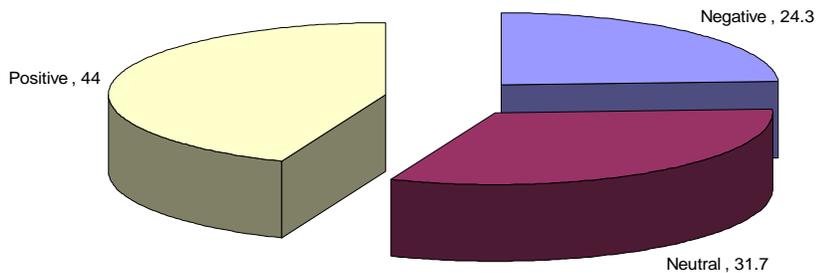
Overall Assessment of the TV Coverage of the Electoral Process



General Assessment of National TV Channels Coverage



General Assessment of Private TV Channels Coverage

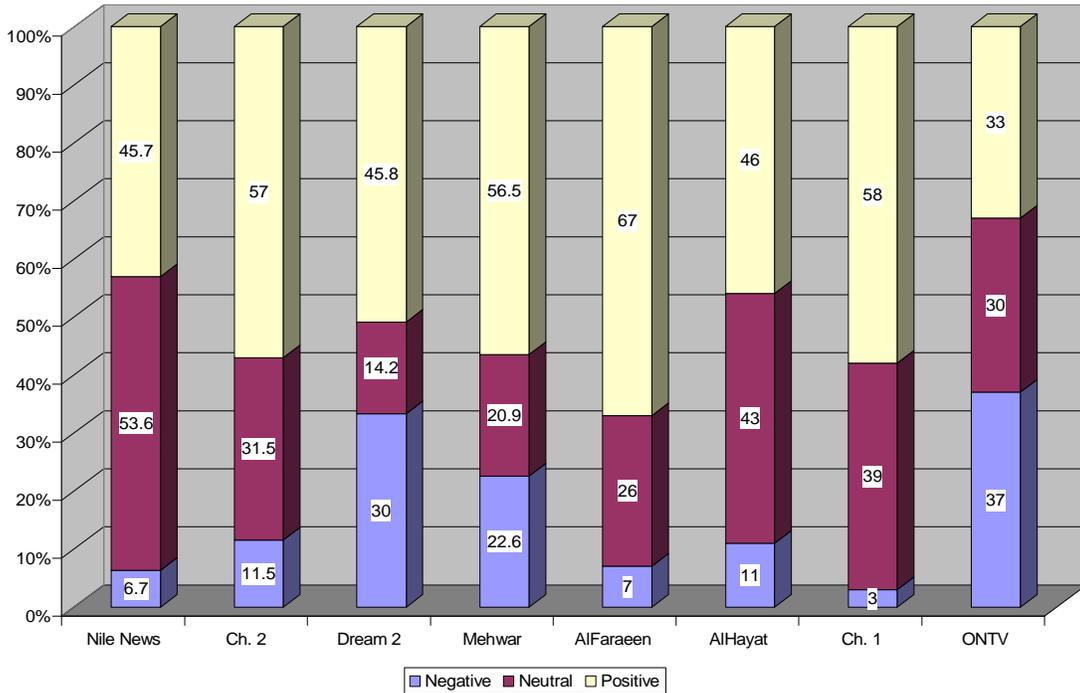


The channel that provided the most impartial coverage of candidates and political forces was Nile News, with 53.6% of its total election coverage classified as impartial, followed by al-Hayat (43%), Channel 1 (39%), Channel 2 (31.5%), ONTV (30%), al-Farain (26%), Mehwar (20.9%), and Dream 2 (14.2%).

The most negative coverage was found on ONTV, with 37% of its total coverage classified as negative, followed by Dream 2 (30%), Mehwar (22.6%), Channel 2 (11.5%), al-Hayat (10%), al-Farain (7%), Nile News (6.7%), and finally Channel 1, only 3% of whose election coverage was negative.

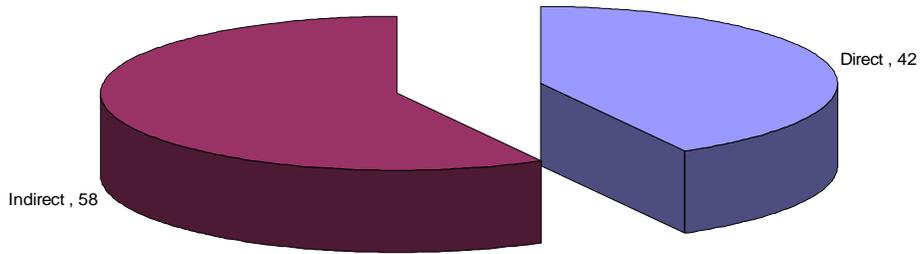
The most positive coverage was offered by al-Farain, with 67% of its election airtime classified as positive, followed by Channel 1 (58%), Channel 2 (57%), Mehwar (56.5%), al-Hayat (46%), Dream 2 (45.8%), Nile News (45.7%), and ONTV in last place, only 33% of whose coverage was positive.

Assessment of Media Coverage of Different TV Channels

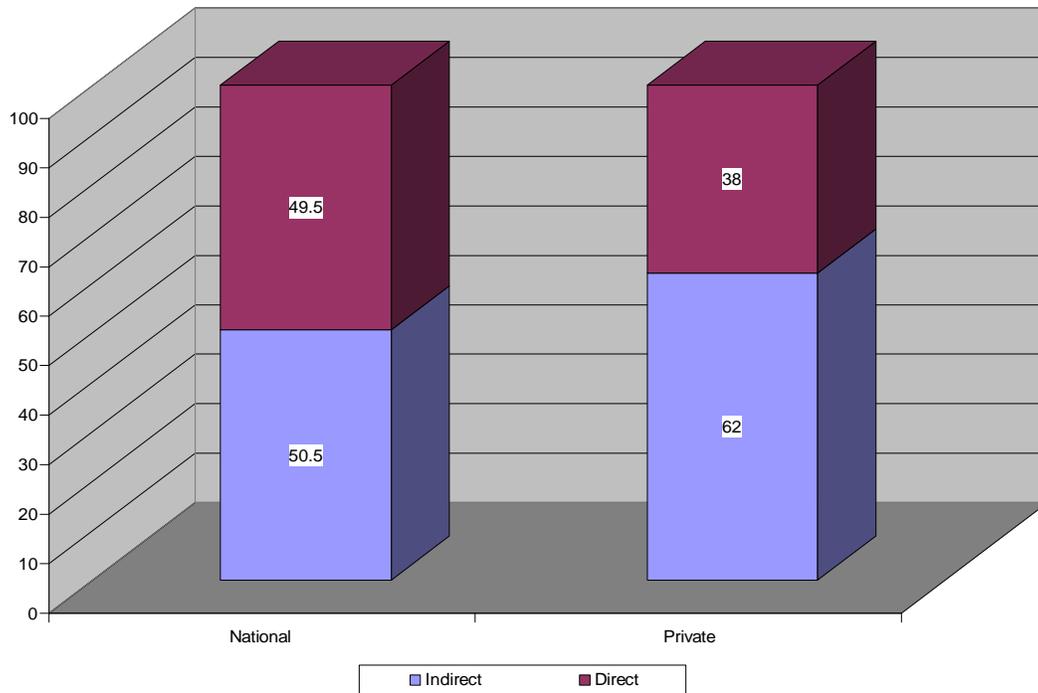


In general, television coverage of elections tended to be indirect coverage—that is, it provided either audio or visual coverage, but not both, or discussed candidates in their absence. Out of the total election airtime, 58% was indirect, compared to 42% direct coverage. Coverage on the official channels was nearly evenly split between direct coverage (49.5%) and indirect coverage (50.5%), while indirect coverage was dominant on private channels, accounting for 62% of the election coverage compared to 38% direct coverage.

Percentage of Direct and Indirect Media Coverage in TV Channels



Distributing Direct and Indirect Media Coverage Between National and Private TV Channels

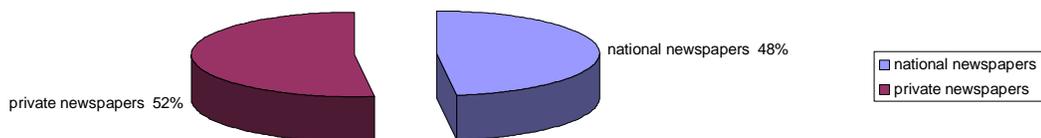


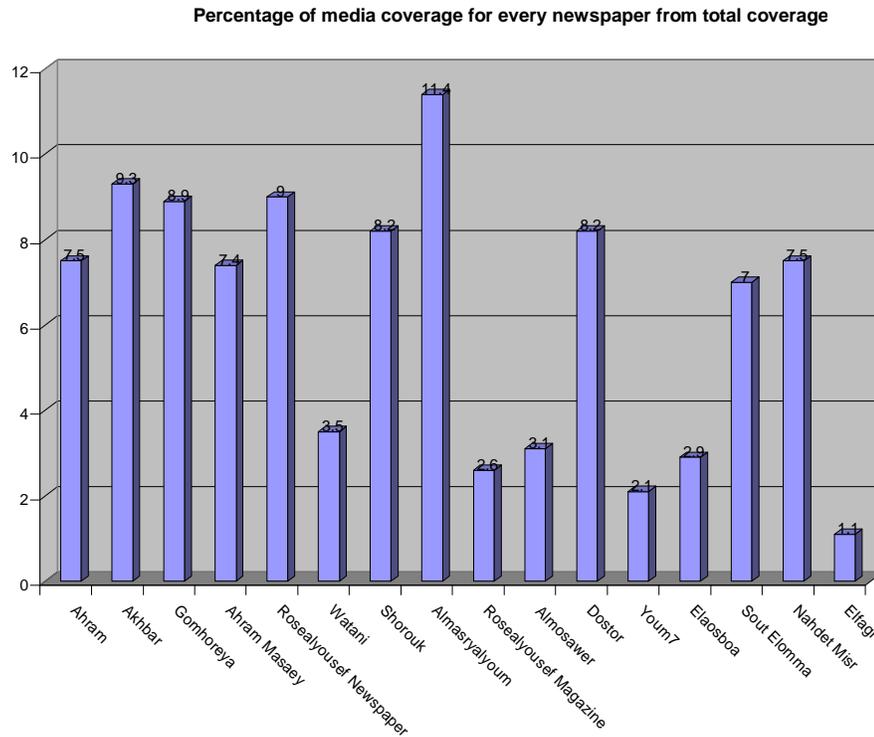
II. Performance of the press

Usually the press is able to cover momentous events such as elections more professionally and objectively than television due to more available space, more ample capacities, and greater diversity within each newspaper. But this does not mean there is no lack of balance or objectivity. Indeed, certain basic features, such as an endemic pro-NDP bias, were present in the press as well, though to a lesser degree than television. A review of the election coverage of 16 state-owned and independent papers—al-Ahram, al-Akhbar, al-Gomhouriya, Roz al-Youssef daily newspaper, Nahdat Misr, al-Masry al-Yom, al-Dostor, al-Shorouk, al-Ahram al-Masai, al-Usbua, Watani, al-Yom al-Sabia, al-Fajr, Roz al-Yossef magazine, al-Musawwar, and Sawt al-Umma—led to several basic observations.

Firstly, the Egyptian press devoted substantial space to election coverage—in all, a total of 1,203,672 cm², or about 730 pages of a normal daily, making for an average of 15 pages of coverage a day. The coverage was fairly evenly split between the national papers, although they are fewer than the independent papers, with 48.8% of the coverage, while the independent press was responsible for 51.2% of the total election coverage. Overall, al-Masry al-Yom led, providing 11.4% of the total space devoted to elections, followed by al-Akhbar with 9.3%, Roz al-Youssef newspaper (9%), al-Gomhouriya (8.9%), al-Shorouk and al-Dostor (8.2% each), al-Ahram and Nahdat Misr (7.5% each), al-Ahram al-Masai (7.4%), Sawt al-Umma (7%), Watani (3.5%), al-Usbua (2.9%), Roz al-Youssef magazine (2.6%), al-Musawwar (3.1%), al-Yom al-Sabia (2.1%), and finally al-Fajr, which provided 1.1% of the total press coverage of elections.

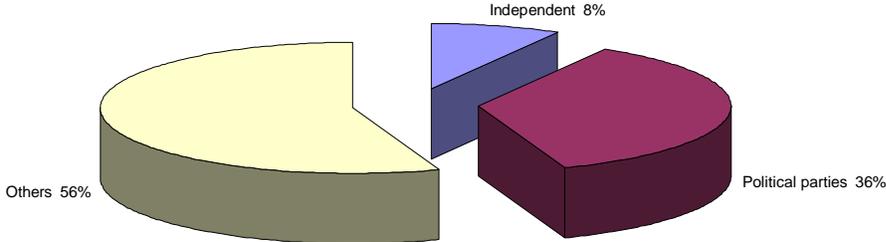
Distributing elections coverage between National and Private newspapers





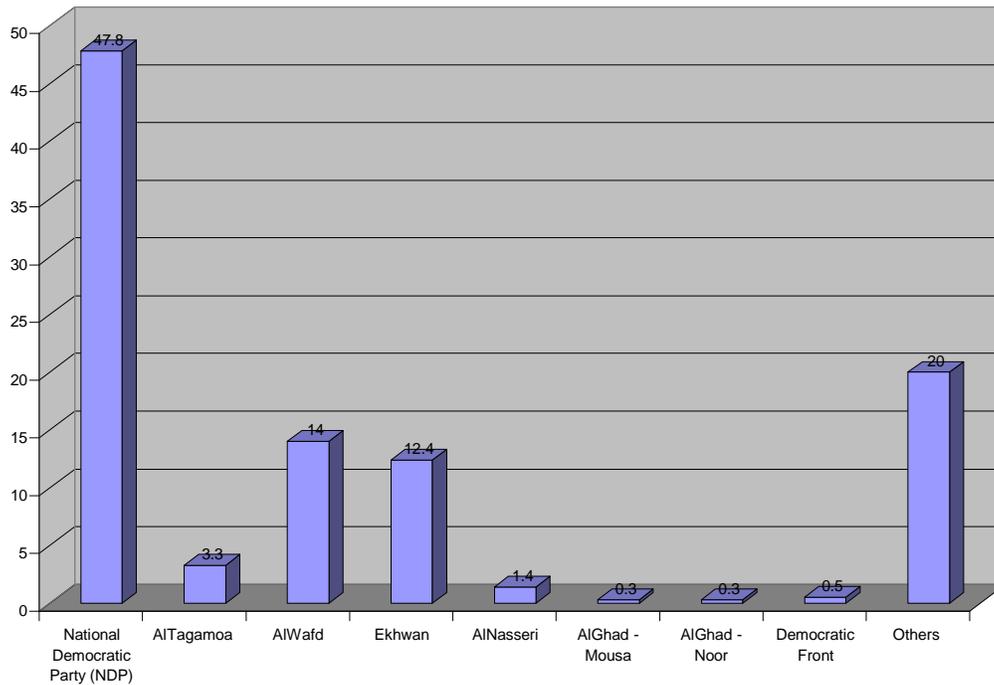
Secondly, regarding balanced coverage of various candidates and parties, it became clear that press coverage was unbalanced. Independent candidates received less than one-quarter (23.3%) of the total space devoted to party candidates. Independent candidates identified as independents by the press received only 8.4% of the total space devoted to elections, while party candidates received 36%. Party candidates received similar levels of coverage in the independent and national papers, garnering 36.5% of the space in the independent press and 35% in the national press, which may be an indication of a specific stance on the part of the national press when compared to the independent press. Independents received 10% of the space in independent papers, compared to 6.7% in the national papers. The remainder of the space was devoted to general election coverage and candidates with no identified political affiliation.

Distributing media coverage between Political parties candidates and Independent candidates



The lack of balance becomes clearer when looking at the quantity of coverage received by each party. The NDP, Wafd, and Muslim Brothers combined received about three-quarters of all press coverage (74.2%). The NDP led by a wide margin, garnering alone 47.8% of the total space devoted to election coverage, most of it (55%) in the national press. Most of the press coverage of the NDP was positive (50%), with 37% being impartial and only 13% being negative, the overwhelming majority of which was in the private press (89.5%).

Distribution of press coverage among various parties

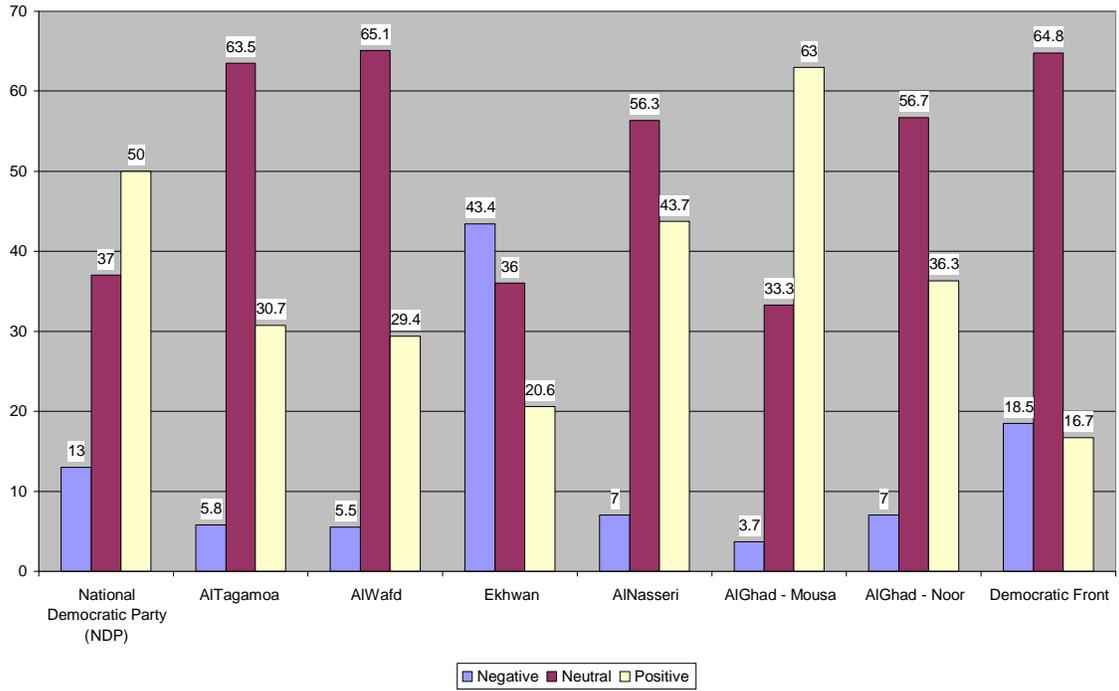


The Wafd Party was the second most covered force with 14% of the coverage, the majority (72.5%) in the private press. In general press coverage of the party was impartial, with 56.1% of all coverage classified as impartial compared to 29.4% classified as positive and only 5.5% negative, most of it (68%) in the national press.

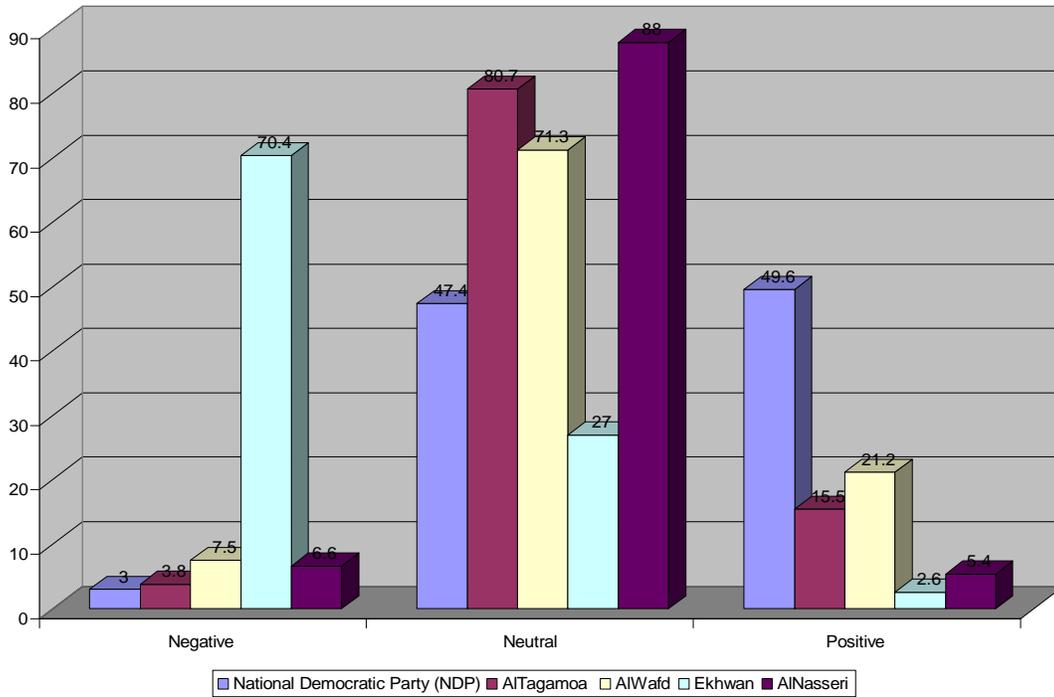
The Muslim Brothers came in third in terms of coverage, garnering 12.4% of the total, most of it negative (43.4%), and most of that in the national press (84%). Some 36% of coverage of the group was impartial while 20.6% was positive, more than three-quarters of it (77%) in the private press.

The other parties received markedly little coverage, all of them less than 1% of the total with the exception of the Tagammu Party, which received 3.3% of the total coverage, most of which was impartial (63.5%), while 5.8% was negative. The Nasserist Party received 1.4% of the total coverage, most of it (56.3%) impartial, with only 7% of the total negative. The Ghad Party (Moussa Mustafa) received only 0.3% of the total coverage, most of it (63%) positive, while the Ayman Nour branch of the Ghad Party also received 0.3% of the coverage, most of it (56.7%) impartial. The Democratic Front garnered 0.5% of the coverage, most of it (64.8%) impartial, with 18.5% of it negative, most of which (88%) came from the private press.

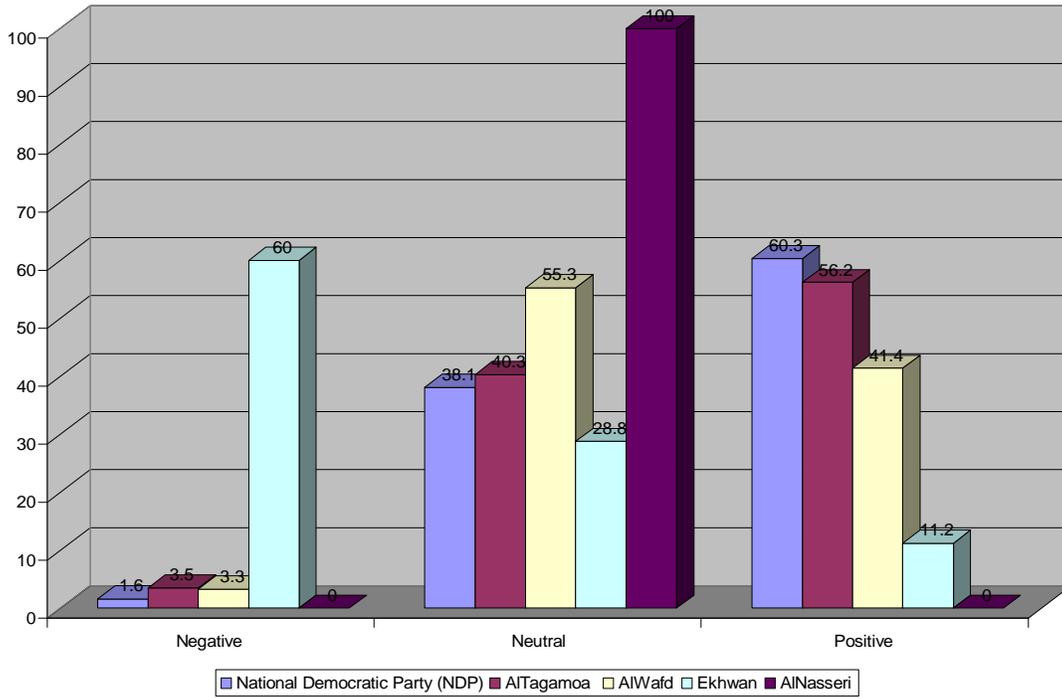
Assessment of press coverage for various political parties



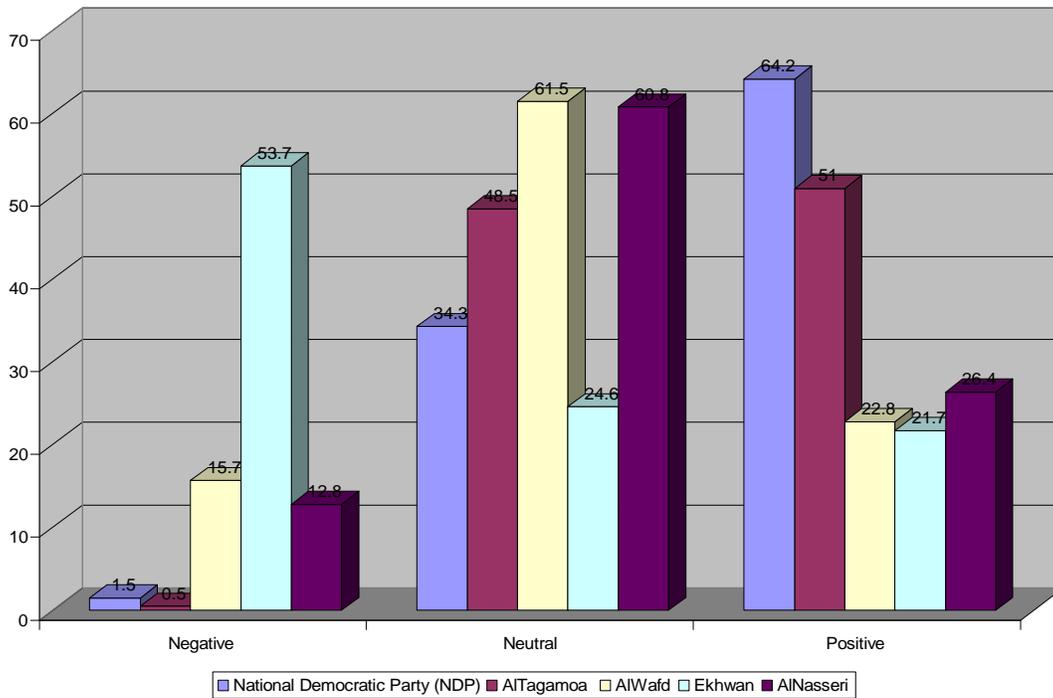
Assessment of Ahram Newspaper for Various Political Parties



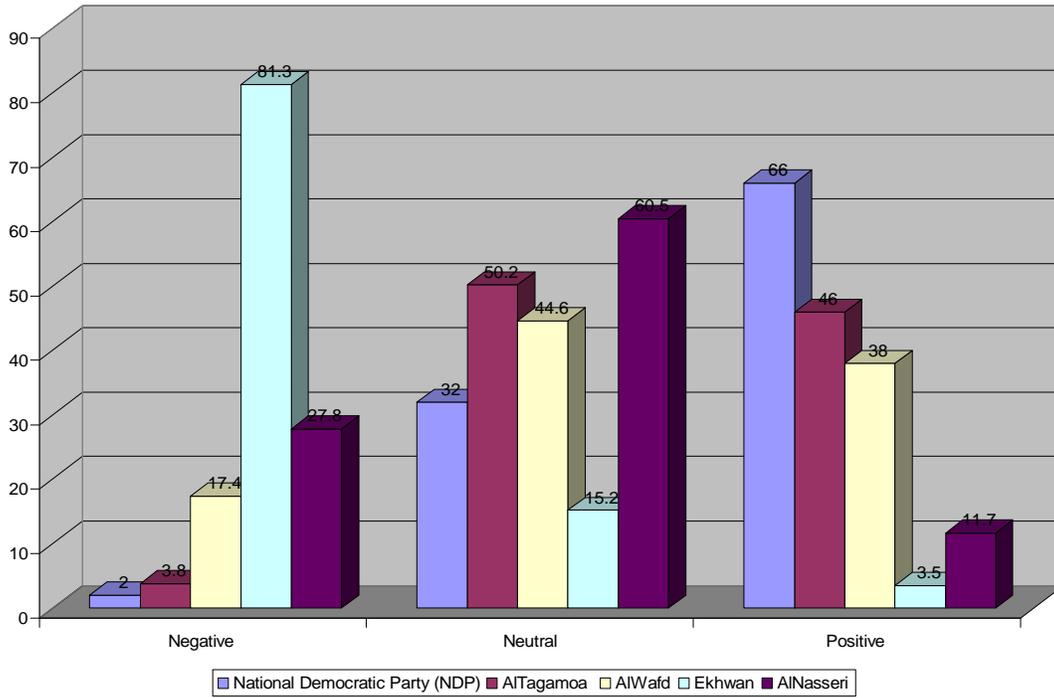
Assessment of Akhbar Newspaper for Various Political Parties



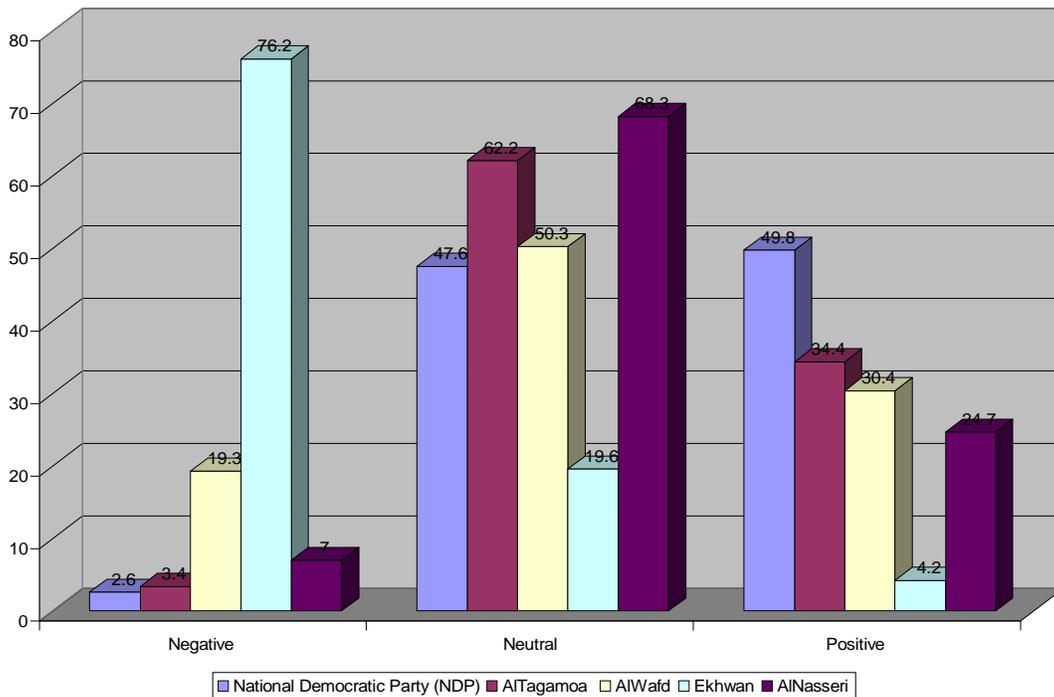
Assessment of Gomhoreya Newspaper for Various Political Parties



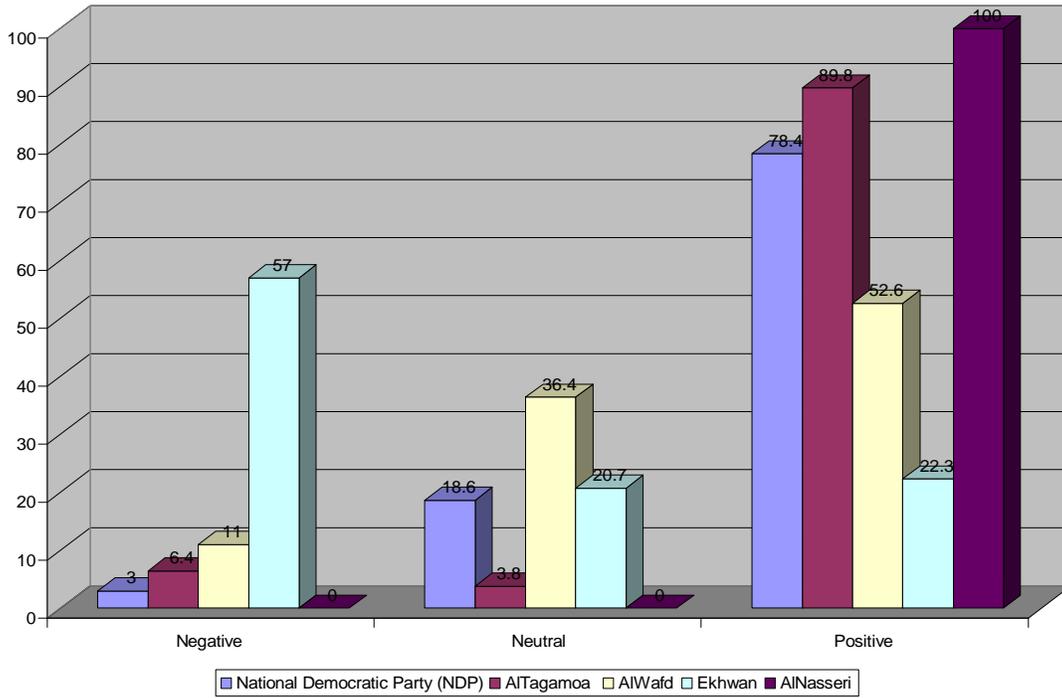
Assessment of Ahram Masaey Newspaper for Various Political Parties



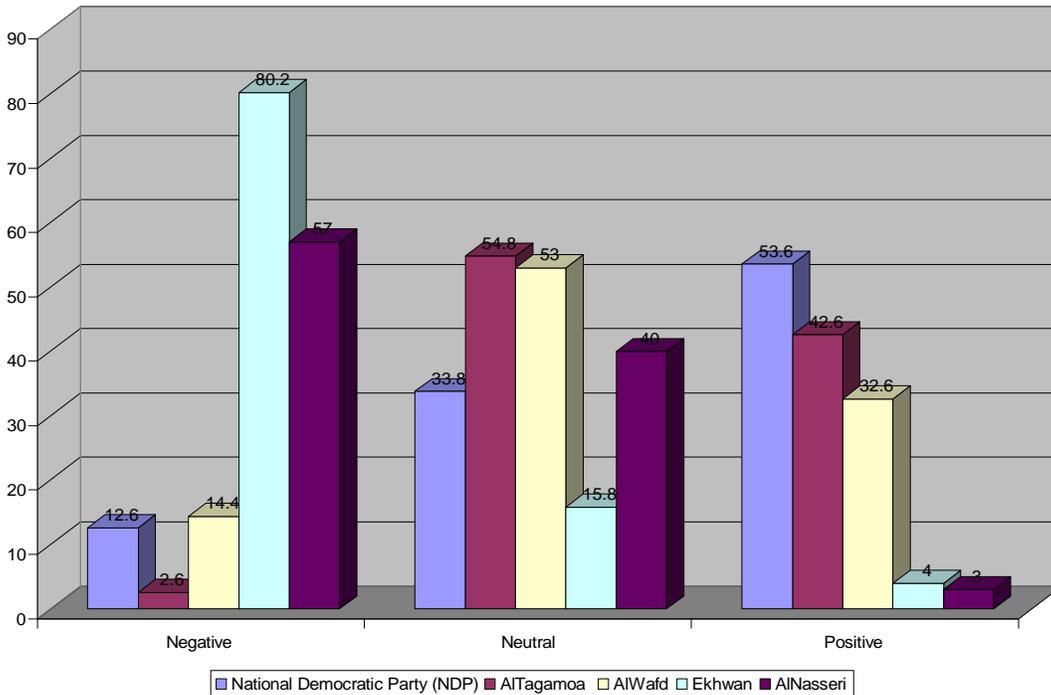
Assessment of Rosealyousef Newspaper for Various Political Parties



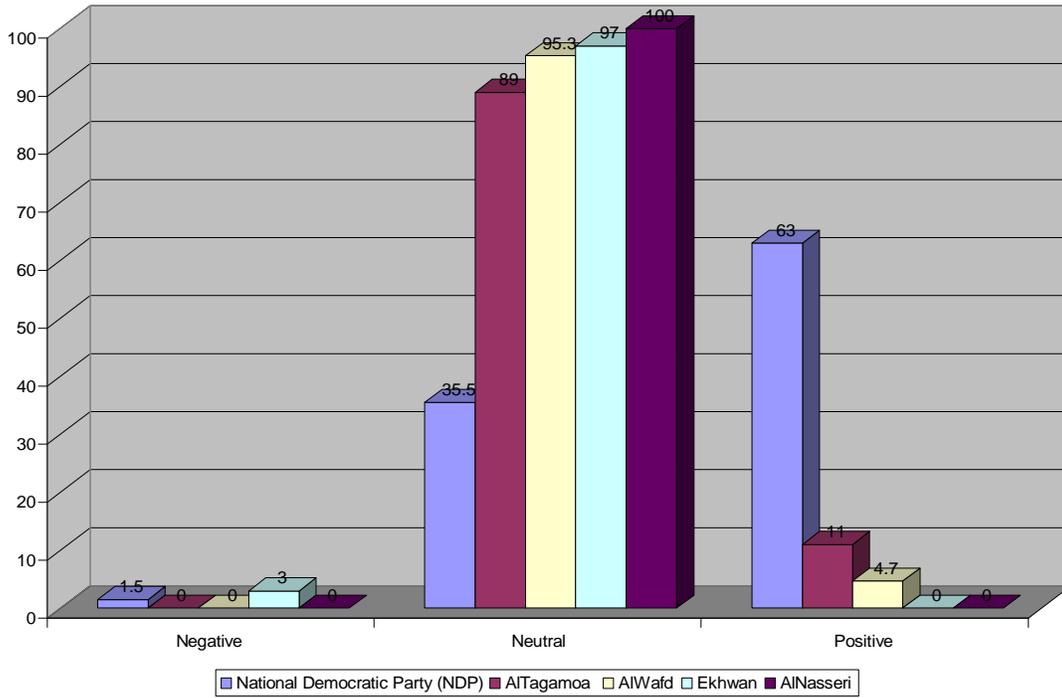
Assessment of Almosawer Magazine for Various Political Parties



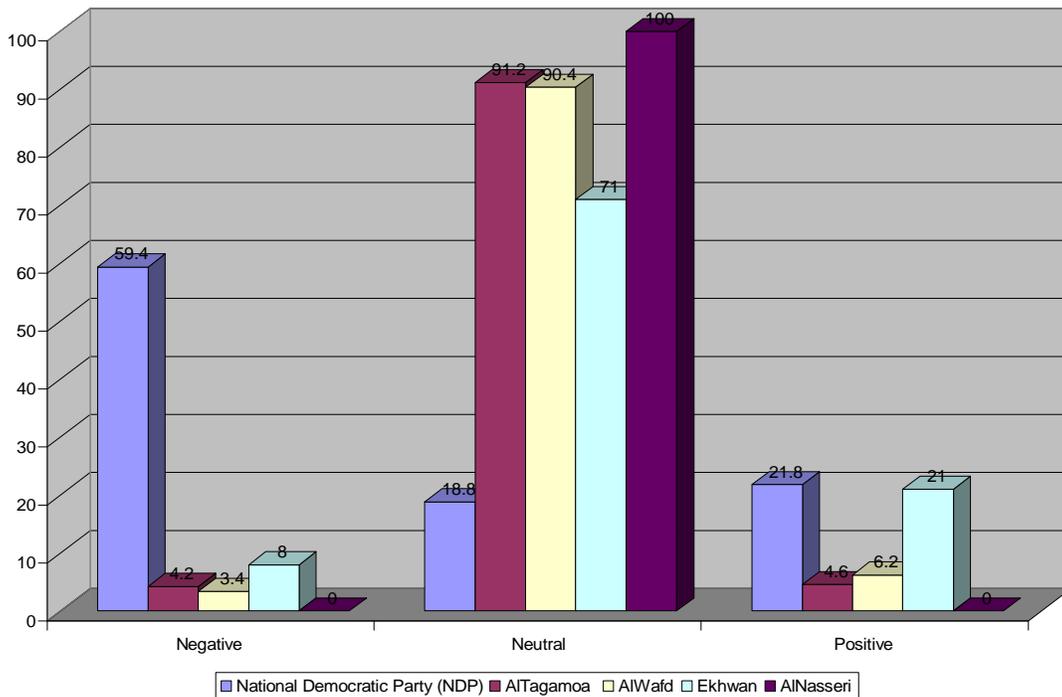
Assessment of Rosealyousef Magazine for Various Political Parties



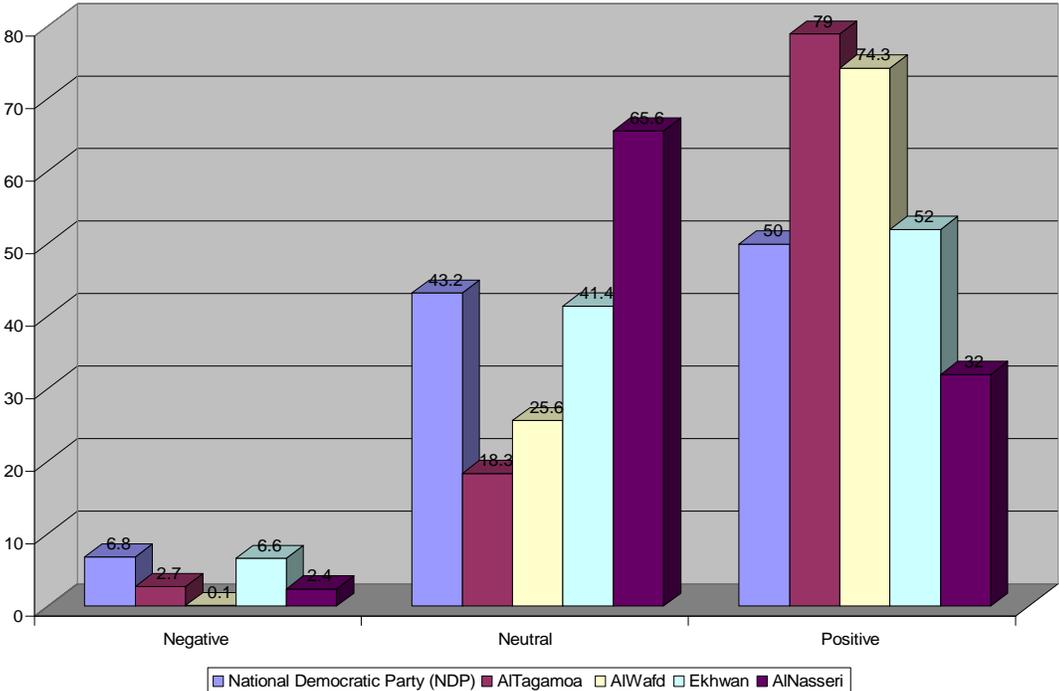
Assessment of Watani Newspaper for Various Political Parties



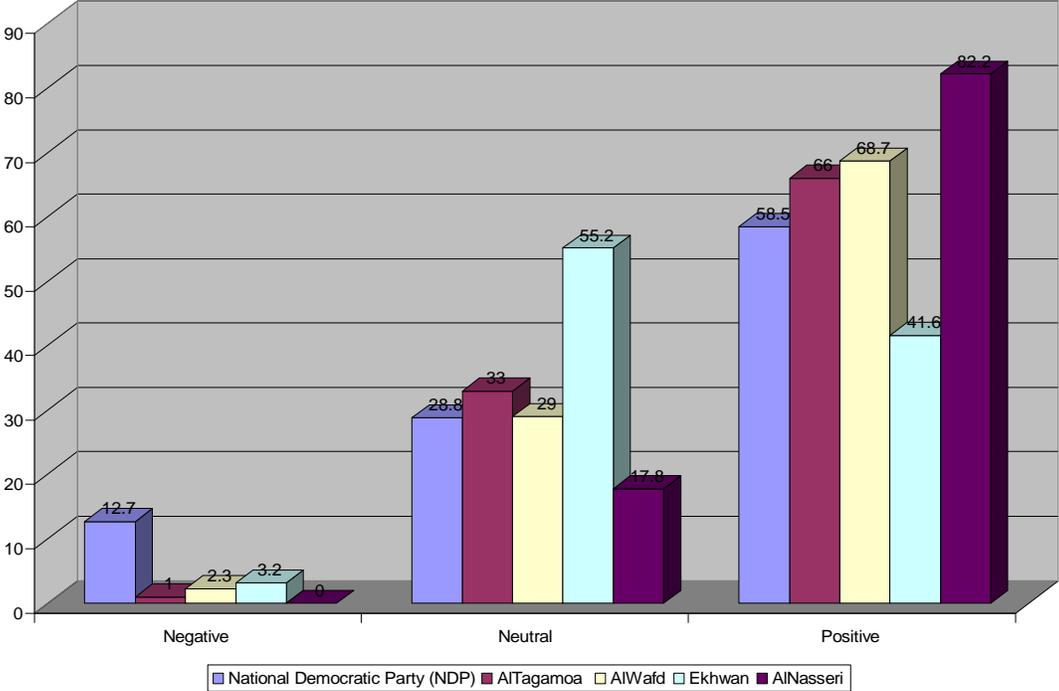
Assessment of Sout Elomma Newspaper for various Political Parties



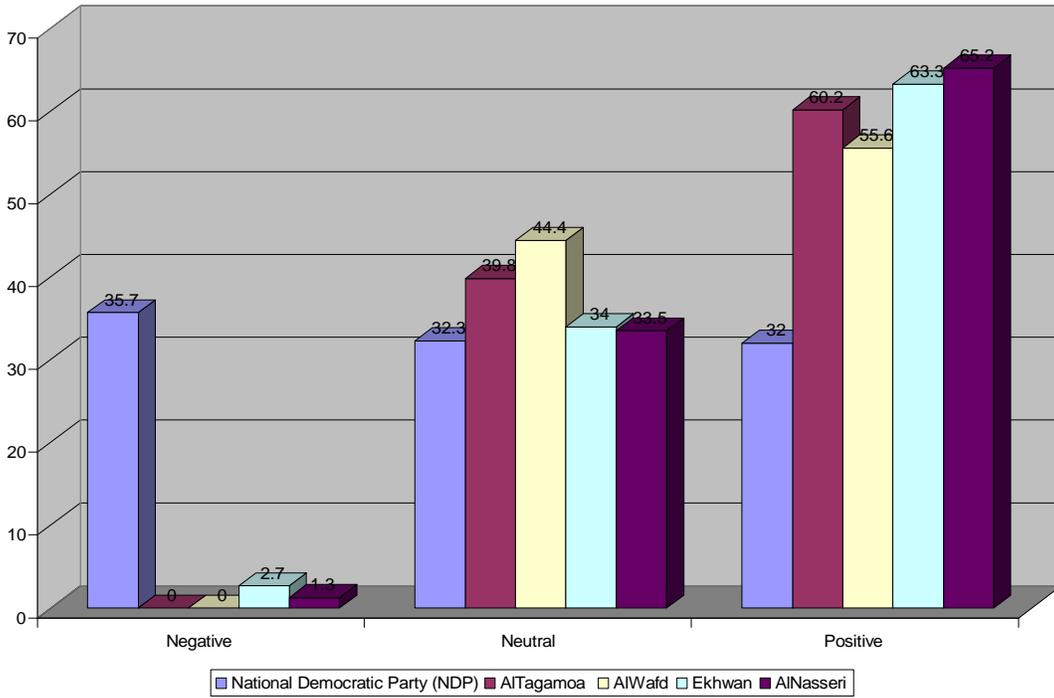
Assessment of Elaosboa Newspaper for Various Political Parties



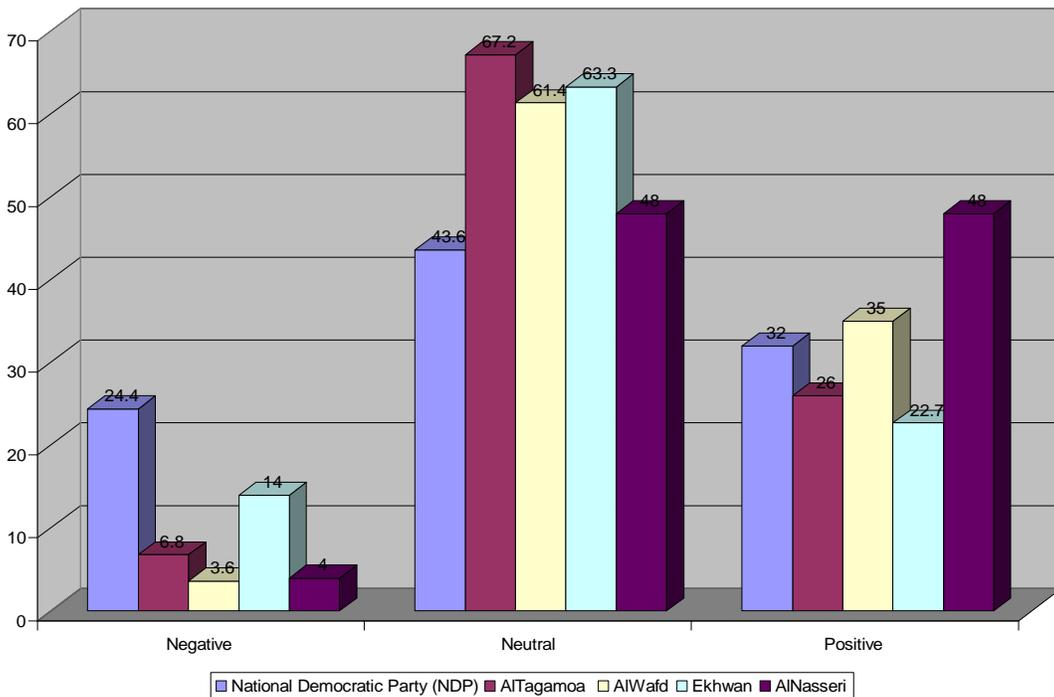
Assessment of Youm7 Newspaper for Various Political Parties



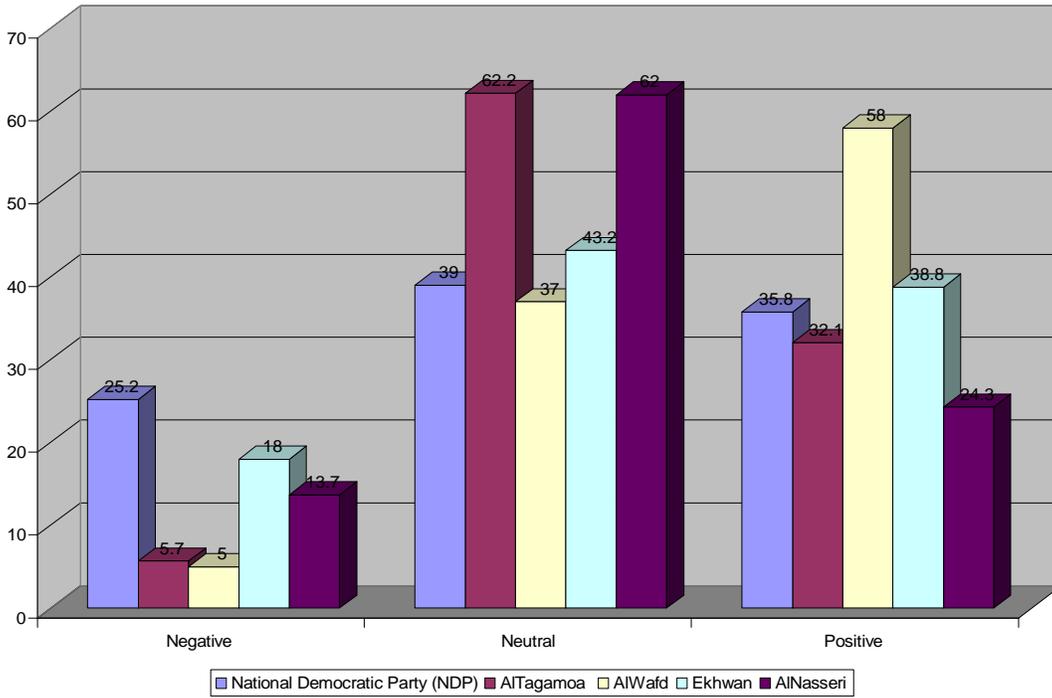
Assessment of Alfagr Newspaper for Various Political Parties



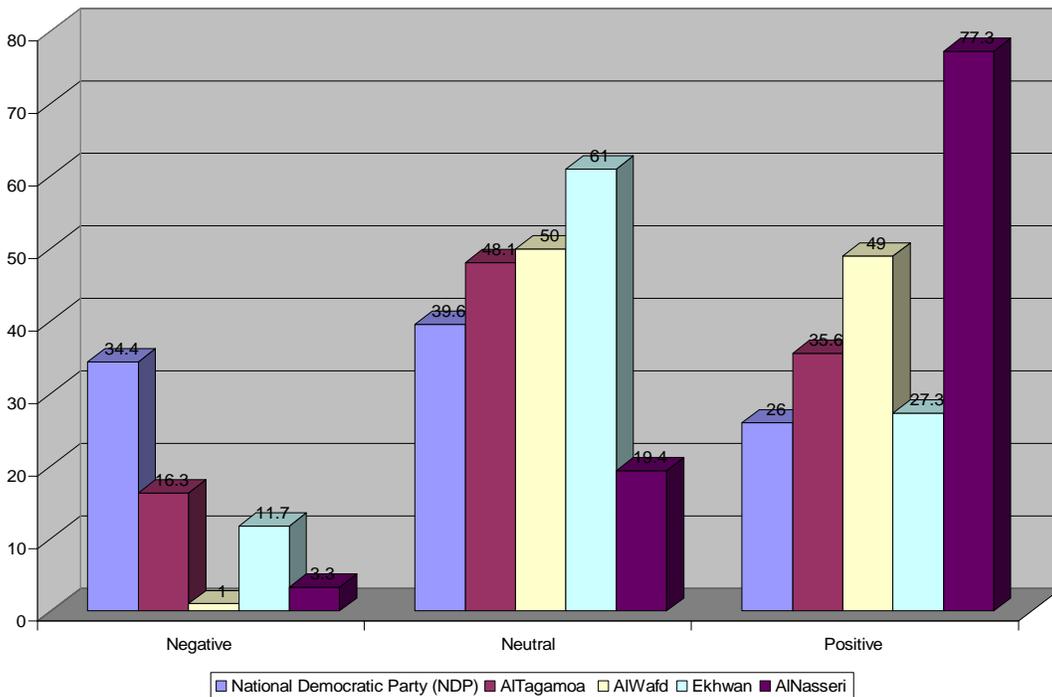
Assessment of Shorouk Newspaper for Various Political Parties



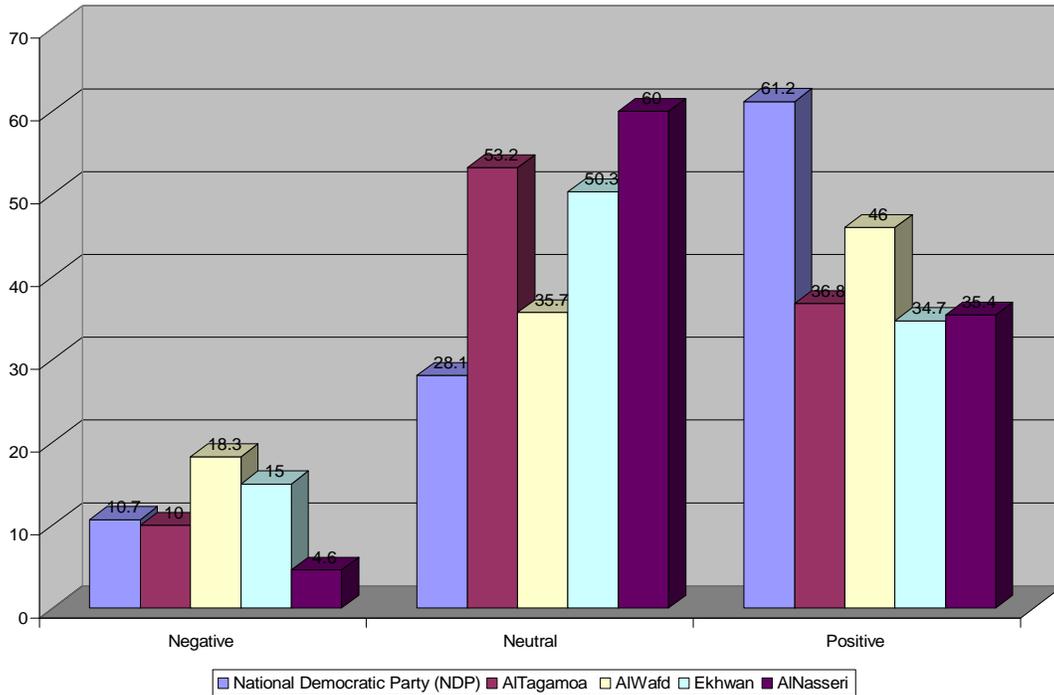
Assessment of Almasryalyoum Newspaper for Various Political Parties



Assessment of Dostor Newspaper for various Political Parties

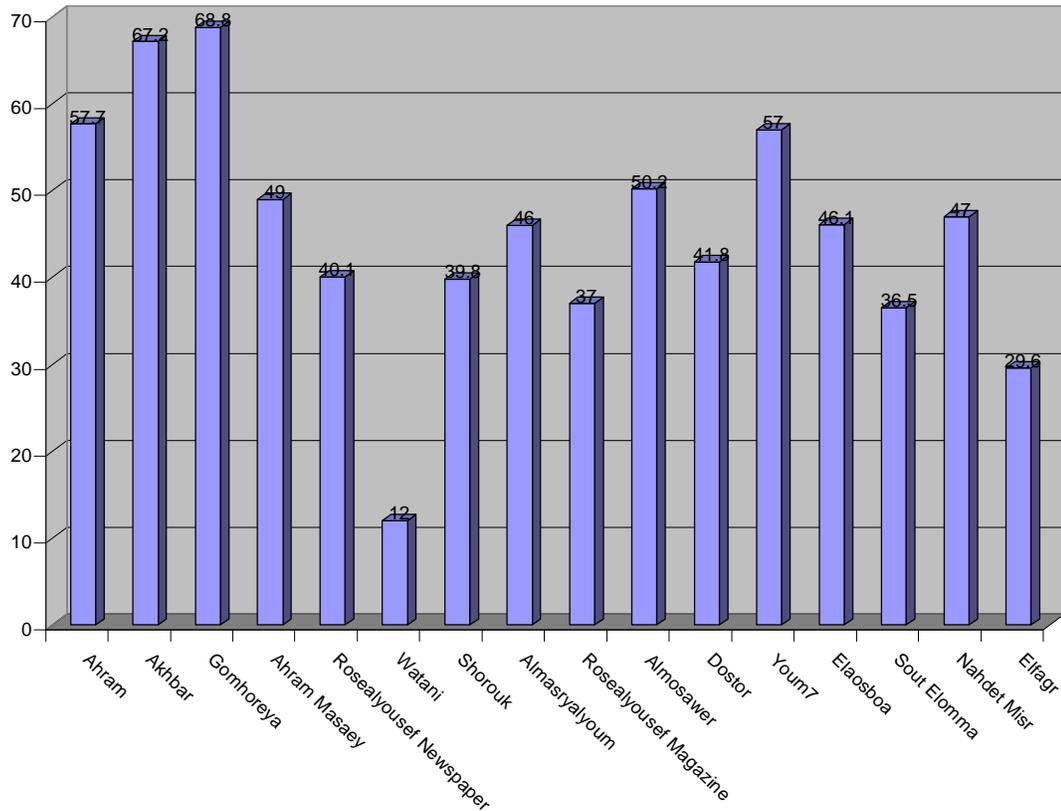


Assessment of Nahdet Misr Newspaper for Various Political Parties



The paper with the most pro-NDP coverage was al-Gomhouriya, which devoted 68.8% of its election coverage to the party, with only 1.5% of this coverage negative and 64.2% positive. It was followed by al-Akhbar, which gave over 67.2% of its election space to the NDP, only 1.6% of it negative and 60.3% positive. Al-Ahram came in third place, devoting 57.7% of its election coverage to the NDP, 3% of it negative and 49.6% positive, followed by al-Ahram al-Masai, with 49% of its election space given to the NDP, 2% of it negative and 66% of it positive. Of the national daily press, Roz al-Youssef was the least biased to the NDP, devoting 40.1% of its election space to the party, only 2.6% of it negative and 49.8% positive. Roz al-Youssef magazine gave 37% of its election coverage to the NDP, 12.6% of it negative — the largest degree of negative coverage in the national press — and 53.6% positive.

Press coverage for NDP

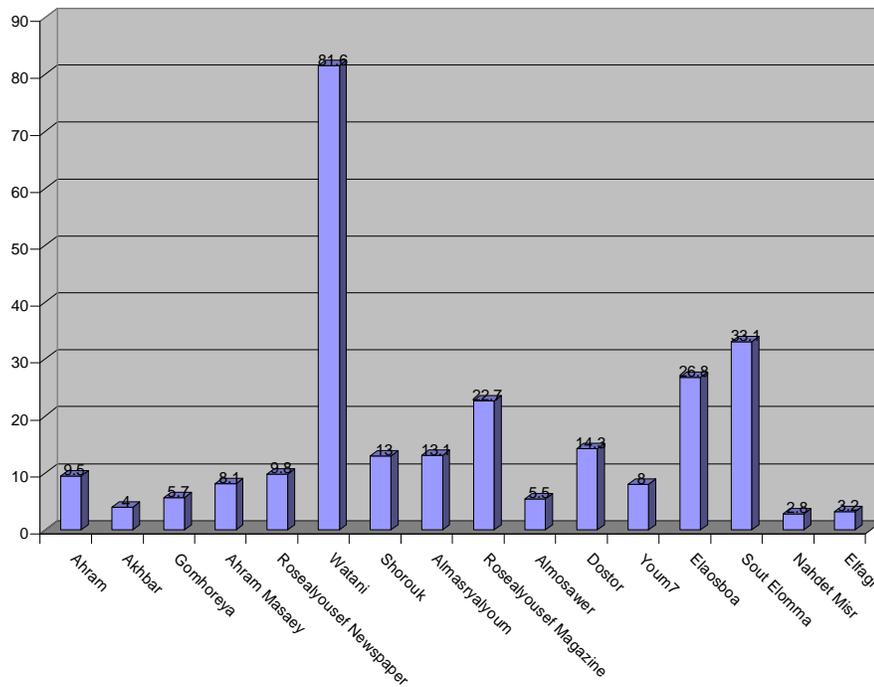


Turning to the private press, al-Yom al-Sabia was the private paper that exhibited the most pro-NDP bias, devoting 57% of its election coverage to the party, only 12.7% of it negative and 58.5% positive. It was followed by Nahdat Misr, which gave over 47% of its coverage to the NDP, 10.75% of it negative and 61.2% positive. Al-Usbua focused 46.1% of its election coverage on the NDP, 6.8% of it negative and 50% positive, followed closely by al-Masry al-Yom, with 46% of its space focused on the party, 25.2% negative and 35.8% positive. Some 41.8% of the election coverage in al-Dostor was devoted to the NDP, 34.4% negative and 26% positive, whereas al-Shorouk devoted 39.8% to the NDP, 24.4% negative and 32% positive. Al-Fajr gave over 29.6% of its election coverage to the NDP, 35.7% negative and 32% positive. Finally, Watani devoted just 12% of its coverage to the NDP, only 1.5% of it negative and 63% positive. The paper with the most negative coverage of the NDP was Sawt al-Umma, which devoted 36.5% of its election space to the party, 59.4% of it negative and 21.8% positive. The most positive coverage of the party was found in al-Musawwar, which covered the NDP in 50.2% of its election space, 78.4% of it positive and only 3% negative. Al-Ahram was the most impartial in its coverage of the NDP, with 47.4% of its coverage of the party classified as impartial.

The Wafd Party received the most coverage in the private weekly Watani, which devoted 81.6% of its election space to the party, none of it negative and overwhelmingly impartial (95.3%). It was followed by Sawt al-Umma, which focused on the party in

33.1% of its election coverage, the vast majority (90.4%) impartial and only 3.4% negative. The weekly al-Ushua devoted 26.8% of its election coverage to the Wafd, only 0.1% of it negative and 74.3% positive. The daily al-Dostor gave over 14.3% of its space to the party, only 1% of it negative, 49% positive, and 50% impartial. In al-Masry al-Yom, 13.1% of its election space was devoted to the Wafd, 5% of it negative and 58% positive. The party was the subject of 13% of al-Shorouk's coverage, 3.6% negative, 35% positive, and the majority (61.4%) impartial. The weekly al-Yom al-Sabia devoted 8% of its election coverage to the party, 2.3% of it negative and 68.7% positive. Meanwhile, the weekly al-Fajr devoted 3.2% of its election coverage to the Wafd, none of it negative; 55.6% was positive and 44.4% impartial. The Wafd received the least amount of coverage in Nahdat Misr, which devoted only 2.8% of its election space to the party, 18.3% of it negative and 46% positive.

Press coverage for AlWafd

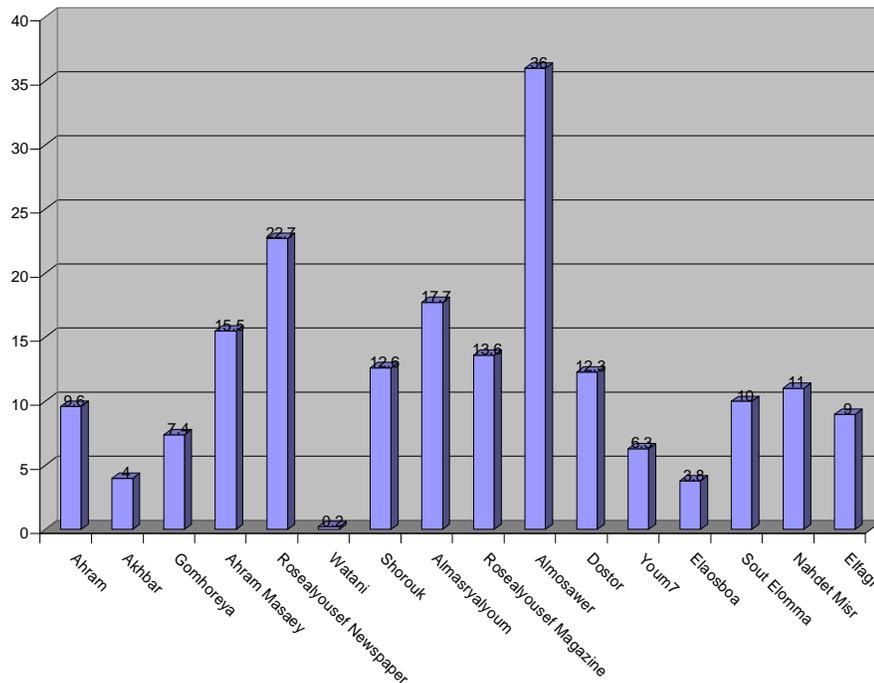


Of the national press, the Wafd received the most coverage in the weekly Roz al-Youssef magazine, which devoted 22.7% of its election space to the party, 14.4% negative and 32.6% positive. It was followed by the daily Roz al-Youssef newspaper, which covered the Wafd in 9.8% of its election space, 19.3% of it negative, 30.4% positive, and about half (50.3%) impartial. The daily al-Ahram focused on the Wafd in 9.5% of its coverage, 7.5% of it negative, 21.2% positive, and 71.3% impartial. The daily al-Ahram al-Masai devoted 8.1% of its election coverage to the party, 17.4% of it negative and 38% positive. The daily al-Gomhouriya spent 5.7% of its election coverage on the Wafd, 15.7% of it negative, 22.8% positive, and the majority (61.5%) impartial. The weekly al-Musawwar devoted 5.5% of its election coverage to the Wafd, 11% of it negative and 52.6% positive. The national paper offer the least coverage of the Wafd

was al-Akhbar, with only 4% of its election coverage about the party, 3.3% negative, 41.4% positive, and the majority (55.3%) impartial.

Turning to the Muslim Brothers, the national weekly al-Musawwar devoted the most election space to the group, devoting 36% of its coverage to the Muslim Brothers, 57% of it negative and 22.3% positive. It was followed by Roz al-Youssef magazine, which devoted 22.7% of its election coverage to the Brothers, 76.2% of it negative and only 4.2% positive. Al-Masry al-Yom focused on the Muslim Brothers in 17.7% of its election coverage, 18% of it negative and 38.8% positive. Al-Ahram al-Masai devoted 15.5% of its election to the group, the overwhelming majority (81.3%) of it negative, with only 3.5% classified as positive. The state-owned weekly Roz al-Youssef devoted 13.6% of its election coverage to the Brothers, 80.2% of it negative compared to only 4% positive. Meanwhile, al-Shorouk focused on the group in 12.6% of its coverage, 14% of it negative and 22.7% positive. Al-Dostor devoted 12.3% of its election space to the Brothers, 11.7% of it negative and 27.3% positive, followed by the daily Nahdat Misr, which devoted 11% of its coverage to the group, 15% of it negative and 34.7% positive. Sawt al-Umma devoted 10% of its election coverage to the Muslim Brothers, 8% of it negative and 21% positive. Al-Ahram devoted 9.6% of its coverage to the group, 70.4% of it negative and only 2.6% positive, while the weekly al-Fajr spent 9% of its election space covering the Brothers, 2.7% of it negative and the majority (63.3%) positive. Al-Gomhouriya devoted 7.4% of its coverage to the group, with a little more than half (53.7%) negative and 21.7% positive. The private weekly al-Yom al-Sabia devoted 6.3% of its coverage to the group, 3.2% of it negative and 41.6% positive.

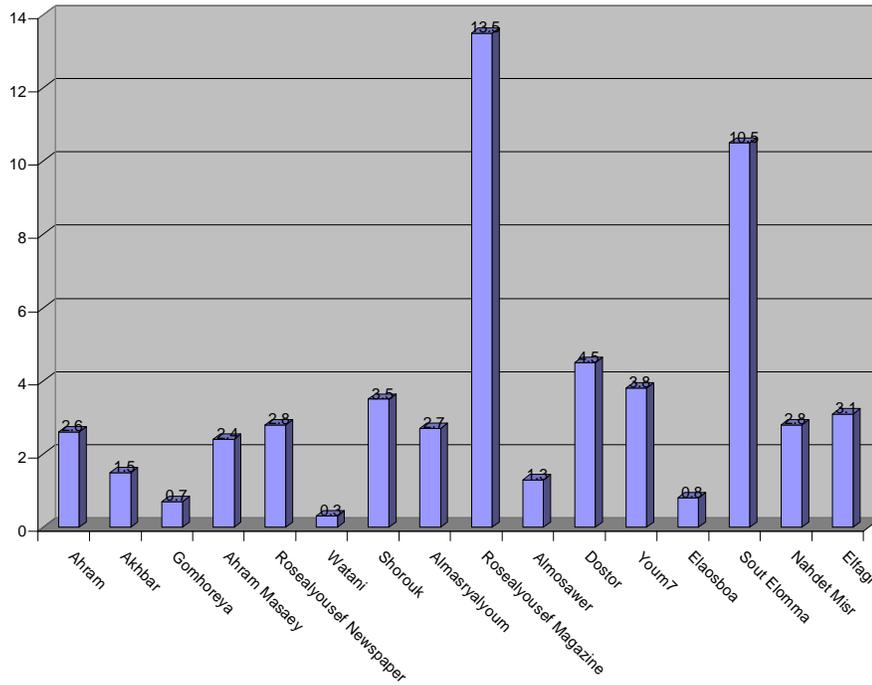
Press coverage for Ekhwan



The Muslim Brothers received the least amount of coverage in the weekly *Watani*, which focused on the group in just 0.2% of its election space, nearly all of it (97%) impartial and none of it positive. *Al-Usbua* devoted 3.8% of its election coverage to the Brothers, 6.6% negative and 52% positive. Among the national papers, *al-Akhbar* covered the Brothers the least, giving over only 4% of its election coverage to the group, 60% of it negative and 11.2% positive.

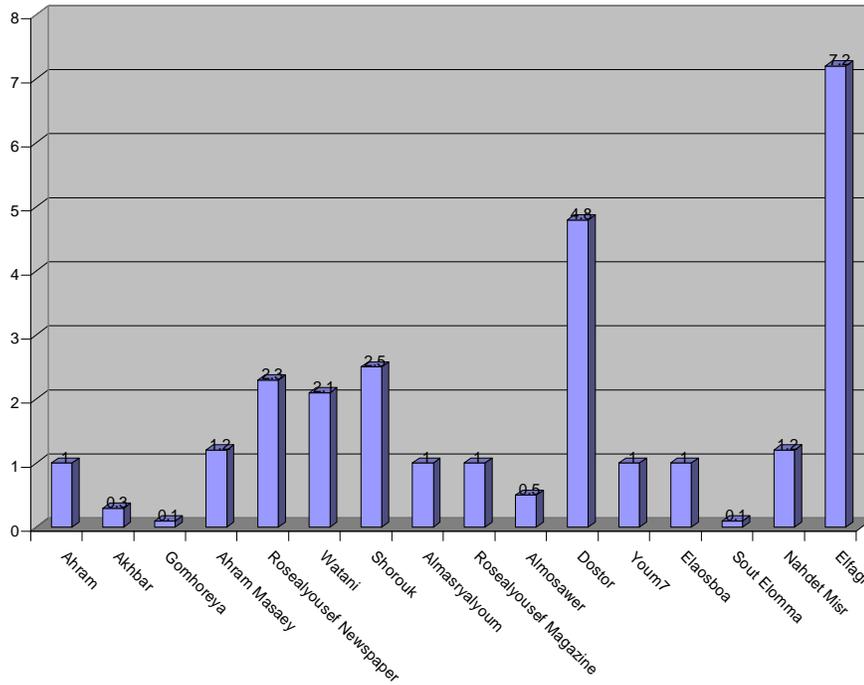
The Tagammu Party received the most coverage from the state-owned weekly *Roz al-Youssef* magazine, which devoted 13.5% of its election space to the party, 2.6% of it negative and 42.6% positive. It was followed by the private *Sawt al-Umma*, which devoted 10.5% of its election coverage to the party, 4.2% of it negative and 4.6% positive. The private daily *al-Dostor* devoted 4.5% of its election space to the party, 16.3% of it negative and 35.6% positive while the private weekly *al-Yom al-Sabia* focused on the party in 3.8% of its coverage, 1% of it negative and 66% positive. The private daily *al-Shorouk* devoted 3.5% of its election coverage to the party, 6.8% of it negative and 26% positive, while the private weekly *al-Fajr* focused on the Tagammu in 3.1% of its coverage, none of it negative and 60.2% of it positive. Both the private *Nahdat Misr* and the national *Roz al-Youssef* devoted 2.8% of their election coverage to the party. Some 10% of *Nahdat Misr*'s coverage was negative while 36.8% was positive; 3.4% of *Roz al-Youssef*'s coverage was negative while 34.4% was positive. Meanwhile, *al-Masry al-Yom* gave over 2.7% of its election space to the Tagammu, 5.7% of it negative and 32.1% positive. The state-owned daily *al-Ahram* devoted 2.6% of its coverage to the party, 3.8% of it negative and 15.5% positive. In the state-owned *al-Ahram al-Masai*, the Tagammu received 2.4% of election coverage, 3.8% of it negative and 46% positive. The state-owned daily *al-Akhbar* devoted 1.5% of its election coverage to the party, 3.5% of it negative and none of it positive. In the weekly *al-Musawwar*, the Tagammu received 1.3% of the election coverage, 6.4% of it negative and 89.8% positive, while the weekly *al-Usbua* devoted only 0.8% of its election space to the party, 2.7% of it negative and 79% positive. The Tagammu received only 0.7% of the state-owned *al-Gomhouriya*'s election coverage, 0.5% of it negative and 51% positive. The Tagammu received the least amount of coverage from the private weekly *Watani*, which devoted 0.3% of its election coverage to the party, none of it negative and 11% of it positive.

Press coverage for AITagamo



Regarding the Nasserist Party, the party received the most coverage in the private weekly al-Fajr, which devoted 7.2% of its electoral coverage to it, 1.3% of it negative and 65.2% positive. It was followed by the private daily al-Dostor, which gave over 4.8% of its coverage to the party, 3.3% of it negative and 77.3% positive. In al-Shorouk, the party received 2.5% of the paper's coverage, 4% of it negative and 48% positive. The state-owned daily Roz al-Youssef devoted 2.3% of its election space to the party, 7% of it negative and 24.7% positive. The party received 2.1% of the election coverage in the private weekly Watani, none of it negative or positive, but 100% impartial. Both the private daily Nahdat Misr and the state-owned daily al-Ahram al-Masai devoted 1.2% of their coverage to the Nasserist Party. In the former, 4.6% of the coverage was negative and 35.4% positive, whereas in the latter, 27.8% was negative and 11.7% was positive. The party received 1% of the election coverage in the private weekly al-Usbua, the private weekly al-Yom al-Sabia, the state-owned weekly Roz al-Youssef, the private daily al-Masry al-Yom, and the state-owned daily al-Ahram. Some 2.4% of the coverage in al-Usbua was negative and 32% positive. Al-Yom al-Sabia provided no negative coverage of the party and 82.2% positive coverage, whereas negative coverage accounted for more than half (57%) of the total party coverage in Roz al-Youssef, compared to 3% positive. Some 13.7% of al-Masry al-Yom's coverage was negative while 24.3% was positive. Al-Ahram's coverage of the party was 6.6% negative and 5.4% positive. Al-Musawwar devoted 0.5% of its election coverage to the Nasserist Party, none of it negative and all of it positive. The party received 0.3% of the election coverage in al-Akhbar, all of it impartial.

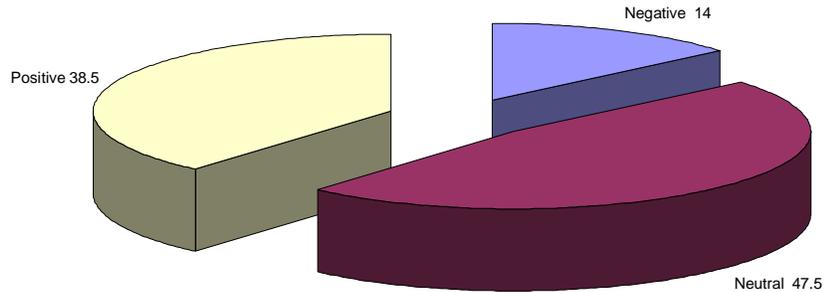
Press coverage for AlNasseri



Finally, the private weekly Sawt al-Umma and the state-owned daily al-Gomhouriya devoted only 0.1% of their election coverage to the party. Whereas the former offered only impartial coverage, coverage in the latter was 12.8% negative and 26.4% positive.

Thirdly, in general, press coverage tended to be either positive or impartial. Overall, impartial coverage accounted for 47.5% of all coverage and 57% of coverage in the private press. Positive coverage comprised 38.5% of all coverage and 55% of all coverage in the state-owned press. Negative coverage constituted 14% of all press elections coverage and 56.2% in the private press. In the national press, 44.5% of the coverage was positive while 13% was negative. In the private press, 51.7% was impartial while 15.3% was negative.

Overall assessment of the press coverage of the electoral process

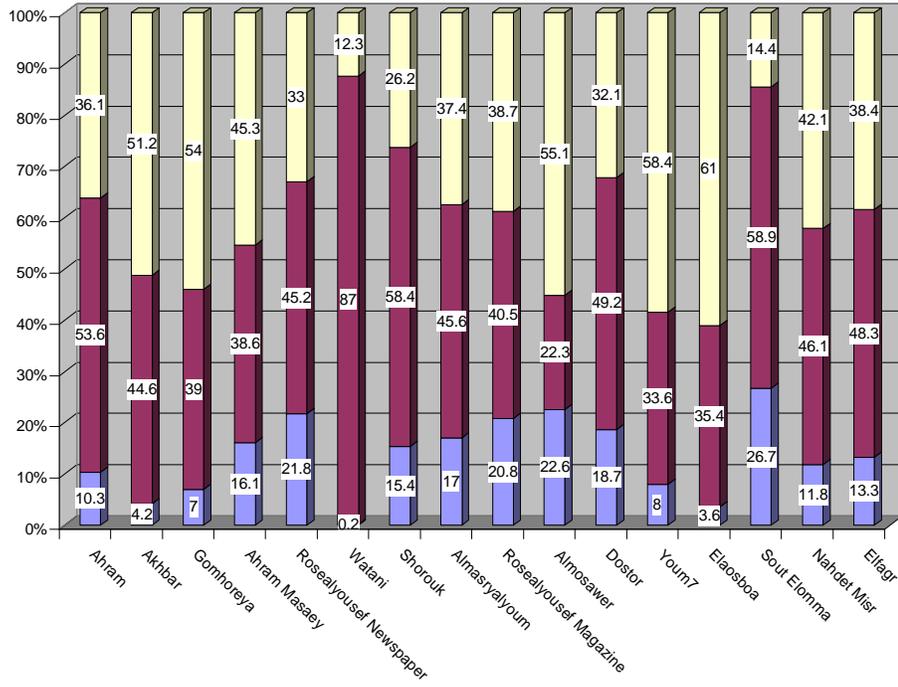


The private weekly Sawt al-Umma had the most negative coverage of elections, with 26.7% of its content classified as negative and 14.4% positive. It was followed by al-Musawwar, with 22.8% of its election coverage negative and 55.1% positive. The least negative coverage was offered by Watani, with only 0.2% of its election coverage negative, compared to 12.8% positive.

Sawt al-Umma also offered the most impartial coverage of elections, with 58.9% of its content classified as impartial. It was followed by al-Shorouk with 58.4% and al-Ahram with 53.6%. The least impartial coverage was provided by al-Musawwar, where only 22.3% of the election coverage was impartial.

The most positive coverage of elections was found in al-Usuba with 61% positive coverage, followed by al-Yom al-Sabia with 58.4% and al-Musawwar with 55.1%. Sawt al-Umma offered the least positive coverage, with 14.4% of its election content classified as positive.

Assessment of media coverage of different newspapers



Qualitative Analysis

Many hoped that 2010 would bring change in the performance of the media, particularly in its coverage of the parliamentary elections held in late November, but the reality frustrated these hopes and expectations. The media was not divorced from the conditions surrounding the elections, characterized by a total lack of judicial supervision, the sway exercised by capital, and blatant rigging for particular parties and individuals. Indeed, the media was crippled as a result of state control over most media outlets, even private media, which it managed to rein in with various laws, threats of closure, and the imposition of specific agendas.

The analysis revealed that the political forces that received the most media coverage were the National Democratic Party (NDP), the Muslim Brothers, and the Wafd Party, and that this coverage came at the expense of other political forces and at the expense of the political awareness-raising in general. For example, women's issues were covered only in relation to the women's quota and candidates running for these seats. There was little discussion of women's issues in the wider sense or about women as a primary partner in society whose participation in elections is a means of achieving some of their rights stipulated in the constitution and laws.

Both the press and television focused their attention on the NDP, the Muslim Brothers, and, to a lesser extent, the Wafd Party. The national press continued to display its long-standing clear bias against the Muslim Brothers, ignoring even arrests of members of the group which were reported by the private Egyptian and international press. There is a clear logic in the private media's overriding interest in the largest and most influential parties — whether we agree or disagree — insofar as the owners of these media outlets are businessmen and one of their fundamental objectives is profit, which is determined by interests and relations with state officials. This same logic, however, cannot be applied to state-owned papers and television channels, which are supposed to represent all parties equally. Nevertheless, coverage of other parties and independent candidates was greater in the private media than in the state-owned media.

Overall, media criticism was largely directed against the NDP and the Muslim Brothers. Critics of the NDP focused on its monopoly of power, fears of election rigging, security control over polling stations and vote counting, and the silencing of supporters of other forces. Critics of the Muslim Brothers approached the issue from a rejection of religious groups' participation in politics. Notably absent, especially in the state-owned media, was any space given to the Muslim Brothers to respond to the criticisms or attacks leveled against it, which is incompatible with professional standards. For example, several state-owned papers devoted substantial space to discussing the Muslim Brothers and the group's role in the assassination of al-Nuqrashi Pasha, paying no attention to the Brothers' view. This historical event highlights violent tendencies within the Muslim Brothers in an attempt to turn public opinion against the group.

Here it must be noted that professional standards do not disallow the adoption of a specific viewpoint or opinion; this is not problematic in and of itself. The error lies in not presenting the other opinion in order to fulfill the reader or viewer's right to know and in defense of freedom of expression and media diversity, which is a basic component of raising public awareness and an important social role for any serious media.

State-owned newspapers and television channels, in addition to the private al-Farain television channel, all showed clear pro-NDP bias and anti-Muslim Brother bias. On al-Farain, for example, the program presented by the owner and manager of the channel was entirely devoted to campaign propaganda for himself and his party, the NDP, and against the Muslim Brothers, which he covered entirely negatively. The channel and the state-owned media focused on what they termed the Brother "conspiracy," the organization's extremism, and its "danger to Egypt's security." This heavy media presence of candidates for the People's Assembly illustrates the importance of the decree issued by the Minister of Information banning candidates who present television programs from appearing on these programs – during electoral campaigning period – as some candidates, most of them members of the NDP, were able to exploit their positions to promote themselves and their parties.

The same observations can be made of the press and television, although the bias was clearer in the press than the visual media. State-owned television channels showed pro-NDP bias in the selection of their coverage and news and even in the descriptions they used, but there was relatively little coverage of the elections when compared to the press and thus the bias was less noticeable. Without exception, all the state-owned newspapers exhibited clear pro-NDP bias in both their evaluations and the space devoted to the party, and strong anti-Muslim Brother bias. This bias was less noticeable in the private press and television channels, some of which were more partial to the Wafd Party, for example.

Al-Ahram, the largest of the national dailies, ignored most election events or developments of concern to the Egyptian opposition. For example, the paper published the list of NDP candidates, devoting pages to them, but did not publish a candidate list for any other political party or movement. There was also a clear tendency to support NDP candidates, with space devoted to discussing "the achievements of the NDP and its president." The paper pointedly did not discuss the arrests of Muslim Brothers that began when the group announced that it would slate candidates in the elections, even when the arrest campaign reached its peak on Eid al-Adha, about ten days before the poll. The same is true of al-Akhbar, which ignored numerous events in favor of coverage of NDP candidates with their photos prominently featured. The paper also published articles by numerous writers focusing on the NDP's importance to political life, which functioned as propaganda for the party and its candidates. The attack on the Muslim Brothers continued unabated while no space was given over to divergent opinions.

The state-owned al-Ahram al-Masai pursued the same tack, giving over space to coverage of the Muslim Brothers to relate the group's "negative and terrorist" history and featuring interviews with officials known for their strong opposition to the organization, such as Gen. Fouad Allam, the former director of State Security Investigations. The paper was strongly biased to the NDP; in one article published on Tuesday, November 16,

2010, the paper even referred to the party as “the engine of political life in Egypt,” considering the current incarnation of the NDP as the same party that has gone by that name over various phases; this is a distortion of the facts and strips them from their genuine historical context.

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Roz al-Youssef, although it devoted the least coverage to the NDP, is perhaps the only national institution to have openly declared its pro-NDP bias in articles written by its editor-in-chief, Abdullah Kamal. Kamal announced that pure objectivity was impossible and that pro-Muslim Brothers sentiment meant support for a religious state, which he personally rejected. Kamal spoke about the elections as if these were only two competing forces, which entailed a clear exclusion of other political forces. The paper carried all news of the NDP and its candidates, and considered any negative points to be “missteps,” inevitable because we are all human. The paper was enthusiastic in its attacks on the Muslim Brothers, which were given almost as much space as the NDP. Coverage of the organization attacked the group in manifold ways and focused on its mistakes and negative aspects, which may also be interpreted as indirect propaganda for the NDP, as the Brothers were portrayed as the party’s sole, eternal competitor.

As for the private press, it also focused its attention on the NDP and Muslim Brothers, but its attempts to offer an alternative perspective to the national press played a role in determining its final coverage. Overall, coverage was more diverse and varied, giving the reader a relative plurality of viewpoints. Ownership of the private press played a role in determining each paper’s editorial line. For example, al-Dostor, owned now by businessmen who are members of the Wafd Party, exhibited a clear bias toward the party, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, despite the existence of a party newspaper (al-Wafd). The paper devoted numerous pages to the party and its candidates at the expense of other parties.

In contrast to the state-owned media, the private press covered news of the Muslim Brothers and the arrests in its ranks. Al-Masry al-Yom, for example, reported on most events and daily developments, ignoring few, in the period under review. Nahdat Misr was a different case, with its coverage exhibiting a more anti-NDP bias. For example, the paper focused on those disqualified from the NDP list and the “deal” concluded between the NDP and the opposition to defeat the Brothers. At the same time, however, the paper clearly neglected news of Muslim Brothers’ arrests published in other papers.

The weekly al-Fajr tended to take an oppositional stance to the Muslim Brothers. In its issue of November 15, 2010, for example, it published a full expose on the group and its participation in the 2005 elections, giving a negative portrayal of the demonstrations staged by the group and its supporters during that period and noting that members took part in the protests because they were “forced” by the organization, not out of conviction.

Al-Shorouk tried to maintain impartial coverage of various political factions, and its stance on different political forces varied from day to day and incident to incident. For example, it showed clear bias toward NDP candidates in its issue of November 8, 2010, but launched a fierce attack on the party and its members on November 17 and objected to its stances in more than one story in its issue of November 11. Most of the time, it maintained a neutral stance on the Muslim Brothers.

The anti-NDP bias of Sawt al-Umma was clearly exhibited, for example, in the paper’s publication of an “expressionist” photo in its issue of November 22, showing the decapitated heads of several leading NDP figures—specifically Ahmed Ezz, Safwat al-Sherif, and Fathi Surour—superimposed in front of the parliament dome while in the background the parliament building was partially destroyed. The photo gave a negative impression of the NDP’s impending fall and simultaneously linked it with the collapse of the parliament, which the paper attributed to the revolt of NDP members not chosen for the party’s electoral list.

After the results of the NDP primary were announced, news of NDP members dropped from the party slate received heavy coverage in various media outlets, along with internal party disputes. Some opposition parties used this to convey an unfavorable impression of the party, while others, like Roz al-Youssef, used it as example of democratic plurality within the party.

In an example of neutrality and the representation of different political forces and opinions, al-Yom al-Sabia in its issue of November 9 devoted a full page to candidate Sayyed Meshaal, minister of military production, to discuss his achievements and his platform. In the article he praised President Mubarak and Gamal Mubarak and dismissed the latter’s succession as “a myth.” In the issue of November 16, the paper gave candidate Mustafa Bakri the chance to speak, discuss his platform, and criticize his competitor, Sayyed Meshaal.

The confusion and ambiguity surrounding the declaration of the NDP’s final candidate list, which came several days later than expected, as well as the tension and questions this raised about how the party’s candidates are selected, highlighted the importance of educating voters and the role of the media in explaining and clarifying such issues. Yet, the media’s performance in this regard was not up to par. News and decisions issued by the Supreme Elections Commission was mixed with criticism of the commission itself. Between the praise lavished on the commission for its impartiality and suspicions voiced about its integrity, readers and viewers—who are also voters—had no way of obtaining accurate, clear information about the elections. Nevertheless, the media did devote some space to this issue. For example, Nahdat Misr showed some degree of interest in

educating voters in its discussion of the role of the National Council for Human Rights in election monitoring and its get-out-the-vote campaign, called “Participate and Monitor,” in the issues of November 10 and 11, 2010. Al-Shorouk also devoted space to defining oversight and voting mechanisms, as well as encouraging participation and warning against the vote buying. The paper also published the reports of committees monitoring the elections and op-eds evaluating the political situation and analyzing the platforms of various candidates.

The focus on ministers was extremely strong in press coverage of elections. Al-Ahram on November 12 published a story about Minister of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Mufid Shehab that was closer to campaign propaganda. On November 13, the same paper published a story that contained indirect propaganda for candidate Mohammed Nasr al-Din Allam, the minister of irrigation, announcing that he would lead members of his district in the Eid al-Adha prayer. Al-Akhbar gave over substantial space to news of candidate-ministers and their achievements. On the front page of its issue of November 8, it published a letter from the business man Mustafa al-Sallab and his sons to Mohammed Abu al-Einein, congratulating him for his election as speaker of the Mediterranean Parliament and describing him as “trustworthy.” The same article noted that he was the head of the Industry and Energy Committee in the People’s Assembly. Al-Ahram al-Masai devoted space to Minister of Social Solidarity Ali Meseilhi, Minister of Finance Youssef Butros Ghali, and Minister of Irrigation Mohammed Nasr al-din Allam to speak about their ministries and their achievements while at the helm. Al-Gomhouriya gave a half-page to Mohammed Abd al-Salam al-Mahgoub, the governor of Alexandria, to speak about his opinion of people around him and his achievements in his district. He also criticized other parties and their platforms, with the exception of the NDP and Wafd.

On some days, it was clear that editors-in-chief of the state-owned papers, and some writers at private papers, were following the same editorial line, when they “coincidentally” all wrote about the same point from the same viewpoint on the same day. Indeed, in some of these cases, the articles contained some virtually identical paragraphs. Often these articles appeared in the press at the same time that the idea was discussed from the same perspective on various satellite channels.

The pro-NDP bias was also present on television, though to a lesser extent, even in the broadcast of paid ads for the parties and their candidates. Channel 2, for example, aired ads only for the NDP, while Mehwar broadcast ads for the Wafd Party and the NDP. Consistent with its pro-NDP bias, al-Farain aired news only of that party’s candidates. The channel also focused noticeably on the campaign of its owner, Tawfiq Okasha, by airing his ads congratulating and paying his respects to NDP members, President Mubarak, and the policies secretary Gamal Mubarak, and broadcasting their photos constantly.

ONTV focused more on party candidates than on independents, which is logical to some extent given that parties play a greater role in light of the fact that they are political organizations capable of change. Nevertheless, this ignores the individual candidate system used in Egypt, which makes no distinction between party candidates and independents and, thus, unlike the list or mixed electoral system, minimizes the

importance of parties in elections and necessitates greater coverage of independents. ONTV covered NDP disputes and the news of those not selected as official party candidates. On its program, "Manshit," it highlighted internal NDP disputes and news of spurned NDP candidates running as independents or supporting candidates affiliated with other political forces.

Dream 2 satellite channel offered the most objective coverage, employing no unusual methods and covering all points of view, as well as devoting some time to educating citizens and covering various party platforms and candidates.

Al-Hayat, owned by the chair of the Wafd Party, al-Sayyed al-Badawi, was careful from the outset not to air any paid ads by the party or its candidates, although these ads were aired on other channels. According to press reports, this decree came from al-Badawi himself, prompted by a desire to maintain media neutrality and refrain from using the channel to directly promote the party and its candidates.

Nile News showed some interest in educating citizens about elections through ads urging them to participate in elections, but at the same time, it ignored the calls for an electoral boycott. While the channel focused on participation and those urging it, it did not cover news of specific candidates. It also covered the women's quota, the standards for selecting female MPs, their performance in parliament, and how to encourage their participation. The program, "Ein al-Kamera," referred to problems in the NDP due to the selection of its female candidates and the problems faced by women with the quota system.

Channel 1 conducted opinion polls among citizens about the elections, specifically about campaigns and the huge sums of money spent on them. It also hosted a group of Egyptian political parties to outline their electoral platform.

In general, there was not as much focus on voter education as hoped, perhaps due to the lack of space or programs devoted specifically to the issue. Nearly all media outlets covered the issue only in passing as part of their news coverage or during discussions with guests on talk shows, and any coverage or news that could be considered voter education came in the context of discussions about the role of the Supreme Elections Commission. Al-Hayat, for example, aired reports from the street about people's view of participation in elections, which generally highlighted the public's lack of confidence in election results. It also aired another poll showing the public's lack of knowledge about the Supreme Elections Commission. The channel focused on educating voters about the importance and role of the commission, its duties, and how it performs them.

Women's issues were discussed only in terms of the quota system and female candidates, without an attempt to raise awareness of women's issues and rights. For example, ONTV on October 27, 2010, described the campaign propaganda used by female candidates as "men's propaganda," a description inconsistent with the idea of equality. News of female candidates was covered as part of the coverage of the NDP's primary, without reference to other female candidates not affiliated with the party. In general, coverage of women was limited to coverage of female candidates without taking

a wider perspective on the role of women in society. News of the National Women's Council and Suzanne Mubarak did not extend to discussing ideas and rights of women in Egypt.

Various media outlets featured coverage of civil society organizations consistent with the outlet's goals and stances, meaning that the same subject was approached in different ways depending on the media institution. This is not problematic in principle, unless the content is manipulated to reflect a particular view that does not cover all the facts. The most remarkable aspect of civil society coverage was the initial strident stance taken against it, which included accusing it of working as "a foreign arm," and the later increasingly less harsh tone, as more than one outlet began presenting it as an alternative to international monitors—an idea rejected by some and supported by others—with an important role to play in monitoring elections and exposing irregularities. Meanwhile, some media outlets carried statements accusing civil society of being agents, saying they represent the eyes and arms of foreign parties, which indicates either a lack of understanding of the role of civil society or an attempt to intentionally smear it, which is unprofessional. Criticism is important to correct course, whether official or civil, but wholesale accusations and distortions cannot be considered professional conduct. One of the most important issues in this regard was the discussion of international monitoring, which is rejected by the state as an infringement on its sovereignty.

Some of the most prominent issues covered by the press were election monitoring and regulating the role of civil society groups in the monitoring. Several media outlets reported the guidelines for election monitoring. Al-Akhbar, for example, quoted Judge Abd al-Aziz Omar, the chair of the Supreme Elections Commissions, who noted that monitors should not belong to any party, have no ties with any candidate, and stressed that only those with permits would be permitted to enter polling and vote-counting stations, which depended on permission from the head of the general or branch polling station. He also stressed the need to report violations based only on confirmed information and with real evidence and banned any discussions or questions inside the polling station. In fact, these rules obstruct the role of the monitor. Working with the permission of the chair of the polling station leaves the matter at the discretion of the personality and affiliations of each station head, instead of establishing clear, specific rules for monitoring. These guidelines were not announced sufficiently in advance of elections, nor did the organizations involved in monitoring have any say in their formulation. In turn, the announcement of the guidelines via various media outlets was unclear and ambiguous, based only on information gleaned from statements of the chair or officials of the Supreme Elections Commission, and the media did not have the opportunity to present and debate them.

From the beginning of the monitoring process, it became clear that the presidential elections were an important issue, broached by virtually all media outlets, which discussed the potential candidacy of President Mubarak, Gamal Mubarak (his son and secretary of the NDP policies secretariat), Mohamed ElBaradei (former director of the International Atomic Energy Agency), and Amr Moussa (secretary-general of the Arab League). President Mubarak's visit to Sohag and the NDP conference titled "Promised

and Done” were major events covered by the media, and these opened the door to discussions of the presidential elections that were slated for late 2011.

Conclusion:

Looking at the qualitative section and the quantitative values of this report, we find that the capacities of the Egyptian media were fully mobilized by one body—the NDP—and harnessed to serve its interests by using the press and the visual media to promote party policies and exaggerate the size of its achievements while excluding coverage of others. This was aided by the failure of other political forces to get into the streets and engage with Egyptian citizens.

There was also a desire to falsify and distort facts, while imposing nearly full control of various media, particularly the state-owned media, which has more reach among regular citizens. This was an effective means of imposing a particularly agenda and minimizing the opportunities of competitors, who do not possess the same advantages or tools needed to reach voters.

The NDP’s exploitation of all state property, from the media, to government agencies and ministries, in service of its electoral campaign is a flagrant violation of others’ right to express their opinions and stances, and it denies them the right to equality and equal opportunity. It also flagrantly blurs the line between the NDP as ruling party and the NDP as a competitor in legislative elections, in which all presumably have the same rights and duties.

This was not the case with the government media alone. Indeed, the NDP extended its control to private media using influence, money, and the authority represented in Ministry of Information decrees issued to regulate private media, owned in turn by businessmen who have profit as one of their objectives.

The media coverage of the 2010 parliamentary elections did not live up to expectations. It did not offer sufficient coverage or full coverage of all Egyptian political forces and candidates. Nor did it offer much in the way of educating voters on their rights and duties. It also reduced important issues into a few points. For example, it did not devote enough space to the discussion of women’s issues in the larger social sense, dealing only with the parliamentary women’s quota. The same is true of its treatment of civil society. Finally, it neglected coverage of appeals for an election boycott and focused solely on participation and those who supported it.

Ultimately, this reflects the nature of the political environment in Egypt, in which the NDP controls all aspect of politics and is able to impose a certain agenda that supports its continued hold over power without any genuine competition or even regard for the demands of all the people.

Results of the 2010 Parliamentary Elections

2010 Parliament	Number of Seats
The National Democratic Party (NDP)	420 Seats
AlWafd Party	6 Seats
AlTagamoa Party	5 Seats
Muslim Brotherhood	Only 1 seat
The Democratic Generation Party	Only 1 Seat
AlAhrar Party	Only 1 Seat
The Social Justice Party	Only 1 Seat
The Democratic Peace Party	Only 1 Seat
Independent (mostly dissidents of the NDP)	68 Seats
Revoked results	4 Seats
Appointed MPs (1 Woman – 7 Christians – 2 Muslims)	10 seats
Overall	518 Seats (444 Seats – 64 Seats for Women's Quota – 10 Seats for Appointed MPs)

Annexes

Annex 1

Professional Code of Ethics for Media Coverage of General Elections ·

First: General Principles

- (1) Media personnel believe that media coverage of electoral campaigns aim at corroborating all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights; particularly provisions of direct relevance to general elections, including the first paragraph of article XXI of the Charter, which guarantees the right of every individual to participate in the management of public affairs of his/her country, either directly or through freely elected representatives; and the third paragraph of the same article, which provides that the will of the people is the source of government authority, and that the people will express this will in periodic and impartial elections, performed on secret ballot basis, on an equal footing for all, or according to any similar procedure ensuring freedom of voting .. This meaning is also stipulated in the first paragraph of Article 25 of the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, which recognizes the right of every citizen in the conduct of public affairs, either directly or through freely chosen representatives, and the second paragraph of the same article, which guarantees to every citizen to vote and be elected in genuine periodic elections on the basis of equal suffrage and that the elections shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors.

- (2) Media personnel believe that their role in the media coverage of election campaigns is not merely a commitment to provisions of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, regarding the right of everyone to receive and impart information and ideas through any media, as an imperative right and duty; to raise public opinion awareness and interest through general elections, as a right and duty ; to stimulate citizens to participate in elections, through voting and nomination and; to believe that they are the public opinion vehicle to monitor the integrity and transparency of the electoral process.

• This code of ethics was prepared by Salah Essa – Editor in chief of Cairo newspaper. The Code of Ethics reached this final draft after a series of meetings between Salah Essa, CIHRS and a number of Egyptian Prominent Journalist with different backgrounds and ideologies, for more information look: "What role for the media in covering general elections, manual for domestic and international practices", Giovanna Mayola and Sobhy Essaila, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, 2010
<http://www.cihrs.org/Arabic/NewsSystem/Articles/2540.aspx>

- (3) Media personnel cling tight, in media coverage of the general elections, to all the rights guaranteed by the public law, the Press Law, the Law on the Exercise of Political Rights, and the Presidential Election Law, the Press Code of Honor, and – as well – they abide by all the duties imposed on them by these laws and conventions, according to details provided for in this Declaration.
- (4) Mass media shall make a clear distinction between advertising and editing on the one hand, and news and opinion on the other, with respect to coverage of election campaigns. They may not publish electoral advertising material under the guise of an editorial, even if not directly related to the elections. Owners of the newspapers and media may not receive, directly or indirectly, any financial support from political parties and figures engaging in election campaigns, during the entire period between the nomination and the announcement of final results of elections, including the publication of commercials for economic ventures or companies in which candidates are shareholders.
- (5) Newspapers of all kinds shall be committed, when releasing the results of public opinion polls on voter attitudes vis-à-vis candidates, to highlight more clearly in their headlines and in the body of their reports, the size of the sample having participated in the poll and the authority having conducted it, and the date of the poll. They shall not publish or broadcast these findings in such a way as to suggest that it was administered to the overall electorate called upon to cast their ballots; and the entity preparing the survey or the questionnaire should be an independent, specialized, and non-partisan legal person.
- (6) National newspapers, private and independent mass media shall, in their published material on the election contest, be committed to absolute neutrality between all parties and candidates competing in these elections, provide them equal opportunities, including personal information and platforms, and shall not make any distinction between candidates in terms of photographs, headlines or any means of highlighting, or in the prices of advertisement. They may not - outside this scope- administer any interviews with one of the candidates, either immediately prior to or during the election campaign, even if the elections were not the subject of such interviews.
- (7) Partisan newspapers shall be exempted from commitment to the text of the previous article. In the event any independent information medium decides to take sides with any of the candidates or parties, it must clearly indicate such whenever required. Neither national newspapers, nor TV channels and radio stations owned by the Radio and Television Union, shall enjoy this exemption. They shall abide by provisions of Article 55 of the Law on Regulation of the Press, and as such, shall preserve their impartiality and independence from the Executive Estate and from all the political parties, and shall be committed to neutrality among all contenders.

- (8) In case the independent information medium decides to take sides with any of the contending nominees or parties, it shall be under an obligation to clearly refer to such whenever necessary. In the event it publishes free advertisements, platforms, or editorial material in support of this candidacy, it shall be under an obligation to refer to itself as the supporting entity.
- (9) Impartiality of any information medium to any of the candidates or parties running in the elections does not give this medium the right to launch smearing campaigns against, or to distort, slander, defame, or politically undermine any of the contenders. In all cases, all mass media shall undertake to preserve the rights established in the professional codes of conduct and public law in dealing with their contenders and antagonists, in terms of protection against slander, safeguarding the right to privacy, and focusing the disputes within an objective political context.
- (10) All mass media shall refrain from publishing or broadcasting any electoral paid advertisements in favor of any candidates 48 hours prior to the scheduled date for the elections. They shall also abstain from administering any opinion polls or publishing results thereof regarding the electors' position vis-à-vis the candidates. This provision shall not include all material related to elections, which fall beyond the scope of electoral paid advertisements for candidates.

Second: Rights

- (1) Any journalist/reporter assigned to cover the general elections shall have the right to obtain copies of all the laws, resolutions, instructions, data, and reports about the electoral process and its development from the entity governing the electoral process as soon as they are proclaimed, since the beginning of nomination and until the announcement of the results. The competent administrative authority or the media which employs the journalist shall, as appropriate, provide him/her with the necessary material to facilitate the performance of his/her task in the requisite professional competence and in a timely manner; without discrimination between a newspaper and another.
- (2) The employing authority shall provide the journalist/reporter with solid evidence and documents required for the performance of his/her task, and to obtain the required authorizations from the authorities concerned, for the journalist/reporter and his/her assistant staff including photographers and others. The employing authority shall provide the journalist with a uniform easily recognizable from a distance, so that he/she may not be subject to any constraints or injury during the performance of his/her professional duty. The employing authority shall coordinate with the competent administrative bodies to ensure the security of the journalist/reporter. Information authorities shall act in concert to obtain administrative decisions from the competent authority which regulates the work of journalists/reporters so that they will not be subjected to any arbitrary interference with the performance of their mission.

- (3) Any journalist/reporter shall be entitled to attend press conferences convened by the candidates, to enter into electoral headquarters of all the candidates and the outer zone of the electoral committees of either general or subsidiary elections, and to enter the committee during the voting process. He/she shall have the right to attend the counting of the votes with the representatives of candidates. However, no more than three journalists/reporters shall be present simultaneously within the subsidiary election committee during the voting process, in addition to the sufficient number of assistance.
- (4) The employer shall provide the journalist/reporter with the means of communication and transportation that would enable him/her to follow-up to elections and to timely send reports to the medium he/she is employed with.
- (5) Journalists and media officers shall adhere to their right provided for in Article 12 of the Law on the Regulation of the Press No. 96 for the year 1996, which stipulates that anyone having insulted or abused a journalist because of his/her work shall be liable to the penalties prescribed for insulting or abusing a civil servant, in accordance with articles 133, 136 or 173/1 of the Penal Code as the case may be. The medium shall report any insult or affront of this kind as soon as it occurs.

Third: Duties

- (1) Any journalist running for elections may not exercise the duties of his/her profession as of the beginning of the nomination process until the announcement of the results of the elections. Anyone working in the audio or visual press may not exercise his/her functions during that period, even if the material he/she writes or presents is not directly related to the electoral process. This shall not forfeit other rights he/she possesses as a candidate, and he/she should be treated on an equal footing with other candidates without any prejudices.
- (2) Any journalist/reporter may not cover the elections in the constituency where his/her native origin is located, or where his/her name is registered in the electoral rosters.
- (3) Any journalist/reporter covering the elections may not work in the media team of any party or candidate running in the elections, with the exception of journalists/reporters working for partisan newspapers.
- (4) Any journalist/reporter may not work to attract electoral paid advertisements, either directly or indirectly.
- (5) Any journalist/reporter covering the elections shall be committed to professionalism in drafting and editing reports on the electoral process, in terms

of accuracy and documentation of information, the reference of words and deeds to well-known sources whenever available and possible. He/she shall also be committed to refrain from publishing incomplete or abridged news or reports, or deliberately conceal aspects of the truth or facts from the readers.

- (6) Any journalist/reporter shall be committed to disclose all forms of deviance from the laws regulating the electoral process, in such a way as to affect the integrity thereof or inaccurately express the will of the voters, including:
- A.** Poor organization of the electoral process, in terms of lack of logistical preparedness to guarantee their smoothness; including: inaccurate electoral rosters, delaying the opening of election committees, spoiling of the phosphoric ink, or the absence of glass boxes, etc...
 - B.** The use of in kind or financial bribes to buy votes out.
 - C.** The use of slogans and rumors of a religious or sectarian nature in electoral campaigns, either in a declared or undeclared manner, in order either to attract or vend off voters.
 - D.** Exposure of the private life of any of the candidates, except what is related to the public post of the candidate; or liable and slander.
 - E.** The use of government facilities, or the resources of administrative bodies or municipalities, in advertising for any of the candidates, or facilitation of the transfer of his/her supporters.
 - F.** The distribution of government services through one of the candidates.
 - G.** Hindering voters', candidates, their delegates, and election monitors from civil society organizations access to the polls, and preventing them from entering therein.
 - H.** Voters casting their ballots in public.
 - I.** Expelling representatives of candidates from voting or counting committees, or placing fabricated obstacles to prevent them from fulfilling their mission.
 - J.** The use of any form of physical or verbal violence against the supporters of rival candidates, candidates, their delegates, or election monitors from civil society organizations.
 - K.** Excessively spending on electoral campaigns in such a way as to suggest that money is used to influence the will of the voters, or that it involves manifest violations of resolutions and laws governing expenditure on electoral advertisements.

Annex 2

Forum of Independent Human Rights NGOs

Rigging the 2010 Parliamentary Elections in Egypt

Press Release

9 November 2010

The Forum of Independent Human Rights Organizations⁵⁹ is sorry to announce to the public opinion that the consecutive signals it is receiving only confirms the lack of the necessary political will to organize free and fair parliamentary elections on 28 November. The Egyptian authorities are posing restrictions on the individual's right to run for elections in addition to the voters' right to access the necessary information relating to the electoral process, and the stances and tendencies of the candidates and different political groups. The authorities are hindering the supervision of the elections independent of state authorities and the ruling party and are restricting civil society from monitoring the elections, in addition to banning international monitoring as well.

The unprecedented climate of intimidation created by the authorities within printed and visual media, especially in independent media; the escalating violent crackdown on the right to peaceful assembly and political participation; and the effective limitation of the campaigning period to only one week are indeed signs that the coming elections will not meet the international standards for free and fair elections. Rather, they offer implications that the elections will be based on legislative and constitutional corruption, with the existence of tight administrative and executive control. This confirms that the forging of the will of the voters has started early for this election.

The electoral process and candidate registration:

- The law has given wide powers to the Ministry of Interior, limiting the powers of the Supreme Electoral Commission by denying the latter from its main role in supervising and managing the electoral process. For example the Supreme Electoral Commission is denied supervision of electoral rolls; announcement of the election dates; candidate registration; and specifying electoral constituencies. In addition the law denies the commission from clear mechanisms empowering it to implement its decisions in appointing officers to manage the electoral process. This has led to the domination of the Ministry of Interior over the electoral process being.

⁵⁹ The Forum is a coalition of 16 independent human rights organizations. This statement is released in a press conference for the Forum, held on 9 November 2010 at the Arab Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) head office.

- Candidate registration was only open for five days intersected by a weekend. This stood in the way of prospect candidates from issuing requested official documents, especially that documents needed for registration was left to each security directorate to specify without any coordination or prior announcement.
- Candidate registration applications did not specify the number of documents needed. Additionally, the receipt for receiving the application used the vague statement: "... attached (number) of documents for candidate registration and it was received." This opens the door for administrative interventions to consider some of the application to be lacking the necessary documents.
- The final list of candidates will be announced a day before the Adha Feast, thus preventing rejected applicants from appealing in a timely manner before the election date.
- Electoral campaigning will officially start on 14 November, which will immediately be followed by the Adha Feast for five days.
- Restrictions were imposed on independent candidates from the Muslim Brotherhood and those who dissented from the National Democratic Party.
- Restrictions were imposed on local monitors preventing them from entering some of the candidate registration headquarters in a number of governorates. In some instances, monitors were daily detained for a number of hours.
- Threats were made to remove the legal protection of some of the monitoring organizations.

Freedom of expression and the right to exchange information during elections:

- TV channels were banned from live broadcasting from the streets of Egypt until new permits are issued by the Radio and Television Union.
- The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority issued a decision imposing new regulations on marketing and news SMS services. The seriousness of this decision lies in the fact that SMS services have become the main source of information. Any new restrictions on it will only restrict the flow of information between the sender and the receiver. In addition, this has become an important tool for electoral campaigning and for coordination between election monitors.
- The Egyptian NileSat Satellite Company, managed by the Egyptian government, issued a number of decisions during October to cease the broadcasting of 17 channels, while issuing warnings against a number of other channels. The reason stated was to limit the dissemination of sectarian tension. While the Forum denounces and rejects religious based hate speech, it observes that these decisions were made without any prior warning and were not issued by a court; especially that governmental media has not ceased to broadcast religious hatred. This decision and the overthrowing of Ibrahim Eissa, Chief Editor of Al-Dostor Newspaper – one of the most independent and critical newspapers - have only led to intensifying the climate of fear in all forms of media.
- Some programs known to criticize the government have been stopped, such as the closure of the studios broadcasting "Cairo Today" program on Orbit Channels and the dismissal of Ibrahim Eissa from presenting "Baladna Bel Masry" (Our Country in Egyptian), on ONTV Channel.

- The head of the Supreme Electoral Commission was banned from making further press statements following interviews with Al Wafd and Al-Shorouk Newspapers, where he revealed that the commission does not possess any legal powers or the necessary capacities to supervise the elections and thus is forced to depend on the Ministry of Interior.

Exerting pressure on civil society:

- The Ministry of Social Solidarity continues to pursue human rights organizations and intimidate them by sending indirect threats. In addition, the security authorities continue to intervene in decisions of NGO registrations.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned some representatives of international organizations, which had applied to open headquarters in Egypt, and threatened them to reject their applications if they continue to expose and publicized human rights violations in Egypt, particularly during the time of elections.
- Throughout the months of October and November, security authorities have continued to harass Arab and foreign human rights defenders while entering the country by stopping and questioning them at the airport. Even those who were officially invited by the National Council for Human Rights were targeted.
- The authorities banned a meeting organized by the Euro Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) on the day it was meant to be held, despite prior permission to hold the meeting. In addition official meetings with a German parliamentary delegation were cancelled.

The right to peaceful assembly and political participation:

- Security authorities are increasingly violent against peaceful protests and assemblies, especially those demanding change, end to torture and impunity, and labor strikes. Protesters are physically attacked, detained, and later released in isolated areas on the margins of the cities. Some of those detained were brutally beaten in a life threatening manner.
- Security authorities are resorting to “thugs” to physically attack members of reform movements. This was the case with the members of the 9 March movement for the independence of universities in Ain Shams University on Thursday 4 November.
- Security authorities continue its campaign of arrest and detention of members of the Muslim Brotherhood and other political activists across the country. In addition it has kidnapped non-Islamist political activists and held them in unidentified places without pressing charges or referring them to the prosecutor.

The current scene seems bleak when considering what happened with the elections of the student unions in Egyptian universities. While the student union elections are less important than the parliamentary elections, still the authorities have excluded candidates affiliated to opposition political movements, manipulated the electoral process, and resorted to the excessive use of force against protesting students.

Annex 3

Press Releases of the Independent Coalition for Elections' Observation During the 2010 Parliamentary Elections



The Independent Coalition for Elections' Observation

"No Free Elections without Democracy and No Democracy without Public Liberties" Evaluation of the Parliamentary Elections' Preliminary Phase

The First Press Release

November 13, 2010

This program is funded by

The Danish Institute for Media Support

European Commission



Opinions in this report do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the funding parties. They reflect the opinion of the Independent Coalition for Elections' Observation: EACPE, Nazra, and CIHRS

* The Independent Coalition for Elections' Observation includes three Human Rights Organizations: The Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement (EACPE), Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) and Nazra Association for Feminist Studies (Nazra). The EACPE is concerned with field observation of all the stages of the electoral process, CIHRS is concerned with monitoring the visual and written media, and Nazra is concerned with monitoring gender and women voters and candidates on regular and quota seats.

The Independent Coalition for Elections' Observation announced today the results of the first phase of monitoring the 2010 parliamentary electoral process. The facts show the absence of the Egyptian government's political will to run free and fair elections and create the necessary political environment for it.

Throughout the months preceding the parliamentary election on 28 November, the Egyptian government resorted to a wide and escalating campaign to restrict public liberties, especially freedom of expression and citizens' rights to peacefully assemble, protest, strike and participate in the political process. This has created an environment of fear amongst media and independent voices critical of the government's performance, the opposition, and voices demanding democratic political reform.

The last period witnessed the closure of 12 TV channels, warnings against other channels, banning of political programs and the removal of their presenters, in addition to the dismissal of chief editor of the most critical newspaper. The Egyptian security has also dealt with unjustified violence against protesters and strikers. Violence was excessively used against university students protesting the rigging of the students' elections and university guards' presence in the universities' premises. Security authorities are continuing their arrest campaign against political activists affiliated to opposition and reform movements. This is in addition to the ongoing restrictions on civil society and the continuation of the state of emergency.

The legislative environment regulating elections in Egypt violates the principle of equal opportunities between candidates and gives administrative and security authorities wide powers in directing and managing the electoral process. The law condenses the powers of the Supreme Electoral Commission so it has no power to call for elections, supervise electoral rolls, or monitor the candidate registration phase. It does not have an independent administrative body implementing its decisions and thus resorts to the executive body for implementation. In addition, the Commission has no accountability mechanism to hold liable those who violate its decisions. This is made possible through the legislative contradiction between law 18/2007 establishing the Supreme Electoral Commission and law 38/1972 with regards to the People's Assembly, which expands the powers of administrative authorities in administering the electoral process.

The Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement (EACPE) noted that the first stage of the electoral process has seen leniency towards allowing ministers and influential individuals in the ruling party to start their campaigns using state facilities and money. This is in contradiction with Supreme Electoral Commissions decisions, which put the responsibilities of governors to implement its campaigning ban decisions. On the contrary, governors were campaigning for the interest of candidates from the ruling party. In addition, the Muslim Brotherhood has been resorting to religious slogans also in contradiction with the Commission's decisions in this regard.

During the candidate registration phase, the Minister of Interior did not specify the necessary documents for applicants. This allowed for security directorates to request documents with no legal basis. In addition, issuing these documents is done through the administrative authorities affiliated with the executive body, which in turn resulted in a delay in issuing the necessary documents for some of the opposition and independent candidates. This phase saw violations represented in banning some of the independent candidates who have defected from the ruling party from applying. In addition, applicants were given receipts that did not specify that they have submitted all the necessary

documents. Applicants were forced to sign statements affirming that they shall not start their campaigning until the final candidates' list is issued. The final candidates' list will be announced on 14 November, only one day before the Adha Islamic holidays which means that rejected candidates will not be able to appeal in a timely manner. Additionally, such a step has effectively reduced the campaigning period to no more than one week.

Nazra Association for Feminist Studies (Nazra) has noted that those administering the electoral process are not aware of the new regulations regarding the quota system for women, the number of quota constituencies and its difference from normal constituencies. In addition, some of the electoral process administrators wrongly perceive that women are only limited to run for the quota seats. Nazra also noted that the number of candidates running for the quota seats is 397, which is 6% only of those applying for candidacy. A preliminary analysis thus shows that the percentage of women running for elections is especially low in comparison to the total number of those running for elections.

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) noted through its media monitoring of 8 TV Channels (CH1, CH2, Nile News, Dream 2, ONTV, Haya 1, Faraeen) and 16 press publication (9 daily: Ahram, Akhbar, Gomhouriya, Rozal Youssef daily, Nahdet Masr, Al-Masry Al-Youm, Dostour, Shorouk, and Ahram Masa'y; and 7 weekly: Al-Usbo', Watany, Youm7, Fagr, Rozal Youssef Magazine, Mosawar Magazine and Sout Al-Umma), that while TV coverage of the electoral process was very short, the bias towards the ruling party was very clear. This was especially the case with state owned TV channels, which have also adopted the semi-official position that the Wafd Party is going to be the second largest party in the next parliament. CIHRS also noticed that some of the candidates have used their ownership of TV channels to campaign for the elections. The Wafd Party, for example, had the highest coverage in Haya Channel, which is owned by the party's chairman. The press was also biased towards the National Democratic Party as it provided 52.6% of its space given to the elections. The Muslim Brotherhood followed with 12% of press coverage, while much of this coverage was in the form of attacks published in state owned newspapers.

In light of the environment of fear that the Egyptian government has created for media, a reading of the results of the media monitoring shows that the press faces less pressure and restrictions in comparison to TV channels, particularly that the latter is more widespread and accessible to the illiterate citizen.

While the official discourse conveys the state's confidence that civil society organizations will competently monitor the coming elections, this seems to be a justification to reject international monitoring. Media discourse in state owned press and TV channels has been either refraining from covering the activities of monitoring organizations or has been negatively, and occasionally aggressively doubting the credibility of reports that are to be issued by national monitors.



The Independent Coalition for Elections' Observation

Interior Ministry and High Elections Commission's Refusal to Implement Court Orders Threaten to Nullify the Parliamentary Elections

The second Press Release

27 November 2010

This program is funded by

European Commission



Opinions in this report do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the funding parties. They reflect the opinion of the Independent Coalition for Elections' Observation: EACPE, Nazra, and CIHRS

The previous report of the Independent Coalition for Elections Observation noticed how the candidacy registration stage of the 2010 parliamentary election was dominated by the security directorates. However, as we entered the final stages, Interior Ministry's domination of the whole electoral process has become as clear as day, while the role of the High Elections Commission (HEC) has varied between timid silence and speaking on behalf of the Interior Ministry.

After the HEC announced that it will implement all Administrative Court orders to reinstate candidates rejected by the security directorates, it had to retreat before the Interior Ministry's insistence to not implement court orders. As a result, the Supreme Administrative Court passed a historical sentence on 25 November ordering the HEC to implement these court orders, considering appeals by the Ministry of Interior to be legally void. This court order is a blatant condemnation to the HEC especially that it called upon it to uphold its independence, maintain its neutrality, and respect the law and the constitution, or else it would be an obstacle to the implementation of court orders.

This historical court order condemning the main authorities administering the elections, several administrative court orders annulling elections in 24 electoral districts in a number of governorates - which the executive authority is delaying their implementation - and the administrative and security interventions in the electoral process, are the three developments threatening to nullify the elections.

On the other hand, the authorities' position politically rejecting international monitoring and practically rejecting national monitoring through national civil society organizations, confirms the lack of political will to hold free and fair elections. The HEC had refused to allow a number of human rights organizations, including the Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement - a member of the Independent Coalition for Elections Observation - to monitor the elections. The remaining organizations received only 10% of the permits they had asked for.

It is worth noting that it was the Security's decision to exclude these organizations and thousands of other monitors from other organizations. Police officers stationed at the HEC's headquarters informed the relevant NGOs with the decision and confirmed that this was for security reasons. This came to only confirm the extent to which the Interior Ministry is controlling the whole electoral process and that the HEC's presence is only decorative and for a main purpose, which is to announce the results of a process that is in practice administered by the Interior Ministry.

Women running for regular and quota seats

The administrative authority did not implement court orders modifying the status of women candidates. In addition a number of women candidates withdrew, which provided a larger opportunity for NDP women candidates to win a majority of the quota seats.

As a result of the limited campaigning period and the large size of quota electoral districts, women candidates, especially those running within the quota system, have resorted to different methods of campaigning, such as using new media and setting

profiles on social network sites. Some have allied with candidates of regular seats. Women candidates resorted to women in their campaigns as leaders or with secondary roles. In addition a number of opposition women candidates and their supporters (running for both regular and quota seats) have faced violations.

A gender analysis of some of the campaigning programs of women candidates showed that many of these programs rejected the rights won by the feminist movement. Generally, the number of electoral programs supportive of women's rights is very low.

According to these indicators, it is clear that the quota system, until now, has not benefited women's right and that the only benefactor is the ruling NDP.

Media and Elections: Conclusive bias towards the NDP and a Commission to terrorize media

Even though press and TV interest in elections has increased in the second stage, still it is much less than during the 2005 parliamentary elections. This seems to be the direct result of the official tendency of the authorities to keep the public's interest in elections and politics at the lowest level possible. This finding is also consistent with the aggressive attack concerted by the authorities since the beginnings of October against free media creating a climate of fear, which we referred to in the report of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS).

This official stance to limit the public's interest in elections is shown in the following observations:

1. The limited time given daily on TV for Elections (2.5 hours distributed between 8 channels)
2. The Parliamentary Channel was not broadcast even though it played a critical role in 2005 in raising awareness of citizens of partisan and independent candidates
3. Governmental TV channels were the least channels broadcasting news on elections in comparison to private channels. The state owned Nile News Channel, which was meant to be the largest channel covering the elections, had the least coverage
4. The limited time that this channel provided was broadcast out of the PrimeTime
5. The Macarthyian role played by the commission formed by the Minister of Information to pursue any critical handling of the NDP in private channels. It considered, without any legal foundation, that the way in which one of the famous Talk Shows criticized the final NDP candidates list as a banned intervention in the internal affairs of the party.
6. Large time periods were given to women's quota at the cost of other important issues due to the fact that it is less politically controversial.

The most prominent conclusions of the report on media coverage of the electoral process are:

1. The report notices that only one private TV channel, ONTV, has provided a quarter of the time period given by all TV channels for elections. In addition, this channel was much more varied and balanced in its coverage of political parties. As for newspapers, Shorouk followed by Al Masry Al Youm had the most varied and balanced coverage.

2. The Muslim Brotherhood was given marginal coverage (0.5%) in CH1 and CH2 and most of it was negative.
3. The bias of state owned channels and newspapers towards the NDP were blatant despite the fact that these are media outlets funded by public funds. CH1 provided 72% of its electoral coverage to the NDP, while CH2 gave 78%. Al-Akhbar newspaper gave 75%, Gomhouriya 71% and Ahram 56%. Most of this space was positive in its coverage of NDP news and the positive aspect of it varied between 94% and 99.4%. In contrast, the critical coverage of NDP in all newspaper has seen a retreat from 64% in the initial stage to 55%.
4. Governmental newspapers were relatively interested in the reports of some of the reports published by civil society organizations regarding elections. However most of the interest was regarding reports that did not criticize governmental bodies responsible for the electoral process and which focused mainly on criticizing the Muslim Brotherhood. At the same time, those calling for boycotting the elections were not given a chance in media to explain their stance and presenting their reasons to the public opinion.



The Independent Coalition for Elections' Observation

**The Independent Coalition for Elections' Observation
Calls Upon the President to Dissolve the Parliament**

The third Press Release

6 December 2010

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The Independent Coalition for Elections' Observation announces to the public opinion that serious challenges now strongly surround the legitimacy of the People's Assembly if it is formed according to the announced results of the parliamentary elections held on 28 November and 5 December 2010.

The elections were full of widespread violations that brought Egypt at least 15 years back. The elections were held in a political environment characterized by restrictions on public freedoms in a manner that does not allow for free and fair elections. The most important features of this political environment were restrictions on civil society at large, including professional and labor unions; administrative and security harassment of civil society organizations; depriving of political and social movements from their right to peaceful assembly and protest and the use of excessive force to confront their activities; and restrictions on the margin of freedom allowed for press and satellite TV channels.

Transparency standards were overlooked at the largest scale. Rigging and forging the citizens' will has become the "law" regulating this election. This was further consolidated by the abolishment of judiciary supervision on elections which was replaced by a high commission, the majority of which is formed by the ruling party, with limited powers. In addition, the Ministry of Interior maintained the most important powers in administering the electoral process, such as administering voters' rolls, supervising the candidate registration phase, setting and amending electoral constituencies, and supervising polling stations. The electoral process witnessed blatant administrative and security interventions, restrictions on independent candidates during registration, and exclusions of a number of candidates in the final candidates list. In addition, both rounds of elections witnessed violence in the presence of security which directly resulted in the death of a number of citizens, the exclusion of candidates and their representatives, and attacks and expulsion of civil society organizations' monitors, including those who have received official permits from the High Elections Commission. As a result, polling stations and ballot counting premises have become breeding grounds for forging ballot cards and manipulation of the will of voters whether for NDP candidates or even for some of those considered part of the official opposition. This was especially apparent during the second round which saw the official withdrawal of AIWafd party and the Muslim Brotherhood in an act of protest against the rigging of the elections.

Undoubtedly the non-NDP women candidates running for Quota seats have witnessed violence, administrative obstinacy, and security harassment which led to the domination of the NDP in the representation of women in the parliament. This situation has contributed to the failure of the quota system, which is seen by many to only mean more seats for the NDP, as was the case in these elections. In addition, this has contributed to the failure of social acceptance of women as political actors. Since all the winners of Quota seats are of the ruling party, their political discourse will not differ from that of the NDP and the whole situation limits political empowerment to women only affiliated to the ruling party.

Additionally, a large factor challenging the legitimacy of the People's Assembly lies in the fact that the High Elections Commission and the Ministry of Interior chose not to

respect administrative court rulings pertaining to enrolling candidates excluded from the final candidates list. Both authorities have also ignored the High Administrative Court ruling that obliges the High Elections Commission to implement those court rulings, which in turn has annulled the elections.

The Independent Coalition for Elections' Observation fears that continuing to ignore court rulings tightly linked to the electoral process and leaving the situation in the hands of an illegitimate parliament will directly affect the upcoming presidential elections and all legislations to be passed.

Accordingly, the Independent Coalition for Elections' Observation calls upon the President to:

First: Use his constitutional powers according to article 136 of the Constitution to dissolve the new parliament.

Second: Issue a decision in accordance with article 147 of the constitution to amend the law on the exercise of political rights before calling for new parliamentary elections. This is a necessary and urgent step towards reforming the electoral system and in ensuring minimum standards of transparency and fairness in general elections.

The Independent Coalition for Elections' observation believes that to reform the electoral process at minimum, the following must be ensured:

1. The whole electoral process must be supervised by an independent and permanent judicial authority. Its members must be elected by members of courts' general assemblies. This requires the abolishment of the domination of the Ministry of Interior in the administration of general elections. Its powers must be given to the independent judicial authority, which should be responsible for setting, revising and updating electoral rolls; receiving and examining candidate registration applications and their appeals; setting electoral constituencies and polling stations; and appointing supervisors for polling stations. In addition, the independent judicial authority should be responsible for setting regulations for electoral campaigning and for suitable legal mechanisms to ensure that they are met, and for the announcement of final elections results.
2. The establishment of a judicial police authority affiliated to the independent judicial authority to ensure the implementation of its decisions.
3. The independent judicial authority should activate legal clauses criminalizing acts of thuggery and violence and ensuring that those committing electoral crimes, which have no statutory limitations, are brought to justice.
4. The law must have strict and obligatory regulations to respect State Council rulings regarding electoral appeals. The law particularly must stipulate that any appeals to halt implementation of these rulings should not be considered unless submitted to the appeals inspection chamber at the High Administrative Court.

5. The law must stipulate the right of civil society organizations to monitor all stages of elections. The law must guarantee all necessary conditions to empower these organizations to play its role. Electoral crimes must include depriving or hindering civil society organizations from monitoring elections.

Third: To establish an investigative body composed of independent actors with acknowledged moral status and respect among the Egyptian society to investigate the proceedings of the parliamentary elections and its preparation. The body should draw on the political, constitutional and legislative lessons of this political and moral electoral disaster to prevent further threats to the country's state of law which could be on a path to anarchy.

Finally, the People's Assembly, soon after its members are elected, should immediately start procedures of constitutional amendments to give greater momentum for the reform of the electoral system and to ensure guarantees of fairness and equal opportunities in all general elections, including presidential elections.

Particularly, the parliament should look into:

Revising article 76 of the constitution to put the supervision of presidential elections to the aforementioned independent and permanent judicial body.

Revising article 93 of the constitution in a manner that would consolidate the role of the court of cassation in judging the integrity and fairness of the electoral process and in making the final ruling regarding the parliament's membership.