



Diversity Observatory

Report 4

A General Look at Media Diversity in Selected Egyptian Newspapers (March-April 2013)

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Report Released June 2013

This is the fourth in a series of research reports on media diversity in Egypt, which looks at diversity in the coverage of the media, both print and broadcast, during certain critical political moments in the country. The past three reports covered the time periods of the Parliamentary elections of November 2011 (released in March 2012); the Presidential elections of May and June 2012 (released in September 2012); and the constitutional referendum of December 2012 (released in February 2013). While in the past three reports, we looked at stories related to the particular major event in question, in this, our fourth and for now final report, we chose to take a general look at media coverage of everyday events, which meant that we analyzed each and every story in the newspapers and television programs we selected.

The report aims to provide an accurate and scientific analysis of how inclusive and how diverse the media content was in the five weeks between March 17 and April 21, 2013. For the purposes of our four reports on media diversity, we are not necessarily interested in political diversity. Rather, it's societal diversity that we are most interested in. **Diversity is therefore defined here as the inclusiveness of different groups in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, age, income-based discrimination, gender, and any other factors which makes individuals or groups different from, but equal to, each other.**

As in our previous three reports, this report indicates a severe under-representation in issues pertaining to diversity in Egyptian media. We had hoped that taking the focus off of one particular major political event and analyzing the whole newspaper would show more coverage of different aspects of Egyptian society. Unfortunately, this was not the case. All diversity groups/issues in Egypt are severely under-represented by the media, both in terms of the persons featured and the issues discussed. With the exception of geographical diversity, which has shown considerable improvement in all reports, diversity suffers when it comes to gender representation, as well as the representation of ethnic minority groups, religious minority groups, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

Methodology and Sample

This report is based on a methodology that incorporated both quantitative content analysis and qualitative discourse analysis to obtain a clear, scientific look at the diversity within Egyptian media, tackling both print media and television. Given the many types of media that Egypt has (print, television, radio, Internet, etc.) and the many outlets within each type of media, we had to make several decisions on sampling that were guided by the purposes of our study. These decisions apply for all of our four reports.

First, it was not possible for us to analyze every type of media. We decided to go with television (both private and state-owned) as the most popular and therefore perhaps most influential medium in Egypt, and with print media as an agenda setter to society. We do acknowledge the importance of other media such as radio broadcasting and the Internet, but including these two media would have entailed additional resources that we did not have for this study.

Within television and print media, we still had to make decisions concerning the particular channels, programs, and newspapers to include in the analysis. Given the lack of scientific viewership or readability research in Egypt, we chose several newspapers and programs with some indications of high readership and viewership. We realize that a study of media diversity in all Egyptian media is much needed, but this is an effort that would entail an institutional effort dedicated to it, to be able to obtain access to ongoing programming on every radio and television channel, every issue of every newspaper and magazine published, and every (at least major) Internet website. It would also entail an enormous amount of researchers to be able to implement the coding for each of these media. This scope of resources is simply not available at the time, and therefore we had to take these following sampling decisions.

We analyzed issues of five newspapers, as well as episodes of several popular talk shows. The quantitative analysis focused on **a representative sample of state-owned media and private (independent) media**. We consciously opted out of analyzing party newspapers, because party newspapers are expected by definition to be a mouthpiece of the parties they represent, and therefore some of the variables we examine in this study would not apply to them. We chose two popular state owned and three popular private newspapers. The newspapers we monitored are:

- 1) **Al Ahram** (state)
- 2) **Al Akhbar** (state)
- 3) **Al Masry Al Youm** (private)
- 4) **Al Shorouk** (private)
- 5) **Al Tahrir** (private)

Overall, **the coders analyzed a total of 20,690 stories** that were published in the five newspapers during the coding period, from March 17 to April 21. The dates represent five weeks of newspaper coverage, where every single story published in the newspapers was analyzed.

Television coverage was also considered in a qualitative manner through discourse analysis. We monitored the state television political show *Kashf Hesab*, which airs during the prime time period after the 9 pm news bulletin; as well as four popular private, independent talk shows *Baladna Bel Masri* on OnTV; *Al Hayah Al Youm* on Al Hayat;

and *Akher Al Nahar* on Al Nahar, all of which air in the evening prime time slot, as well as the morning talk show *Zay el Shams*, which airs on CBC.

The research addressed diversity both in terms of the agents featured in the media as well as the topics mentioned/discussed.

Results

I. Newspaper Analysis:

A **total of 20,690 stories** were analyzed, representing newspaper content in the five newspapers during the coding period, from March 17 to April 21. The number of stories per newspaper was as follows:

Al Ahram: 6809

Al Akhbar: 4436

Al Masry Al Youm: 4160

Al Shorouk: 3868

Al Tahrir: 1417

In terms of type of story, 63.7% of the stories were pure news stories (12,581 stories); 14.4% (2,836 stories) were feature stories; 18.7% (3,699 stories) were opinion pieces or editorials; 1.9% were cartoons; and the remaining 1.4% (278) were different other types of stories.

Out of the news and feature stories analyzed, 88.2% (14,460 stories) were small in size, meaning they were under $\frac{1}{4}$ of a page in size; 8.7% (1,423 stories) were medium in size (between $\frac{1}{4}$ of a page and up to under half a page), and only 3.1% (516 stories) were half a page or more in size.

We looked at the quality of journalism displayed in the four newspapers in terms of objectivity, and fairness and balance. Given that editorials, columns, and cartoons are by definition expected to present a point of view, we only looked at news stories and features for the quality of journalism variables. Among the stories that qualified for coding on the objectivity variable (13,920 stories), three quarters of them were deemed “objective” (10,433 or 74.9%), meaning that they separate fact from opinion, and their content is free from sensationalism, and free from libel or inciting negative emotions

towards the group(s) mentioned. Another 23.5% of stories (3,271 stories) were “somehow objective,” and 1.6% (216 stories) were “not objective.” We are glad to report an increase in objectivity in this report as compared to our February report.

The concept of fairness and balance, a concept at the heart of diversity, was defined as “covering both/all sides of a story rather than one side.” Again, we only analyzed news stories and features for this variable. Among the stories that qualified for analysis, about two thirds (66.1%, or 9,202 stories) were classified as “fair and balanced.” Another 19.7% (2,738 stories) were classified as “somehow fair and balanced,” while the remaining 14.3% (1,985 stories) were classified as “not fair and balanced.”

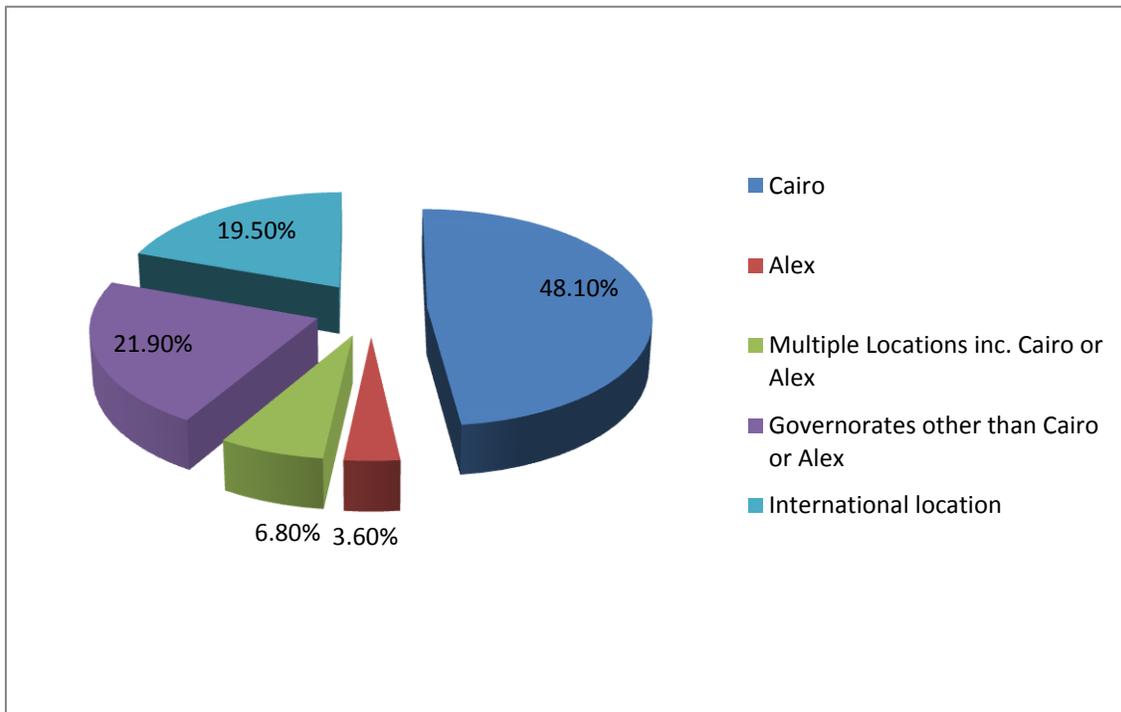
Diversity of Themes:

Over half of the stories were political in nature. To be exact, 40.6% (8,329 stories) were dedicated to local politics, and 13.6% (2,784 stories) were dedicated to international politics. Economic issues were featured in 9.4% (1,934 stories), which is considered a low percentage given the critical economic situation Egypt is in at the moment. This was followed by arts and culture (9% or 1,839 stories), and sports (8.9% or 1,819 stories). Social issues were featured in only 4.1% (839 stories), and crime in 4.9% (1,008 stories). Of particular concern is that some of the main challenges facing Egypt had very low coverage. This has also held true in previous reports, but since we analyzed every story in the newspapers for this report, we had hoped these important issues would have a higher percentage of coverage. To illustrate, education was only featured in 1.7% of the stories (342 stories); health was only covered in 1.3% of the stories (260 stories), and science and technology was only featured in 1.1% (228 stories).

Once again, as with our previous reports, issues pertaining to diversity had a very small percentage of coverage. Again, we had hoped that when we analyze whole newspapers rather than one particular political issue that these important issues of diversity would end up being more represented. Unfortunately, that was not the case. For example, women’s issues were only discussed in only 1.1% of the stories (233 stories). Issues pertaining to religious minorities, including Christians, were discussed in only 1% of the stories (211 stories). That number may have been inflated by the coverage of some clashes which occurred between Muslim and Christians in the town of Al Khosous in early April. Other important issues were severely under-represented: issues pertaining to ethnic minorities were only featured in 14 stories (0.1%); issues pertaining to refugees were only featured in 37 stories (0.2%); issues pertaining to children were only featured in 55 stories (0.3%); issues pertaining to persons with disabilities were only featured in 26 stories (0.1%); and the elderly were only discussed in 3 stories out of 20,690.

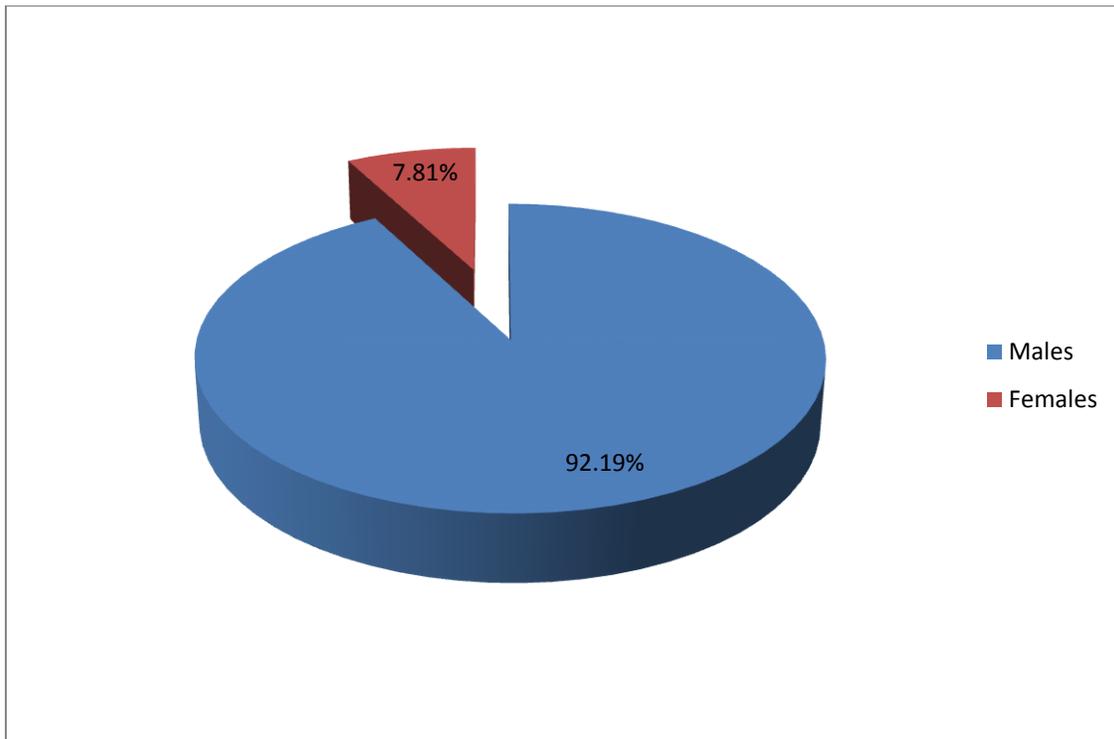
Geographical Diversity:

Geographical diversity is the one area of diversity that has shown progress since the start of Egypt's revolution. The lack of geographical diversity has long been a major problem within media coverage in Egypt, whereby most of the coverage was dedicated to Cairo, with some minor coverage in Alexandria, and almost no coverage in any other governorates. In this report, out of the stories where a location could be identified (10,559 stories), Cairo still had almost half of the coverage (48.1% or 5,082 stories), which is still significantly higher than other governorates. Alexandria had a share of 3.6% or 385 stories. Another 6.8% (720 stories) covered multiple Egyptian governorates that included either Cairo or Alexandria, and 21.9% (2,309 stories) was dedicated to governorates other than Cairo or Alexandria. The remaining 19.5% (2,063 stories) covered international locations. These results are illustrated in the following graph.



Gender Diversity:

Confirming the results of our previous reports, gender diversity was very disappointing as females were severely under-represented. Analysis of the 20,690 stories showed severe bias towards males and against females. It is worth noting that the latest United Nations demographic statistics about Egypt indicates that the gender ratio is 1.01 males to 1.00 females. The stories analyzed featured interviews with 47,619 individuals. Of these, 43,899 were males and only 3,720 were females. This is a staggering difference of 92.19% for males and only 7.81% for females. It means that basically one female is featured for every 11.8 males. The representation of women in our previous three reports was 6.8%, 6.5%, and 4.2% respectively.

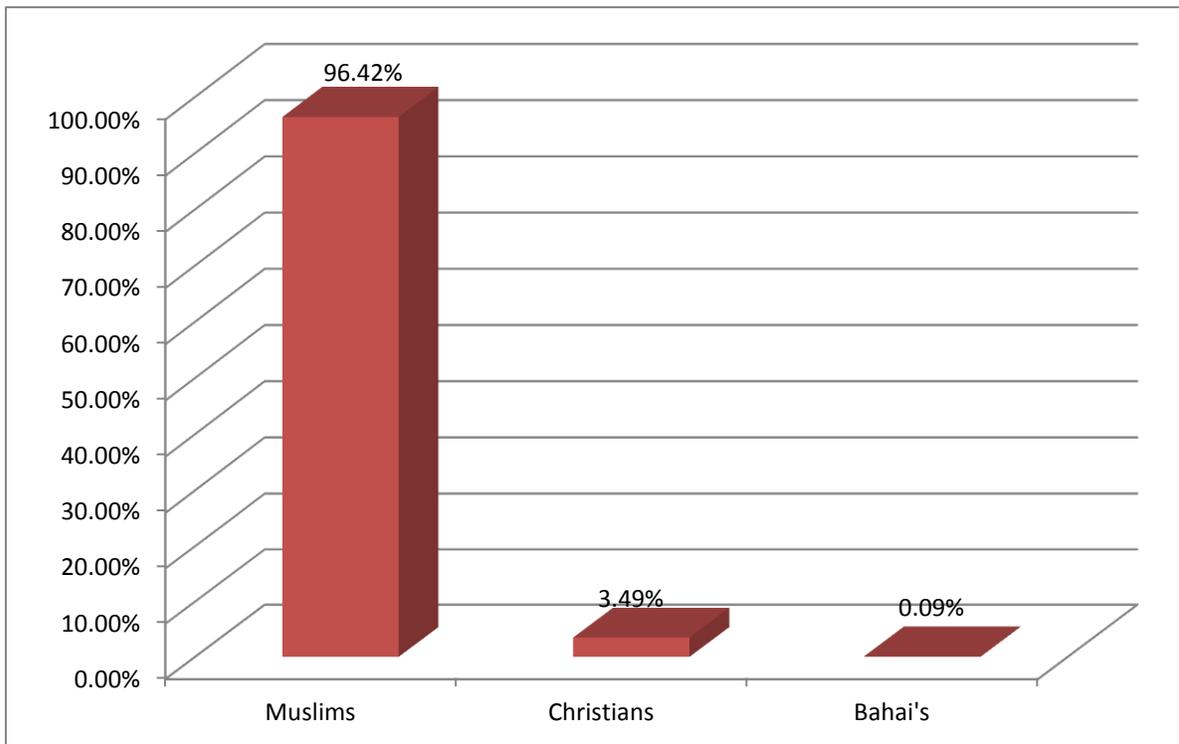


Religious Diversity:

Religious diversity is another very important aspect, and one which is not easy to measure. As with the previous reports, in this monitoring period we attempted to identify Muslims, Christians, Bahai's, as well as those whose religion is unclear within the context presented. We identified an individual as Muslim if he/she had a clear Muslim name (e.g. Mohamed) or if they mentioned their religion or religious affiliation, or bore a clear sign (e.g. garment or veil) relevant to Islam. We identified an individual as Christian based on either having a clear Christian name or by mentioning their religion or

church representation, or otherwise bearing a clear sign (e.g. garment or cross) relevant to Christianity. Bahai's were only classified as such if they were identified as Bahai's in the story. If a person had neither of the above attributes, he/she was listed as "unclear religion." We are aware that this is not a perfect way of measuring religion or religious diversity, since even within Islam, the majority religion in Egypt, there are different sects and diversities, and we continue to work on ways to enhance our measurement tools. However, this is a problem in literature measuring religious diversity all over the world, since religious affiliations are not always obvious or easy to identify.

Once again, as with the previous reports, the results of this coverage show that religious minorities are under-represented. There are no Egyptian official figures of the number of Christians in Egypt, but most sources estimate Egypt's religious demography to be around 90% Muslim and 10% Christian. This analysis showed only 1,526 individuals with Christian names or attributes featured within the total number of those interviewed. In comparison, those identified as Muslim were 42,207. There were 38 Bahai's identified in the stories analyzed, and 3,573 whose religion was not identified. The relative percentages of this coverage out of those whose religion was identified (43,771) are 96.42% for Muslims, 3.49% for Christians, and 0.09% for Bahai's.



Ethnic and Other Minorities:

As with previous reports, media representation in this monitoring period was quite disappointing for ethnic minorities as well as other important sectors of the society such as persons with disabilities, children, and the elderly. Out of the 47,619 individuals interviewed or featured in the stories, only 8 people of different ethnic origins such as Bedouins or Nubians were identified. There were 28 people identified as expatriates; 64 identified as refugees; only 4 identified as persons with disabilities; only 5 identified as elderly in stories discussing their issues, and 208 children. We are also aware of the difficulties in identifying some of these categories, but the numbers are so small that even if they are under-estimated, the absolute accurate figures still cannot be satisfactory. It is worth noting that the Egyptian State Information Service estimates the number of individuals under the age of 15 in Egypt to be 31.74%, and the number of individuals above 60 to be 6.27%.

II. Television Coverage

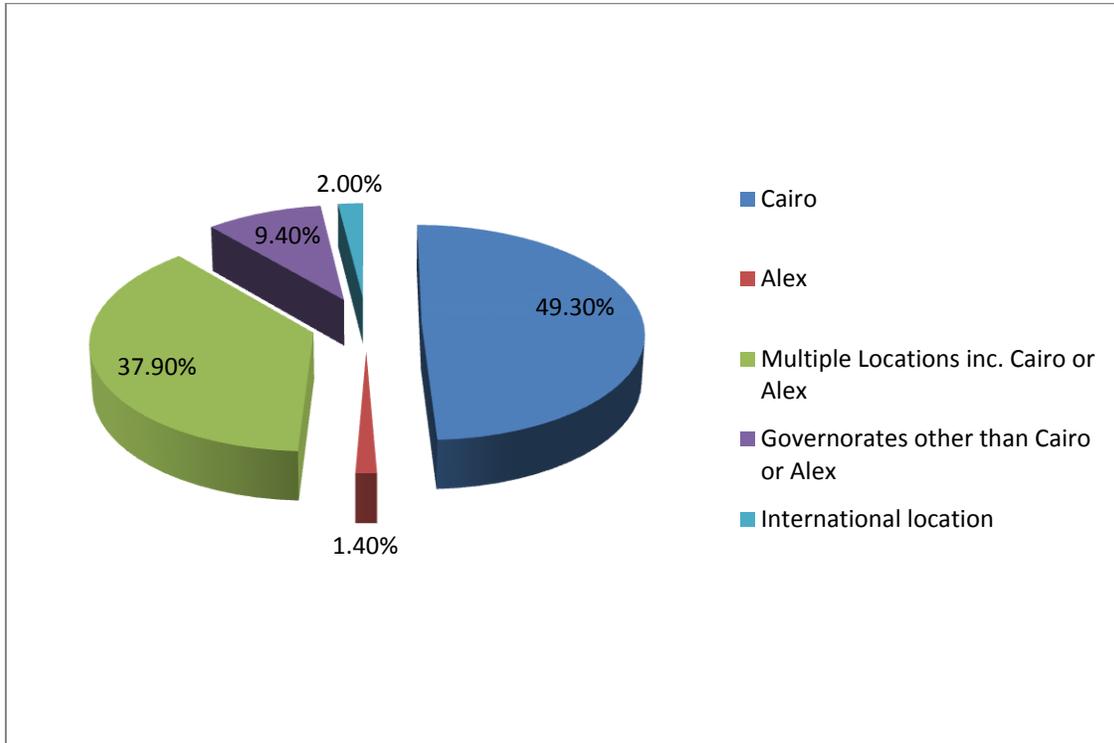
The analysis of the television coverage in this report is based on a critical discourse analysis of a sample of episodes of several popular talk shows, both on state television and on private, independent channels. The analysis is meant to provide some guidance into particular aspects where improvements have taken place in terms of reporting diversity and other areas of concern where more efforts should be exerted.

The talk shows monitored were the main state television political show *Kashf Hesab*; as well as four popular, private, independent talk shows: *Baladna Bel Masri* on OnTV; *Al Hayah Al Youm* on Al Hayat; and *Akher Al Nahar* on Al Nahar, all of which air in the evening prime time slot. In this report, we also added a morning talk show, *Zay el Shams*, which airs on CBC.

Because we analyzed overall coverage in this report, rather than coverage related to a major political issue as we did in the previous reports, we analyzed the whole programs rather than particular segments. All programs were analyzed for five weeks during the period March 17 to April 21. However, the actual number of episodes analyzed per program differs because not all programs air the same number of episodes per week.

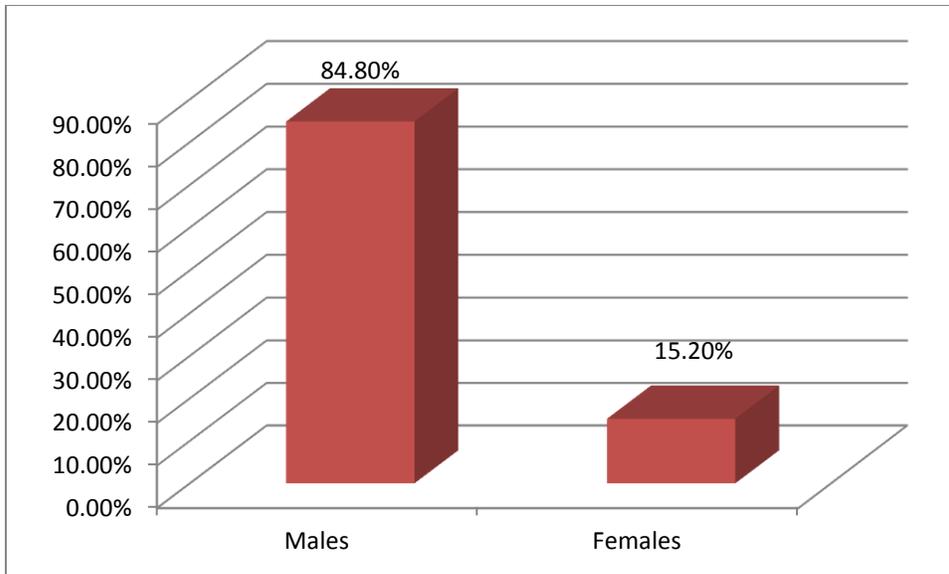
Overall, the pattern of geographical diversity on talk shows was similar to that in newspapers, except for the international coverage since most talk shows focus solely on domestic issues. As can be seen in the chart below, Cairo again got about half of the coverage, while Alexandria got 1.4%. Segments that covered multiple local locations

constituted about 40%, and segments dedicated to other governorates constituted slightly under 10%.



Politics was again the number one topic being discussed, constituting over half of the segments (50.9% to local politics, and 1.4% to international politics). The economy was covered in 7.6% of the segments; social issues in 5.2%; health in 4.4%; education in 3.1%; arts and culture in 3.8%; and science and technology in 2.7%. Issues pertaining to diversity again received little coverage, with women’s issues receiving only 3.2%; ethnic minority issues 1.2%; religious minority issues 2.9%; children’s issues 0.4%; while the elderly and persons with disabilities received no coverage at all.

Gender representation on the talk shows still shows an obvious bias towards males. Out of 1,283 guests featured on the five talk shows during the monitoring period, 1,088 were males (84.86%) and only 195 were females (15.2%).



Kashf Hesab (Statement of Accountability) is a political program that airs following the main 9 pm news bulletin on Egypt’s state television. The program aims to interview government officials and, as the name suggests, present an account of their successes and failures. The program had a very low percentage of female representation. Out of 18 episodes analyzed featuring 120 individuals (in studio or by phone or reports), only 8 were females (6.7%), while 112 were male (93.3%). This is particularly alarming given that this is the state television, which is supposed to be the closest thing Egypt has to public service broadcasting. For every one woman that appears on the program, 14 men appear. Religious minorities were also severely under represented, since none of the guests on the episodes we analyzed appeared to have a clear Christian name. This took place despite coverage on most other talk shows of the sectarian incidents that took place in the town of Al Khosous. Geographical diversity followed the average pattern, with Cairo getting about 43% of the coverage, and multiple locations including Cairo or Alexandria getting another 30.3%.

Despite its name, the *Kashf Hesab* program on Egyptian state television followed a pattern of praising government officials, without holding anyone accountable. Each episode constituted a public relations piece for the government official being hosted. For example, on March 18, the program hosted the Minister of Civil Aviation in a segment that featured no critical questions of any kind. Instead, the presenter asked the minister, “how come the airplane tickets are so cheap?!” When the program’s Facebook page received a complaint of the quality of service on EgyptAir, the minister said he tried the service himself the week before and found it to be very satisfactory. The presenter did not

point out to the minister the fact that since he is the minister, it is possible (if not certain) that he would have received special attention on the part of the crew. The rest of the segment was more of a public relations piece for the “accomplishments” of the ministry.

Similarly, on March 19, the program hosted the Minister of Supply, where the hosts let the minister speak freely about his accomplishments without asking him any critical questions. When the presenter told the minister they were about to see a report of a protest against the ministry, the minister objected, and the presenter complied postponing airing the piece for seven minutes, where the minister was instead allowed the time to talk about his ministry’s accomplishments.

On March 20, the program hosted the Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, where the same pattern of lack of a critical discussion was followed. The program also hosted several governors, and the episodes followed the same pattern: no critical questions and a public relations style segment for the governor to speak of his accomplishments. The presenters always second what the government official says, and make it clear that protesting is the cause of most problems.

The same pattern was repeated in the episode of April 10, when the program hosted the Minister of State for Youth. The program host said, “I usually don’t like to agree with the words of ministers, but allow me to agree with you this time,” and then goes on to air a report of the minister visiting some youth centers. On April 15, the same thing happened with the Minister of State for Local Development, where the program aired reports of the lack of development in Egypt’s rural areas, attributed the lack of development to Mubarak’s era, and the minister just showed his sympathies without telling the audience what his plans are to rectify the situation.

Baladna Bel Masri is presented on the private, independent channel OnTV by host Reem Magued. However, the program does a good effort in featuring balanced guests, and representing different viewpoints, and with the presenter separating facts from opinions. During this monitoring period, we analyzed 20 episodes of the show, featuring 231 guests (in studio or by phone or reports). Among these guests, 54 were women (23.4%), a significant increase from the 5.4% we found in the last report. Geographical diversity on the program is lacking, with Cairo getting most of the focus at 84% of the coverage. Slightly under 70% of the guests had clear Muslim attributes, 6.5% had clear Christian attributes, and about 24% were not clear. Generally speaking, the program makes it a point every once in a while to feature a sample of Egypt’s marginalized ethnic minorities, people of lower socio-economic classes, and persons with disabilities.

The program dedicated some time to issues of diversity. For example, on March 17, the program discussed the United Nations declaration condemning violence against women,

and the segment had balanced guests of men and women. Points of view against and for the document were raised and discussed. On March 27, the program featured a segment on “the art of the palm,” which is a folkloric prose and singing art performed by the Nubians of Upper Egypt. The program featured a report from Aswan governorate on this art.

The program also shed some light on the issues of children and students. For example, on March 18, the program also raised the issue of the rights of children (under 18 years), who are detained by the police in different demonstrations. On March 26, a segment was dedicated to the issues of the students of Nile University, and on April 10, a segment tackled student union elections in Egyptian universities. The program also featured several segments on the sectarian clashes of Al Khosous, where representatives of the Church were featured together with Muslim guests.

Al Hayat Al Youm is another popular talk show presented by hosts Sherif Amer and Lobna Asal on the private, independent channel Al Hayat. We analyzed 27 episodes during this monitoring period. The program tried its best to achieve objectivity and balance, and tried to cover all sides of the issues presented, and to feature guests from across the political spectrum.

On gender diversity, the program had a very low female representation rate. Out of 27 episodes that we analyzed, featuring 203 guests, the program featured only 10 women, a 4.9% rate. The program’s rate in the last report was 7.5%. Males in this monitoring period were represented with 95.1%, with 193 male guests featured.

The program did much better on geographical diversity, with only 20.8% of the coverage dedicated solely to Cairo, with another 61.4% dedicated to multiple local locations including Cairo or Alexandria. The program featured 80.8% of guests with clear Muslim attributes, 5.9% with clear Christian attributes, and 13.3% unclear.

The program did a good job of featuring some important issue of diversity, including women’s issues, children’s issues, Egyptian expatriates, Bedouins, as well as issues of religious minorities. For example, on March 19 and March 21, the program discussed the United Nations declaration condemning violence against women. On March 20, a segment discussed cases of kidnapping children for ransom. Issues of religious minorities were also discussed several times, with representatives of the Church in presence. Issues of religious minorities were discussed on March 20, March 31, April 3, April 6, April 7, April 8, April 9, and April 21. Issues of Muslims as minorities in some other countries were discussed on April 14. Also discussed was the law regulating the performance of civic society organizations in Egypt.

Akher Al Nahar is another popular talk show presented on the private Al Nahar channel. The program is presented by a different presenter every day. The hosts are Khaled Salah, Doaa Gad el Haq, Adel Hammouda, and Mahmoud Saad. We analyzed 36 episodes during this monitoring period, featuring 432 guests. Out of these, 58 were women (13.4%), while the remaining 374 were males (86.6%). The religious attributes of 53% of the guests were not clear. The remaining guests were 44% with clear Muslim attributes, and 3% with clear Christian attributes. As for geographical diversity, the program did a good job, with only 14.8% of the coverage dedicated solely to Cairo, and about three quarters of the coverage (74.8%) dedicated to multiple local locations including Cairo or Alexandria.

Our concern regarding the lack of diversity of topics from the last report still holds true for this report. While the program tries to maintain balance in terms of the spectrum of voices represented, most of the issues tackled are slightly monotone, focusing only on the current political regime from the political side of the issue. While we acknowledge the importance of the current political situation as Egypt passes through a critical juncture in history, the program does not try to tackle the issue through incorporating different aspects of diversity into its coverage. However, the program should be commended for always trying to maintain presence for the opposing point of view, so while there is always someone who criticizes the regime (sometimes the presenter as well), there is also always a voice presenting the pro-regime view point.

The program seems to lack women's representation amongst its guests, both in terms of in-studio expert guests and citizen opinions in featured reports (i.e vox populi). Even when on March 18 the program discussed the severe beating of a female protester outside the headquarters of the Muslim Brotherhood, none of the featured guests were women. Other examples include a report on the protests of Al Azhar University students on April 3, where women representation was plenty in the demonstrations, but still the program report featured only one female. On April 17, the program featured a report on the rising prices of commodities in Egypt, which featured 17 men and only 3 women. The program's female in studio guests are also a minority, and usually a familiar (repeated) face from a list of very few female guests.

In this report, we also analyzed a morning talk show, *Zay El Shams*, which airs on the private channel CBC. The program is presented separately by Dina Abdel Rahman and Ali Al Bahnasawy. We analyzed the 36 episodes of the program, which aired during this monitoring period. The program hosted 297 guests during this period, 65 were females (21.9%) and 232 were males (78.1%). Of these guests 155 had clear Muslim attributes

(52.2%), 15 had clear Christian attributes (5.1%), and the rest were unclear. There was a lack of geographical diversity as the program's coverage was largely focused on Cairo (94.6%), with 1.7% of the coverage focused on Alexandria, and only 3.4% dedicated to other governorates.

Zay El Shams provided a refreshing look at diversity coverage in Egypt. The program paid a good deal of attention to women's issues, as well as the issues of the youth, and of ethnic and religious minorities, including not only Christians but Jews as well. There was at least one female guest almost on a daily basis. For example, on March 17, the program hosted a female dentist, who is also a literary author, and discussed the brutal beating of a female protester outside the Muslim Brotherhood headquarters in Moqattam. On March 18, 27, and 31, the program hosted a female journalist, a female activist, and a female ex-minister respectively, who all discussed the United Nations declaration condemning violence against women in light of what is happening in Egypt. On March 19, the program hosted a female editor in chief of an English language newspaper, who discussed issues of Christians and the issues of the Bedouins in the Sinai. During the episodes from April 7 to 10, attention was given to the sectarian clashes at Khosous, and the rights of Christians in Egypt. On April 4, one of the main issues discussed was homeless children and the rights of children in Egypt. And on April 15, the program discussed student union elections in Egyptian universities. On April 21, the program aired a report about the death of the leader of the Jewish community in Egypt, and hosted the new leader, who discussed the status and the concerns of the Jews in Egypt, as well as how they were affected by the revolution.

The program had a good balance in terms of guests, hosting politicians, media personnel, artists, economists, activists, etc. Different points of view were discussed, either through in-studio guests or on the phone. There was also a good variety of topics discussed.

Conclusions

This report is a scientific, yet simplified, quantitative and qualitative assessment of the diversity of the media coverage in a selection of Egyptian newspapers and television programs during March and April 2013. The report, the fourth in a series of reports on media diversity in Egypt, concludes that discussing diversity issues or including as sources people of different backgrounds is still the exception rather than the rule in Egyptian media. While geographical diversity has generally improved compared with the time period before the January 25 Revolution, minority groups and the marginalized are still largely ignored in the mainstream media.

For the print media, we analyzed 20,960 stories published in five newspapers within the 36 days that constituted the time frame of the study. Generally speaking, all issues related

to inclusiveness and diversity, as they relate to women, children, the elderly, religious minorities, and ethnic minorities receive very little coverage in Egyptian newspapers.

All four reports in this series suggest that the only area of improvement in terms of diversity has been geographical diversity, where newspapers and talk shows are beginning to expand beyond Cairo and into other governorates. It is important to push for and advocate this geographical diversity, as it helps reveal the concerns of Egyptians who live outside of the capital, and whose issues are for the most part ignored by the media and the government alike.

All four reports showed a severe under-representation of all minority groups in society. In this report, females constituted only 7.81% of the 43,899 individuals interviewed for stories in the five newspapers during this monitoring period. This has been an ongoing trend in all reports, since the representation of women in our previous three reports constituted 6.8%, 6.5%, and 4.2% respectively.

Other minority voices were almost non-existent in the newspaper coverage. Only 8 people of different ethnic origins such as Bedouins or Nubians were identified within the 47,619 individuals featured in the stories. There were also a total of only 4 people identified as persons with disabilities, only 5 identified as elderly in stories discussing their issues, and 208 children. These figures are quite alarming, particularly given the actual percentages of these groups of people in the Egyptian society.

As for the television programs and talk shows, while some private channels are trying their best to become more inclusive and are succeeding to varying degrees, generally speaking, a lack of representation of all minority groups was observed during this monitoring period and in all four reports.

Once again, we point out to the phenomenon of the talk show “stars,” which we observed in all four reports. These are repeated guests on the evening talk shows, who are frequently featured on these popular shows. Egypt is a nation of 90 million people, 83 million of which live in Egypt. Given the rich diversity of the population, it is unfortunate that most of these popular shows limit themselves to a narrow pool of guests that producers and presenters are familiar with, thereby depriving the audience from the chance to listen to a more diverse spectrum of opinions. It is not unusual for a guest to appear on one talk show, then another, and be interviewed on the phone in a couple of other shows, all in the same evening. Despite the large number of experts, politicians, and intellectuals in the country, a very minute percentage of them are therefore featured on these popular shows. This not only limits diversity of thought and expression but emphasizes a stereotypical image of what a talk show guest looks and sounds like.

Recommendations

Diversity in media coverage is much needed in Egyptian media in order to reflect the rich and diverse fabric of Egyptian society. Some aspects of diversity will take more time and effort than others, but the first step needs to be a societal debate on the importance and the value of diversity, and the difference that it makes in any society. This report is mainly dedicated to journalists, editors, producers, and media personnel and policy makers of all kinds, and we are hoping that those who carry out these important media functions will help us start and carry this important conversation into Egyptian society.

At the heart of the matter is a realization that diversity exists in every society, and Egypt is no exception. Women do exist, and constitute slightly under half of the population. Religious minorities and ethnic minorities do exist. Children, the elderly, the lower socio-economic classes, and persons with disabilities do exist and have needs and concerns. By not addressing these concerns the problems do not go away; rather, they become amplified. It is the right of the marginalized to be represented because they are a part of society. **The concerns of the marginalized also need to be portrayed through their own voices.** For example, it is not appropriate to host five men to discuss women's issues; women need to be very much present at this conversation.

The first step to resolving any issue is always awareness, and so we hope that media personnel will read this report (and the past three) carefully, and see where performance could be enhanced. The point is to try to keep diversity on the journalist's or the reporter's mind at all times. If a journalist is working on a story, and is to interview five people, he/she should keep in mind that at least two out of these five should be women. **Editors should keep in mind that their newspapers should regularly feature stories that discuss some aspect of the lives of ethnic and religious minorities; of women; of children; of the elderly; and of persons with disabilities.** People who belong to these groups should be regularly featured in everyday coverage of stories, because anything that happens in Egypt has a direct effect on their lives.

The same applies to television programs and talk shows. **Television producers should make sure that their guest list is more inclusive and is representative of all groups in society.** The simple count given here of minorities and marginalized groups featured on such programs should help. **The chief editors of such programs should make sure the topics they present are also diverse, and the viewpoints presented in the discussions are inclusive and varied.**

On a technical note, **diversity training is important and should be carried out regularly by media organizations.** The Media Diversity Institute carries out such

training in different countries around the world including in Egypt, and would be happy to help in this regards.

Research is also very important. Media organizations should try to commission or internally carry out simple content analysis studies similar to our series of reports that would provide an insight into how these organizations handle diversity, and pinpoint the areas that need improvement.

Finally, from a more long-term perspective, **an independent media regulatory body should be set up in Egypt, and among its roles should be to establish minimum guidelines for the media coverage of minorities and marginalized groups in society.** This is a practice that is carried out in many countries around the world, including Morocco and Lebanon in the Arab world, and most recently, post-revolution Tunisia. We hope Egypt will implement such guidelines in the near future.

About the Author



Dr. Rasha Abdulla is Associate Professor and former Department Chair of Journalism and Mass Communication at the American University in Cairo. She has a Ph.D. in Communication (December 2003) from the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida. She is the recipient of several international teaching and research awards, including most recently, the AUC Excellence in Research and Creative Endeavors Award (2011). Dr. Abdulla is the author of three books and numerous articles. Her main research interests include media inclusiveness and diversity, public television and media reform, as well as the uses and effects of new media, particularly the Internet, and the link between social media and political activism. She tweets regularly on these issues and more at [@RashaAbdulla](https://twitter.com/RashaAbdulla) and can be reached by email at rasha@aucegypt.edu.

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About the Media Diversity Institute (MDI)

The [Media Diversity Institute](#) (MDI) is an international organization entirely devoted to working with the media in order to improve reporting on diversity issues which can cause disputes/conflicts at the local, national, regional or international level. We define diversity as race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, age, income-based discrimination, gender, and whatever else makes individuals or groups different from each other. Different but, equal! Over the last 14years MDI has worked in Europe, the former Soviet States, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and Southern Asia. MDI promotes responsible journalism as a means to improve inter-community relations, increase tolerance, and encourage dialogue among individuals and groups coming from different backgrounds. We work with journalism academics and students, media decision makers and reporters, as well as with civil society organizations specialized in diversity issues. We promote responsible journalism, with special emphasis on fairness, accuracy, sensitivity, and inclusiveness.