



Panel 7. Media Landscapes in the Arab World

Barbara Trionfi

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Statement

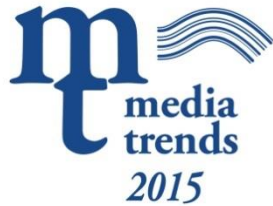
A native of Milan, Italy, Barbara Trionfi graduated in Chinese Studies from Ca' Foscari University in Venice with a thesis on freedom of opinion in the P.R. of China. After living and working in China for some years, Barbara received an M.A. degree in International Relations from Webster University in Vienna with a focus on international human rights mechanisms. Barbara also specialized in Chinese contemporary literature at Shanghai's Tongji University and at Shandong University in 1991 and 1993. Parallel to her study, she carried out research into China's censorship system during Mao Zedong's and Deng Xiaoping's leaderships. Barbara started working at IPI in 1999 as Press Freedom Advisor for the Asia-Pacific region. Later, as Press Freedom Manager, she oversaw IPI press freedom activities and led the IPI press freedom team. She became the Executive IPI Director in 2014. Her field of expertise covers different areas related to press freedom and freedom of expression, including media ethics and self-regulatory media accountability systems, journalists safety, and international mechanisms to protect press freedom. Barbara has taught undergraduate courses in media ethics, media literacy and cultural diversity and the media at Webster Vienna Private University since 2005.

Dina Farouk Abou Zeid

Associate Professor, Mass Communication Department, Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University, Egypt

Egyptian television challenges in the 21st century

Egyptian television is facing many challenges in the 21st century mainly because Egypt has witnessed two revolutions, 25 January in 2011 and 30 June in 2013. After two revolutions leading to a dramatic change in political life in Egypt, Egyptians are waiting for and expecting a dramatic change in media. On 25 January in 2011, protesters in Tahrir Square were calling for the fall of the regime and reform in all domains including media, especially "public service media", which is actually owned by the state. The revolutionaries were criticizing Egyptian public television because of its support of the Mubarak regime before and during 25 January revolution. After two revolutions, Egyptians do not accept Egyptian public television regime propaganda; they want these channels to serve the public. This research studied the challenges that face Egyptian public television in the 21st century according to the relation between media and the different powers influencing Egyptian television from the points of view of the cultural and political elites. The researcher conducted a survey of 50 members of Egyptian cultural and political elites including university professors, authors, journalists, politicians, activists, actors, actresses, singers, athletes, bankers and television presenters. The majority of the sample said that Egyptian public television should be independent from the government and the regime even if it is owned by the state. They added that there is no need for a minister of information because the minister belongs to the government and serves its agenda. Most of the sample said that Egyptian television should be



economically independent from the government. Also, there should be a syndicate for individuals working on television in Egypt to protect their rights and punish them when they make ethical mistakes in their programs besides Egyptian television institution laws, rules and regulations. Moreover, television should include competing private satellite channels which are more popular among Egyptian audiences but at the same time it should not consider advertising as a main sponsor. Public television should be a tool to improve the society. It should produce and show educational, cultural and service programs even if these programs do not attract commercials and advertising.

Dr. Dina Farouk Abou Zeid is Associate Professor in the Mass Communication Department, Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University in Egypt. She received her BA (96) and MA (2001) both from Mass Communication Department at the American University in Cairo. She received her PhD (2007) with honors from Mass Communication Department, Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University. She is the author of "Television Presenter's Skills". She lectures in many public and private universities in Egypt in Arabic and English languages. She conducts research on a variety of topics including television production, radio production, communication skills, writing news, new media, digital media, media ethics and translation. She is a supervisor of many MA and PhD theses. She participated in various national and international conferences. She worked as a television presenter in the Egyptian Television and as a reporter in the News Sector in the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (1996-2007).

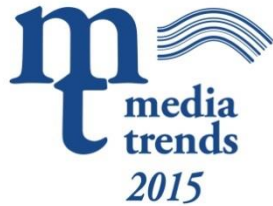
Vicken Cheterian

Webster University Geneva, Media Department, Switzerland

Digital technologies are generating massive amounts of information, but are we better informed?

New technologies of communication are providing huge volumes of video, audio and text material in a very fast-growing and now nearly instantaneous manner. This rapid technological development is providing new kinds of direct visibility on events that are taking place far away geographically from the global audiences. New technologies permit users to upload millions of photos, video footage and text messages on various on-line platforms. For example, in 2013 Facebook claimed that users uploaded 350 million pictures to the network per day. Thanks to user-generated content (UGC), material posted online, such as YouTube videos, by citizen-journalists, activists, or by simple eye-witnesses, is providing large amounts of data and raw information on important events such as violent conflicts, natural catastrophes and other dramatic events. State monopolies or censorship of information or communication are no longer possible. We are better informed. But do we know more?

The conflict in Syria is the best case to illustrate the new dilemma. The conflict that started in 2011 came at a specific period in the evolution of digital technologies and means of mass communication: when smartphones stopped being luxury products and became available to everyone. As a result, the Syrian conflict generated massive amounts of raw, direct information on the unfolding events. But does this unprecedented volume of information help us understand the conflict better? And, consequently, did it make any difference? The massive information flow so far did not seem to help us understand better what is going on in warzones. Instead of detailed factual reporting, public opinion – whether in zones of conflict or far away from it – is looking for arch-narratives, self-affirmation and self-justification, rather



than for detailed and balanced investigation. This is largely the result of the structural problem of the new media itself, as it is capable of generating enormous detail, instantaneous reporting, but unable to provide depth. The question is: can the digital media provide in-depth reporting on major issues, such as when covering wars, debating genocides, and other major catastrophes?

Dr. Vicken Cheterian lectures at Webster Geneva Media Communications department. He holds a PhD from the University of Geneva, and has worked as correspondent for a number of publications, incl. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Al-Hayat* and others. He is the founder of Caucasus Media Institute in Yerevan, and has consulted a number of international organizations and development agencies on media development and conflict resolution, including the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs, UN agencies, OSCE, etc. He is the author of *War and Peace in the Caucasus, Russia's Troubled Frontier*, Hurst/Columbia University Press, 2009. His latest book is: *Open Wounds, Armenians, Turks and a Century of Genocide*, Hurst, 2015.

Mourad Teyeb

Maghreb Media Forum (MMF), Tunisia

The Tunisian media: From serving dictatorship to serving agendas

Mainstream media, new media and social networks played a major role in all that happened in Tunisia since early 2011. All of these media contributed to the ousting of the former Tunisian police-state regime. Nevertheless, they also played a decisive role in defending and preserving corrupt and criminal mechanisms of the old regime. And they deeply influenced the events and decisions that led to the difficulties encountered by the nascent democracy in the country and, eventually, the return of the old regime's symbols and policies in the elections of October-November 2014. Tunisia went from a media scene that opposed, even demonized, all the democratic products of the democratic revolution (the period 2011 to 2013), to an altogether pro-regime, pro-government media (in 2014 and in 2015, separately).

The most popular public and private Tunisian media have changed their coverage and their editorial decisions from one period to another. This is what we can explain in the current paper. We can make conclusions as to the extent of the influence this behavior of the Tunisian media had over the political, social, economic, and security developments in the country between 2011 and 2015.

Mourad Teyeb is a Tunisian journalist and media researcher. He has been working in the print, online and broadcast industries for 15 years, and has covered issues ranging from politics, transition and conflicts to business, sports and arts, in English, French and Arabic. Since the huge changes in Tunisia and the North-Africa region started in 2011, his focus has mainly been on issues ranging from democratic transition to media reform, corruption and security issues. He is particularly interested in ethics and regulation. Such issues have been a matter of fierce debates in Tunisia. He also attaches great importance to training young journalists, citizens and activists in advocacy and media literacy and to social media and new media. In 2013, Teyeb founded the Maghreb Media Forum (MMF), a Tunisia-



based think tank focusing on certain key media issues such as ethics, regulation, media and information literacy, access to information and the training of journalists.