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From Underground to Elite: Egyptian Bloggers before and after the 2011 Uprising

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and after the 2011 Uprising

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DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis I have presented for examination for the PhD degree at the University of Westminster is my own work.

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ABSTRACT

This research looks at how the shift in the status of Egyptian bloggers from underground dissident voices to mainstream political and media players affected the plurality they add to the public space for discourse in Egypt's authoritarian settings. The role of the internet – and more recently social media and bloggers – in democratic transition has been studied by various media scholars since the introduction of the worldwide web and especially after the Egyptian and Tunisian uprisings of 2011. But no work has been done to study how bringing those once-underground bloggers into the public and media spotlight affected the nature of the blogosphere and the bloggers themselves. Star bloggers were not only covered by the media after January 25th, 2011, they also started joining the media as column writers; a move that had various effects on them and the blogosphere but was never examined in media studies. The plurality the blogosphere adds to the Egyptian public space for discourse in light of those changes as well as in light of the financial and practical sustainability of blogging was hence never looked at in a context similar to Egypt's. Guided by modified theories of the public sphere and theories of hegemony and manufacturing consent, I look at whether bloggers have been co-opted into the historical bloc in the process of renewing the social order and how this affects them and the online sphere. Also, guided by theories of power and media elites, I look at bloggers' backgrounds to assess whether they come from power elites and are transforming into media elites, thus limiting the plurality of the online sphere. Finally, guided by theoretical works on institutionalizing and commercializing the internet, I look at how those shifts into mainstream affect the independence and freedom of the blogs and micro-blogs. The research uses a comparative study to assess how those changes affect prominent versus less prominent bloggers and compare their backgrounds. The study uses quantitative content analysis and framing analysis of chosen media outlets and interviews with bloggers, marketeers and media professionals. The findings trace an increase in media coverage of bloggers post January 25th, 2011, especially in the prominent bloggers category, and an overall positive framing of bloggers post the uprising. This led to the mainstreaming of bloggers into the media as well as public work, which had various implications on the freedom they had over their content and voice, both online and offline. It also points to a dramatic decrease in bloggers' activity on their blogs in favour of mainstream and social media and due to star bloggers becoming more career-oriented and their failure to make blogs financially sustainable. The findings also indicate that more prominent bloggers seem to come from more elite backgrounds than others and enjoy luxuries that allow them the time, technology and security to post online. This research concludes that the shifts in bloggers' status post-January 25th have limited the plurality they add to the discourse in Egypt.

Chapter I: Introduction

The Egyptian uprising of 2011 marked a turning point in online activism in Egypt in general and social media and the blogosphere in particular because of the perceived importance of these platforms during the uprising. Satellite channels, social media and blogs became trusted news and opinion sources on current affairs after state media lost their credibility for their biased reporting during the earlier days of the uprising. With the rising popularity of social media platforms since 2011, bloggers' status shifted from operating in underground media platforms to being mainstreamed as the faces behind the calls for the uprising and movers and shakers of the political scene in the months following January 25th, 2011.

1.1. Theoretical Positioning

With the perceived role social media and bloggers played in the Egyptian and Tunisian uprisings — and before that in the 2009 Iranian protests dubbed the Twitter Revolution — came a body of literature discussing the role of social media in public mobilization, political and civil advocacy and the democratization process. Four years before the Egyptian and Tunisian uprisings, namely around 2006, various scholars also discussed what blogs add to the discourse in the Arab world and how much freer they are than the mainstream media. A recent example of these works is Ghazal Saif's research on "Keyboards Fight Tanks," where she studies the anti-authoritarian discourse in Egyptian blogs (2013). Rasha Abdullah has also written about the role the media, including online media, played during Egypt's democratic transition (2011) followed by a research paper mapping the digital media in Egypt in 2013. Mark Lynch (2006 and 2007), Courtney Radsch (2007 and 2008) and

Etling et al (2010) have looked at the emergence and mapping of the Arab blogosphere. There has also been a limited number of studies looking at the quality of discourse in the Egyptian blogosphere; El-Nawawy and Khamis have analyzed the quality of discourse on the blogosphere in 2011 and 2014. This literature came as the blogosphere started discussing issues that were not covered by the media, including sexual harassment and police violence. Earlier works on online platforms came with the introduction of the World Wide Web in the 1990s and mainly argued the merits of the internet in providing a platform for expression that is free from state or economic control and available to everyone. Utopian theorists of the internet included Beacham (1995, cited in McChesney, 1995), Jones (1997), Grossman (1995) and Rash (1997) (cited in Papacharissi, 2004) while one of the most dystopian theorists is Morozov who argues against cyber-utopianism, predicting online activism can never lead to on the ground change (2011). There had also been ongoing works on business models available for new media platforms, including Forrester and Powell (2008) and Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010).

There has been limited bridging, however, between the business area of researching online platforms and that studying the democratic merit of the internet, especially when it came to blogs. Little work has been done looking at blogs in light of organizational theory to look at the financial aspect of blogging in terms of its sustainability. There is also a research gap when it comes to looking at just how inclusive the Egyptian blogosphere really is, both in terms of who gets heard and promoted both online and offline as well as the backgrounds of bloggers in light of elite theories. This not only means that little has been done on just who these bloggers are, but also whether there is a

growing gap between star bloggers and other bloggers and micro-bloggers that is leading to an online sphere where, increasingly, only a handful of voices are getting heard as others struggle for followership. No research looked at the relationship between backgrounds of bloggers in relation to their prominence and the nature of issues they prioritize. When it comes to post-January 25th, 2011 literature concerning blogs, there is also a research gap in looking at how the shifting status of bloggers is affecting them and the blogosphere. No research has been done to assess how the media changed its attitude towards and relationship with prominent versus less-prominent bloggers and the impacts of such changes. There has also been no work done to assess the effects of mainstreaming the once underground bloggers. This is why the overarching question of this research is how much plurality the blogosphere (a supposedly inclusive space for dissidence) adds to the public space for discourse after the changes it has undergone during the uprising in Egypt's authoritarian setting.

Instead of looking at bloggers and micro-bloggers romantically as drivers of democratic change or at the internet as an exclusive sphere, I look at social media makers and bloggers as micro-organizations that need certain conditions granted to achieve sustainability, including financial sustainability. I am hence looking at the blogosphere as a formerly counterpublic of counterhegemonic elements that is potentially becoming part of the historical bloc to achieve sustainability (both financial as well as career) and in turn, how this affects the plurality the online sphere adds to the public space for discourse.

This research does not look at the role social media played in the uprisings, nor does it aim to assess its potentials in the democratization process. It does not take a deterministic stand in the utopian and dystopian internet studies. Instead, I take a circumstantial approach to studying the blogosphere and micro-blogs; I study the blogosphere like any other media platform that can theoretically drive change given the appropriate circumstances. This means taking the stand that, like many other media platforms, the blogosphere and social media are not free from state or economic control, but the key to an inclusive online sphere lies in how the makers of that sphere respond to those pressures. I look at the blogosphere in the historical context of the media; much like any other media platform, its emergence held hopes of change and when this change occurred, it began resembling mainstream media in the pressures it undergoes, be it political or financial, hence losing its core differences that set it apart from mainstream media. I also look at prominent bloggers as media elite who set the agenda but are of drastically different making than the majority of the population they communicate with. And much like other media platforms, I take the stand that although internet is in theory inclusive, the blogosphere and social media can be, in practice, just as exclusive as newspapers or channels, despite the lower barriers to entry.

When studying elites, I had to adapt Mills' concept of elites (1956) to the Egyptian context where access to high-speed broadband that allows for shooting and uploading videos on the go is considered elite given a poverty rate of 40%, according to the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (2013). The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS),

claims illiteracy rates in those above 10 years of age to be at 30% (2013). The real rate, however, is believed to be far higher; illiteracy rates are measured by primary school education and it is common to find primary school graduates who cannot read or write but have succeeded through cheating in end of term exams; the only determinants of success in Egypt's public education system. CAPMAS estimates illiteracy rate among those above the age of 60 to be at 65%. Basic English is also spoken among 35%, according to a report by Euromonitor International (2012), and that includes English speakers who do not have the necessary language grasp to blog or read in English and only know the basics. This means that not only do elite definitions need to be tweaked to the Egyptian context, but also the concept of proprietorship and inclusivity as stipulated by Habermas, Mouffe (2000) and Fraser (1992). Inclusivity of the online sphere in Egypt needs to factor in the cost of accessing high-speed internet and smart phones as well as education levels and language proficiency. The public sphere's freedom from state and economic control is also at strong play in Egypt's authoritarian given media ownership and censorship over state and private media. We also need to look at what the historical bloc, as described by Gramsci (1971), is formed of in Egypt, and how mainstream media, given the media ownership and how it marries politicians and businessmen, is considered a strong element of that bloc. These elements come into play strongly when looking at theories of manufacturing consent, (Herman and Chomsky, 1988) and how consent is renewed in Egypt after January 25th; namely by coercing counterhegemonic elements, bloggers, into the historical bloc; political organizations and the mainstream media.

These issues are especially important to answer at a time when Egypt is undergoing drastic changes under an authoritarian regime. The state media have also lost credibility, alternative or community media are limited and social media's popularity and importance are on the rise. Additionally, platforms like blogs used to represent room for dissident voices without the pressures mainstream media are subjected to, like legal, financial, editorial or trying to cater for mass audience. This is why it was important to look at whether this freedom from mass media pressures is still relevant, even after star bloggers and social media makers became mainstreamed and were put under the spotlight of the media, the private sector and ultimately the state.

1.2. Background to the research question

Before January 25th, bloggers remained largely alternative media sources that did not often intertwine with mainstream media. They represented dissident voices that discussed issues mainstream media did not necessarily pick up on because they did not want to or could not due to censorship. Bloggers were the ones to break stories like mass sexual harassment in 2007 and police brutality. But at large, they remained on the dissident margins, read by the educated elites who had access to the internet and kept largely separated from mainstream media. The sole relationship existent between mainstream media and bloggers was that, on occasion, mainstream media used bloggers' videos without crediting them.

The media's relationship and coverage of bloggers saw a drastic change after January 25th. Bloggers, who often live-Tweeted events, became sources for the media to quote on current affairs and hot topics in politics. They became faces of the revolution and the center of news and events and so were

taken into the spotlights of mainstream media. Bloggers turned from underground writers into public figures whose roles in the uprising were often celebrated. Asmaa Mahfouz, for instance, was named one of the most influential Arab women by *Arabian Business* and received the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. Similarly, three prominent bloggers were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Even their arrests became the center of media attention and moved to the front pages whereas they had passed unnoticed or covered in the crime section a few months earlier. For instance, star blogger Alaa Abdel Fattah became the face of military trials of civilians in 2011 although there were 1,200 civilians undergoing military trials. Blogger Mina Daniel's death also became the face of the Maspero violence where clashes occurred in protests in front of Maspero building, the headquarters of state television's main channels, leading to the death of 28. Newspapers, including *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, even started dedicating sections to cover the pulse of social media.

Along with bloggers' rising popularity, social media also started gaining popularity after January 25th. On February 2nd, the first day the internet was available after being cut off on January 28th, 100,000 new users from Egypt registered to Facebook, increasing its penetration rate in Egypt from 12% in April 2010 to 29% in April 2011, (Arab Social Media Report, 2011). Facebook users grew from 4.8 million in December 2010 to over 9 million in January 2012. Twitter marked over 35,000 Tweets on February 11, 2011, the day former president Hosni Mubarak stepped down, up from an average of under 15,000 Tweets before the uprising. The internet penetration rate grew

from 24% in 2009, according to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, to 43% in 2013, marking 36 million users.

This increasing popularity of social media makers made the private sector and the mainstream media seek bloggers for more credibility and validation. Mainstream media started seeking them to write columns because they became voices of the revolution and the movers and shakers of the political arena in 2011, hence providing newspapers with revolutionary credentials. The private sector also started inviting them to their product launches to gain prominence and validation on platforms where those bloggers and social media makers are popular. Nokia even held a product launch event in April, 2011 where they invited bloggers only instead of their usual press list to create an online buzz about their new product. Similarly, star blogger Gigi Ibrahim, who comes from elite backgrounds and blogs largely in English, started getting invited, alongside other online media makers and journalists, to events of products targeting an upper or middle class customer. Bloggers represent a goldmine for marketeers because they are able to reach a young audience of middle and upper classes; a key segment for marketeers and an important segment of the audience for the mainstream media. In fact, according to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, 85% of internet users in Egypt are between ages 16 and 34 and out of the 24 million internet users in 2011, 23 million are broadband users. Given prices of broadband services in Egypt and 40% of the population being below poverty line, one can assume that those 23 million come from upper or middle classes. Similarly, in 2011, 75% of Facebook users in the Arab region were between 15 and 29 (Arab Social Media Report, 2011). This interest from the private sector,

however, does not necessarily translate into advertising revenue for bloggers, putting the financial sustainability of blogging into question.

It is important to note, however, that these changes did not necessarily happen for all bloggers. While some bloggers became household names, others remained largely unrecognizable to the general, non-virtual audience. A handful of star bloggers gathered more fame and credibility and stood more chances to be defended, covered and recruited by mainstream media when they faced any oppression. These star bloggers also stood a chance to generate revenue through posting advertisements on their now-sought-after blogs or transferring their skills and their now-trusted by-lines and joining mainstream press. Their blogs became more well-read as the media hosted them and they became familiar to a mainstream audience. Others who were less famous, however, remained largely underground and struggling to find enough time to keep the frequency of their posts. My research indicated that it was important for me to differentiate between prominent bloggers and others who do not receive the same attention and followership.

Blogging and tweeting throughout the day is a rather time-consuming activity and several bloggers gave up their jobs for the causes of January 25th, including Abdel Fattah, Sandmonkey and Asmaa Mahfouz who then joined a documentary-making company. But this is not something all bloggers and activists afford. An interview with a less-prominent blogger going by the name Sherine shows she expressed concern over not having the time she would like to post frequently, given a full-time job, and so has resorted instead to much-shorter Twitter posts. Meanwhile, star blogger Alaa Abdel Fattah told *What Women Want* magazine in December 2012 that although his wife and him are

both breadwinners in the family, they were both jobless as he had gone to prison after their move back from South Africa and his wife had just given birth and could not work. "We haven't thought much about that but we're quite privileged, in terms of education, having a supportive family, and having some savings," he said in the interview. "So we're not personally threatened or worried about that whereas the majority of Egypt is really feeling the crunch."

Therefore, revenue streams might not be equally available to less-prominent bloggers and the need for revenue is also unequal between bloggers, putting the sustainability of blogging in question. If bloggers, be it prominent or less-prominent ones, opt against finding a revenue stream or are not presented with the opportunity to generate one, they might not be able to maintain frequent posts. And if they do maintain frequent posts, it is then relevant to see whether they come from a financial elite that affords them more time than others who do not enjoy the same luxuries. Dedicating one's time to a cause without finding financial sustainability can be a question of political activism only. But putting it in that context alone would be failing to acknowledge that blogs are a media platform that could be possibly profitable. It would also be failing to acknowledge that the skills of bloggers could be transferrable to mainstream media, much like Abdel Fatttah and Sandmonkey have, contributing columns to mainstream newspapers.

Additionally, any revenue stream adopted, be it through advertising or joining mainstream media, poses several questions about joining the historical bloc and possibly altering or neutralizing content to fit mainstream needs or answer advertorial, editorial or legal pressures.

There is also the question of whether bloggers are turning into media elite as they come from more elite backgrounds, run in the same social circles and link to one another. Posting links to one another as well as promoting each other and getting promoted by the media makes blogs appear higher up on search engines. This then increases the one-way communication of the blogosphere and its domination by a select few as prominent bloggers support and promote one another and gain more fame from the media while others struggle to find followership. In a possible indication that elite bloggers do run in the same circles, English-language blogger Gigi Ibrahim married prominent leftist blogger Hossam El Hamalawy.

It is then relevant to assess whether the most prominent bloggers in Egypt who were celebrated by the media are, in fact, of elite backgrounds and becoming part of the media elite, leading to the lack of plurality on the blogosphere. This means looking at whether a relatively small number of prominent bloggers might be enjoying a growing visibility and means to generate revenue, as an increasingly large number of less-prominent bloggers are faced with limited visibility and resources.

It is also important to look at how their changing status and mainstreaming is affecting their online and offline content generation. This means looking at how aware they are of being under the spotlight and whether this spotlight makes them alter their voices to fit a more mainstream audience or to stay safe from oppression now that they are more visible. It also requires looking at how the frequency of their online posts changed post January 25th.

1.3. Identifying the research questions

This research is a comparative study between prominent and less prominent bloggers as well as blogs before and after January 25th. It aims to determine whether the blogosphere is limited in the plurality it contributes to the public discourse in Egypt post-January 25th. Plurality is assessed through a comparative study of prominent versus less prominent bloggers and blogs to determine whether the only voices heard online are those of elite, prominent bloggers. It is also assessed based on whether bloggers' new status affects the quantity and nature of their content.

This rests on several sub-questions:

- **How did the media's coverage, portrayal of bloggers and relationship with bloggers change post January 25th?** Guided by media framing and propaganda model approaches, I use quantitative and qualitative content analysis and framing analysis, as well as semi-structured, in depth interviews with bloggers and media professionals to assess how the quantity and nature of coverage differed between the two periods studied as well as between prominent and less prominent bloggers.

- **Who are the bloggers most quoted and covered by the media and are they of elite backgrounds?** Guided by a power elite theoretical framework, I use the offline content analysis to determine the bloggers most covered by the media as well as in-depth, semi-structured interviews with bloggers to determine their backgrounds.

- **How are less popular bloggers featured in the media in comparison to more prominent ones?** This is determined through applying media framing in the offline media content analysis.

- **How do issues discussed in prominent blogs compare to those discussed in less prominent ones—in terms of whether topics prioritized in some blogs are of elite nature?** This question is guided by theories of power elites as well using quantitative web content analysis.

- **How are bloggers' inclusion in mainstream media and changing status affecting their status as counterhegemonic elements? Are they joining the historical bloc through collaborations with mainstream media or their private sector? And how does this compare between prominent and less prominent bloggers?** Guided by theories of hegemony and manufacturing consent, organizational theories, revised theories of the public sphere and theoretical works on blogging, this question is answered through interviews with bloggers, media professionals and marketeers.

- **Are bloggers seeking revenue streams to make their blogging financially sustainable?** Using organizational theories, I look to answer this question through the interviews with bloggers, media professionals and marketeers as well as quantitative web content analysis to determine the lack or existence of revenue streams on the chosen blogs and how prominent and less prominent blogs compare.

- **If they are seeking revenue streams (advertisements or joining mainstream media), how is this affecting their content?**

- **If they are not seeking revenue streams, how is this affecting the frequency of their posts? And if it does not, are they of elite backgrounds who can afford time and cost of blogging?** This

question and the previous one are guided by theories of the public

sphere, hegemony and manufacturing consent as well as power and

media elites and theoretical work on blogs and answered through

interviews with bloggers as well as analysis of their blogs.

- **Given the private and the media sectors are now more interested in online advertisements, are they targeting elite or otherwise bloggers?** This is answered through interviews with bloggers, marketeers and the media professionals.

- **Are prominent bloggers becoming media elites and making the blogosphere less inclusive and blogging unsustainable?** This question is of conclusive nature and should be based on the answers to all of the above questions.

1.4. Methodological Orientation

The methodology used in this research was four-fold in the aspects it looked at and hence the elements under study. The media themselves needed to be studied to assess the shift in attitudes before and after the uprising and that also required interviewing the people behind the media studied to give insight on the findings from the media analysis. So to study the media, I needed to conduct both quantitative and qualitative research in the forms of quantitative content analysis of select platforms, qualitative framing analysis of those platforms and qualitative, in-depth interviews with media people. The second element of the research required looking at bloggers' backgrounds and assessing the shift they underwent in the three years post the uprising, which required in-depth interviews with selected bloggers. Thirdly, I needed to look at the medium at hand and the core of this study, and that is the blogosphere

itself through studying the relevant blogs of bloggers interviewed. Lastly, to gain insight into potential revenue streams, I also needed to interview marketeers. Combining the interviews with findings from media and blogs analysis gave the quantitative data deeper insight and allowed for more analysis of the trends spotted. Triangulation also ensured most of the shortcomings of the three methods used (interviews, quantitative content analysis and framing analysis) were rectified as the data derived from all three methods seemed complimentary and consistent.

Most research work on Egyptian and Arab bloggers has been quantitative or exploratory in nature. Qualitative work done on bloggers in the region seldom included open-ended, face-to-face interviewing methods or triangulated between qualitative and quantitative methods like this research has done. Many scholars studied blogs and interviewed the relevant bloggers, like Taki (2010) and El-Nawawy and Khamis (2011 and 2014). The research conducted, however, either focused on the bloggers themselves in relation to politics and their blogs, or mainstream media, but rarely studied both the bloggers and the media to merge the online and the offline spheres in an attempt to study their incorporation into the offline sphere.

Using framing analysis in studying how the media portrayed bloggers started off as a challenge because there was not a large body of similar literature done to guide this study. One particular research conducted by Kensicki in 2001 was helpful to this research and it looked at how the media framed a social movement in a hegemonic setting. But it still did not provide operational guidance as to how to apply frames to the content analysis of the media platforms at hand, a common issue with framing analysis. But once the

quantitative content analysis started, it seemed more relevant to the research for me to construct my own frames that will guide my study, based on repeated patterns seen in the quantitative analysis. It was the quantitative analysis phase of the research, therefore, that made it possible to come up with the frames against which the media portrayal of bloggers was studied.

The fieldwork started out aiming to interview prominent bloggers as determined by the media analysis conducted. As the fieldwork started, however, it became apparent that a comparative study between prominent and less-prominent bloggers needed to be carried out to truly understand the shift in the overall blogosphere, and not changes that happened to only a select few, and so get a wider picture of the plurality of the blogosphere. It was also apparent that I needed to modify my definition of prominence from those covered by the media to those popular online, as determined by their Twitter and Facebook activity, to be able to compare prominence to activity and then compare both to media coverage they received. This definition served the purpose of the study better but posed a few issues when star bloggers were not mentioned in the media during the period studied and non-prominent bloggers were mentioned over twice in the media in the periods studied. This, however, was considered limitations of the research, given the limited time periods studied, that were rectified for through the qualitative methods adopted. But while prominent bloggers were more difficult to access for interviews, they were easier to identify because they were those hosted by the media in my findings. The less prominent bloggers, however, posed a problem; how do I identify bloggers who are, by definition, not known to the general public. Through my interviews with bloggers, and my general knowledge of the

blogosphere, however, I was able to identify and get access to six less-prominent bloggers who have been active since before the uprising.

Bloggers also did not seem to grasp the concept of my looking at revenue streams or financial sustainability of blogging, having been used to being interviewed about their writings, activism and the likes. But once the interviews started and we started talking about whether they are sustaining their online activity, all of them expressed that they have gone older and more concerned with their careers and so seem to blog and micro-blog far less. It was only then that bloggers started grasping the financial angle of my research and began speaking about it.

The problems faced during the fieldwork reflect the problems the blogosphere itself faces. Access to state media, for instance, proved impossible with broadcast although easier in print because the state newspaper studied was accessible online and I was able to buy back issues from the newspapers' archives and newsstands. This reflects the general information barrier the media and the public are subjected to when it comes to authorities. Some bloggers were also reluctant to speak, in fear of their security, while others were in jail during the time of the interview. Therefore, because four out of the 21 possible prominent bloggers to interview were in prison during fieldwork, bloggers interviews were conducted earlier than planned to ensure access. In fact, after our interview, Esraa Abdel Fattah was put on a travel ban and is now fighting charges against her and so is Mostafa El Naggar. This reflects the security issues and scrutiny that star bloggers are facing years after the uprising.

Chapter II: Conceptual Framework

To answer the research questions, this research will be guided by a conceptual framework that includes power and media elites, modified public sphere theories of Habermas, Mouffe and Fraser, theories of hegemony and the historical bloc, theoretical literature on social media, blogs and the Arab blogosphere, as well as theoretical work on the possible commercialization of the blogosphere.

2.1.The blogosphere.

2.1.1.Emergence and Definition of 'blogs'

Before discussing what blogs add to the public space for discourse, we must first define and track what blogs are. Although there had been platforms for online users to share opinions and news through mail groups and weblogs in the 1990s, they required a level of computer coding skills so they were mainly used by IT specialists (Taki, 2010, p.108). The early 'blogs' were "primarily based on links to websites and news sources [bloggers] deemed interesting. Their sites were called filters at the time and were seen as maps and networks of the internet," (Taki, 2010, p.109). In 1999, a more user-friendly software called Blogger was introduced to the market, allowing users without previous technical knowledge to own and manage a blog, which lowered the barriers to entry and caused a boom in the bloggers community. Blood, an early blogger herself, argues that the introduction of Blogger software marked the shift of bloggers' role from simply filtering news to commenting, contextualizing, comparing and analyzing mainstream-media articles they post (2000). She argues that it was also in 1999 that bloggers started inter-communicating with other bloggers in the "tribe they wish to belong to." But Taki (2010, p.110)

argues other formats of blogs existed before those introduced in 1999. She adds that as early as 1994, there had been a few bloggers writing personal thoughts and diaries rather than linking to websites.

The definition of what exactly constituted a blog, and hence the blogosphere, evolved with the development of blogs throughout the 1990s. Early blogger and creator of the popular blog Camworld49, Cameron Barrett, suggested an early definition of weblogs when he was questioning whether his own website should be considered a weblog or a microportal, "It's got all the aspects associated with weblogs. It's updated regularly [daily]. It's got a nice, clean easy-to-use design and user interface. It does not patronize the end user, dumbing things down too much. It has a theme [Random Thoughts + Web Design + New Media]. It has a way for the users to interact with each other [a mailing list]. It even has somewhat of a community, maintained by repeat visitors and list members who contribute many of the links often found in Camworld," (1999). This definition was updated later in 2000, after the introduction of tools like Bloggers, to include its function as a platform for commentary. Blood (2000) then defined a blog as a "website that is updated frequently, with new material posted at the top of the page." The academic world mostly defines a blog similarly as a website with frequently updated posts in reverse chronological order.

Early blogger David Winer (2003) believes a blog is primarily the unedited voice of a person and represents an amalgam of many voices. This definition is primarily interesting to this study because Winer stressed on the fact that nobody can edit his voice on his blog, which is the key feature that makes out a blog. This component of a blog gave it an edge over other

platforms where people express opinions, such as news columns or readers'
columns. This key feature, relative freedom of expression, may be hindered if
blogs become subjected to advertorial or editorial pressures.

Bloggers are significantly different than journalists although they might
bear similar characteristics. Graves argues that while blogging and journalism
are different from one another and cannot replace each other, they do not exist
in mutually exclusive spheres and are now complementing one another (2007).
He argues that blogs serve as raw materials for the media to build their stories
on in crisis coverage and news and political bloggers build their writings on the
media's coverage of events in daily news (2007). He adds that news-related
blogs provide a forum for opinions as well as an open, collaborative "version
of the detailed, factual analysis that normally takes place in closed editorial
meetings," (2007). Although bloggers may be citizen journalists, they go
beyond citizen journalism in that they not only consistently report on certain
events, but they also often write their opinions. As Dean argues, they also do
not abide by the same editorial and journalistic guidelines journalists are
expected to abide by (2010) and so do not have to provide unbiased, balanced
and well-rounded reporting. Rettberg adds that unlike journalists, bloggers are
also responsible for how the article is laid out and the aesthetic side of
publishing (2008). They also do not answer to editors or the same financial
pressures mainstream media is subjected to. Most bloggers are both, bloggers
and social media makers, but not all social media makers are bloggers.
Bloggers now are often active on social media and are of the most prominent
players on platforms like Facebook and Twitter. But social media makers, or
micro-bloggers, do not necessarily have blogs. The difference between

discourse on social media platforms, blogs and mainstream media is further discussed in chapter 7.

2.1.2. The Death of the Blogosphere?

More recent work on blogs has included debating whether blogs are a dying publishing platform that was replaced by others like social media.

As early as 2010, Lenarcic and Sarkar have predicted a trend in the blogosphere they called "Tragedy of the Virtual Commons," which is "analogous to that of the flood of information associated with the spam problem," that is created due to inactive blogs that remain in the virtual sphere (2010, p. 144), taking up unnecessary space and opportunity from more active blogs. "The paradox of choice afforded by the unchecked generation of blogs could lead to a situation where readers are faced with a myriad of information sources, with varying degrees of activity levels, but without the personal time to assess the authenticity in a selection," (*ibid*, p. 144). In December 2014, Neiman Lab predicted the death of bogs when veteran blogger Jason Kottke wrote an article in their *Predictions for Journalism 2014* series arguing that "The function of the blog, the nebulous informational task we all agreed the blog was fulfilling for the past decade, is increasingly being handheld by a growing number of disparate media forms that are blog-like but also decidedly not blogs." He goes on to argue that people are now Tweeting and posting on Facebook and other social media platforms instead of blogging. "Blogs are for 40-somethings with kids," (Kottke, 2013). Similarly, Gangadharbatla et al's study on 5000 university students in the US indicate that they rely primarily on social media to get the news, but still find mainstream media more credible (2014).

But this view is not necessarily shared with all the bloggers or media scholars, however. Dean argues that although as early as 2010 there were "ghost blogs," inactive blogs floating about the cyberspace, as well as corporate blogs, blogs sponsored and created by brands to hire bloggers to promote their products, blogs were still well and alive and social networks traversed, extended and included blogs rather than replaced them, (2010). Leading blogger Andrew Sullivan also argued that blogs are not dead but that have rather evolved (2013).

2.1.3. The public discourse in Egypt's authoritarian setting

The importance of blogs and micro-blogs in news coverage and opinion making has been growing post-January 25th. In fact, research (Semetko and Krasnoboka, 2003, cited in Papacharissi, 2008) has shown that access to alternative online media and blogs becomes more important to get information that is not covered in mainstream media in countries undergoing political change, such as Russia and Ukraine where virtual newspapers are more popular than online versions of physical newspapers. McChesney predicted this change as he speculated in 1995 that the broadcasters and newspaper chains that were market leaders for generations will not necessarily rule the digital age.

Media scholars have argued the importance of political blogs in the democratic process in general, but more importantly, in authoritarian regimes. Mohammed El-Nawawy and Sahar Khamis argue that political blogs can vitalize some of the crucial functions of civil society, including checking and limiting the state influence and widely disseminating information and empowering citizens, which can then pave the way for democratic reform in

Egypt (2011, p.50 and 2011, p.250). In a later research by the same authors where they study posts from five prominent Egyptian blogs posted between 2009 and September 2011, they conclude that the posts indicate that cyber-activism aids in the process of mobilization of the public both online and on the ground, and that blogs provide platforms to document and raise awareness against violations of human rights locally and globally (2014). They also conclude that blogs allow for "electronic debate and virtual democracy" through engaging in fruitful discussions (2014). Similarly, Elizabeth Iskander argues, "In an autocratic and stagnant political system such as Egypt where politics is exclusive and traditional media have limited freedom of speech, there is a severe democratic deficit. The result is that the majority must choose to remain passive […] or it must create parallel spaces for participation," (2011, p.1226).

Under an authoritarian regime, the media had been under the grip of the government, which loosens or tightens according to the era, since the reign of the Free Officers in 1952. Under Mubarak's regime the media had been given superficial freedom in the past decade; so while they could speak of previously taboo issues, other issues like criticizing the president or his sons had to be avoided. Other public spaces were also kept under the government's close watch, including the blogosphere where many bloggers were subjected to prosecution by the state. The blogosphere had not been subjected to the same pressures as the offline sphere, however, despite several crackdown on certain bloggers. The internet became an alternative platform for dissidence, with much more markings of a Habermasian public sphere that operates free of state and economy than the offline world. The blogosphere had been somehow

devoid of commercialization as well as state's grip due to it being largely off the mainstream radar, allowing it the opportunity to become more plural and vibrant than the offline public space. Robert Springborg argued in 2009 that hybrid political regimes deemed the word "meaningless and politically irrelevant," (p.15) even though they might be the key to change in Egypt, and so allowed it so long as it was separate from action. He argued that the state wasn't paying attention to the blogosphere but started cracking down on it once "the most directly political counter-culture has emerged" on it, blurring the line between the word and action, (p.17). The question of the plurality the blogosphere presents to the Egyptians is hence an important one, given the state of the media and the state's dominance over other public domains. Plurality here is not studied in terms of the political theories of pluralism or media theories of ownership, but rather in Mouffe's sense of a plural public sphere with diverse voices.

2.1.4. The Egyptian blogosphere

Emergence

Although there were mail groups and weblogs in Egypt in 1999, Radsch (2008, p.4-7) explains that blogging, in its current form, started in Egypt in 2003 but it was not until 2005 that activists started exploiting its potential, eventually growing wider and more fragmented in 2006 as users' base grew.

Taki (2010, p.117-123) traces back the emergence of a strong Egyptian blogosphere to 2004 when the Kefaya (Enough) movement, which called for an end to the presidency of Hosni Mubarak, established cyberspace platforms for opposition voices.

Blogs, which remained underground in Egypt and were only followed by a certain segment of society until the January 25th events, were largely in English (as there had not been blog hosts that supported Arabic language until 2007) and spoke to the educated few who had internet access, and knew about blogs. It was not until January 25 that bloggers were mainstreamed, and that the blogosphere ceased to be underground and the bloggers became active journalists quoted in the mainstream newspapers and channels.

Theoretical Work on Egyptian and Arab Blogosphere

Although the body of theoretical literature in the field of Arab bloggers is thin, there had been scholarly research on the subject of mainly political bloggers, including Maha Taki (2010), Courtney Radsch (2007 and 2008), Ghazal Saif (2013), Ali Mohamed (2011) and Mark Lynch (2006 and 2007). Most theorists studying the Egyptian blogosphere focus on political blogs. Albrecht Hofheinz argues, however, that although "the politically active bloggers have gained more political attention and weight than in many other Arab countries," there are other non-politically active bloggers the body of literature and research on Egyptian bloggers failed to look at (2011, p.1423). Shehta (2008) estimates political bloggers to constitute only 20% of blogs in Egypt (cited in Saif, 2013).

In studying bloggers, one cannot bundle them all into one bundle. We need to differentiate between different types of bloggers in any study of blogs and look more specifically at the map of the Arab blogosphere to accurately study revenue streams available and backgrounds. Some scholars have referred to blogs that discuss current events as political blogs (Wallsten, 2005) or news-related blogs (Graves, 2007). Herring et al (2005) and Adamic and Glance

(2005) divide blogs into A-list blogs, which are the popular and publicized blogs, interconnected blogs and then the sparsely socially connected and less conversational blogs. More specific to Egypt, Etling et al (2010) map the Egyptian blogosphere into several categories; April 6th movement bloggers, Muslim Brotherhood bloggers, professional journalists, online activists, politically oriented bloggers, citizen journalists, religiously oriented bloggers and a small segment of personal blogs. Similarly, Radsch (2008, p.7) explains that after 2006, the Egyptian blogosphere was fragmented into citizen journalists, non-denominational activists, leftists, Muslim Brotherhood, Islamists, culture and art enthusiasts, open source technology activists, English language political commentary and personal activists. Lynch divides bloggers into activists, bridge-bloggers and public sphere bloggers (2007, p.10-21). He defines activist bloggers as bloggers who are engaged in a certain political movement offline and use the blogs for that purpose, like the Muslim Brotherhood bloggers. Bridge-bloggers are those who blog in English and serve as a bridge with the Western audience and media. Public-sphere bloggers are bloggers who do not participate in certain political parties or movements but are actively engaged in discussing domestic issues.

Bloggers are often a mixture of those categories. The intertwining nature of bloggers in Egypt posed several issues concerning the accurate term this research should adopt to describe the bloggers this research is interested in. Those bloggers I study are politically engaged but they are not affiliated with a certain political party, and accordingly are not necessarily online activists. Even though they do take videos and material from the field and post it onto their blogs, they do not fit the definition of citizen journalists as they do more

than reporting what they have witnessed. They comment on news and write editorials, and they post their material on their own websites, as opposed to other media channels. They are also not adhering to journalism teachings, such as fact-checking or unbiased reporting, and so cannot be described as freelance journalists. They are a cross between activists, bridge bloggers and public sphere bloggers and often cross back and forth between one or two categories. For instance, they might blog in both Arabic and English or they might be public sphere bloggers who were not engaged in political movements but started participating in them after the uprising. But for the purpose of this research, the bloggers that will be studied will be termed political bloggers to address their interest without failing to identify them for who they are; bloggers engaged in political discourse but not primarily activists from certain political groups.

2.2. *Public Sphere and the Blogosphere*

2.2.1. *Public Sphere and Habermas*

In his influential work, Jurgen Habermas discussed the emergence of the public sphere in 18th century Europe. He argued that the coming of the capitalist economy gave way to the public sphere. The representational culture was replaced by a public sphere culture that was facilitated by newspapers and clubs. He defined the public sphere as "a realm of our social life, in which something approaching public opinion can be formed" (Habermas, 1989, p.103). The public sphere, according to Habermas, is outside the control of the state, and is not subjected to single voices, but rather a liberal exchange of views that facilitates rational discourse of public affairs towards the common good and operates autonomously from the state and the economy. To achieve a

true public sphere, Habermas argued, discourse has to be conducive to public accord and decision-making and facilitates uninhibited and diverse discussion of public affairs in an inclusive public sphere that disregards status of individuals (Habermas, 1989). Habermas described a bourgeois public sphere to which the entry requirements included education and property ownership. This particular condition has often been criticized, however. According to scholars like Mouffe (2000), these conditions limit the inclusivity and plurality of voices in the public sphere.

The Habermasian view of what constitutes a public sphere has been the subject of study of many researchers. Habermas' views of the public sphere have been criticized and accused of being highly romantic, overestimating civic engagement in societies and putting unattainable conditions for a public sphere to be achieved as Lyotard (1984, cited in Papacharissi 2008) and many others argue. Many also believe Habermas overemphasized the necessity of rational accord in achieving a democratic public sphere, Lyotard (1984, cited in Papacharissi 2008) argues that on the contrary, it is individuality and disagreement that would lead to genuine democracies. Similarly, Mouffe (2000) argues in favor of a plurality to achieve a true democracy. She argues for the inclusion of minority groups, women and the propertied and non-propertied alike. She emphasizes the role the internet plays in promoting political expression and fierce arguments amongst different and diversified opinions. Fraser (1992) has also criticized Habermas' model of the public sphere, which historically excluded women and non-propertied classes. She proposes a post-industrial model of counterpublics that form through their exclusion from the public sphere. She proposes multiple public spheres that are

not equally powerful, articulated or privileged as the dominant sphere of debate but exist to give voice to those excluded (Fraser, 1992, p.109-142). Much like Fraser, Geoff Eley proposes multiple public spheres that are more inclusive than a single one, and contends that these counterpublics are not always necessarily virtuous (Eley, 1992, p.289-339). "Some of them, alas, are explicitly antidemocratic and antiegalitarian, and even those with democratic and egalitarian intentions are not always above practicing their own modes of informal exclusion and marginalization," (Fraser, 1992, p.124).

It is crucial to remember, however, that even though Habermas does not develop a post-bourgeois model of the public sphere, as Fraser (1992, p.58) points out, his theory could not be taken out of the context it was written in; a study of the development of the bourgeois public sphere during a specific period. One cannot hope to replicate this bourgeois public sphere in modern society without critically analyzing what constitutes the public sphere now. Habermas himself contends that even though he had argued in 1989 that inclusion of non-propertied men led to the degeneration of the quality of discourse, we cannot achieve democracy today through going back to an elitist public sphere (Calhoun, 1992, p.3).

Ferjani argues that we cannot reduce the public sphere to that Habermas described over 40 years ago, a theory he acknowledged in 1992 had several flaws in, including the notion that there could exist a public sphere under an authoritarian regime like those in the Arab world (Ferjani, 2010, p.95). This is why it is important to adapt Habermas' theory, not only to the context of Egypt's authoritarian setting, but also to account for the changes in media and technology that the blogosphere and social media brought about since their

emergence.

2.2.2. *Adapting modified theories of the public sphere to the online sphere*

Habermas describes a space independent of authority and commercial interests where the participants could oppose society and social norms. Scholars drew parallels between Habermas' definition of what constitutes a public sphere and the blogosphere and social media. But the notion of a possible alternative public sphere, or a medium adding to the plurality of a public space, becomes more important in an authoritarian setting like Egypt. For instance, whereas the mainstream media failed to discuss issues like police brutality and sexual harassment, bloggers, journalists and activists found a platform for opposition in the blogosphere.

Calhoun (1992, p.9) explains that, based on Habermas, "A certain educated elite came to think of itself as constituting the public […]. The members of this elite public began to see themselves through this category not just as the object of state actions but as the opponent of public authority." This view of the formation of a public sphere can be adapted to the blogosphere where a certain educated class broke from the mainstream to discuss issues of common interest and oppose the state in ways that media did not. They then collaborated to move the masses.

The three key elements of the Habermasian public sphere this study is concerned with and those most prone to change post January 25th are: Its inclusivity, its disregard of status and its operating independently of the state and the economy. As some bloggers become more involved in mainstream media and as they start getting invited to cooperate with the private sector, their independence of the economy and the state starts getting affected. The

"disregard to status" factor was provided by the relative anonymity the internet gives bloggers, which made their content alone matter, without regard to the identity behind it. But post-January 25th, star bloggers gained prominence and their identities and growing status came to be known to more of the general public. The favorable media coverage gave prominent bloggers' content more credibility, and their status more weight, which then caused their followership to grow, as opposed to other less-prominent bloggers. This, accompanied by whether those prominent bloggers are of certain elite status who can afford the time and cost of blogging and have access to smart phones and fast connections, possibly hinders the disregard to status factor. As bloggers' fame develops due to mainstream media shedding light on them, the inclusivity of the blogosphere is prone to dwindling down as star bloggers gain more and more followership. Therefore, a relatively small number of prominent bloggers enjoying a growing visibility and means to generate revenue, as an increasingly large number of less-prominent bloggers are faced with limited visibility and resources. Much like cultural salons in the past, the virtual public sphere might become dominated by people who possess means of communication online and become inclusive in principle but not in practice

In addition, Mouffe's theory of plurality is also key to this research, when looking at the concept of a plural public sphere and how it's affected by the change in bloggers' relation with other elements of the historical bloc. This will also be guided by Fraser's theory of counterpublics to look at changes in the virtual public space — a counterpublic in itself forming as a result of the bloggers' exclusion and marginalization from the mainstream public space. As the counterpublic intertwines with the exclusive public sphere through

collaborations with mainstream media or the private sector and joins the historical bloc, it is important to assess how this affects the element of plurality and inclusion of different societal strata and backgrounds of bloggers. This means assessing whether the blogosphere may be becoming an exclusive counterpublic for elitist voices, rather than a pluralistic sphere of its own.

2.2.3. *Utopian views of the internet and blogs*

A significant body of literature appeared arguing the merits of the internet in general, and blogosphere in specific in creating a plural, inclusive space for debates. Since the Iranian protests in 2009, dubbed the Twitter Revolution, several scholars have been interested in the merits of cyberactivism, with influential books such as *Blogistan: The Internet and Politics in Iran* (2010) discussing how blogs provide a space for the oppressed where equal opportunity is given to even the marginalized segments of society, like women in Iran, to express themselves. The theoretical body available on social media and blogospheres' effects on mainstream media, democracy and society has been predominantly divided into utopian and dystopian camps similar to those studying the effects of the internet at large.

Utopian theories especially arose with the development of the internet in the 1990s, although less romantic views of the internet began developing later on. Beacham (1995) argues that the internet represents the real information revolution that sets mass media free from governmental and corporate constraints, (cited in McChesney, 1995). Jones (1997), Grossman (1995) and Rash (1997) share similar views of the internet being a place for anyone, even the lesser known individuals, to express their opinions and influence the public opinion (cited in Papacharissi, 2004). Designer of Lotus software Mitchell

Kapor and the co-founder of Electronic Frontier Foundation, an NGO to develop policies to protect democracy and civil liberties on the internet, commented on the information superhighway in an interview saying, "Instead of a small number of groups having privileged positions as speakers-broadcast networks and powerful newspapers-we are entering an era of communication of the many to the many […] the nature of the technology itself has opened up a space of much greater democratic possibility," (1994).

We can assume similar utopian views of the blogospheres in the past few years, especially with the Arab Spring, to those associated with the birth of the internet in the 1990s. Coleman believes that blogs' ability to transform media consumers into media producers gives them democratizing potentials (2005). In his study of the "new Arab public," Marc Lynch (2006) explains that the recent emergence of a vibrant media scene in the Arab world has led to a new public sphere that is not made by the media in and of itself, but by arguments entertained on the media in an increasingly open, participatory and interactive media context. Saif's research findings (2013) on Egyptian bloggers concluded that they presented counterhegemonic elements that discussed issues that are considered taboo in the mainstream media, like the military and Islam, and defended human rights and freedom of expression.

2.2.4. Dystopian views of the internet and blogs

As some argue the utopian possibilities the internet has to achieve democracy, others stand on the total opposite of that view, with much more skeptical views of the internet and its possible divides and commercialization.

Morozov argues that "The idea that the internet favors the oppressed rather than the oppressor is marred by what I call cyber-utopianism: a naïve

belief in the emancipatory nature of online community that rests on a stubborn refusal to acknowledge its downside," (2011, p.xiii). Additionally, some scholars are wary of the bloggers' tendency to "regress to self-confessional posts that resemble diaries, with few exceptions that engage in journalistically informed punditry," (Papacharissi, 2008, p.237). Scholars like Papacharissi argue that while bloggers may occasionally influence mainstream media and public opinion, even news-oriented A-list bloggers are mostly subjective and narcissistically motivated and need to be differentiated from journalism. "On blogs, the expression of public opinion on private forums (or the expression of private opinion on a public forum)…becomes a carefully orchestrated performance with the Other in mind," (Papacharissi, 2008, p.238). Similarly, Boyd (2006) argues that bloggers write in relation to a conceptualized audience of like-minded strangers and Lenhart argues that they are apprehensive of their audience (2006, cited in Brake 2012). On the other hand, Brake (2012) interviewed 23 bloggers and concluded that bloggers are mostly unaware of who their audience and argues against theorists like Papacharissi (2008) and Boyd (2006) and Lenhart (2006, cited in Brake 2012).

Habermas believes that in the public sphere's liberal model, the mass media have a critical role in informing and directing public opinion. On the other hand, many media scholars, including Habermas, Putnam (1996) and Hart (1994) believe that the media have the potential to feed readers large amounts of political information that create an illusion of civic engagement in the readers when in fact it promotes rather passive involvement in the political and civic scene. Similar issues that Hart and Putnam raise can be viewed in the blogosphere, hence raising the question of whether it is truly a medium for

discussing public affairs or if it is rather a one-way conversation from elite bloggers to readers. Readers might be receiving the information and not contributing to the discussion themselves, hence getting a false sense of civic engagement. Hart's argument means that the blogosphere and social media may be rendering people more politically inactive than they believe; they might like a photo on Facebook or re-tweet something on Twitter and get a false sense of political participation, failing to actually engage in deeper discussion or offline activity.

This false sense of civic engagement and detachment from the ground had been noticed in both constitutional amendment referendum that took place in Egypt in 2011 and the two constitutional referendums of 2012 and 2014. After the referendum of 2012, it was clear that not all blogosphere activity leads to actual action on the ground. As the blogosphere buzzed with objection against the constitutional referendum of 2011, the blogosphere was shocked with unfavorable results in both events, making several bloggers report feeling disengaged from the general public. In her research on social media activism in Egypt, Elizabeth Iskander comments on the results of the first referendum saying, "The views and discourses that dominate Egyptian Facebook spaces do not necessarily represent the political voice of the majority of Egyptians," (2011, p.1235). This does not only signify a possible eliteness of the presumed online public sphere, it also resonates with Hart's theory. McChesney (1995) explains that virtually all theories of political democracy suggest that a concentration of media and communication in a handful of mostly unaccountable interests is a dangerous situation.

Lynch warns against the possible pitfalls of the online public sphere he speaks of. He argues that even though the rise of satellite channels and the internet in the Arab world gave way to a public sphere away from authoritarian regimes' control, it is still rife with paradoxes. "Its politics of identity could all too easily slide into a tyranny from below, excommunicating those who disagree and demonizing outsides to enforce internal unity," (2006: 3-4).

In Mohamed El-Naway and Sahar Khamis' analysis of two prominent Egyptian bloggers, Nawara Negm and Wael Abbas, the two scholars have concluded that while there was a genuine Habermasian public sphere reflected in some of the threads of the two blogs, "there was a general lack of rational critical debates, reciprocal deliberations, and communicative action as envisioned by Habermas," (2011, p.234). Similarly, Ali Sayed Mohamed concludes that the very language used in blogs undermines the possibility of achieving the rational-critical discourse necessary to achieve the Habermasian public sphere (2010).

But even those who criticize aspects of the blogosphere in the Arab world, do concede that it represents a space for dissidents and an outlet for opposition that did not exist before, hence, serving a great role in the public discourse in Egypt. Even though in their study, El-Nawawy and Khamis found the blogosphere to fall short of a Habermasian public sphere, they conclude that the bloggers are "effectively contributing to widening the base of popular participation in Egyptian political life through encouraging a more active and dynamic civil society, as well as bringing to life the concept of citizen journalism […] in every case, what is evident here is an attempt to move beyond official, governmental authority and mainstream media in an effort to

broaden and (re)envision the existing public sphere(s)," (2011, p.248).
Similarly, Mohamed concludes that despite the quality of discourse, the
internet has created a different type of public sphere that facilitates a dialogue
about democracy. (2010)

Researchers such as Malina (1999), Papacharissi (2008 and 2002) and
Sassi (2000) lay out three aspects of online communication that they believe
directly affect social and political benefits that can be generated from online
media. Those aspects "are *access* to information, *reciprocity* of information,
and *commercialization* of online space," (Papacharissi, 2008).
Commercialization of the internet is discussed in section 2.5.2 on
institutionalizing blogs.

Access

The second widely discussed element in the limitations the internet has in
democratization is access. In 2008, Papacharissi argued that dystopian rhetoric
conversely cautions against enthusiasm regarding the democratizing potential
of medium that was then operating on a 17% global penetration rate (p. 231).
Although this rate increased to 40% in 2015, it's important to remember that
this number can be misleading as it is skewed by higher penetration rates in
more developed countries. Similarly, McChesney has set qualifications that
need to be fulfilled for the internet to provide a boon for democracy; universal
access and computer literacy, and quality journalism (1995). In fact, Dean
choses the term "blogipelago" over blogosphere because she argues that sphere
"suggests a space accessible to any and all," (2010). Those elements are
especially relevant in Egypt where access to internet is only available to 43%

of the population, according to official statistics. The divides in the offline public space may as well be reproduced online, and elites might dominate the online discourse as they do offline, albeit the nature of online and offline elites may differ. Papacharissi argues that the internet reproduces class, gender and race inequalities that are similar to those in the offline public sphere (2008, p.234). Beer, similarly, studies the power play online and how class divisions and power elites offline are recreated online (2009).

Reciprocity

Scholars have also noted that even though there is diversity in views online, it does not ensure communication between those diverse views. The diversity may also lead to fragmented spheres where similar-minded bloggers, and users in general, cluster together to form fragmented sub-spheres in the online sphere that do not interconnect or communicate amongst one another. Similarly, Papacharissi argues that despite the anonymity given online, "special interest groups attract users who want to focus the discussion on certain topics […] as the virtual mass becomes subdivided into smaller and smaller discussion groups, the ideal of a public sphere that connects many people online eludes us," (2002, p.17). Coleman (2004) poses similar views, contending that the phenomenon of social herding, where people cluster around sources of information and channel of communication supporting their own values and prejudices, leads to polarization of the blogosphere. This also means that one is likely to follow Tweeps or bloggers with similar views, who express subjective views that resonate with those of their followers, hence, constantly getting only a singular voice. A study has shown that blogs are interconnected by bloggers' interests (Kumar et al., 2004) and similarly, another showed that political blogs

of similar interest proved most heavily linked with one another, (Adamic and Glance, 2005). Professional bloggers Duane Forrester and Gavil Powell (2008) argue one of the main tips to become successful is to link to other blogs, indicating the importance of a tight network in the blogosphere. This was especially relevant when studying the most prominent bloggers hosted by the media and analyzing their backgrounds and connections with one another to assess whether they only communicate with like-minded popular bloggers in mutually exclusive, fragmented online sphere. It was also relevant in studying whether those star bloggers are getting more and more popular due to the unified network they share which makes them link to one another and so become more prominent on search engines whereas other less prominent bloggers do not enjoy the same advantage.

2.3. <u>Hegemony and Manufacturing Consent</u>

2.3.1. Hegemony

Antonio Gramsci's views on hegemony and social order are useful in assessing how social orders, consensus and coercion continue to factor into relationship dynamics of business and media with political bloggers; and thus what this implies for the nature of those bloggers.

Stuart Hall explains in *Mass Communication and Society* that hegemony exists when a ruling class or alliance of class fractions, 'historical bloc,' is able not only to coerce a subordinate class to conform to its interests, but exerts a 'total social authority' over those classes and the social formation as a whole," (1977, p.332). Gramsci believes hegemony and consent need to be renewed and cannot be assumed or guaranteed as failure to renew it would cause elements of the historical bloc to peel off (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci argued

capitalist states relied on political and civil societies that the hegemon, or ruling class, uses to keep control over the public and maintain the status quo. Political society, as seen by Gramsci, is not only the government, but also the army, police and legislative and constitutional arms. Civil society on the other hand includes the private sphere (one's own family, for instance), as well as cultural institutions, educational and religious establishments, trade unions and the media. Because political society's coercion to achieve and reproduce hegemony is not enough, Gramsci argues that civil society rule is needed to achieve consent through propagating the ruling class ideology (1971, p.145). Together, political and social societies form what Gramsci calls the historical bloc. The hegemon aims to influence classes to adopt dominating classes' values and ideas and to assert that the status quo is normal, favourable for the majority and not just the ruling class and unchallengeable. This takes place under authoritarian and democratic states alike. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) have developed the concept of hegemony as introduced by Gramsci to include struggles beyond the obvious class struggles, including those of gender relationships, for instance. In Egypt, hegemony was often achieved through coercion although under late president Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime it was achieved partially through coercion and partially through consent over the ideologies of socialism, pan-Arabism and the common struggle against occupation.

In reproducing social order, alliances change to incorporate what might have previously looked like counter hegemonic elements. This reproduction of the submission to the ruling ideology requires the collaboration of cultural institutions, including the church, or in Egypt's case, religion, and the mass

media, the political apparatuses and overall management of the state, (Hall, 1977). Ayubi argues that no Arab regime had achieved a specific publicly announced political and economic ideology for people to gather around and constantly shifted from one policy to another; what Gramsci calls political nomadism (2001, p.3-5). This then, Ayubi argues, led to the existence of a déclassé segment of the society, a marginalized one, which is arguably how bloggers can be seen. Bloggers can be seen as déclassé, counterhegemonic elements that might be joining the historical bloc through consensus, not coercion. This shift from underground and private social networks accounts to mainstream media platforms is not specific to Egypt alone. In fact, Thurman and Rodgers conclude in their research that mainstream media key players like the *New York Times* and the *Guardian* have used live blogs to cover crises and get the most eye witness accounts, often depending on individuals' social media accounts to build up their stories (2014). But it's one that potentially goes against some of the original foundations of the blogosphere. Park's research on four A-list bloggers in the U.S. concludes that "bloggers assert authority largely through opposing themselves to journalism. They are authorized, they seem to say, precisely because they are *not* journalists, and this independence is played off as if it makes them closer to the authentic needs of the audience…These bloggers highlight their own anti-professionalism, at least in part because it allows them to venture into discussions of any topic and claim a commonality with their audience," (p.267). Although his study was conducted on only four cases in the U.S., it resonates with what sets Egyptian bloggers apart; they were not journalists and they provided material and covered issues the media never has, often questioning the integrity and

credibility of mainstream media.

Gramsci argues that class struggle never disappears but is kept at bay by the ruling bloc making concessions required to win consent and legitimacy. For Gramsci, this is often manifested in how particular interests are presented as general interest in which all classes have an equal stake, (Hall, 1977, p.334). In the Egyptian context, this can be seen in prioritizing democracy as a general interest over issues of poverty, for instance.

Fraser debates whether the bourgeois public sphere shifted political power from a repressive mode of domination to a hegemonic one, rather than opening up the political realm to the general public. Similarities can be drawn between the blogospheres and the proletariat spheres, although blogs are different in nature and content due to the education and culture of bloggers as compared to the proletariat. We can then pose the question of whether, like proletariat spheres, the blogosphere is being subjected to a process of coercion or consensus into the historical bloc, becoming an exclusive bourgeois public sphere on its own.

In fact, Mohamed's findings suggest that bloggers do try to promote themselves outside the realm of online and in the mainstream realm (2010, p.260), suggesting possible willingness to join the historical bloc by consent. He points out Hossam El Hamalawy's blog which had a section for his interviews on mainstream media, suggesting bloggers also care about their popularity and penetration both online and offline. He goes further to explain that his research suggests that bloggers might move to larger media organizations online when they start feeling their impact on the ground is real (2010, p.163).

To understand the new public sphere post January 25th, we need to look at the implications of the shift of political bloggers, previously counterhegemonic elements, from the margins and to the mainstream and historical bloc on their independence and content. It's also relevant to see whether those bloggers joining the historical bloc are only star bloggers with intellectual or financial elite backgrounds, leaving out other non-star bloggers in the counterhegemonic bloc. It is also insightful to see the implications of how the ideologies of bloggers influence the element of the historical bloc they decide to join. This is manifested in rightist bloggers joining the capitalist elements of the bloc, for instance.

2.3.2. Manufacturing Consent

Herman and Chomsky's theory of manufactured consent (1988) suggests that mass media often, willingly, act as propaganda agents for state ideologies without the state having to coerce them to. Self-censorship in favour of the state is often a result of market dynamics and media economics and availability of sources. Officials provide access to information for media outlets that are more favourable in their coverage of state policy, and so opposing media is left with little access to official information, news and sources. This in turn affects their readership and so ultimately their advertising revenue. Herman and Chomsky argue that the private sector, whose interests often intertwine with that of the state, also shies away from advertising with media outlets that are strongly opposing state and corporate policies.

This government and financial pressure then forces the mass media outlets to refrain from harsh state or corporate criticism to stay in business, without the state having to coerce them into favourable coverage.

In the Egyptian context, the media is often under both, state and self-censorship. The state can sue and imprison journalists for what they write under umbrellas such as religion disdain and others. This means the media is often careful to what they write, but it is also because of media ownership in Egypt. Most of the popular newspapers and channels are owned by businessmen whose interests coincide with those of the state. Therefore, there is always the editorial struggle to have enough freedom to gain readers' trust without affecting the financial interests of their shareholders through harsh attacks on the state or the private sector's biggest players. So censorship comes in the form of state-imposed, self-censorship in fear of one's security as well as censorship imposed by shareholders and owners who want to maximize advertisement revenues as well as ensure being on the favourable side of the regime.

Chomsky and Herman then argue that given such pressures, mass media have filters through which they decide what to include or exclude from the news agenda. These filters normally answer to the interests of not only the media elite, but the society's power elite as well, which is normally involved in one way or another with the media elite. This is manifested in media ownership in the Egyptian context where businessmen and political players, or power elite, like Sayed Badawy and Naguib Sawiris own two of the most popular satellite channels; *Hayah* and *ONTV* and therefore intertwining with the media elite. Chomsky and Herman argue that coverage of mass media undergo five filters that often bias their reporting. Those filters are the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms, the advertising as a primary source of income, the reliance on

information provided by the government, business, and experts, flak as means of disciplining the media and finally anti-communism as a national religion and control mechanism, (1988, p.2). The last element, anti-communism, has since been revised to fit any popular ideology that serves as a scarecrow to fight. This element can now be seen as political Islam in the post-January 25th Egyptian context.

The ownership of mass media firms is at strong play in Egypt because there are not many media platforms that are independently funded as discussed in chapter 4. The model of popular public service broadcaster is weak in Egypt due to state television and newspapers losing credibility, especially after their biased reporting on the 2011 uprising. Therefore, the majority of popular media platforms in the country rely primarily on advertising for revenue. When it comes to bloggers in particular, however, the third filter "reliance on information provided by the government, business, and experts" does not directly apply because bloggers who join mainstream media are mostly opinion-writers and so do not need sources to write their columns, unlike traditional journalists or reporters. Flak is a strong element as well in the Egyptian context because journalists and bloggers have been known to be targeted for what they write. Throughout the last five years there have been many court cases against journalists and bloggers for articles or posts they wrote, some in front of military courts. Flak also came in the form of media-sponsored character assassinations to particular writers through channels and newspapers that are known to be supportive of the state. Finally, the fifth filter; anti-communism as a national religion and control mechanism, came into play strongly after the Muslim Brotherhood year in power. Public figures, including

writers, who oppose the state would easily be dubbed pro-Islamist or pro-political Islam as a way to restrict them from expressing anti-regime sentiments.

Herman and Chomsky's theory of manufactured consent helps guide this research when studying the implications of bloggers joining the historical bloc after being once independent from the pressures Herman and Chomsky lay out for mainstream and media elite. It will help determine whether bloggers are becoming media elite through joining mainstream and media elite platforms and so the implications of that on their content. If the bloggers are joining institutions that undergo those five filters, biasing their reporting, it is important to see the degree to which bloggers' content, both on those media platforms and on their own blogs, are affected by the same filters that are the result of the pressures mass media undergo.

2.3.3. Conceptualizing intellectuals

Gramsci views intellectuals as a key element in hegemony because of their ability to speak on behalf of, as well as influence, segments of the society. Bloggers holding influence over certain segments of society and moving from alternative spheres to the mainstream bears resonance of Gramsci's concept of intellectuals. But it is important to go beyond the concept of intellectuals that Gramsci draws for a bourgeois sphere. Here, I examine how Gramsci (1971), Julien Benda (1927) and Edward Said (1993) view the concept of intellectuals to develop a definition of intellectuals that is suitable for the context of this research.

Although Gramsci believes all men are intellectuals, he believes they do not all have that role in society and categorizes those who have that function

into traditional and organic intellectuals (1971, p.132–148). Traditional intellectuals, Gramsci argues, view themselves as separate from society while organic intellectuals are often affiliated with certain classes or enterprises that use them to gain more power and spread certain ideologies and influence. He views organic intellectuals as those arising naturally as thinking groups from every class and representing the interests of those particular classes. He argues that traditional intellectuals are often more concerned with conceptual and philosophical interests; the likes of priests and teachers. While traditional intellectuals' role in society is more or less stagnant in its function, organic intellectuals are more dynamic in nature and constantly looking to expand their roles.

Benda, on the other hand, has a more romantic view of intellectuals and sees them as a "tiny band of super-gifted and morally endowed philosopher-kinds who constitute the conscience of mankind. Real intellectuals constitute a clerisy, Benda says, 'those whose activity is essentially not the pursuit of practical aims, all those who seek their joy in the practice of an art or a science or a metaphysical speculation,'" (Said, 1993). Writing in the context of the First World War, Brenda views those intellectuals are often ready to risk their lives and suffer in defence of their morals, principles and the weak. In short, she views intellectuals as the heroes of their times who are detached of worldly interests and needs and willing to sacrifice for their cause.

But Benda fails to acknowledge intellectuals' own, personal needs and the pressures of modern society to develop his theory beyond the context of post-war romanticism. Said, on the other hand, takes a more realistic view of intellectuals that is closer to Gramsci's view, but still accounts for a degree of

romanticism and develops the definition to fit the 21st century. He argues that Gramsci's view of intellectuals is "much closer to the reality," in the late 20th century when "so many new professions – broadcasters, academics, computer analysts… and indeed the whole field of modern mass journalism itself- all these have vindicated Gramsci's vision," (1993). But Said sees intellectuals as having specific public roles in society that cannot be reduced to faceless professionals. An intellectual, to Said, is "an individual endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public, in public," (1993). To do so, Said argues, he has to raise uncomfortable questions that defy and confront orthodoxy and dogma, rather than be the person producing them, to advance human freedom and knowledge. This person, therefore, cannot be easily co-opted by governments or corporations. He argues that the significance of intellectuals are not in the arguments they pose only, but in who they are, their constant stands on various issues and their personal stakes and mannerisms. But Said tackles a question that is of crucial importance to this research; he poses the issue of intellectuals being distracted in their pursuit of advancing knowledge and critical thinking by modern society, and that includes the distraction that is the emergence of journalism, advertising and a sphere where "all ideas are marketable, all values transmutable, all professions reduced to the pursuit of easy money and quick success," (1993). He poses C. Wright Mills' argument that, in facing a sense of powerlessness at their marginality, intellectuals are often faced with the choice of joining the ranks of institutions, corporations or governments and become the hired agents of the information industry, thus hindering their independence. He concludes that the intellectual

needs not to be viewed in the idealist, romantic sense, but with steady realism and the energy to balance between the problem of his own selfhood and that of the demands of publishing and speaking in public.

This research adopts a modified amalgamation of Said and Gramsci's views on intellectuals. I do not intend to look at intellectuals as romantically as Benda does, but I also take on a more modern view of intellectual than Gramsci does. Intellectuals, in the context of this research, are not any individuals affiliated with institutions or organizations and able to influence the public in any context, because, as Said points out, this, in the context of today, can include marketing professionals who are able to influence consumers into buying goods, but this type is irrelevant to my research. The aspect of intellectuals in Gramsci's definition that is relevant to this research, however, is their categorization into organic and traditional intellectual to assess whether the shift in bloggers' status also meant a shift in between those categories, or whether they always existed as dynamic organic intellectuals who, as Said describes, had to balance between their own needs and the their independence as gifted speakers. The aspect of Said's definition that is of interest to the research is this very struggle between modern society's pressures and distractions and maintaining a sense of independence.

2.4. Theorizing Elites

Habermas describes a public sphere dominated by businessmen, literary people and an overall bourgeois stratum. It would be insightful to compare this to the composition of the blogosphere and adapt criticisms of the Habermasian public sphere's lack of inclusivity to the nature of the existent online public sphere. It is then important to see whether the hypothesis that political bloggers are part

of a power elite, or were born into one and thus possess advantages to become one themselves, holds true. If it does, the implications and consequences for the nature of blogging, their content and the plurality they present to the public space are important to look at.

This then implies looking at theories of elites and what defines power elites. We need to differentiate here between different types of elites among Egyptian bloggers. While there are bloggers who come from financial elites, others come from politically-powerful elites, intellectual and educational elites or a mixture of all of this. Alaa Abdel Fattah, for instance, comes from a family of prominent activists and academics, and so forms an intellectual and educational elite, while Sandmonkey comes from a financial and power elite, having a financially well-off family and a mother who was a member of the formerly ruling National Democratic Party.

2.4.1.Power elite

Karl Marx speaks of elites controlling opinion in his theory of political economy: "The class which has the means of material production has control at the same time over the means of mental production so that […] the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it […] Thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch," (Cited in Thussu, 2006, p.40). This implies that the financial elite holds control over personally forming public opinion or using intellectual elite to do so. In his book *The Power Elite* Mills defines elites as those who can by their decisions mightily affect the everyday worlds of men and women (1956, p.3-4). Steven Lukes argues that those who hold power believe they know what is best for others because people are not capable of truly knowing their true wants and preferences due to the system

influencing them into wanting certain things that are, in reality, not truly in their own interest (2005, p.38). In this radical view we can reflect on the current status of political bloggers, calling for democracy as opposed to minimum wages, for instance, which were workers' demands during the labour strikes in Egypt in 2007. We can then compare the expressed wants of different bloggers; prominent or less-prominent ones.

Mills (1956) claims that power elite runs in the same social circle and acts in each others' interests because it is ultimately common interests and thus achieving hegemony. He suggests that although those born into this ruling elite class do possess the tools and advantages to become a power elite of their own in the future, it is not an inherited condition. This means that unless they put those inherited tools and advantages to work to become a power elite, they would not naturally become one just because they were born in a power elite family.

How and whether certain political bloggers might be regarded as power elite is studied in light of Mills definition of elites, looking at their backgrounds to see whether they come from elite backgrounds. As Fraser points out, the notion of a common interest is a flawed one because what might be a priority for certain classes could be insignificant to others (1992). What the blogosphere, which is composed of certain strata, may see as common interest, the majority of the public might not necessarily prioritize. Therefore, power elite theories also guide the analysis of the blogs to see whether issues discussed on the more prominent blogs reflect more elitist interests as opposed to those discussed on less-prominent ones.

Research on the Egyptian blogosphere's possible eliteness needs to be

put into the Egyptian social, cultural, educational, political and financial context. The digital divide found in almost every country, is strongly present in Egypt, not only due to the high illiteracy rates, but also due to the economic situation and access to the internet. One needs to remember that this digital divide is also present between users of the internet, something that is especially peculiar to Egypt due to the spread of internet cafes where users who cannot afford access at home pay per time used. This means that while the internet penetration rates may be higher than official statistics, it also remains true that internet café users are limited in their usage by the money they have to spend on surfing the web. Their usage may also be guided by the social pressures present in using the internet in public, which might hinder the content users access in fear of either social pressures or legal prosecution as the internet cafes are known to fall under the eye of the state. This means, for instance, that while users may confidently check extremely anti-governmental blogs in the comfort of their homes, they may not be able to do so in a public area in fear of prosecution. Similarly, while they might be able to upload content, be it text or video, that is either culturally or politically sensitive from the privacy of their homes, they might fear doing so in internet cafes. The internet divide is also present between dial-up and ADSL users and it affects the way users use the internet. Wilson (2000) distinguishes between formal access that is physical availability to the internet, and effective access, that is affordable connectivity and diffusion of skills that people need to benefit from the technology, (cited in Taki, 2010, p.36). This is true for both users and content creators. Bloggers need to have the financial means to afford high-speed access to internet to be able to upload not only videos, but also texts and photos. Similarly, they need

smart phones to be able to take on-the-scene footage and Tweet or blog instantly, or report to others.

Jo Ann Oravec argues that a blog is a medium where "individuals can develop an individualized voice that will reflect facets of their personal style and idiosyncratic intellectual approaches," (Oravec, 2002, cited in Saif 2013, p.19). If blogs are manifestations of personal styles and beliefs, how much plurality do bloggers actually add to the public space if the most prominent ones dominating the blogosphere are of elite backgrounds?

2.4.2. Media Elite and the Blogosphere

To better understand the changing image, status and influence of bloggers, it is useful to compare the concept of media elite to the nature of bloggers post January 25th, as evident in this research's findings. Comparing the findings to the elements of what constitute media elite helps determine whether the political bloggers are becoming media elite and so limiting the plurality they add to the public sphere.

Media elite and agenda setting

Elite media are defined as "the agenda-setting media because they are the ones with the big resources, they set the framework in which everyone else operates," (Chomsky, 1997, p.1). Chomsky and Herman (1988, p.5) argue that the media's top tier, the elite media, sets the agenda for the two remaining tiers.

In *The Media Elite*, Robert Lichter, Stanley Rothman and Linda Lichter have conducted research on 238 journalists from leading American media organizations in 1980 to compare beliefs of journalists to those of the general public and how editorial team's beliefs biased their reporting. Their research suggests that the media elite in the US is largely very different from the general

public in their backgrounds, status and political orientations (Lichter et al, 1986). Through psychological tests, surveys and content analysis, they concluded that the media, especially elite media, had an overwhelmingly liberal agenda, which yielded biased reporting and an agenda that was rather different than the general public's. Although their research has been insightful in many ways, their conclusions were often criticized for generalizations, as well as the lack of a national random sample to which they can compare the findings from this study, something Rothman and Lichter admit themselves. "Unsophisticated attempts to 'objectify' the problem of media bias through the application of projective psychological tests are thus of necessarily limited value," (Teachout, 1987, p.346).

Regardless of the generalizability of *The Media Elite*, other researches on the blogosphere concluded similar findings signifying that bloggers might be becoming the new media elite. Taki found that bloggers in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, are mostly males who are well-educated with at least a master's degree (2005). Half of her respondents had also studied in Europe or America (*ibid*). This indicates that bloggers in those countries were born in a certain financial elite that allowed them to become media elite.

Studying bloggers in the US, Mathew Hindman (2008) concludes that bloggers are the new elite in the media world. Hindman concludes that while there are many voices on the internet, only a few of those voices are heard. He finds that the demographics of major political bloggers find an overwhelming emphasis on highly educated and Ivy-league lawyers and academics. He found that the political blogosphere was dominated by an elite class of mostly men without any significant representation of minorities.

In Egypt, one can argue that in the months following the 2011 uprising, online political bloggers have set the agenda for other media, which monitors blogs and social activists to break stories, relay opinions and report on current affairs. They also gained certain status similar to that of media elites. They are becoming similar to the cultural saloons that Habermas contended were places for any works of literature, music or art to gain legitimacy, given the status opinions formed at those saloons had. One could argue that the blogospheres are becoming spaces for providing legitimacy to works and products amongst a certain segment; a trait similar to that of elite media.

Elites trending, search engines and the polarization of the blogosphere

Hindman concludes that one of the main reasons a few voices get heard on the blogosphere is interlinking between popular bloggers, which leads to its domination by only a few star bloggers as well as its polarization as each segment is drawn to communicate with and follow those in their same circles or those whose beliefs fall in line with their own. This interlinking, according to theories of networks, results in popular bloggers getting more and more popular as the interlinking secures them higher spots on search engines. In the meantime, other less-popular bloggers struggle to appear on search engines and so their voices are rarely heard online (Hindman, 2008).

More specific to Egypt, David Faris had already noticed in 2008 that only star bloggers like Hossam El-Hamalawy, Wael Abbas and Nora Younis, are what he referred to as "pushers," or bloggers who can push stories into mainstream media. Faris explains that the Egyptian blogosphere is a scale-free network, which means, "most nodes will be relatively poorly connected, while a select minority of hubs will be very highly connected," (2010, p.28). This,

Faris argues, means that according to the science of networks, those well-connected nodes of the network, or prominent Egyptian bloggers, will become more and more connected and so get more popular and dominant. This gap not only continues post-January 25th, but is even prone to growing wider. Given the vast amount of information available online, users find themselves with an information overload. When users first start a Twitter account, for instance, they find themselves faced with hundreds of thousands of possibilities for people to follow. Naturally, they follow those they are familiar with their names, be it from the mainstream media that began hosting bloggers after January 25th, or through their friends' or Twitter's recommendations. Those recommendations are usually for Tweeps who have a large number of followers or were validated by their followers as a trusted source in a certain issue. This means that the divide between elite micro-bloggers and lesser-known ones could possibly be growing wider, eventually re-instating their status as online media elite. "Some bloggers are vastly more influential than others, continue to gain further influence, and make it harder for newer bloggers to crack the scene," (Faris, 2008, p.3). Those star bloggers and Tweeps' influence on individuals' opinions is amplified due to an "information cascades" effect, which is a situation where "it is optimal for an individual having observed the actions of others ahead of him, to follow the behavior of the preceding individual without regard to his own information," (Lotan et al 2011, p.1380). On Twitter, the authors add, this is manifested in the form of re-tweeting and reposting content. This is amplified by the trending topic feature on Twitter, which highlights content that is related and statistically outstanding on the system.

This is why it's important to study how links between blogs affect their prominence during the content analysis as a step to contribute towards determining whether star bloggers have become media elites, contributing to the limitation and polarization of the blogosphere.

Implications of being media elite in elite media outlets

This shift in status from underground to media elite in elite media outlets has many implications. Chomsky (1997) explains that elite media are institutionalized where there is a certain framework set for their employees and subsequently the mainstream, non-elite media, to abide by. The top media conglomerates also undergo the five news filters Chomsky and Herman laid out (1982). Thus the rules that apply to underground activists are very different than those that the elite media goes by, which makes it important to study this shift in status' implications in theory and in practice on the political bloggers.

2.5. Funding, Organizational theory and Institutionalization of Blogs / Blogs as a Business

Although certain blogs might be becoming elite media, most scholarly works ignore the financial aspect of blogging and seem to be predominately concerned with the new media's democratic potentials. Chomsky argues that elite media are subjected to the editorial pressures that come with advertisements more so than other media outlets (1997). Elite media's capability to influence the public and reach viewers makes them lucrative to advertisers. Internet also provides organizations the advantage of targeted marketing, of knowing who exactly their advertisements reached and getting statistics on how many people viewed their ads as well as data on where they are from and the language they use.

2.5.1. Costs of blogging

In his revision of the public sphere theory, Habermas (1992) speaks of the increasingly expensive media operating costs and higher barriers to entry, which have resulted in a changed public sphere that leads to growing rules and pressures. Unlike conventional media that incurs increasing costs of publishing or broadcasting and employing staff and overhead costs of large conglomerates, blogs, which are normally run by one or few people, incur very little overhead or operation costs. But blogging requires high-speed internet access, smart phones with internet plans and free time. Financial requirements of blogging are affordable to certain classes, but not all members of the lower and middle classes. Additionally, if blogging is conducted as a part-time hobby, bloggers can afford the time spent. But if it takes up more time than they can spend after working hours, then the question of making it a viable activity to avoid decreasing the frequency of posting starts to pose itself — unless they are of financial elite who can afford to carry on blogging without having a revenue generating job to support themselves. Calhoun argues, "A public sphere adequate to a democratic polity depends upon both quality of discourse and quantity of participation," (1992, p.2).

Golberg (2011) discusses the economic dynamic between internet users and networking services in new media scholarship which assumes transmission of data online is free or too cheap to matter or meter. He gives examples of scholars like Anderson (2009), Benkler (2006), Currah (2007), Kelly (2008) and Slater (2000) who assume data is a non-rivalrous resource in that "its consumption by one user does not preclude or inhibit its consumption by

others," (Golberg, 2011, p.746). Lowry (2009) explains that while scholars often ignore the profit angle of the virtual sphere, it remains true that the internet service providers are growing dissatisfied with unlimited access for flat fees, and are beginning to experiment with tiered pricing. Golberg argues that there is a conflict between the economic value produced for content providers as users consume content and the inadequate value produced for service providers when users consume data online (2011, p.747). He cites YouTube as an example of a content provider who spent $300 million on bandwidth in 2009, forcing them to look for revenue generation.

2.5.2. *Institutionalizing Blogs*

Blogs as organizations

The blogosphere audience is of prime importance to advertisers in Egypt; they are the middle class youth advertisers often seek. Peter Golding and Graham Murdock argue that the audience is the commodity as the higher the channel's viewership is, the more advertisers are willing to pay for a slot (2000, p.75). But as Colin Hoskins et al argue, it goes beyond viewership quantity as "the price advertisers are willing to pay to access an audience also depends on the audience's demographic characteristic," (2004, p.255). The blogosphere audience, therefore, is an expensive commodity advertisers hold interest in as they turn more towards online.

From an organizational viewpoint, bloggers can be considered multi-sided platforms, which Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) define as serving two or more interdependent customer segments; advertisers who finance production and distribution and readers who attract advertisers. "Both segments are required to make the business model work," (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010,

p.21). They explain that customers and companies can have various forms of relationships, including forming communities — formed by being involved with the customer to facilitate connections between community members — and co-creation, getting customers involved in the production and engaging them. Bloggers' relationship with the readers can be categorized as communities and co-creation, two categories that engage the customers with the brand and create a sense of belonging, which advertisers often seek. Bloggers' value proposition, "the reason why customers turn to [them]," (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010, p.22) is that they are an alternative source of news that breaks through the mass media clutter and is able to cover issues not covered elsewhere without being subjected to the same pressures the media is subjected to. "Some value propositions satisfy an entirely new set of needs that customers previously did not perceive because there was no similar offering," (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010, p.23). One could argue that bloggers have this as their value proposition; an interactive media for the voiceless that speaks the same language to roughly the same age group as the content providers. Also a value proposition is price (as they access the information without paying a fee other than internet access), accessibility (which is valid only to those with internet access) and convenience, (which applies because online users can access information anywhere and anytime). Blogs and micro-blogs provide free access to fresh voices who have on the ground coverage at the fingertips of the readers from any place and at any time.

The dangers of institutionalizing blogs

Scholars fear that commercialization of the internet will work against the potential it has for democracy as they get mainstreamed into larger media

conglomerates or the mainstream economy, allowing them less flexibility and autonomy over content. Habermas argues that in a market economy, the media needs to appeal to the widest audience possible, hence, neutralizing the content to do so, appealing to the lowest common denominator.

Davis (1999), Margolis and Resnick (1997), among other scholars have noted that the internet is colonized by commercial concerns manifested through collaborating and merging with media conglomerates. Papacharissi cites AOL, Napster and Excite as examples of online forums that emerged as alternatives to mainstream media but were merged into larger corporates, forfeiting their singularity (2008, p.21). Murdoch (1994) and King (1995) also argue that it is only a matter of time until media conglomerates take over the internet and merge traditional media with the digital world (cited in McChesney, 1995). This has been already proving partially true with takeovers as well as convergence of newsrooms.

Davis (1999), Margolis and Resnick (1997) argue that commercial concerns of the internet neutralize and standardize its content, much like traditional media.

Habermas and other scholars, including Putnam (1996) and Hart (1994), argue that the public sphere has been ruined by forces of commercialization and corporate conglomerates, transforming it into a vehicle for capitalist hegemony and ideological reproduction. Commercialization of blogs, therefore, might hinder their objectivity, credibility and editorial direction and voice. Because bloggers did not have to answer to an editor, advertiser or sponsor before, they were not afraid to tackle certain taboo issues. If they do attempt to generate revenue, the revenue streams adopted might mean they will

have to answer to someone, which in turn might hinder the autonomy they have over their content. Depending on advertisements also means depending on the most hits possible, and so possibly tailoring their product to fit the mass product to get the most audience. "The premium prices are commanded by shows that can attract and hold the greatest number of viewers," (Golding and Murdock, 2000, p.75). In fact, Mohamed's research on Egyptian blogs concluded that readership increases as topics covered became more controversial (2010). In a book by two expert bloggers to guide beginners on how to make their blogs popular and generate revenues, Forrester and Powell (2008) warn users against being overly opinionated and advise them to keep a positive tone. This is an indication that professional bloggers, under financial pressures to appease advertisers by a neutral content that does not oppose their interests or drive away traffic, may neutralize their content and limit the issues covered. "Keep in mind that if those opinions clash with the best interests of advertisers, you could have problems," (Forrester and Powell, 2008, p.3).

Although the issue of commercial interests and editorial integrity is present in any medium, the issue is more problematic in the blogosphere where no set of regulations and codes of conducts govern. Bloggers are not subjected to any editorial constraints nor do they follow any organizational or professional regulations, values and codes of conduct to revert to. Philip Eliot argues that working for prestigious media organizations like the BBC and the *Time* magazine carries with it notions of appropriate styles and behavior that leads to audience respect (1977, p.147). It also means, however, that there is often a conflict between different ideals or goals of the reporters, or conflict over control and autonomy in the workstation (Elliott, 1977, p.147). "The

demands of commerce, the despised polar position in the dilemma have come to invoke most types of control over the creative process," (Elliott, 1977, p.147). This is a double-edge sword as it was this particular independence that allowed bloggers to discuss issues that were not discussed before, but it is also this non-compliance with rules that makes many scholars question the editorial direction, integrity, objectivity and overall balance of the content provided on blogs. This also means that if they are subjected to commercialization, there are no guides or rules to separate editorial from advertisement interests as is theoretically the case with other media outlets. It also means that there are no rules or guidelines to ensure quality if the time dedicated to blogging is hindered with the lack of funds, there is no editor to ensure compliance to standards. Elliott (1977) divides journalists into straight reporters who give facts and let readers decide, participant and committed journalists who give facts, backgrounds, analysis and even opinions on behalf of readers. We can assume bloggers mostly fall under that second category; the committed journalists. As Elliot (1977) and other media scholars contend, these are the hardest to follow moral codes and ethics because they are driven by a need to give opinions and often reject rules. This means that advertisers might shy away from advertising on their blogs because of the lack of journalistic guidelines and their opinionated coverage.

McChesney (1995) compares the development of the internet to that of the radio, which started out with great hopes for democratization in the 1920s. He explains that eventually, the medium developed from being controlled by amateurs and non-profit groups to being commercialized. This, McChesney argues, has already been seen in the internet's computer networks which were

eventually privatized after being subsidized (1995). Although this article was written in 1995, when the effects of the internet could not yet be fully detected, the argument and questions posed still remain relevant. Scholars try to speculate the effect of commercialization on the internet and whether or not a medium like the blogosphere might yield to commercial interests as have many traditional media outlets.

2.5.3. Funding alternatives

While some blogs are backed by political parties and organizations, including Muslim Brotherhood bloggers, most prominent liberal, secular leftist and democratic bloggers in Egypt are independent of any funding or resources provided by political powers. This means that the funding options they might have are limited to sponsorship, forms of advertisements, syndicating content to, or joining altogether, mainstream media. Osterwalder and Pigneur (2008) explain that organizations have several options to stream revenues; asset sale, usage fee, subscription fee, lending, licensing, brokerage and advertising. Of those, advertising and licensing, which is content syndication for the media, are the most relevant as research has shown that paying for online content has proven unsuccessful in Egypt (El Sayed, 2009).

Forrester and Powell (2008) advise bloggers that there are certain things to keep in mind to attract advertisements. Along with keeping a positive, neutral and objective tone, bloggers need to watch for the amount of advertisements they carry as too many ads can chase readers away. They also warn against offensive postings "Yes, the internet does have a spirit of free speech and free enterprise, but if you are trying to make money, avoid commentary that could cause offense," (2008, p.5). But it is not just a matter of caution to increase

hits, when using ad agents like Google Adsense, bloggers need to follow terms of service that include steering away from offensive content and hate speech. The terms of service on Google include

"You agree that the Site does not at any time contain any pornographic, hate-related, violent or offensive content or contain any other material, products or services that violate or encourage conduct that would violate any criminal laws, any other applicable laws, any third party rights, or any service policies issued by Google from time to time."

This clause can be subject to various interpretations as terms are left loose, for instance, would the calls for civil disobedience fall under call for violence? Similarly, footage of police brutality, for instance, may fall under violent content as well.

While setting up a blog, users have the option to choose from a variety of open-source platforms, which offer different options as some platforms require that they control the ad space and others leave it up to the user. Bloggers have the option of running their own ad spaces, hiring online advertisement companies as their agents or using services like Google Adsense. Political blogs in Egypt have an advantage in advertisement in that they write about key issues and so come up in the top results on search engines, which attracts advertisers. When choosing ad programs, bloggers have three main options; contextual ads, ad networks and affiliate programs. Contextual ads "put advertisements on your website that are in the same contexts as (closely related to) the content of the webpage where you place those advertisements," (Forrester and Powell, 2008, p.79). This program, however, does not seem

relevant to political blogs as they normally carry current affairs issues and so cannot link to any product or service advertisers provide, although they could simply relate to Egypt. AD networks are agents for ad spaces, they could be a group of advertisers or publishers, (Forrester and Powell, 2008). Finally, affiliate programs are programs that focus on one product or service and they normally pay higher than contextual programs, these include Amazon.com and Commission Junction. These last two categories seem to apply more to bloggers than contextual ads. It remains to be studied, however, what categories bloggers are using, if any, and how different categories affect the bloggers' content, as a sub-research question under the effect of existence or lack of ads on blogs.

Forrester and Powell (2008) explain that there are two other types of revenue streams for bloggers, spin-off revenue and personal revenue. Spin-off revenue is revenue generated from referring to other things or people when the blog has high traffic, while personal revenue is revenue generated from selling the bloggers' expertise. Referral revenue puts in question integrity and objectivity of the blogger as the blogger is paid when they mention or recommend the advertiser and may not be the most relevant method to political bloggers.

Personal revenue could be generated through many ways. Political bloggers could also possibly use their skills in providing their services to companies or organizations that might want them to run their blogs or social media accounts, on the side of political blogging. Similarly, bloggers could join mainstream media as freelancers, part-timers or full-timers. As scholars like Taki (2010, p.191) point out, some bloggers in the Arab world are either

former journalists, current ones, or have ties with the mainstream media, which came to collaborate with them recently for topics they are more experienced in.

Monetizing social media platforms for micro-bloggers or bloggers using those platforms is also a possible revenue stream for some outlets. YouTube, for instance, allows users to post ads on their videos and set up Google AdSense and then the user might become a YouTube partner if they have managed to monetize videos with large numbers of viewers. Partners have more tools on the platform and are able to generate more income through sponsorships. Users can also generate money from their Facebook and Twitter accounts through affiliate marketing or sponsoring certain products on their posts and Tweets. This means brands would pay them to Tweet or post on Facebook favorably about their products. Affiliate marketing, like other types of advertising, puts those once-free platforms under pressures of the political economy of the media in the sense that they cannot write negatively about brands advertising with them and that they will have to alter content to attract the maximum number of readers and so maximize profits.

2.6. Summary and Discussions

The blogosphere has several elements of what constitutes a Habermasian public sphere; grounds for debate, opinions from the readers, theoretical inclusivity, low entry barriers, relatively free speech and serious debate of public affairs. The question remains, however, as to whether we can actually claim there exists a plural virtual sphere given the penetration rate in Egypt, the growing polarization and limitation of the blogosphere to a few prominent voices, the possible eliteness of leading bloggers and the possibility of them turning into media elite. One also needs to question the plurality this

blogosphere gives to the public space of discourse if the activity decreases, or bloggers resort to mini-statements on microblogs that requires less in-depth features and opinions as a result of the lack of funding needed to maintain the time-consuming activity. Plurality is also at risk if the blogosphere gets commercialized as a result of being coopted into the historical bloc because of a need for funding and a shift in status. Commercialization might lead to either complete shifts in editorial directions or toning down the opposition voice.

Habermas himself is wary of the democratization potential of the internet due to the growing commercialization of it (2006). I have made a conscious decision, however, not to generalize the findings of this study beyond the plurality blogs add to the public sphere in Egypt after 2011. I do not, therefore, intend to reach deterministic utopian or dystopian conclusions around blogs' role in the democratization process of Egypt. Scholars like Marc Lynch advocate other approaches to new media studies than assessing their democracy potential, "Rather than focus on whether blogs alone can deliver democracy or a political revolution, analysts should explore the variety of ways in which blogs might transform the dynamics of Arab public opinion and political activism," (2007, p.3). However, theories of plural public spheres, what forms them, their necessity and the potentials the internet may have in adding to the plurality of existing public spaces, are essential to guide this study.

Chapter III: Methodology

3.1. Introduction and Overview

The study is based on both qualitative and quantitative research methods; namely quantitative content analysis, framing analysis and qualitative interviews. The change in the media's coverage and portrayal of independent political bloggers was studied using quantitative content analysis of blogs and qualitative framing analysis of selected media outlets. The change in prominent and less-prominent bloggers' status and relationship with the private sector and media was covered through in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews with selected marketing executives from the private business sector and media professionals. After the initial content analysis of mainstream media was over, quantitative content analysis of blogs and in-depth, qualitative interviews with 12 bloggers was conducted. The content analysis of blogs aimed to assess whether the existence or lack of a revenue stream affects the length and frequency of posts in 6 prominent blogs and 6 less-prominent ones. The analysis also served to see whether the number of links the blog is carrying to other blogs is related to the blogger's popularity, prominence and coverage in the media. The blogs were also studied in terms of the topics discussed in both prominent and less prominent ones to assess whether the issues prioritized are of elite nature or reflect more mainstream demands and issues. Interviews were then conducted with the 12 bloggers to study their backgrounds, available revenue streams and changing relationship with the media and the private sector. The interviews served to determine whether more prominent bloggers come from a power elite and whether they are becoming media elite.

3.2. Literature on methods used and limitations

3.2.1. *Qualitative and quantitative research and triangulation*

Cassel and Symon (1994, p.7) define qualitative research as a "focus on interpretation rather than quantification; an emphasis on subjectivity rather than objectivity; a flexibility in the process of conducting research; an orientation towards process rather than outcome; a concern with context." In the definition and application of qualitative methods lie both its advantages and shortcomings. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to have an in-depth grasp of the data and focus on analysis and context of the data rather than quantifying data. Qualitative research is useful for this research for many reasons. This research studies a new multi-dimensional phenomenon in a relatively new field, taking into account the context and various factors contributing to it; something that qualitative research is often used for (Kohlbacher, 2006). The research also does not begin with a hypothesis to validate or negate, but rather a research question to answer, which is why qualitative methods need to be used in addition to quantitative ones.

While earlier works on content analysis were mainly focused on quantitative approaches, as early as 1952, scholars like Kracauer have advocated the use of qualitative content analysis to study aspects of the text that quantitative content analysis cannot study. He advocated going beyond counting and measuring patterns and gaps in texts and looking at the various possibilities of interpretations and meanings. Scholars like Mayring (2000) argue that by using a qualitative content analysis guided by theory, aspects that are ignored by quantitative analysis—like the context of the text being studied and the distinct individual cases beyond text—could be analyzed.

However, qualitative analysis also has several shortcomings. For instance, findings from qualitative methods may not be generalizable and can be more prone to subjectivity, in both research and interpretation, than quantitative methods. Scholars including Denzing and Lincoln (2000) do not believe in the merits of qualitative research and believe qualitative researchers are more like journalists, describing their work as unscientific, subjective and exploratory (cited in Kohlbacher, 2006). Even Mayring (2000) who advocates qualitative content analysis realizes that there are issues with qualitative research, including reliability issues with coding and the inability to draw inference from a small sample to the whole population.

The debate between the merits of quantitative and qualitative research has often led researchers to abandon or pursue one method over another, "based on their ideological commitment to the particular methodological paradigm rather than on the nature of the phenomena they are describing and the epistemological and practical issues most applicable to that particular context," (Hammersley, 1992, p.163). This is what led researchers like Bourdieu and Hammersley to advocate the use of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies as appropriate to the research itself and not adhere to one or the other regardless. Similarly, researchers like Kohlbacher (2006) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) adopt a mixed approach to exploit advantages of qualitative and quantitative approaches; "these attempts share the conception that qualitative and quantitative methods should be viewed as complementary rather than as rival camps," (Kohlbacher, 2006). The debate between scholars on the merits and issues associated with quantitative and qualitative research methods has led media scholars to adopt more reconciliatory methods in their

research. The merits of pro-quantitative and pro-qualitative arguments have led many to use triangulation methods to reap the benefits both methods have to offer as well as compensate for the shortages they both bear. Kohlbacher (2006, p.15) argues that using qualitative content analysis in analyzing data from interviews provides a method that ensures better understanding of data at hand while minimizing risks associated with qualitative content analysis. Similarly, Trochim (2006) argues, "our best hope for achieving objectivity is to triangulate across multiple fallible perspectives." So while quantitative research might detect a certain pattern or phenomenon, qualitative research can give insight on why it is happening and provide deeper analysis of it (Cassel and Symon, 1994).

In the particular case of this research, triangulation, as well as combining interviews with content analysis, is also useful in compensating for the shortcoming of interview bias. Combining those methods also provides more quantifiable and objective evidence to support the interpretation drawn from qualitative data that might be hindered by the interviewee or the interviewer's subjectivity. The quantitative content analysis serves to detect change in bloggers' portrayal in the media while framing analysis gives more insight to this change and how it compares across bloggers. The qualitative interviews help determine why this change detected by quantitative analysis happened and the consequences it has on the nature of blogging.

I also used quantitative coding in framing analysis to analyze the qualitative data to measure media's attitudes and beliefs accurately and objectively and rectify some of the qualitative methods shortcomings. I also

manually conducted the quantitative content analysis to avoid limitations of automated content analysis.

3.2.2. *Media framing and content analysis*

One of the limitations of content analysis in general is the limited information available in the text, which in my case means that not all media attitudes towards bloggers are portrayed in the text studied. Using interviews in parallel with the content analysis amended for this shortcoming to draw more insight from media professionals themselves.

Framing

Framing analysis of main stream media seemed the most appropriate to assess the change in the attitude of the editorial staff towards different bloggers and how they're portrayed (framed) before and after January 25th.

Framing stems from the notion that people rely on broader interpretive schemas, or primary frameworks, which are the result of stable and socially shared category systems. People use those frames to interpret new information because human beings look for easier and quicker ways to process information and so find it easier to depend on existing schemas in interpreting incoming messages. Entman (1993, p.52) argues that "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described." Gitlin (1980, p.7) defines frames as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handles routinely organize discourse." Framing is meant to make the audience build associations between an issue presented and "particular

considerations relevant to its definition, causes, implications and treatments," (Tewkesbury and Scheufele, 2009, p.24).

Framing, as a theory, can be traced back to Heider (1959) and Erving Goffman (1974), who studied the organization of experience and concluded that reporters' understanding of the world determines which issues get selected to be told, and how they will be told. But it was Todd Gitlin (1980) who first undertook a news media framing analysis and analyzed media frames from a social perspective. Iyengar's (1991) work on "episodic and thematic political news framing and attributions of responsibility," was also one of the most significant academic contributions to media framing, (Tewkesbury and Scheufele, 2009, p.18). Robert Entman (1993) was one of the leading media researchers who tried to build on the framing concept and its applicability.

Scheufele (1999) explains that individuals interpret the same information differently depending on the framing of the message received. This is the essence of news frames and media framing theories, which contend that news can be framed in ways to influence the viewers' beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. Entman argues that for frames to be successful, they need to resonate with elements of stored schemas in the audience's mind (2010, p.391). Frames are used to introduce new issues to the audience when they do not have a set of linkages between this issue and diverse countervailing considerations. Frames are also used to suggest to the audience to think about a familiar issue in a novel way that is different to the existing beliefs, values and attitudes, they associate with this issue, (Tewkesbury and Scheufele, 2009: 24). Gamson and Modigliani (1987) believe media elite use packages to characterize an issue, and those include arguments, information, symbols, metaphors and images, and

these affect how "people understand, interpret and react to a problem or issue," (Tewkesbury and Scheufele, 2009, p.19). The frame used in the message is the element that unifies information into a package and builds associations between concepts: it is a "central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events," (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987, p.143). The strongest frames rely upon culture-based meanings, norms and values and so do not need to be explicitly introduced. Those frames are normally the most successful in making the audience think of issues introduced in a certain manner.

Frames can be studied as an independent or a dependent variable. I intend to study framing as an independent variable; so instead of studying how frames were built (*frame building*), I studied the effect of frames on the bloggers' status and image (*frame setting*). And while some scholars are concerned with equivalency frames, others study emphasis. Equivalency frames (Chong and Druckman, 2007) studies the use of two terms that bear the same meaning but connote different frames to lead the audience to respond in favorable or unfavorable ways. This is manifested, for instance, in coverage of the issue of abortion using the term baby by pro-life advocates as opposed to fetus. Emphasis frames, however, rely on qualitative differences in the angles used to cover certain stories. For instance, while readers would respond to a story tackling illegal immigration from a refugee's point of view in certain way, they would respond very differently if the same issue was covered from their negative impact on the economy.

Framing, Agenda Setting and Information Persuasion

The content produced by the media is often affected by three effects that are

often confused together; media framing, agenda setting and information persuasion. Researchers like Ettman (1993, p.53) and Iyengar (1990, p.160-285) believe that framing stems primarily from accessibility, meaning that people store the more frequently and recently used information in a portion of their memory that is more accessible, and hence automatically retrieve this information to make judgments or interpret messages. This school of thought bears resonance with agenda setting theories, which made various scholars argue for media framing to fall under the umbrella of agenda setting. Other researchers, however, like Scheufele (1999) and Nelson et al (1997) argue that, unlike agenda setting, framing does not only rely on accessibility of the information that agenda-setters prioritize in the audience's minds. The authors argue that framing relies primarily on applicability in that the audience applies frames that are the most applicable of the set of frames and schemas their memories have stored. The agenda-setting effect, on the other hand, is "the process by which audience exposure to news about an issue raises its accessibility," (Tewkesbury and Scheufele, 2009, p.21). Agenda setting makes issues covered the most become the most important in the viewers' minds.

Persuasion effects, much like framing, are concerned with how content is presented in a way to influence the audience towards a certain attitude and both framing and persuasion effect consider the source credibility as a moderating effect. The difference between the two, however, is that while framing includes the origin, evolution, presentation, and effects of frames, persuasion is not concerned with the origin and evolution of messages. Persuasion studies also involve the audience being aware of the intentionally-persuasive content while news framing studies presume the audience is not aware of frames used.

Framing is also often studied in comparison to priming, which occurs when news content suggests to news audiences that they ought to use specific issues as benchmarks for evaluating performance of the authority (Tewksbury and Scheufele, 2007, p.52).

Critique of Media Framing

Media framing has been criticized for obliqueness and operational inconsistency by various scholars, making its theoretical grounding hard to apply. "Part of this vagueness at different levels stems from the fact that framing researchers have often approached the theory very inductively and examined framing as a phenomenon without careful explication of the theoretical premises and their operational implications," (*ibid*, p.17). Many scholars like Snow and Benford (cited in *ibid*, p.28) have argued that a set of master frames need to be created for researchers to apply across various issues for more consistent and reliable application of framing approach.

But through studying various scholarly work that used media framing as a method before, including Entman (1993 and 2010) and Kensicki (2001), one can get an idea of the applicability of media framing in research. The quantitative content analysis also helped set the frames used for media framing on the chosen media outlets. In fact, Kenisicki's work on media framing of a movement against the administration of a university accused of racism is insightful to this particular research. She concluded that in general, frames used to cover the movement were overwhelmingly positive, reflecting internal unity of the movement, external support of its cause, a plausible and justifiable set of demands as well as effective action taken towards achieving it. These frames all resonate with the media framing of January 25th activists and

revolutionaries. One of her findings was that due to the unavailability of elite sources at the university to comment on the issue, users of the social media became primary sources quoted by most mainstream media, which made the frames used in their coverage more favorable. This is comparable to the situation in Egypt where often official and elite sources were unavailable to comment and so bloggers and opposition voices were louder and more accessible by the media, hence framed more favorably.

The approach I took to answering the lack of operational guidance when using frames is that I used the data collected from the quantitative analysis of the media to create my own set of frames that are relevant to this particular research, as discussed in section 3.3.1 of this chapter.

3.2.3. *Interviewing*

Interviewing falls under the umbrella of case studies; studying particular cases of the population at hand to draw not generalizations, but inferences and insight from the research. Robert Yin (1994) defines case studies to be an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Case studies cope with a situation where there are more variables of interest than data points and relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion, (Yin, 1994).

Yin explains that explanatory case study is useful in understanding complex social phenomena as it allows researchers to "retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events," and are useful when the researcher is looking at how or why questions, has little control over events and is studying a contemporary phenomenon (Yin, 1994, p.4). Although there

are several merits to the use of case studies, critics argue that although they might bring insight on particular phenomena, they cannot be grounds for generalizing. Yin (1994), however, argues that while data gathered from case studies are not statistically generalizable to the population, they are analytically generalizable to the theoretical propositions being studied. For the interest of this research, which does not aim to reach a statistical generalization that is applicable to the population of bloggers, collective case studies of the bloggers serve to provide an analytical generalization of the theory in question; the plurality added by the blogosphere.

Stake (2000) outlines three different kinds of case studies; intrinsic, instrumental and collective (cited in Kohlbacher, 2006). While the intrinsic and the instrumental studies differ in the degree to which they focus on the unique or generalizable features of the case research, the collective study is a study of several cases (*ibid*), which is the type of case study I am looking at. Bloggers interviewed are not samples of the population studied, they are case studies that serve to answer a theoretical research question.

Yin (1994) identifies 5 techniques for case studies analysis; pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, cross-case synthesis and logic models. To ensure validity of research and accurate analysis of data at hand, he lays out three crucial strategies for case study analysis; relying on theoretical propositions, considering rival explanations and developing a case description.

Qualitative interviewing is a process of bringing the interviewer into the interviewee's world, and "the quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer," (Patton, 1990, p.341).

Semi-structured interviews were used because with most interviewees, I needed the possibility of probing further to better understand the answers, especially with political activists, and get more commentary. It is also crucial to have open-ended questions to be able to assess attitudes through the respondents' own words. Analyzing open-ended comments and probing might hinder the standardization of the interviews. But for qualitative assessment purposes, it works better than standardized structured interviews, which do not allow the researcher to probe for more or allow respondents' enough room for expression. Semi-structured interviews also serve to get conversational flow and ease the respondents into the questions gradually to avoid evaluation apprehension as the interview seems more conversational and less survey-like.

Evaluation apprehension was introduced by Nickolas B. Cottrell in 1972 and happens when respondents are aware they are being studied and so respond differently than they would normally do. There is a social desirability issue as respondents would not want to look too materialistic and at the same time would not want to speak of monetizing their activism. It is also hard for them to admit they are dedicating a long time to blogging because they are getting financial help from others, be it family or a party. At times financing sources might be confidential or the bloggers might not want to admit to a funding by a political party or power for fear of being judged or sounding biased. Studying the blog's content, however, at times helped account for bloggers' reluctance to share some information, including affiliations with political groups, parties or movements. I also use hypothetical projective respondent technique (Trochim, 2006) to pose questions of sensitive nature as hypothetical and general. This technique means, for instance, enquiring about issues like financing in relation

to editorial content or frequency of blogging and micro-blogging in a more general sense at first. I then pose the personal question to be able to get as honest a response as possible. For instance, I start by asking about whether they know of bloggers who have succeeded in generating revenues or funding off their blogs, or how much they think blogging might yield and what are the funding options they deem suitable for bloggers and micro-bloggers to be able to carry on their activity and whether it is important to get funding. I then ask them about their particular case. To ease the bloggers into the interviews, I start by general opening questions and leave the most sensitive questions to the end, until after they have relaxed and I have gained their trust. I start the questions by asking about the nature of the blog, the content, the direction, when and how it started. When tackling sensitive questions, such as income, it is also essential to explain why these questions are posed and why answering them is insightful to the research. To gain entry, I use the language used by the bloggers, as detected from the content analysis, and dress casually so they can familiarize better with me, and explain exactly what the research is about, what I am looking to find and its importance.

 The research bias in this method was counterbalanced by setting out guides prior to the interviews as to how to probe and using vocabulary that maintains objectivity and avoids influencing answers. I also study blogs' content as a form of parallel testing as well as any research and biographies conducted on them to eliminate bias and ensure internal reliability of the data.

 The population in question, the bloggers, are literate, and speak either English and Arabic or Arabic, hence there is not a language barrier. There is also no geographical barrier as I am studying Egyptian bloggers and most of

the popular ones are based either in Cairo or, less likely, Alexandria. There are also no issues with elite interviewing as most bloggers are of young age and similar backgrounds to the researcher.

The researcher's bias is especially strong when the interviewer and researcher come from the same ethnographic background as the subject s/he is studying, as well as her/his interviewees. This means that the researcher might have strong feelings or attitudes towards the issue or the subjects of study that may bias either their methods, the interview itself, their selection criteria or his interpretation of the data found.

To make up for this bias, this research uses triangulation methods, discussed above, as well as pre-written set of questions, probes and topics for the semi-structured interviews and preset guideline for the framing analysis, interpreting data and conducting the interviews.

3.2.4. *Collecting background data on blogs and the media*

The background data on the Egyptian media landscape and the emergence of the blogosphere were collected through secondary research on theoretical works on the Egyptian blogosphere and media as well as access to press archives. It was also gathered through the interviews with the bloggers and media professionals during the fieldwork.

Several researches have been conducted studying the Egyptian media's map as well as the emergence and history of the blogosphere in the Arab world in general and Egypt in particular. The data on both, therefore, was rich and provided historical and contextual grounding for the research. My experience in the media allowed me access to archives of magazines like *Egypt Today* and *Business Today* that often ran in-depth features on the media and bloggers, as

well as various other newspapers and magazines. The interviews with bloggers and media professionals also helped shed light on history of not only the bloggers or media platforms studied, but on the blogosphere and the media in general.

3.3. <u>Methods used and application to research questions</u>

The research question**,** "How much plurality is the blogosphere really giving the public sphere in Egypt post January 25th, 2011." This rests on several sub-questions:

- How did the media's coverage, portrayal of bloggers and relationship with bloggers change post January 25th?

- Who are the bloggers most quoted and covered by the media and are they of elite backgrounds?

- How are less popular bloggers featured in the media in comparison to more prominent ones?

- How do issues discussed in prominent blogs compare to those discussed in less prominent ones—in terms of whether topics prioritized in some blogs are of elite nature?

- How is bloggers' inclusion in mainstream media and changing status affecting their status as counterhegemonic elements? Are they joining the historical bloc through collaborations with mainstream media or their private sector? And how does this compare between prominent and less prominent bloggers?

- Are bloggers seeking revenue streams to make their blogging financially sustainable?

- If they are seeking revenue streams, how is this affecting their content?

- If they are not seeking revenue streams, how is this affecting the frequency of their posts? And if it does not, are they of elite backgrounds who can afford time and cost of blogging?

- Given the private sector and media sectors are now more interested in online advertisements, are they targeting elite or otherwise bloggers?

- Are prominent bloggers becoming similar to media elites and making the blogosphere less inclusive and blogging unsustainable? This question is of conclusive nature and should be based on the answers to all of the above questions.

3.3.1. Content and Framing Analysis

Three newspapers have been chosen for the purpose of the quantitative and the framing analysis, *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, *Al-Ahram* and *The Daily News Egypt (DNE)*. The reason for choosing those particular newspapers are several: first they represent diversified directions as *Al-Ahram* is a pro-government newspaper while *Al-Masry Al-Youm* is perceived as an independent newspaper and *DNE* is an independent English newspaper. Furthermore, it is interesting to look at the case of *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, being a private newspaper funded by businessmen, to see how businesses react to changing social orders. Also, two of the newspapers have an accessible archive and therefore were possible to research. *Al-Masry Al-Youm* and *Al-Ahram* are published daily while the *DNE* is published daily except Sunday as it combines Saturdays and Sundays issues in one, published every Saturday.

As for the TV channels, the initial plan was to study three shows; two aired on satellite channels and one on state television. I looked at *Baladna Bel Masry* (*Our Country in Egyptian Dialect*), an evening talk show on *ONTV*,

satellite channel funded by liberal businessman and founding member of Al Masreyin Al Ahrar Party, Naguib Sawiris. This is based on the availability of the show's archives as well as their popularity and the peculiarity of the channel being funded by one of the business tycoons in Egypt who recently engaged in politics. *Baladna Bel Masry* was hosted by Reem Magued and aired five times a week for two hours and is off Fridays and Saturdays. This show was discontinued in June 2013 as Reem Magued declined to renew her contract with the channel post June 30th, 2013 – when the Muslim Brotherhood regime was ousted after mass protests against their rule and the army detaining then-president Mohamed Morsi – for what she calls 'editorial differences.' I also studied *Al Ashera Masa'an* (*Ten PM)* as another example of a popular talk show aired on a satellite channel funded by businessman Ahmed Bahgat, *Dream TV*. *Ten PM* airs five times a week from Saturdays to Wednesdays for three hours and was hosted by Mona El Shazly at the time of the episodes chosen for analysis. The show was taken over by Wael El Ibrashy when El Shazly left for MBC Masr in November 2012. I attempted to study state television's popular *El Beit Beitak* evening talk show for comparison but failed to get access. *El Beit Beitak*, however, was discontinued in May 2011 after initial hosts Mahmoud Saad, Khairy Ramadan and Tamer Amin had all quit by April 2011. A much-less popular show replaced it for a short period. However, access to the Maspero archives – archives in the headquarters of state television – of the show was not granted despite repeated attempts through contacts with producers in Maspero. Although some of *El Beit Beitak*'s episodes were available on YouTube, the replacement show was not. This is an indication of the gatekeeping process in Egyptian state television; access to

archived media and general access to information is rarely simply granted. The process of accessing archives needs connections and persistence, but access to information became especially sensitive after January 25th when the state television was heavily criticized for its massively biased coverage of events.

A total of 178 issues of newspapers were studied and a total of 88 episodes totaling around 230 hours of broadcast.

Getting access and gathering data for broadcast

Baladna Bel Masry and *Ten PM* were both analyzed for the months of November 2010 and November 2011 as well as the first week of December 2010 and December 2011.

All of *Ten PM*'s episodes were available on the channel's YouTube channel but *Baladna Bel Masry* was only available starting November 2010. After contacting producers of the show, they advised me to refer to the available episodes on YouTube as the team was rather busy with current events breaking every day and uploading 22 episodes would prove too big a task for the time. This is why broadcast was studied in November of 2010 and 2011 and not in October 2010 and 2011 as the initial plan was.

November 2010 was the month where the parliamentary elections were run under Mubarak's regime. November 2011 was the month of the first parliamentary elections post-January 25th and the month following the Maspero events where 28 protestors, including many Copts and prominent blogger Mina Daniel, were killed and 212 injured. Many activists and protestors were also arrested after the events, including prominent blogger Alaa Abdel Fattah. November 2011 also witnessed the Mohamed Mahmoud events that took place from November 19th to 24th when police forces brutally dispersed a sit in on the

19th. The events yielded many deaths and injuries, including a prominent activist, Ahmed Harara, losing his sight completely as he had lost one eye during the January 25th events, and a prominent blogger, Malek Mostafa, losing one eye. The clashes resulted in 45 dead and more than 60 injured.

Baladna Bel Masry was analyzed in the period from 1 November 2010 to 6 December 2010 as the show did not run on the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th because it was the Feast of Adha and so the 4 episodes missing were replaced with four episodes from December 2010. This means that a total of 22 episodes of *Baladna Bel Masry* were studied, each running for two hours. For the analysis of 2011, the show was studied from 1 November 2011 to 11 December 2011 as it was off for the Feast of Adha on the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th and then off again on the 15th, 16th and 17th as the hostess was traveling. Therefore, 8 episodes were studied from December 2011. A sum of 22 episodes were studied in 2011, each running for two hours, except three episodes of special election coverage that varied in length from three to five hours.

Ten PM was studied from November 1st in 2010 to December 8th as it was off for feast on the 13th, 15th, 15th, 16th, 17th and 20th. The six missing episodes were replaced by episodes from December 2010. Total episodes studied in 2010 were 22 episodes, each episode runs for three hours. For the analysis of 2011, the show was studied from November 1st to December 7th as it was off for the feast on November 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th, replaced by five episodes from December. The total was also 22 episodes, each also running for three hours.

All episodes of the two shows were watched and double checked to see if they were all, in fact, covered through a date search on Google videos and on the channel to make sure no segments are missing. *Baladna Bel Masry* was then searched by the keywords Baladna, Bel Meftesher (or Frankly Speaking), the name given to the introductory segment of the show, which was all mostly missing from the show's playlists but available on YouTube. Other keywords searched were 'bloggers', 'activists' and key bloggers' names were then Googled along with the name of the show in the periods studied and a hashtags search was also performed for special election coverage and coverage of the Mohamed Mahmoud clashes. All suggested videos on the right bar of every clip watched on both shows were also checked to make sure all episodes' segments are covered. This yielded an extra 48 clips for *Baladna Bel Masry* that were not included in the original playlist but did not yield anything for *Ten PM* as it was all uploaded in full in their playlist.

Getting access and gathering data for print

Al-Masry Al-Youm has a full archive online providing all old issues, the online archives were used in conjunction with past printed issues bought from a newspaper stand in Abbaseya. The *DNE* used to have online archives for its past issues but were put offline when the new management and ownership took over in June 2012. *DNE*'s assistant editor in chief was contacted and he provided the needed issues of the newspaper in the form of soft copies. *Al-Ahram* also has an online archive but the server would often fail to connect to the archives and so Al-Ahram Archives were contacted to buy print copies of the needed issues. Missing issues from the print were studied from soft copies bought from Al-Ahram Archives and others from their online archives. Al-

Ahram Archives is often accessible to researchers and journalists and old issues are easy to get hold of through them.

October 2010 and 2011 were studied for each newspaper as the original plan was to analyze October, the month leading up to the first parliamentary elections post-January 25th and leading up to the 2010 parliamentary elections under Mubarak. The dates could not be changed to follow the change in broadcast as the *DNE* assistant editor in chief had already provided copies of October 2010 and 2011 when the dates for broadcast were changed and so it was not possible to get hold of him again for November 2010 and 2011. This meant that while print was studied for October 2010 and 2011, broadcast was studied for November 2010 and 2011. Although unfavorable, it does not, however, make a significant difference in the findings as both months had similar political context and issues discussed were similar.

All print was read thoroughly and then an advanced search on Google specifying each newspaper's website was performed for the set dates for keywords found commonly—including popular bloggers' names and the words Facebook, Twitter, social media, bloggers, activists and blogs. The *DNE*'s PDFs were searchable and so after the initial reading and research, the issues were again double checked with above-mentioned keywords. *Al-Masry Al-Youm* past issues online archives were also searchable and so were searched for the keywords after initial reading and research. *Al-Ahram*'s PDFs were not, however, searchable so could not be double checked in the same manner.

Quantitative offline content analysis

The quantitative content analysis focused on counting the number of times bloggers were quoted, hosted or covered in chosen media channels, the number

of times they made headlines or front pages as well as whether directly quoted, hosted or had their pictures featured in the article. The data was then compared from October and November 2010 to those of October and November 2011.

The quantitative analysis not only indicates the changing attitude of the media towards different bloggers, it also allows for determining which bloggers are hosted the most, and so serves as one of the selection criteria I use to determine the bloggers to be used in this research.

The quantitative analysis for broadcast was coded and divided as follows:

C: Coverage, this indicates the news of the blogger were covered in particular in the show, this includes, for instance, news or updates on Alaa Abdel Fattah's arrest.

M: Mention, this indicates that the presenter or an interviewee or guest simply mentions the blogger in the middle of a general issue but the coverage is not specific to their case. This indicates the blogger's name came up while discussing a general issue.

CA: Caption, this indicates the newsreel or caption on the screen mentions the blogger.

IIP: Interview in Person, this indicates that the blogger was interviewed in person, either in the studio or elsewhere, but they appear in person on the show being interviewed by a reporter or the show hostess.

PI: Phone Interview, this indicates the blogger was not hosted in person but was interviewed over the telephone.

The number of times segments on YouTube were named after the bloggers were also counted.

This division was used to differentiate between the different kinds of coverage the blogger was subjected to and to indicate the level and degree of importance given to the issue or their opinion in each instance.

At the end of the analysis, a summary of the number of times the blogger was interviewed (in person or over the telephone,) covered, mentioned or their name appeared on the screen is calculated and the total number of minutes they were covered or interviewed is also calculated. The number of minutes does not include, however, the Mentions category where their name was simply stated. The number of times segments on YouTube were named after the bloggers were also counted.

The quantitative analysis for print was divided and coded as follows:

Q: Quoted, this indicates that the blogger was quoted in the article; either in an exclusive interview, quoted from their social media account or quoted at a conference. In one incident, an article written by the blogger himself (Mostafa El Naggar) was included into this category.

M: Mentioned, this indicates the article mentions the blogger in a general issue or incident but the article itself is not specifically about or covering the blogger.

GM: General Mention, this was used in incidents where no specific blogger was mentioned but the article mentions the words 'bloggers,' 'social media activists,' 'Twitter activists,' 'Facebook activists' or 'online activists.'

FC: Full coverage, this indicates the article is about the blogger, covering their news or updates. This includes, for instance, coverage of a conference held by bloggers, news about Maikel Nabil's detention, for instance, and the likes.

Those four categories were the primary categories that went into the total, final calculations for all newspapers to calculate the number of mentions and space given to bloggers in terms of number of words covering them across all three newspapers. The below categories were also considered in the quantitative analysis but did not go into the final calculations for each month.

H: **Headlined**, this indicates the blogger's name or the word 'blogger,' 'online activist,' 'social media activist,' 'Twitter activist,' or 'Facebook activist' was mentioned in the headline. This was subdivided into two categories; headlined with names and headlined without names.

P: **Pictured,** this indicates the blogger's picture was included in the article, or in one case, his mother's picture.

FP: **Front Page**, this indicates the article was in the front page of the newspaper.

In both print and broadcast, some cases were not clear-cut as to whether the activists mentioned are bloggers or simply activists who, sometimes, use social media. The issue arose, for instance, when it came to cases of journalists who are also prolific bloggers, like Nora Younes, for instance. In that case, if they, themselves, identified themselves as bloggers at any point and were keeping a steady blog separate from their professional capacity as journalists, i.e. not under the publication they work for, they were considered in the study. The reason for this is that many bloggers cross the line between blogging and contributing to mainstream media, including prominent bloggers Mahmoud Salem (Sandmonkey) and Alaa Abdel Fattah, which is at the core of this study.

Qualitative print and broadcast framing analysis:

The qualitative offline framing analysis serves to study how the mainstream

media's portrayal of bloggers and social media makers has evolved throughout 2011.

The framing analysis was conducted to assess how bloggers are presented, the degree of familiarity between the blogger and the presenter, how they are identified and the weight given to their opinions. The frames used were all derived from the findings of the quantitative analysis after detecting repeated patterns used to describe, address and cover bloggers. Four frames were used to analyze print and five frames used to analyze broadcast. The four main frames for print and broadcast were the Identification Frame, Representation Frame, Analytical Frame and Framing as Heroes/Criminals/Victims. The extra frame used for broadcast was the Familiarity Frame; how the presenter addresses the blogger, using the word '*hadretak*,' a common courtesy when speaking to strangers or elders in Egypt, or '*ustaz / ustaza*,' (mister or miss) or simply calling them by their first names and *enta* (you).

Identification Frame: Analyzing the terms used for introduction leads to studying how the bloggers are framed in terms of their identity; whether they are framed as bloggers, activists, party members, victims, martyrs, defendants, alternative media or a mixture of those. When the article identifies the blogger as a member or a spokesperson of the April 6th movement they would be considered being framed as an activist not a party member as they belonged to a youth movement not an official party.

Representation Frame: This frame looks to see whether the bloggers are asked about their personal opinion or if the question is framed to ask the blogger about the street's, the revolutionary youth's or the general public's

opinion. The presenter sometimes asked bloggers hosted to predict or reflect the reactions of the 'street.' Although this might be a problematic wording as there are several 'streets' in any given social and economic context, the 'street' frame reflects the wording the presenter uses to address the question to the blogger. This is indicative of the weight given to their opinion and how big a segment they are framed to represent. This further shows whether they are framed as an elite group or a group representing the revolution or the population. A further Representation Frame of Out of Context was added to indicate instances where the bloggers were not hosted or quoted in their capacity as bloggers or activists but on a separate activity and the issue discussed is irrelevant to the political activism studied.

Analytical Frame: This is used to see whether the bloggers are framed as eyewitnesses or as political analysts. This means looking at whether the writer or presenter asks or quotes the bloggers on their analysis of the situation and what they predict for the future of the situation discussed or about only the events that took place. A further Analytical Frame of Out of Context was also added. When the blogger was interviewed as a political analyst but was also asked about events they were an eyewitness to, the Political Analyst frame overrides the eyewitness one as analysts are often asked about events they partook in but normal eyewitness are not often asked about their analysis of the situation or predictions for the future.

Framing as criminals, defendants heroes or victims: This frame is used to see what the media chooses to highlight; their roles in demonstrations before and after January 25th and what they stand for, the risks they have taken and hardships they go through for their causes and their successes or whether the

media highlights how they disrupted peace, blocked traffic and contributed in the downfall of the economy and the lack of security. If the presenter or writer is neutral about their charges and simply portrays them as charged without showing signs of them being wronged or being truly criminal, then the framing is categorized as defendants.

The Familiarity Frame: While the use of the person's first name and a simple 'you' would be common among strangers in some cultures, it is rather uncommon for strangers in professional context and in the public space in Egypt. Therefore, dropping titles and addressing by the familiar *enta* is hence indicative of the familiarity between the presenter and the blogger.

Often not all of those five frames were applicable to the given segment or article, and in that case, the frames were referred to as N/A. This includes, for instance, times where the blogger is mentioned but not quoted or interviewed and so is not under any Representation or Analytical Frame.

The line between the Victim and the Hero frames is very thin because bloggers are often framed as both, victims and heroes who have withstood injustice and prosecution for their cause. However, only when their heroism is clearly discussed or spelled out, they were categorized as victims. In the case where their strength, resilience or achievements are mentioned equally alongside their detention or injuries, they were categorized as both. In case where their heroism was the aspect most focused on, then the framing moved to Hero and not Victim.

In some instances, none of those frames applied because the reference was too general, the segment or mention was too short to analyze or because it was not applicable. Those were disregarded from the framing analysis.

Web content analysis

The quantitative web content analysis was performed after the mainstream media analysis was conducted. The prominent blogs studied in this research were run by bloggers who were covered by the mainstream media, as indicated by the quantitative content analysis of these shows and newspapers. The other blogs studied, however, were chosen by convenience sampling of available and accessible, non-prominent bloggers.

The quantitative online content analysis was conducted on blogs in the same periods as print media, October 2010 and October 2011, to track the changes in the frequency and length of posts, number of links they carry to other blogs, the issues discussed and number of advertisements posted, if existent, three months immediately before the revolution compared to eight months immediately following it. These were also the months leading up to the 2010 and 2011 parliamentary elections that took place in November 2010 and 2011. The results were then compared between prominent and less prominent blogs.

The frequency and length of the posts were compared in the same months chosen for all the content analysis, October 2010 and October 2011, but the number of advertisements on the websites cannot be tracked back, and so were only studied in the present. During the blogs' content analysis, when the blogs had no posts in October of 2010 or 2011, November was studied instead if available, if not, then posts of months available in both 2010 and 2011 were studied. The relevance between sources of revenue and advertisements to the frequency and length of posts and issues covered was determined through asking the bloggers themselves when their blogs started

carrying advertisements or when they started looking for revenue streams off their blogging and how this helps or hinders the frequency or length of their posts.

The blogs, Twitter and Facebook statistics in each blogger profile were all updated until February 2015, so they might have changed afterwards. It is important to note that Facebook only shows a select number of notes for each user and therefore the first Facebook note showing for each person might not actually be the first note the author created.

The data gathered from mainstream media analysis was compared against the data found from the quantitative web content analysis and then from interviews to see how the media reactions affected different blogs' content, as well as bloggers' own awareness of those factors.

3.3.2. Interviews with bloggers, marketing executives and media professionals

For the selection of bloggers, I used modal instance sampling, under purposive sampling, to interview the bloggers quoted or hosted most in the media, as per the quantitative content analysis. This was done to be able to identify prominent bloggers the media covers and then compare them to non-prominent ones who were not featured in the media. Purposive sampling is useful when a targeted sample needs to be reached quickly and sampling for proportionality is not of primary concern, (Trochim, 2006, chapter 4). I opted for purposive sampling to reach the most popular bloggers and because it is hard to get hold of the population of political bloggers in Egypt.

As for sampling marketing executives and media professionals for interviews, I used convenience and expert sampling because I am not looking

to generalize the attitudes of marketeers or media professionals interviewed on the whole population. I am only drawing insight to assess changing attitudes' implications on the plurality of the public discourse, which is the primary question. "Expert sampling involves the assembling of a sample of persons with known or demonstrable experience and expertise in some area. Often we convene such a sample under the auspices of a 'panel of experts,'" (Trochim, 2006, chapter 4).

Furthermore, I used non-heterogeneity sampling in that I used non-political bloggers to ensure diversity in the sample interviewed to provide a point of comparison and get a well-rounded image.

Bloggers

The interviews with the 6 prominent and 6 less-prominent bloggers aim to determine the changes they have lived between 2011 and 2014, their backgrounds, the difficulties they perceive as bloggers, how sustainable they perceive their activity is, as well as how conscious or unconscious they are of revenue generation possibilities and how all of this compare between the two categories of bloggers. The filtering criteria I used for choosing those bloggers are that they should be bloggers blogging or tweeting on current affairs in Egypt, excluding party-backed bloggers. They should have also been maintaining a blog before January 25th, 2011.

The interviews with bloggers, who mostly do not have an office, were conducted in the time and place of their choosing for their convenience, and to be in their comfort zone. The topics covered were explained before setting the interview so they can choose the time and place accordingly and to avoid unpleasant surprises. Times slotted for each blogger were 90 minutes. During

the interview, there was a laptop to be able to navigate through the relevant blog to allow bloggers to comment on advertisements, advertisements placement, frequency and length of blogging and the particular posts they were asked about. While questions relating to their beliefs, priorities and nagging issues in the Egyptian context were asked without referring to the blogs themselves at first, they were followed by follow-up questions referring and demonstrating on the bloggers' own blogs and posts. This helped probe bloggers without hindering or biasing their responses at first.

Bloggers' prominence and non-prominence was initially determined based on their social media popularity, although the initial list of bloggers to be contacted was based on both social media popularity as well as their media appearances during the periods studied. The more the research went on, however, the harder it became to differentiate between prominent and less prominent bloggers. The fieldwork has shown that because this research only studied a specific period of time, some bloggers who are most prominent in terms of popularity on social media did not appear in the mainstream media during periods studied but had several other media appearances during other times as interviews showed. An example of this is one of the first bloggers, Amr Ezzat, who has 176,000 followers on Twitter but was never featured in the media in the periods studied. On the other hand, a blogger like Bassem Fathy who only has 40,500 followers on Twitter, compared to 1.39 million followers in the case of Wael Ghoneim, happened to appear on the media twice during the period studied. Given his popularity as measured here, he is not considered among the prominent bloggers. However, his media appearances did make him seem prominent. When I interviewed him, Fathy expressed

surprise at having appeared twice in the media during the period studied as he explained he kept a low profile and limited his appearances.

With the exception of Fathy and Ezzat, the popularity of bloggers interviewed on social media seemed consistent with the number of times the media hosted them during the period studied. These two variances were therefore attributed to the time limitation of the research, and were rectified through their re-categorization and the interviews. Fathy was categorized as a less-prominent blogger in the analysis, despite appearing twice in the media. Meanwhile, Ezzat, who did not appear in the media studied in the period of the research, was considered a prominent blogger in the analysis.

The primary determinant of prominence throughout the study was the blogger's social media popularity. The threshold of 100,000 followers, held good for 15 out of the possible 19 bloggers who were covered at least twice by the media during the period studied and applied to every prominent blogger interviewed. The popularity of the blogger here is then considered the independent variable and their media coverage the dependent one, by which one can assess how their social media popularity correlates with their media appearances.

Because less-prominent bloggers are, by definition, not famous, they were harder to get a hold of. With the exception of Bassem Fathy, who was covered in the media during the period studied, the other less-prominent bloggers interviewed were reached through research, personal networks and asking the more prominent bloggers to recommend names to be interviewed.

Another issue faced during the research arose in relation to Esraa Abdel Fattah who never had a blog, despite having been very active on social media

and being one of the two people behind the online calls for general strikes in 2008. She was, however, categorized as a prominent blogger because she was one of the first Egyptian micro-bloggers to utilize Facebook for writing notes and was always active on Facebook and Twitter, having a large followership in both. She was dubbed the Facebook Girl in 2008 and received wide local and international attention as one of Egypt's most prominent online activists. She was hence considered a micro-blogger for the purposes of this research.

It is also important to note that Ali Hisham, a less-prominent 18-year-old blogger, was studied to compare between older bloggers and younger ones. This was done because interviews have shown that the first wave of Egyptian bloggers, the founding generation of the Egyptian blogosphere, have become focused on things like career and livelihoods as they grew older.

A few issues arose trying to get access to the bloggers interviewed. Although the initial plan was to interview bloggers after media and marketing professionals, their interviews had to be held in June, before media and marketing professionals' interviews, because at the time many of them were getting detained. Out of 20 possible bloggers to interview, four were in prison and one was abroad in fear for his security at the time of fieldwork and after the interview was conducted, Esraa Abdel Fattah was put on a travel ban. Some bloggers were also reluctant to speak at a time where some media outlets were attacking them.

Marketeers and media professionals

I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with three marketing executives from an advertising and marketing agency, an online advertising agency and a beauty brand to determine changes to their marketing activities to

reflect the growing use of social media. This is important to assess whether there is a demand for marketeers to sponsor or advertise on blogs. It is also important to analyze the criteria they might use for cooperating with bloggers and how they feel towards cooperating with prominent bloggers compared to less prominent or non-political bloggers.

I also conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with five media professionals from broadcast and print backgrounds to study the influence of bloggers and Tweeps on setting the agenda. Those media professionals are from managerial positions in the shows and newspapers I conducted the content analysis on.

The interviews with media professionals and marketeers were conducted in their offices, when possible, for convenience, and at the times they set. The relevant findings from the analysis of their newspapers or shows were present in the interview for probing on interesting findings. Time slotted for each interview was 60 minutes.

3.4. Reflecting on the Ethical Dimension of Interviewing Opposition Figures

Researching figures of opposition in an authoritarian country carries with it various connotations on the security and safety of the subjects in question. It also carries with it responsibility in maintaining the integrity of the research and the desire to represent all facts and data collected, all the while safeguarding the interviewees against possible harm. The interviewees were all adults and all aware that this research would be made public and so, consequently, anything they tell me. I, however, still had to weigh the benefits of publishing certain facts against the risks that this would pose on the

interviewees — despite their knowledge and consent — given the changes that happened to the Egyptian blogosphere and the dynamics of its relationship with the public realm and so, ultimately, the authorities.

Despite the measures taken in informing all my interviewees that everything said during the interview will be used for the academic purposes of this research there were several ethical considerations to reflect upon in deciding, not only whom to interview, but also what to include in the findings.

The Association of Internet Researchers' (AoIR) report on "Ethical Decision Making and Internet research" advises that the greater the vulnerability of the subject studied, the greater the obligation of the research to protect them (Markham and Buchanan, 2012). My subjects were not in particular a vulnerable segment in the traditional sense, but their identities as opposition figures in the Egyptian context made them vulnerable to state crackdowns or character assassinations by a media that is directed in most cases.

The first ethical issue faced was the fact that my list of potential interviewees included several bloggers who were either in prison or undergoing trials. Although the authorities had several of my sources under scrutiny before I began this research, bundling those with other names the authorities are not necessarily aware of or familiar with might shed light on the lesser-known ones. So although my subjects are all operating in the public realm of the internet, at least, if not the mainstream in the cases of the more prominent ones, as the AoIR puts it, "data aggregators or search tools make information accessible to a wider public than what might have been originally intended," (Markham and Buchanan, 2012). So while the less-prominent

bloggers may have been public and accessible online only, the research would make them public and accessible in other platforms that might attract more attention to them and thus possibly putting them at risk. The impact each blogger interviewed had on the political street and his popularity, however, was made clear in the chapter discussing their backgrounds. This means that the research made it clear that the lesser-known bloggers — who might not have been under authorities' radar despite having publicly accessible blogs and social media profiles — were not of huge influence, which would make them far less important to the authorities.

The second ethical dilemma was including quotes the interviewees told me on the record that could potentially cause them harm, but that were interesting to include. Although the sources had given me prior permission to include everything said during the interviews, they often drifted off in the middle of conversation, saying information and giving quotes that might subject them to state crackdowns. At times as well the bloggers told me inappropriate or personal details about other bloggers I was interviewing in the midst of our long conversations. I have made a conscious decision to remind them on the spot that they were on record and that this research would be made public as I believed that they might get carried away, saying things they would later realize might harm them. In many cases what they had said was interesting to include, but would cause them serious harm and would not be of potential significance and its exclusion would not hinder the conclusions driven from fieldwork. In those cases I found that the rights of the subject not to be harmed outweigh the benefits those specific quotes would add to the research, (Markham and Buchanan, 2012). In the seldom cases when the

information given was of significant importance to the research, I opted to include the data without using the specific quote of the said blogger to avoid putting them at risk.

Finally, I had to deliberate on the authorities possibly using my research, or myself, as sources to pry on my subjects. It is important to remember, however, that English-language content is often of less importance to the authorities as it reaches a narrower audience, as discussed in the findings and background chapters (4, 5 and 6). The authorities have been known to give English media more freedom as they know the impact it has is limited to an English-speaking audience and so do not monitor as thoroughly as they do Arabic media. This means that research published in English is not as accessible, nor as interesting, to the authorities as that published in Arabic. The personal data I have included on each blogger's background was often either not sensitive information, or information easily found online; sensitivity of information they personally gave me during the interviews was discussed above.

Chapter IV: Contextualizing the Egyptian Media Landscape

This chapter contextualizes the research in light of a pivotal period in Egypt's political and media life and that is the period between 2006 and 2010. Through studying the political and media scene around that period, we can see that it marked a changing political life in the country, but also a changing media scene and the emergence of a stronger, more influential blogosphere.

4.1. A turning point

The period from 2006 to 2010, right before the uprising, is significant in the political and media scenes in Egypt. The period saw the start of public mobilization that led to the 2011 uprising and the emergence of various political movements that had influence on the street and ultimately played significant roles in the 2011 uprising. It was also a significant period in terms of the changing degree of freedom in the media, the new media platforms emerging as well as the state's reaction to the changing media direction.

Under the Emergency Law, which was instated from 1967 to 1980 and then again in 1981, the state had various unconstitutional rights in the name of fighting terrorism. The law gave the state the right to arrest anyone without directing any immediate charges, but also the right to arrest anyone for protesting as public gatherings were not allowed. The year 2010, for instance, marked the massacre of nine church goers on the eve of the Coptic Christmas in Nag' Hammadi, Upper Egypt, as well as suicide bombing of a church in Alexandria, leading to the death of 21 people. Both events led the state to claim more rights under the Emergency Law and their fight against terrorism. But for over 10 years before 2006, protests were very limited and quickly dispersed. But since the formation of the Kefaya (Enough) movement in 2004, protests

were brought back to the political map, (Springborg, 2009). The movement was called Enough to reflect its calls for an end to the Emergency law, Mubarak's rule of 23 years, corruption and rigged elections. They were also known to raise awareness and gather strong opposition against possible plans by Mubarak to instate his son, Gamal, as the next president Although the movement was formed in 2004, it was not until 2005 and 2006 that it began gaining momentum as it called for protests against a constitutional referendum and the rigged results of the parliamentary elections. The constitutional referendum was on a change to Article 76 of the constitution to allow for the first direct, multi-candidate presidential elections. Before 2005, the parliament would decide on a presidential candidate who would then be approved or rejected by the people through a referendum. Kefaya, however, was calling for an end to the emergency law before holding any elections. It is important to note that the year 2005 marked two elections; presidential and parliamentary, which was an unusual coincidence since the former is held every six years and the latter every five. This led to an exceptionally increased political activity, especially towards the end of the year. The presidential elections of 2005 – where the Muslim Brotherhood was not allowed to run and neither was prominent politician Talaat El Sadat and no international monitors were allowed – brought about a wave of protests. Protestors called the results rigged as Mubarak allegedly won 88.6% of the votes and candidate Ayman Nour of Al -Ghad (Tomorrow) Party called for a re-run. By the end of 2005, Kefaya had become known in the political scene for its success in mobilizing relatively small numbers – the media had then estimated protests to have gathered 10,000

at most. But 2005 also marked the Egyptian Judge's Club protests against the rigging of elections; a move that was unheard of in post-1952 Egypt.

In 2006, as Mubarak carried out a neo-liberal economic plan to privatize the public-sector factories, a wave of protests were held by the workers in the city of El Mahalla El Kobra, a major industrial city, leading to clashes with the police. Workers were calling for an end to the ongoing privatization, minimum wage and overall better conditions. This was the re-birth of the workers' movement in Egypt, which was stagnant for decades. It was also a call to put an end to the deteriorating workers' conditions and instating a decent minimum wage because, despite the inflation rates and general economic indicators improving in 2006, distribution of wealth continued deteriorating. The year 2006 also marked the Salam Ferry disaster where an estimated 1,000 passengers and crewmembers were killed when the ferry sank in the Red Sea due to the boat's unfit condition and the negligence of Egyptian authorities to act quickly or ensure the safety of the ship. The ship's owners also reportedly ordered the captain to continue the trip despite him asking for permission to return to the port as fire broke out. Private media launched a campaign discussing the negligence of relevant authorities and possible corruption that led to the death of 1,000 Egyptians. The owners were acquitted in the first trial, held in 2008, but after wide public anger, the owner was sentenced to seven years in prison in a later hearing in 2009.

Soon after, the April 6th movement was formed in 2008 and many former members of Kefaya and supporters of Nour joined it. The first major activity of the movement was to form a Facebook group supporting El Mahalla El Kobra workers in their strikes, calling for a general strike on April 6th, 2008.

The movement has subsequently called for several strikes and protests, including those in the 2011 uprising.

But the protests were quickly and violently dispersed by tactics Springborg calls unique to Egypt (2009:11), namely the use of plain-clothed men to arrest, harass and beat protestors. The plain clothes mean the media cannot document the violations against harassers and the protestors cannot foresee the crackdowns.

Although quick to disperse protests, Springborg (2009:7) points out that as hybrid states – those carrying aspects of both democratic and authoritarian regimes – normally do, the state separates between political action and political expression; allowing the latter and prohibiting the former. The state did not believe the written word could have direct impact on the political life and so allowed for a degree of freedom in the press that was still restrictive, but unprecedented since 1952. In fact, by 2009 Freedom House had upgraded Egypt's status from "Not Free" to "Partly Free" due to the efforts of Egyptian journalists and newly-launched media platforms as well as the blogosphere to cross red lines, despite harassment and imprisonment of journalists, (Mohamed, 2010).

In fact, up until the launch of newspapers like *Al-Masry Al-Youm* and *Al-Shorouk*, the press was categorized, in the minds of officials and the public, as either "national" press, such as *Al-Ahram*, or "opposition" press. Since late President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the press, independent, credible press was unheard of until the introduction of *Al-Masry Al-Youm* in 2004, followed by *Al-Shorouk* and the online newspaper *Youm7* in 2009, which was later turned into a daily, printed newspaper. The rise of independent

newspapers, blogger Baheyya argues, pushed the boundaries of journalism and challenged state's oppression, introducing a new breed of journalism to a largely stagnant media scene (quoted in Sakr, 2013, p.22).

Although the new media platforms, both online and offline, were able to cross some previous red lines and provide more credible and unbiased coverage of the political scene, their freedom was quickly stifled in 2010. As the 2011 report on media coverage of the elections by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies shows, the private media – which the report said balanced the official media bias in elections coverage – faced a state crackdown right before and during the elections. The report stated, "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," (2011). A month before the parliamentary elections of 2010, the National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority instated a rule that prevented private media from sending text messages to their readers to follow the news without prior licences from the Ministry of Information and the Supreme Press Council. The ministry also suspended licenses of 17 channels stating they incited hatred and strife and carried out several crackdowns on specific journalists known to be critical of the regime. The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies report also cited various threats, both official and unofficial, made to newspapers and channels during these periods.

Crackdown on media platforms continued after January 25th, 2011. Sakr argues that "threats to free speech in Egypt not only persisted but intensified after the uprising," (2013, p.3). This crackdown continued strongly under SCAF and the freedom the press enjoyed shortly after the uprising was "short-lived" as Sakr (2013, p.6) describes it. After January 25th, the state shut down several channels, filed lawsuits – often in military courts – against several journalists and their media platforms and arrested several reporters.

4.2. Media landscape and plurality

The media outlets chosen for the purpose of this study represent the different types of media platforms in Egypt and embody the Egyptian media landscape in terms of its limited diversity and the controls, biases and pressures it undergoes. And so in studying each of those five media outlets — three newspapers and two talk shows on different television channels — one can envision the limited plurality in the Egyptian media map.

The next section demonstrates how, as Ali Mohamed puts it, "the Arabic media is caught between the hammer of government and the anvil of professional responsibility" (2010). He argues that Arab regimes dominate the media through ownership, approving licences, appointing editors and using the media to promote their policies. At the same time, Mohamed argues, the public expects the media to undertake the responsibility to reveal corruption, defend human rights, and champion their interests and concerns.

It is important to note that circulation figures were intentionally excluded from this research as such data is often problematic in Egypt due to the lack of an independent body to monitor or regulate the figures and so they normally depend solely on the figures the publications provide. Two other

factors skew those figures; the fact that a copy of the newspaper is often read by more than one person and the number of free copies provided to institutions, companies and certain people, especially in the case of state-owned newspapers.

4.2.1. Al-Ahram

One of the three main state-dominated daily newspapers in Egypt, the other two being *Al Akhbar* and *Al Gomhoureya, Al-Ahram* was founded in 1875 is the second oldest newspaper in Egypt. Although originally founded by Lebanese brothers Beshara and Saleem Takla and functioned as independent newspapers, *Al-Ahram*, like other private newspapers, was nationalized by Nasser in 1960. The newspaper, like all state press in Egypt, is controlled by the state, which directly appoints its editors. It is widely circulated but its popularity had been dwindling especially during 2010 as its pro-government stand became stronger and more obvious. The introduction of new independent newspapers like *Al-Shorouk* and *Al-Masry Al-Youm* also decreased *Al-Ahram*'s popularity and added to the credibility crisis it was facing as the readers had access to more credible and objective news and analysis sources.

Al-Ahram faced a major credibility scandal when they published a photoshopped picture of Mubarak heading a group of presidents in 2010. Shortly after its publishing, blogger Wael Khalil published the original photo where Mubarak was at the back of the group and exposed *Al-Ahram*. During the 2011 uprising, the newspaper was largely pro-regime and attempted to undermine the size of the protests. The newspaper even claimed that those in Tahrir Square were in support of Mubarak (Sakr, 2013, p.1). The biased reporting, however, only lasted until February 11th, the day Mubarak

announced resigning his post. After this date, the editorial policy took a sharp turn, becoming supportive of the uprising and critical of the previous regime. The newspaper, however, remained supportive of the then-ruling SCAF, suggesting it was supportive of whichever regime in rule, with the exception of that of the Brotherhood. This exception, however, could be explained by the fact that although the military rule remained in control of various institutions and bodies inside the state, including the media, the Brotherhood's regime had not yet infiltrated institutions on the micro-level and so had not been able to co-opt or coerce the media. Despite the Brotherhood regime appointing several new Islamist-leaning newspapers editors in August 2012, this attempt to control the press did not strongly reflect on the editorial policies of most newspapers, which remained largely opposed to their regime.

While *Al-Gomhoureya* and *Al-Akhbar* are two of the oldest newspapers in Egypt, established in 1954 and 1952 respectively, and, like *Al-Ahram*, state publications, their popularity is not comparable to that of *Al-Ahram*. Much like *Al-Ahram*, the two newspapers are largely government mouthpieces. Not only does *Al-Ahram* have better access to government sources and so normally have exclusive news that the other two newspapers do not, it is also more of an educational press institution than the other two. *Al-Ahram*, with its various affiliated publications, often runs training programs and was considered a learning institution that many now-established journalists trained and gained experience from. It is worth mentioning that *Al-Gomhoureya* was once the leading newspaper of the 1952 military regime before *Al-Ahram* replaced it.

4.2.2. Al-Masry Al-Youm

Al-Masry Al-Youm was launched in 2004 and was the first independent newspaper to provide credible and unbiased coverage after the scene was dominated by partisan or official newspapers only. The newspaper was launched in 2004 by three businessmen; Salah Diab, former National Democratic Party member Ahmed Bahgat and the liberal Naguib Sawiris. It quickly grew to become a credible news source, competing with the long-established *Al-Ahram* as an alternative, more objective news source. Newcomers came to the picture almost five years later, including the daily independent *Al-Shorouk,* which launched in 2009, and the online *Youm7*, launching in the same year.

A 2012 Oxford Business Group Report indicates that independent newspapers like *Al-Masry Al-Youm* and *Al-Shorouk* as well as online newspaper *Youm7* were gaining more popularity in the years leading up to and after January 25th, especially online.

Each newspaper, however, represented different content and targeted a different audience. While *Al-Masry Al-Youm* was perceived as targeting the average Egyptian, with a mix of hard news and editorials, *Al-Shorouk* was perceived as targeting a more elite reader. *Al-Shorouk* was known for its credibility and unbiased, professional reporting, but was also renowned for a selection of trusted and highly regarded columnists from intellectual circles that other newspapers did not have; including novelist Alaa Al Aswany and renowned veteran journalist Hamdy Qandil. *Youm7* was largely different in the content it provided because it was an online platform that provided largely hard news and used simpler language than *Al-Shorouk* and *Al-Masry Al-Youm*. In competition with *Al-Masry Al-Youm* as well was the older *Al-Dostour*

newspaper, which was launched in 1995 and was known to be outspokenly critical of the regime. *Al-Dostour*'s editorial style, however, was often criticized because it often lacked objectivity and would use a sensational style of writing to draw readers in. *Al-Dostour*'s fierce attacks on the regime and outspokenness caused the newspaper several issues, the most famous of which was the dismissal of its editor, Ibrahim Eissa, in 2010.

4.2.3. The Daily News Egypt (DNE)

The *DNE* was launched in 2005 by the *International Herald Tribune* and then again in 2012 by Business News for Press, Publishing and Distribution under a different editorial team. The *DNE* management announced they had to shut their operations down due to the declining advertising revenue, something several newspapers and magazines reported during that period. The *DNE* represents a niche market for English readers and was preceded by several other independent English dailies, weeklies and monthlies, but none as popular as the *DNE*, with the exception of the state-owned *Al-Ahram Weekly*. The *DNE* enjoyed credibility among its readers but its circulation was limited to English-speaking readers, foreigners living in Egypt and expatriates as they updated their website with the content daily so were an accessible source for Egyptians abroad. It was also a source of credible news for researchers on Egyptian affairs as it had an accessible archive that covered all its issues since 2005 until 2012. The archive, however, was taken offline under the new management.

The newspaper, like many of its counter-parts, enjoyed a degree of freedom that other Arabic newspapers did not because the state knew its circulation was limited to the niche. Even the state-owned *Al-Ahram Weekly* seemed to enjoy far more editorial freedom than the Arabic *Al-Ahram* or other

Arabic-language publications under the same establishments. The content the *DNE* presents, however, is different than that of *Al-Ahram Weekly* because while *DNE* specializes primarily in news, *Al-Ahram Weekly* publishes more features and softer news due to the fact that it is only published weekly, as opposed to the *DNE* which publishes both online and in print on daily basis. Before *DNE* there had been several similar newspapers, including *Cairo Times* and *The Middle East Times*.

4.2.4. Ten PM

Ten PM was hosted by Mona El Shazly from its launch in 2006 until 2012 but was taken over by Wael El Ibrashy in November 2012 when El Shazly left for *MBC Masr*. The show ran on satellite channel *Dream TV*, the first private satellite channel to be launched in Egypt in 2001. *Dream TV* is funded by businessman and former National Democratic Party (NDP) member Ahmed Bahgat and was known to be largely pro-state although El Shazly was known to be reservedly critical of the regime.

Although *Ten PM* was one of the oldest political talk shows, before it were two popular talk shows, the oldest and first of its kind being *Al-Qahira Al-Youm* (*Cairo Today*), which ran since 2000 and the other being *El Beit Beitak*, launching in 2004 on state television. *Cairo Today* came as a revolutionary concept to the Egyptian media and aired on the satellite channel *Orbit*, presented by the fiery, outspoken Amr Adib. Adib's casual style, directness and openness in handling political issues were new to the reserved media scene in Egypt and his style quickly gathered massive popularity for the show. The show, however, was suspended in 2010 and its host, Adib, claimed that the show was not suspended due to the alleged outstanding debts, but

rather due to political reasons, especially that the program was willing to pay its debts but the state-owned Media Production City – where satellite channels air and most studios are – refused. Soon after the 2011 uprising, however, the show started re-airing and it remains one of the most popular evening talk shows in the region.

El Beit Beitak came as a response to a change that was taking place on satellite channels, forcing state television to liven up their broadcasting to be able to compete. *El Beit Beitak* tried to compete with the popular *Cairo Today* but due to the limited freedom the hosts were given, its editorial voice was never as strong as the satellite channels' talk shows. It ended up going off air a few months after the uprising as its main presenters, Mahmoud Saad, Khairy Ramadan and Tamer Amin, quit and moved to satellite channels.

4.2.5. Baladna Bel Masry (Our Country in Egyptian Dialect)

One of the most popular political evening talk shows, *Baladna Bel Masry* was launched in 2009 and ran on *ONTV*, a satellite channel funded by liberal businessman and founder of Al Masreyin Al Ahrar Party, Naguib Sawiris. The show was initially co-hosted by Reem Magued and journalist and *Al-Dostour* editor Ibrahim Eissa, who was known to be critical of the Mubarak regime. Before the 2010 elections, however, Eissa was removed from *ONTV* and the show and the channel's owner, businessman Naguib Sawiris, claimed it was due to problems with the advertisers over Eissa. Magued declined to renew her contract with the channel after June 30th, 2013 – when the Brotherhood regime was ousted – for what she called "editorial differences."

OTV, which later became known as *ONTV*, enjoyed the most freedom in its coverage and was the most critical of the regime. It also hosted some of

the most critical talk show presenters, including Magued and Yousry Fouda. *Baladna Bel Masry* was known to be critical of the regime and showed obvious support of the protests and the causes of the uprising from the early days, unlike several other shows that only showed their support after Mubarak stepped down. One of the show's most popular episodes was aired in March, 2011 when she hosted then-prime minister Ahmed Shafik, novelist Alaa El Aswany and the renowned journalist Hamdy Qandil. The debate between Shafik and Aswany got heated and ended with Shafik resigning his post a few hours after the episode was aired. Magued was also summoned in May of that year to the hearing in a military trial where blogger Hossam El Hamalawy was accused of spreading lies during one of the *Baladna Bel Masry*'s episodes.

4.3. Opinionated journalism

The Egyptian blogosphere has had a strong status in the Arab world since 2004 when the Kefaya movement established cyberspace platforms for opposition voices (Taki, 2010). In its early days, the blogosphere was a space for freedom of expression, opposition of the regime and coverage of issues that the mainstream media ignored, not only political issues, but taboo ones like homosexuality and atheism.

The Egyptian blogosphere was diverse in content and the voices it represented and divided into several categories; April 6th movement, Kefaya movement, Muslim Brotherhood, professional journalists, online activists, politically-oriented bloggers, citizen journalists, religiously-oriented bloggers and a small segment of personal blogs. The blogosphere also included Marxist bloggers like Hossam El Hamalawy as well as Islamists like Abdel Moneim Mahmoud. Several of the most prominent bloggers were a mixture of those

above-mentioned categories or went back and forth between one category and the other.

The Egyptian blogosphere was not always that diversified. When it first emerged in 1999, it was composed of mailing groups and only a handful of them. But later on, the Muslim Brotherhood found it a useful space for dissidence and by 2005 many members were blogging their opinions and take on news, which they could not do in conventional media. Members of the Kefaya and April 6th opposition movements were also blogging heavily and acting as citizen journalists and online activists, spreading videos on police violence and calling for action. First-wave bloggers, or those who established the Egyptian blogosphere, included leftist bloggers like Wael Abbas, Alaa Abdel Fattah, El Hamalawy and Malek Mostafa, Islamist bloggers like Mahmoud as well as former Brotherhood members like Amr Ezzat and Mostafa El Naggar. Right-leaning, non-Islamist, liberal first wave bloggers were far fewer than leftists and Islamists and the most known of those was Mahmoud Salem, who is known as Sandmonkey. In 2006 bloggers started gaining some media attention, not as individuals, but as a phenomenon as they started covering incidents mainstream media neglected, including graphic police brutality footage. That year blogger Demagh MAK uploaded a graphic video of two police officers abusing minibus driver Imad Al-Kabir. It was soon picked up by other bloggers, including Wael Abbas and widely circulated and eventually, in 2007 the officers were sentenced to three years in jail (Isherwood, 2008). A few months later, blogger Malek Mostafa uploaded footage of mass sexual harassment downtown during Eid, which was also widely circulated, eventually leading mainstream media to pick up the news.

Another turning point in the Egyptian blogosphere was in 2008 when online and offline activists as well as political bloggers and members of Kefaya, April 6th and the Muslim Brotherhood collaborated their efforts both online and offline to call for labour strikes in opposition to minimum wages and privatization. By 2008, 160,000 of the 490,000 blogs in the Middle East were Egyptian, (Abdallah, 2011, p.23).

Unlike Western blogospheres, the Egyptian one was largely dominated by politics, current affairs, religion and, to a lesser extent, personal issues. Some blogs were run by female bloggers speaking of their personal lives and tackling social norms that concern women while others discussed sensitive issues that the mainstream media shied away from; like homosexuality and atheism. A Bahaii, for instance, ran a blog about his religion and the struggles he faces in the Sunni-dominated Egypt. With a still young online advertising market in Egypt, marketeers and the private sector largely ignored the blogosphere for advertisements, product features or reviews. This means that, unlike blogospheres in the UK or the U.S. for instance, independent bloggers who were not funded by political parties were not able to generate revenues from their content. However, most political bloggers had full-time jobs and blogged as a hobby or part-time activity and so were not in dire need to generate income from blogging to sustain their activity.

Although most bloggers stayed off the state's radar before January 25th, some bloggers were prosecuted for posts they had written. Brotherhood blogger Abdel Moneim Mahmoud, for instance, was arrested in 2007 and Kareem Amer was arrested twice, once in 2005 and again in 2006. Amer was sentenced in 2007 to four years for posts deemed anti-Islamic and insulting to

Mubarak. Bloggers and activists, however, rallied behind both bloggers and although they were not successful in revoking Amer's sentence, they were successful with Mahmoud.

The relationship between the bloggers and the media at first was not a collaborative one. The media would use material shot or recorded by bloggers or citizen journalists mostly without any accreditation or reference to the bloggers, (Wael Abbas in Mohamed, 2010).

Social media and blogs were used before January 25th to call for public mobilisation. This was seen in the calls for general strikes on April 6th over the years and to report on workers' protests and strikes in 2007. But the impact it had on public mobilisation was limited to a few hundreds at most joining the protests.

Before January 25th 2011, pictures of Khaled Said, a citizen who was arrested from an internet café and killed in June 2010, circulated widely. While the official autopsy claimed the official reason behind Said's death was suffocating on a roll of narcotics he swallowed as he was getting arrested, the social media circulated a picture of his dead body that showed signs of violence. Online activists argued Said was brutally beaten and killed for having circulated videos of police violence. Micro-bloggers Wael Ghoneim and Abdel Rahman Mansour created a Facebook page titled *Kolena Khaled Said* (We are All Khaled Said), which raised awareness on his case and called for putting an end to police brutality. In less than two weeks after its launch, the page had gathered over half a million followers. On January 14th, the day former Tunisian Zine El Abeddine Ben Ali fell after the Tunisian uprising, the Khaled Said Facebook page made calls for nation-wide protests on January 25th, the

annual national holiday celebration of the police forces, to protest against torture, corruption, unemployment and injustice, collaborating with other activists on the ground. The calls spread online and offline and January 25th saw larger numbers than any protest that was called for online before.

4.4. Conclusion and discussion

Blogging is often defined as the unedited voice of a writer (Winer, 2003), and its definition often stresses the opinion angle of blogging. The Egyptian blogosphere, however, became popular, not for opinions offered on it, but rather for the facts and news it presented that were not presented elsewhere in mainstream media. People started turning to bloggers to know stories the media were not covering and hear the truth from people who were on the ground and were not as politicized as the popular media platforms.

The rising popularity of blogs came at a time when the state allowed a degree of freedom for the media but various of its popular platforms were used in the process of manufacturing consent (Herman and Chomsky, 1988) and ensuring the continuity of social order. In the process of achieving hegemony, the former regime miscalculated the importance of the increasingly popular alternative media platforms like blogs and social media as well as the growing popularity of independent media platforms.

The state varied between coercing the media into submission and coopting it through the intertwining interests of its owners and the regime. Coercing the media came through the above-mentioned crackdowns on certain shows or presenters who crossed the red lines, which ultimately led to self-censorship. Coopting some platforms, on the other hand, was easy to achieve because the main media owners in Egypt were either part of that political

historical bloc – as was the case with people like former NDP member and *Dream TV* owner Ahmed Bahgat – or had interests and investments that they needed to secure through staying on the good side of the state – as was the case with people like *ONTV* owner Sawiris. This meant that the state didn't always have to exert direct and obvious coercion and consent was often achieved willingly by media owners wishing to safeguard their investments.

However, as Springborg argues, the state did not deem the word strong enough to stir political action (2009) and so it was during the period around 2006 that the introduction of independent press and the blogosphere offered a degree of plurality to the discourse in Egypt. It was this sense of irrelevance on the ground that also allowed English-language publications a higher degree of freedom than other media outlets. The state knew the extent to which these platforms targeting a rather elite readership are able to influence and so allowed for a higher degree of political expression. This degree of plurality in the media, however, did not come close to what Mouffe (2000) stipulated for a revised Habermasian public sphere (1989) but the blogosphere offered a much closer version of a Habermasian public sphere than the mainstream media and institutions did at that time. The media did not operate independently from the state and corporate restraint, a key element in a Habermasian public sphere. This meant that the freedom the media was allowed since 2006 was quickly stifled in 2010 through direct state crackdowns as well as media owners themselves cracking down on their own journalists or presenters to safeguard their investments. The inclusivity required for the creation of a public sphere as per Habermas (1989) was also non-existent given how the state had power over appointing editors in state media. But the state also eliminated the inclusivity

factor given how it could indirectly control who can and cannot be heard through controlling the media, owners of the media as well as tools like broadcasting facilities at the Egyptian Media Production City. Voices that were strongly opposed then were excluded from this sphere.

It is then apparent that the mainstream media in Egypt had close ties with political circles and was largely a significant part of the historical bloc that worked, more or less, towards achieving hegemony and maintaining social order. The ties between the media and the state institutions, however, ran much deeper than simple coercion or abiding by the regimes' rules. This was obvious in how the media reacted to the toppling of Mubarak; media outlets that have always been known to support his regime were quick to turn against it once the army took over power. This is not because those media outlets suddenly changed editorial directions into more revolutionary-inclining agendas, it was rather because media institutions and the state's institutions had deep ties on the micro, not just the macro, level and so the elements of the historical bloc ran deep and strong. This meant that some of the media platforms' loyalty was not to the president or parliament in power, but rather to the institutions of the previous historical bloc – including the army –, which remained largely the dominating institutions in the country, despite changes in presidential or parliamentary leaderships.

Chapter V: Media Findings: Image and coverage of bloggers before and after January 25th

Quantitative and framing analysis was conducted on all October 2010 and October 2011 issues of three newspapers: the state-run *Al-Ahram*, the independent *Al-Masry Al-Youm* and the English-language *The Daily News Egypt*. Quantitative and framing analysis was also conducted on all November 2010 and November 2011 episodes of two popular political talk shows: *Baladna Bel Masry* and *Ten PM*. The analysis served as a comparative study of media's portrayal of bloggers in 2010 and in 2011.

When looking at findings from the Identity Frame applied, one needs to keep in mind that bloggers often also held other positions and performed several other activities they might deem more important than blogging. Prominent blogger Mostafa El Naggar, for instance, was also a parliament member while many other bloggers are prominent activists. Therefore, the writers, presenters and the bloggers themselves often prioritize their identities as activists, for instance, over their identities as bloggers. This holds especially true in more mainstream media outlets, like *Ten PM*, where the audience might be familiar with the term activist but not blogger.

5.1. Findings from quantitative content analysis of offline media

5.1.1 Print

Codes used in print:

Quoted: The article has a direct or a paraphrase of a quote by the blogger.

Mentioned: The blogger's name is simply mentioned in the middle of coverage that is not specific to his/her news.

General Mention: The article generally discusses or mentions bloggers but does not refer to a specific one.

Full Coverage: The article is covering the news of a certain blogger.

Headline: The blogger's name appears in the headline.

Pictured: The blogger's picture is included in the article.

Front Page: The coverage of the blogger is in the front page.

Bloggers were only covered 9 times in the media studied for October 2010, 8 of those times were in the *DNE*.

They were covered 118 times in October 2011. Articles where bloggers were mentioned, quoted or featured most in print of October 2011 were covering Alaa Abdel Fattah's arrest, Maikel Nabil's detention, Asmaa Mahfouz winning a prize, Mina Daniel's death and Esraa Abdel Fattah, Wael Ghoneim, Ahmed Maher and Mahfouz being possible nominees for Nobel Peace Prize. Star bloggers Esraa Abdel Fattah, Ghoneim, Maher and Mahfouz's participation in a conference was also covered frequently.

5.1.1.1. Al-Masry Al-Youm

Comparng Al Masry Al Youm 2010 to 2011

Year	Full Coverage	Mentions	General Mentions	Quoted	Total Number of Mentions	Total Words	Headlines Total	Headlines with Names	Headlines with General Reference	Front Page	Pictured
Al Masry Al Youm 2010	0	0	0	1	1	119	0	0	0	0	0
Al Masry Al Youm 2011	9	17	9	9	44	5,520	13	6	7	2	5
Percentage Change					4300%	4358.60%					

Table 5.1: Comparing Al-Masry Al-Youm's *coverage of bloggers in 2010 and 2011*

In October 2010, *Al-Masry Al-Youm* only had one mention of bloggers in the form of a 119-word long quote from Mohamed Adel in an article about different student movements. Their coverage of bloggers in 2010 came in the middle rank between *Al-Ahram* and *DNE* in terms of frequency and space given to bloggers.

In October 2011, *Al-Masry Al-Youm* had a total of 44 mentions of bloggers and a total of 5,520 words. The word count excluded articles with

simple name mentions and nothing further on the blogger. Their 2011 coverage was the highest in terms of space given to bloggers. The space results were skewed, however, due to six articles covering social media reactions to current issues vaguely calling all social media users online activists. Users quoted were often not bloggers at all, but rather casual social media users. During the interviews, Ehab El Zelaky, managing editor of *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, said that this term was used loosely and inaccurately during this period because the concept of online activists was new to some reporters and it was a chaotic period due to the amount of news covered, especially online, throughout the day, leaving space for such errors. The frequency of mentioning bloggers came in the middle between *Al-Ahram* and *DNE*.

5.1.1.2. Al-Ahram

Comparing Al Ahram 2010 to 2011

Year	Full Coverage	Mentions	General Mentions	Quoted	Total Number of Mentions	Total Words	Headlines Total	Headlines with Names	Headlines with General Reference	Front Page	Pictured
Al Ahram 2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Al Ahram 2011	5	3	0	4	12	1,838	9	8	1	0	3

Table 5.2: Comparing Al-Ahram *coverage of bloggers in 2010 and 2011*

In October 2010, *Al-Ahram* had zero mention of bloggers; the lowest in all three publications.

In October 2011, *Al-Ahram* had a total of 12 mentions of bloggers and a total of 1,838 words. Their coverage of bloggers was also the least of all three newspapers in terms of space and frequency.

5.1.1.3. The Daily News Egypt

Comparing the Daily News Egypt 2010 to 2011

Year	Full Coverage	Mentions	General Mentions	Quoted	Total Number of Mentions	Total Words	Headlines Total	Headlines with Names	Headlines with General Reference	Front Page	Pictured
DNE 2010	2	1	3	2	8	832	3	0	3	6	0
DNE 2011	9	35	6	12	62	4,791	9	1	8	12	9
Percentage Change					675%	475.80%					

Table 5.3: Comparing the Daily News Egypt *coverage of bloggers in 2010 and 2011*

In October 2010, *DNE* had 8 mentions of bloggers and a total of 832 words; the highest in all three newspapers.

In October 2011, *DNE* had a total of 62 mentions of bloggers and a total of 4,791 words; not accounting for simple name mentions in the word count.

5.1.1.4. Reflections and total statistics for quantitative content analysis of print

Comparing newspapers in 2010

Newspaper	Full Coverage	Mentions	General Mentions	Quoted	Total Number of Mentions	Total Words	Headlines Total	Headlines with Names	Headlines with General Reference	Front Page	Pictured
Al Ahram	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Al Masry Al Youm	0	0	0	1	1	119	0	0	0	0	0
The Daily News Egypt	2	1	3	2	8	832	3	0	3	6	0
Total Print	2	1	3	3	9	951	3	0	3	6	0

Table 5.4: Comparing newspapers' coverage of bloggers in 2010

In 2010, there were 9 mentions of bloggers and a total of 951 words

Comparing newspapers in 2011

Newspaper	Full Coverage	Mentions	General Mentions	Quoted	Total Number of Mentions	Total Words	Headlines Total	Headlines with Names	Headlines with General Reference	Front Page	Pictured
Al Ahram	5	3	0	4	12	1,838	9	8	1	0	3
Al Masry Al Youm	9	17	9	9	44	5,520	13	6	7	2	5
The Daily News Egypt	9	35	6	12	62	4,791	9	1	8	12	9
Total Print	23	55	15	25	118	12,149	31	14	17	14	17

Table 5.5: Comparing newspapers' coverage of bloggers in 2011

In 2011, there were 118 mentions of bloggers and a total of 12,149 words.

Changes in print coverage of bloggers from 2010 to 2011

Comparing totals in years

Year	Full Coverage	Mentions	General Mentions	Quoted	Total Number of Mentions	Total Words	Headlines Total	Headlines with Names	Headlines with General Reference	Front Page	Pictured
2010	2	1	3	3	9	951	3	0	3	6	0
2011	23	55	15	25	118	12,149	31	14	17	14	17
Percentage Change	1050%	5400%	400%	733.30%	1211%	1177.50%	933.30%		466.60%	133.30%	

Table 5.6: Comparing total newspapers' coverage of bloggers in 2010 and 2011

In general, it seems all three newspapers showed significant increases when it came to space and frequency of the media coverage of bloggers. The total mentions increased from 9 in 2010 to 118 in 2011. The space given to bloggers

increased from 951 words in 2010 to 12,149 in 2011. The increase was drastic across all categories, as seen in table 5.6. The highest increase was seen in Mentions category and the lowest in the General Mentions. The Front Pages category increased from 6 in 2010 to 14 in 2011 and saw the lowest increase across all categories, possibly due to the fact that it was the highest category in 2010.

Expectedly, the state-owned *Al-Ahram* gave bloggers the least space and frequency of coverage while the independent English-language *Daily News Egypt* (*DNE*) showed the most interest in bloggers' issues.

It is important to note that *Al-Ahram* never put bloggers on the front page while *Al-Masry Al-Youm* did so only twice. This is a significant indication that while the coverage of bloggers increased dramatically across all three newspapers, their perceived priority in *Al-Ahram* and *Al-Masry Al-Youm* compared to other news still remained relatively low when compared to the priority the *DNE* gave to their news.

Al-Ahram has increased its coverage from zero coverage in 2010 to 12 mentions and a total of 1,838 words. *Ahram Online* (the online edition of the newspaper which gets updated throughout the day) covered issues, like Mina Daniel's death, that were not in the print edition of the same day. Hesham Younes, the website's managing editor, says their editorial policies are separate than the print edition and they enjoy more freedom. This is an indication of the perceived importance of the news, which would go into a frequently updated website but does not find space in the more-space-scarce print edition. It is also an indication of the target audience of print versus online and what news would be more relevant to an audience with access to online reading. This study,

however, is concerned with the print edition only. A news article on Maikel Nabil's referral to the mental health hospital was covered in the first edition of *Al-Ahram* but was replaced with an article about the Muslim Brotherhood in the second edition of the newspaper. This is also an indication of the importance the blogger's news presented to the editors; although it was important enough to cover, it was not important enough to keep when space got tight as other news came in. All this indicates that while *Al-Ahram* may have changed its editorial policy to shed more light on bloggers, it has not necessarily matched the attitudes of other newspapers. *Al-Ahram* is shown to have remained, to a certain extent, conservative when it comes to covering the lesser prominent online dissident voices.

DNE was clearly the highest newspaper in terms of frequency and space of coverage in 2010; comparing a zero in *Al-Ahram* and a 1 mention in *Al-Masry Al-Youm* to 8 mentions in *DNE* in a total of 832 words. *DNE* was also the only newspaper to cover and quote less prominent bloggers like Lilian Wagdy and Evronia Azer while *Al-Ahram* and *Al-Masry Al-Youm* quoted and covered only star bloggers like Alaa Abdel Fattah and Asmaa Mahfouz. *DNE* also quoted and covered bridge bloggers like Sandmonkey and Gigi Ibrahim who blogged mainly in English while other newspapers opted for star bloggers who blogged in Arabic. It is also worth noting that even in 2010, six of the eight articles covering bloggers came in the front page of the newspaper and three of them indicated bloggers in the headline. The editorial policy of the *DNE* did not seem to shift post-January 25th, although much more space was given to the coverage of bloggers. The number of mentions in the issues increased from 8 in 2010 to 62 in 2011. *DNE*, although the highest in terms of

frequency in both 2010 and 2011, was not, however, the highest in terms of space given to bloggers in 2011. *Al-Masry Al-Youm* dedicated 5,520 words to bloggers while the *DNE* dedicated 4,791. This, however, could be attributed to six articles *Al-Masry Al-Youm* carried that covered social media reactions to current issues. Those articles vaguely identified all social media users, who were not online activists or bloggers, as online activists. *DNE*, however, was the highest when it came to putting the articles carrying the bloggers news in their front page: 12 times compared to zero in *Al-Ahram* and only 2 in *Al-Masry Al-Youm*. They were also the highest to feature their pictures; 9 times compared to 5 in *Al-Masry Al-Youm* and 3 in *Al-Ahram*. This indicates that although *DNE's* editorial policy did not really change, their focus on bloggers was much more emphasized in 2011. The fact that *DNE* dedicate more space in front pages and to cover issues of specific bloggers indicates the importance they give to both, the bloggers' voices, as well as their arrests, deaths and various issues. *DNE* would also be the highest in space if the six articles where *Al-Masry Al-Youm* covers social media reactions were deducted. The audience of *DNE* as well as their journalists are significantly different than those of *Al-Ahram* and *Al-Masry Al-Youm*. While the *DNE*'s audience and editorial team are English-spoken middle and upper class mostly youth, those of *Al-Ahram* are more mainstream and wider. *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, on the other hand, comes somewhere in the middle of those two spectrums, with a team of mostly young journalists and slightly middle-aged editors and a print audience of wider pool and backgrounds than *DNE* but slightly upper classes and younger ages than *Al-Ahram*.

Al-Masry Al-Youm seems to come in the middle in all aspects between *Al-Ahram* and *DNE* except in the category of headlines where it tops both as well as the total number of words dedicated to online activists for the above-mentioned social media reports. *Al-Masry Al-Youm* increased the frequency of their coverage from 1 in 2010 to 44 in 2011 and the total number of words dedicated to bloggers from 119 in 2010 to 5,520 in 2011. This is a significant increase that reflects a drastic shift in their editorial policy, especially given that the one article they had in 2010 was a quote from Mohamed Adel of April 6th on political movements in universities. They also dedicated six articles in October 2011 to cover social media reactions, which shows how much emphasis they decided to shed on bloggers and the online world.

5.1.2. Broadcast

Codes used in broadcast:

Coverage: Covering news about the blogger.

Mention: An interview or the presenter mentioning the blogger's name in the middle of a discussion that is not mainly about the blogger.

Caption: When the blogger's name appears in a caption or the newsreel.

Interview in Person: When the blogger appears on the screen as they are being interviewed in the studio or elsewhere.

Phone Interview: The blogger is interviewed over the telephone.

In November 2010, bloggers were only mentioned twice, both times on *Ten PM*.

In November 2011, they were mentioned 60 times. Issues where bloggers were mentioned, covered, hosted in person or through the phone in October 2011 were mostly about Alaa Abdel Fattah's detention or bloggers'

analysis and account of the November 19th Tahrir events where prominent blogger and activist Malek Mostafa lost his eye and activist Ahmed Harara lost a second eye (he had lost his first during the January 25th events) when violence erupted as police violently dispersed protestors calling for the rights of those injured or killed during the January 25th events. Maikel Nabil's detention was still discussed in November 2011, although not as heavily as Alaa Abdel Fattah's detention, which was then fresher.

5.1.2.1. Ten PM

Comparing Ten PM 2010 to 2011

Year	Coverage	Caption	Mentions	Interview In Person	Phone Interview	Total Number of Mentions	Total Minutes	Number of times segment titled after blogger
Ten PM 2010	0	0	1	1	0	2	18:10	0
Ten PM 2011	2	0	6	3	2	13	80 mns 39 seconds	1
Percentage Change			500%	200%		550%	344.40%	0%

Table 5.7: Comparing Ten Pm*'s coverage of bloggers in 2010 and 2011*

In October 2010, *Ten PM* had a total of 2 mentions of bloggers and a total of 18:10 minutes of coverage.

In October 2011, *Ten PM* had a total of 13 mentions of bloggers and a total of 80:39 minutes of coverage.

Comparing Baladna Bel Masry 2010 to 2011

Year	Coverage	Caption	Mentions	Interview In Person	Phone Interview	Total Number of Mentions	Total Minutes	Number of times segment titled after blogger
Baladna Bel Masry2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Baladna Bel Masry 2011	16	3	15	7	6	47	172 mns 52 seconds	7
Percentage Change								

Table 5.8: Comparing Baladna Bel Masry*'s coverage of bloggers in 2010 and 2011*

In October 2010, *Baladna Bel Masry* had 0 mentions of bloggers.

In October 2011, *Baladna Bel Masry* had a total of 47 mentions of bloggers and a total of 172:52 minutes of coverage.

5.1.2.3. Reflections and total statistics for quantitative content analysis of broadcast

Comparing TV Shows in 2010

Show	Coverage	Caption	Mentions	Interview In Person	Phone Interview	Total Number of Mentions	Total Minutes
Ten PM	0	0	1	1	0	2	18:10
Baladna Bel Masry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Broadcast	0	0	1	1	0	2	18:10

Table 5.9: Comparing broadcast's coverage of bloggers in 2010

In 2010, there were 2 mentions of bloggers and 18:10 minutes (not accounting for the time they do not speak but are still on air).

Show	Coverage	Caption	Mentions	Interview In Person	Phone Interview	Total Number of Mentions	Total Minutes	Number of times segment titled after blogger
Baladna Bel Masry	16	3	15	7	6	47	172 mns 52 seconds	7
Ten PM	2	0	6	3	2	13	80 mns 39 seconds	1.00
Total Broadcast	18	3	21	10	8	60	253 mns 31 seconds	8

Table 5.10: Comparing broadcast's coverage of bloggers in 2011

In 2011, there were 60 mentions of bloggers and 253:31 minutes.

Comparing totals in years

Year	Coverage	Caption	Mentions	Interview In Person	Phone Interview	Total Number of Mentions	Total Minutes	Number of times segment titled after blogger
2010	0	0	1	1	0	2	18:10	0
2011	18	3	21	10	8	60	253 mns 31 seconds	8
Percentage Change			2000%	900%		2900%	1305.50%	

Table 5.11: Comparing total broadcast's coverage of bloggers in 2010 and 2011

Although *Baladna Bel Masry* covered bloggers more frequently and at more length than *Ten PM* did in 2011, *Ten PM* had 2 mentions of bloggers in 2010 while *Baladna Bel Masry* had none. *Ten PM* also had a weekly segment dedicated to the internet in 2010. It is, however, important to note that both those mentions came in the coverage of underground neighborhood channels where they compared bloggers to alternative television. The blogger hosted was not interviewed as an activist or a blogger, but rather as the man behind the documentary about the phenomenon they were covering.

Other than that, *Baladna Bel Masry* was significantly more focused on bloggers than *Ten PM* was. *Baladna Bel Masry* had 47 mentions of bloggers in 2011 and gave them 172:52 minutes of coverage whereas *Ten PM* only had 13 and gave them 80:39 minutes of coverage only.

Baladna Bel Masry covered news of Alaa Abdel Fattah intensively (16 times in November 2011 in a total of 66:16 minutes). Malek Mostafa was also covered intensively (mentioned 6 times and interviewed over the telephone in a total of 10:29 minutes) and Maikel Nabil's case remained a prominent part of the media coverage of bloggers in November 2011, although not as extensive as in October. Mina Daniel was also mentioned several times in the show.

Meanwhile, *Ten PM* covered issues like the death of Mina Daniel and Abdel Fattah and Michael Adel's arrest, although Abdel Fattah's arrest did not take up nearly as much space as it did with *Baladna Bel Masry*. While *Baladna Bel Masry* had 16 mentions of Abdel Fattah, *Ten PM* only had 3 in a total of 1:50 minutes, compared to 66:16 in *Baladna Bel Ma*sry. They mentioned Malek Mostafa's injury only 2 times (compared to 6 in *Baladna Bel Masry*) but did not interview him.

Although *Baladna Bel Masry* generally had more lengthy and frequent mentions of bloggers, both shows were comparable when it came to time dedicated to Interviews in Person, although not the frequency. While *Baladna Bel Masry* hosted bloggers for 69:44 minutes, Ten PM hosted them for 62:22 minutes, a difference of only 7:22 minutes. The difference in frequencies, however, is not as close. While Those 69:44 minutes included interviews with 7 bloggers for *Baladna Bel Masry*, the 62:22 in person interview time for *Ten PM* included only 3 bloggers. The difference is greater, however, when it comes to Phone Interviews where *Baladna Bel Masry* interviewed bloggers 6 times with a total of 28:27 minutes of phone interview time whereas *Ten PM* only had 2 with a total of 10:13 minutes of phone interview time.

The difference between each show across other categories was also wide, especially in the Coverage category where *Ten PM* had only 2 instances whereas *Baladna Bel Masry* had 16.

It was also apparent that bloggers hosted the most by *Ten PM* were those who were more mainstreamed than others; for instance, hosting parliament member Mostafa El Naggar twice and for extended periods. It was also apparent that *Baladna Bel Masry* was more concerned with bloggers' human rights' issues, like the injury of Malek Mostafa and the detention of Alaa Abdel Fattah and Maikel Nabil, than *Ten PM*, which dedicated fewer mentions and lesser times to those issues than *Baladna Bel Masry* did but rather hosted bloggers to speak of events and analyze it.

Both shows, however, significantly increased their coverage of bloggers. While *Baladna Bel Masry* had zero mentions of bloggers in 2010, they increased this to 47 in 2011 and a total of 172:52 minutes. *Ten PM* increased the number of mentions from 2 and 18:10 minutes in 2010 to 13 and 80:39 minutes in 2011.

Names of bloggers covered by the media in 2010 and 2011:

Name of Blogger	Al Masry Al Youm	Al Ahram	DNE	Ten PM	Baladna Bel Masry	Total Mentions
Alaa Abdel Fattah	2		3	3	16	24
Maikel Nabil	5	4	8		3	20
Mina Daniel	8	1	4	1	1	15
Asmaa Mahfouz	3	2	8			13
Ahmed Maher	5	2	4		1	12
Esraa Abdel Fattah	4	2	3	2		11
Malek Mostafa				2	6	8
Wael Ghoneim	2	1	4			7
Mostafa El Naggar	1			2	1	4
Loai Nagati			4			4
Bahaa Saber			1		2	3
Wael Khalil			1		2	3
Bassem Fathy	1				1	2
Sandmonkey			1		1	2
Mohamed El Dahshan			2			2
Mohamed Adel	1				1	2
Rasha Azab			1		1	2
Hossam El Hamalawy			2			2
Ahmed Doma			2			2
Mona Seif					2	2
Ayman Mansour	1	1				2
Malek Adly					2	2

Table 5.12: Bloggers mentioned most by the media in October and November of 2010 and 2011

Other bloggers mentioned only once:

By *DNE*: Kareem Amer, Dalia Ziada, Lilian Wagdy, Nadia El Awady, Tarek Shalaby, Gigi Ibrahim, Evronia Azer, Mohamed Barakat, Tassony Ragheb, Zeinobia and Sarah El Sirgany.
By *Al-Masry Al-Youm*: Mahmoud Afifi, Tarek El Khouly and Nora Younes.
By *Ten PM*: Baraa Ashraf, Michael Adel, Ahmed El Eish and Mohamed El Kasas.

By *Baladna Bel Masry:* Abdel Rahman Fares, Mohamed Agaty, Nawara Negm, Wael Abbas, Mohamed Marei and Lobna Darwish.

5.2. Findings from framing analysis of offline media

Frames Used:

- **Identification Frame:** Whether the blogger is framed as blogger, activist, victim/martyr, party member, defendant or alternative media. Martyr implies in Arabic that the person died on the hands of an aggressor while fighting for a cause.

- **Familiarity Frame:** Whether the tone used with the blogger is a familiar or a professional one.

- **Representation Frame:** Whether the blogger is framed to represent their own opinion (personal representative), that of the revolutionary youth, the street's opinion (street representative) or the public's opinion.

- **Analytical Frame:** Whether the blogger is framed as an eyewitness or a political analyst.

- **Framing as victims, heroes, defendants or criminals.** The defendant frame is used when the writer or presenter presents the blogger's charges objectively without showing a certain bias towards framing them as a criminal or as a victim of the law.

5.2.1 Print

5.2.1.1. Al-Masry Al-Youm

Comparing Al Masry Al Youm 2010 and 2011	
Al Masry Youm 2010 Totals	**Al Masry Al Youm 2011 Totals**
Identification Frame:	**Identification Frame:**
Activist: 1	Activist: 15
Blogger: 0	Blogger: 5
Blogger + Activist: 0	Blogger + Activist: 2
Defendant: 0	Defendant: 2
Party Member: 0	Party Member: 0
Martyr: 0	Martyr: 4
Representation Frame:	**Representation Frame:**
Personal: 0	Personal: 0
Revolutionary Youth: 0	Revolutionary Youth: 5
Street: 0	Street: 0
Analytical Frame:	**Analytical Frame:**
Political Analyst: 0	Political Analyst: 6
Eyewitness: 0	Eyewitness: 2
Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant:	**Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant:**
Defendant: 0	Defendant: 0
Victim: 0	Victim: 9
Hero: 0	Hero: 17
Criminal: 0	Criminal: 3

Table 5.13: Al-Masry Al-Youm*'s framing of bloggers in 2010 and 2011*

In October 2010, the only applicable frame in April 6th activist Mohamed Adel's quote was the Identification Frame. He was framed as an activist and not a blogger.

In October 2011 bloggers were mainly identified as activists (15), and they were only identified as bloggers 5 times. This shows that while *Al-Masry Al-Youm* is aware of the importance of those bloggers, their status as activists is more familiar to the *Al-Masry Al-Youm* readers than their status as bloggers.

Bloggers framed as revolutionary youth representatives in the print issues studied were prominent bloggers like Alaa Abdel Fattah, Esraa Abel Fattah and Maher. Other non-star bloggers were never framed as representatives of the revolutionary youth, with the exception of Bassem Fathy.

Bloggers framed by the newspapers as analysts were prominent bloggers Esraa Abdel Fattah, Alaa Abdel Fattah, Maher and El Naggar. The only bloggers to be framed as eyewitnesses and not analysts were Tarek El Khouly (who is relatively unknown outside the world of Twitter and blogs) and star blogger Alaa Abdel Fattah's accounts of Maspero. The author highlights how true and honest Abdel Fattah's accounts are while mainstream media broadcasts lies. This shows that when prominent bloggers were quoted, they were mostly quoted as political experts analyzing the situation. In the event when they were quoted as eyewitnesses, however, their accounts were published as more honest truths than that being told by other outlets.

Bloggers were often framed as heroes for the role they played in the revolution. Those framed as heroes were star bloggers like those said to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize (Esraa Abdel Fattah, Maher and Ghoneim), Mahfouz who won a prestigious award, Alaa Abdel Fattah who was framed as a hero siding with the Maspero victim, Mina Daniel.

Out of the 27 martyrs of the Maspero events, Mina Daniel was the one often mentioned for his leading role in the revolution and often described as "one of the revolutionary youth's leaders" and dubbed as Che Guevara of Egypt. Activist and former parliamentary member Zeyad El Eleimy wrote an opinion piece on the Maspero martyrs and mentions seven of those but leads

with Mina Daniel. His article in *Al-Masry al-Youm* introduces Daniel as a young man:

> "whose feeling of responsibility drove his family to depend on him for their modest livelihood. He dreamed of this nation's freedom and believed that freeing Egyptians will not come without them owning their own living. So he went out with his friends to defend our freedom. Mubarak's bullets failed twice to defeat him as he got shot in his shoulder and foot on the Friday of Anger and the Battle of the Camel. He withstood the pains of the Mubarak regime's bullets, not leaving the square and his fellow revolutionaries until Mubarak left and Mina had surgery to remove the bullet from his foot. But the army's bullets defeated him this time."

Daniel here is identified as an activist and clearly framed as a hero. El Eleimy explained he knew Daniel and the six other activists he writes about. Daniel ran in the same circles as the prominent activists like El Eeimy and so his name was publicized the most whereas others who died and did not hold the same status between activists and bloggers were often not mentioned by the activists or the media. Other articles covering Maspero events death seldom mentioned any other martyrs than Daniel.

Meanwhile, Maikel Nabil was framed as a defendant in two articles, a blogger in three, a criminal in two and a victim in two. While some articles highlight groups and activists' support and the dangers of his hunger strike, others highlight the charges against him and refute his claims about his health condition. This shows dual framing of Nabil; at times a victim and others a criminal, but overall equally framed as both.

The article referring to Alaa Abdel Fattah's written account of the Maspero events compares his report to those presented by members of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) on television. The article describes the SCAF accounts on *Dream* channel as lacking vision and creativity and underestimating the audience intelligence. The *Al-Masry Al-Youm* author comments that Abdel Fattah's article "made me cry a lot." She adds that the accounts on *Dream* were the "cold, blind" voices of authority while Abdel Fattah's was "the voice of the revolution when it writes about death so the writing becomes about life, revolution, hope and victory." This is rather indicative of how the author perceives Abdel Fattah's voice; he is portrayed as the true, honest voice of the revolution that speaks the truth to counter the lying, cold voices of authorities, as the author describes them. The article the author refers to was one he had written in a column of *Al-Shorouk* newspaper. So even though Abdel Fattah's accounts of the day were actually those he published in mainstream media he started writing for, he is still viewed as more credible than mainstream media in general. This is important to demonstrate how the once-alternative-media ventured into the mainstream media, but remain, apparently, in the views of their readers as more credible and honest. On the identification frame, Abdel Fattah is framed as an alternative media, rather than a blogger or an activist, because he was never introduced but was framed to represent an honest, independent source of news. He is also framed as a symbol of the revolution and hence a revolutionary representative. The article also speaks of how he broke the lies and told the truth as well as implied his—and other activists'—fight for freedom; he is hence framed as a hero.

Social media reports presented as 'activists reactions' were not included in the qualitative analysis as they were simply social media users' reactions but did not include any bloggers and no frames were applicable.

Bloggers were not quoted in *Al-Masry Al-Youm* as much as they were quoted in other newspapers, and therefore, the Analytical and Representation Frames were not always applicable.

5.2.1.2. Al Ahram

Al Ahram 2011 Totals
Identification Frame: Activist: 6 Blogger: 5 Blogger + Activist: 0 Defendant: 4 Party Member: 0 Martyr: 1
Representation Frame: Personal: 0 Revolutionary Youth: 4 Street: 0
Analytical Frame: Political Analyst: 4 Eyewitness: 0
Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant: Defendant: 0 Victim: 1 Hero: 3 Criminal: 6

Table 5.14: Al-Ahram*'s framing of bloggers in 2011*

Al-Ahram had no mentions of bloggers in October 2010. In October 2011, *Al-Ahram* identified bloggers as defendants 4 out of the 16 times, or one fourth of the times, they were mentioned.

Bloggers were framed as criminals twice more than they were framed as heroes and six times more than they were framed as victims. Those framed as criminals were Maikel Nabil (framed 4 times as a criminal), Ayman Mansour

and Asmsaa Mahfouz. While Nabil and Mansour are of much lesser prominence than other bloggers, Mahfouz, a star blogger, was framed only once as a criminal and another as a hero in the 3 times she was mentioned that month. This shows a certain tendency by *Al-Ahram* to frame lesser-prominent bloggers differently than the known ones.

An article on Nobel Prize candidates Esraa Abdel Fattah and Wael Ghoneim shows strong hero frames used to describe both activists, but especially Ghoneim. The article goes on to say that the Oslo Peace Research Institute's director, Christian Berg Harpvikin, suggested the names of the Egyptian activists for the primary role they played in continuing the Egyptian revolution and protecting its peacefulness. Harpvikin adds that Ghoneim spent 12 days in prison for the great role he played and was chosen by *Time* magazine as one of the most influential personalities of 2011. This shows a possible change in the editorial policies of the newspaper that once put news of bloggers like Alaa Abdel Fattah and Maikel Nabil in the crimes section.

Similarly, when tackling the memory of martyr Mina Daniel, who was killed during the Maspero events, the tone taken by *Al-Ahram* is always a more supportive, emotional one than that taken to cover Nabil's case, for instance. Daniel is often framed as a hero who fought long and hard for a better Egypt and survived many violent events and a victim who was killed too young.

The only times bloggers were quoted and framed as political analysts or revolutionary youth were when Ahmed Maher was quoted speaking of his expectations of the future parliament's composition and elections results and when Maher, Esraa Abdel Fattah and Asmaa Mahfouz are quoted from a press conference in Washington speaking of the political situation in Egypt.

The frames are not always positive, however. Out of 12 mentions of bloggers, 3 were in the crimes section.

Maikel Nabil is covered twice in the crimes section. Nabil is once introduced as spending a three-year sentence for insulting the armed forces through his blog. The placement of the article in the crimes section and introducing him as "serving a three-year sentence" indicates a strong framing as a defendant on the Identification Frame and a criminal on the Criminal/Hero frame. Similarly, coverage of blogger Ayman Mansour three-year sentence for offending religion was also in the crime section.

An article covers a court case against Asmaa Mahfouz and others who insulted and used profanities against police officers, and mentions Maikel Nabil's case frames both as criminals on the Hero/Criminal Frame. The article frames Mahfouz and Nabil in very different frames than the above. Neither Mahfouz nor Nabil is identified, although later in the article Mahfouz is framed as an activist. Nabil, however, is framed as nothing but a defendant in his case with no mention of his activism or blogging. The focus was primarily on their charges without any mention of their side of the story or defense. Mahfouz, especially, was framed as a revolutionary who was caught directing profanities to the state despite her status as a member of the peaceful revolutionary youth. Mahfouz was also framed by the police officers' statements as a representative of the revolutionary youth.

The above four articles show tendencies to revert to the old editorial direction and stand from bloggers. *Al-Ahram* only framed bloggers in positive lights when they were of certain prominence or status that any attack against them might be analyzed as an attack against the revolution and its youth.

The one time a star blogger like Asmaa Mahfouz was framed as a criminal was when the source quoted was expressing his disappointment that a model revolutionary like Mahfouz would insult the officers and use profanities. This shows certain expectations from renowned activists and bloggers like Mahfouz and insinuates that Mahfouz is breaking a positive frame that had been set for her and so shedding light in the issue in a negative frame but without failing to acknowledge the positive frames associated with her. Otherwise, it was the lesser-prominent blogger Nabil and the relatively unknown Ayman Mansour who saw criminal frames in their coverage. A possible explanation is that the readers would not be familiar with those bloggers and so setting a negative frame around them would be far easier than if they had been already known to the readers.

Their coverage, be it the positive or the negative, however, is indicative of the growing attention the bloggers are receiving—going from absolutely no mentions to covering their arrests, accomplishments and conferences they take part in. The coverage is also indicative of how the newspaper still perceives issues of activists and bloggers. Certain bloggers seem relatively untouchable in *Al-Ahram* in the sense that even if they are being framed in a negative light it can only be done up to a certain limit and a positive frame has to be used in parallel. The lesser-known bloggers, however, are still subject to criticism of the newspaper. In other words, the newspaper shows sympathy towards those who are too prominent to do otherwise and have already a set of positive frames associated to them, or those who have gained public sympathy and cannot be framed other than victims of the regime, like Mina Daniel. Other

bloggers who do not have a set of frame associated with them, be it positive or negative, are still subject to negative framing by *Al-Ahram*.

5.2.1.3. The Daily News Egypt

Daily News Egypt 2010 Totals	Daily News Egypt 2011 Totals
Identification Frame:	**Identification Frame:**
Activist: 4	Activist: 19
Blogger: 2	Blogger: 13
Blogger + Activist: 0	Blogger + Activist: 2
Defendant: 0	Defendant: 0
Party Member: 0	Party Member: 0
Martyr: 0	Martyr: 0
Representation Frame:	**Representation Frame:**
Personal: 0	Personal: 0
Revolutionary Youth: 0	Revolutionary Youth: 15
Street: 0	Street: 0
Analytical Frame:	**Analytical Frame:**
Political Analyst: 1	Political Analyst: 9
Eyewitness: 1	Eyewitness: 1
Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant:	**Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant:**
Defendant: 0	Defendant: 1
Victim: 4	Victim: 12
Hero: 1	Hero: 11
Criminal: 0	Criminal: 0

Table 5.15: Comparing Daily News Egypt*'s framing of bloggers in 2010 and 2011*

In 2010, *DNE* framed bloggers in only positive frames in October 2010. *DNE* was also the only paper to cover issues of bloggers' arrests and accomplishments in 2010.

Two articles covering Ahmed Doma's detention are published on two consecutive days. The articles show an indirect support of the detained activist through stressing the fact that he should have been released six days prior to the article as well as indirectly showing disbelief of the charges against Doma. The article highlights Doma's peaceful protest against police attempting to prevent them from practicing their right to demonstrate. His prolonged

imprisonment and concern over human rights further frame him as a victim rather than a criminal. He is also identified as an activist not a defendant.

DNE publishes statements by Freedom House and the Cairo-based Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) condemning restrictions on media freedom, including crackdown on bloggers. Bloggers here are shown as victims but they are put in the same basket as journalists and activists. This shows *DNE*'s commitment to reporting on human rights issues in general, but also on violations against bloggers. The two other newspapers never covered either of those reports.

In 2011, 13 out of the 34 times the bloggers were covered they were identified as bloggers and twice as both bloggers and activists, totaling 15 times where their blogging identity was presented. This shows that this blogger frame is almost as important as their activism frame. With other newspapers, this was not the case, where their blogger frame came behind other frames. This is an indication of how the *DNE* perceives their readers' familiarity with blogging. *DNE* also most often framed bloggers to represent revolutionary youth (15 times) but never as street or personal representatives. They were interviewed as political analysts 9 times and only once as defendants but never as criminals. Those positive frames are used much more often than in other newspapers, however, the total coverage dedicated by *DNE* to bloggers is overall higher than other newspapers.

Eight articles were published in October 2011 about Maikel Nabil's case; all framing him clearly as a victim and several making front page. Nabil's hunger strike, deteriorating health condition and right to better conditions are often highlighted and even stated in the headline and his charges are seldom

mentioned. One headline reads "Retrying detained blogger 'toying with his life,' says Amnesty." Another article identifies Nabil as a blogger and an activist imprisoned by a military court who is on day 41 of his open-ended hunger strike. This is immediately followed by a quote from Nabil saying, "Death is better than living in an oppressive country." The lede of the article clearly indicates a sympathy with Nabil for being trialed in front of a military court and for his hunger strike that threatens his health. The article also quotes a human rights activist defending Nabil and describing the accusations as "petty" and against freedom of expression. The article ends by "Maikel is among an estimated 12,000 civilians who have been subjected to military trials after Egypt's uprising." The article clearly frames Nabil as a face for unjust military trial and oppression of freedom of expression. It quotes people who support the blogger and the charges against him are never mentioned throughout the article—only that he was sentenced for three years. The very next day, October 4th, Nabil is covered again in an article covering news of 53 detained protestors. His coverage took 85 words of the 423-words article originally covering other protestors' cases. The fact that coverage of one blogger who was covered the day before took up space from another article about 53 activists indicates the importance a known blogger like Nabil has in comparison to lesser known protestors originally covered in the article.

Seven articles covered possible Nobel Peace Prize nomination of key Arab Spring activists and their reactions to Tawakol Kerman winning the prize. All those articles framed activists Maher, Ghoneim and Esraa Abdel Fattah as heroes and quoted sources speaking of the role they played in directing the revolution and maintaining its peace. The activists were often framed as

representatives of the revolutionary youth as they were identified often as representatives of the Arab Spring. The newspaper also carried the same quotes from Harpviken *Al-Ahram* published about bloggers Nobel nomination. One article added Esraa Abdel Fattah is Harpviken's top pick for the Nobel prize.

An article covering news of interrogation of Alaa Abdel Fattah and Bahaa Saber shows discrepancy in coverage of the two activists. The article was in the front page and identified both as activists who face alleged charges of inciting violence during the Maspero events and who are supported by a number of protestors demonstrating against military trials of civilians. The article, however, only mentions eyewitness accounts denying allegations against Abdel Fattah, but no mention of any in defense of Saber. So while it frames Abdel Fattah as a victim—insinuating that the charges are false—it frames Saber as a defendant facing alleged charges but, like Abdel Fattah, also getting support from protestors for the unjust military trials.

5.2.1.4. Reflections and total statistics for framing analysis of print

Comparing Total Print 2010 and 2011	
Total Print 2010 Ranked by Order	**Total Print 2011 Ranked by Order**
Identification Frame Ranked by Order:	**Identification Frame Ranked by Order**
Activist: 5 Blogger: 2 Blogger + Activist: 0 Defendant: 0 Party Member: 0 Martyr: 0	Activist: 40 Blogger: 23 Defendant: 6 Martyr: 5 Blogger + Activist: 4 Party Member: 0
Representation Frame Ranked by Order:	**Representation Frame Ranked by Order**
Personal: 0 Revolutionary Youth: 0 Street: 0	Revolutionary Youth: 24 Street: 0 Personal: 0
Analytical Frame Ranked by Order:	**Analytical Frame Ranked by Order:**
Political Analyst: 1 Eyewitness: 1	Political Analyst: 19 Eyewitness: 3
Victim/Criminal/Defendant Ranked by Order:	**Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant Ranked by**
Victim: 4 Hero: 1 Criminal: 0 Defendant: 0	Hero: 31 Victim: 22 Criminal: 9 Defendant: 1

Table 5.16: Comparing total print's framing of bloggers in 2010 and 2011

Print in October 2010: While *DNE* covered issues such as Doma's arrest and oppressing bloggers, the only mention of bloggers in the two other newspapers came in an *Al-Masry Al-Youm* article quoting blogger and April 6th member Mohamed Adel speaking about the movement. *DNE* was the only newspaper to cover, for instance, Freedom House and ANHRI reports on crackdown on journalists and bloggers.

Only *DNE* covered Dalia Ziada winning the Anna Lindh Journalist award. This might be due to the nature of the *DNE* readers who might be familiar with the award and the winners, who include Mona El Tahawy. But it is also a result of a general editorial direction that supports activists and bloggers as shown in other articles. What's interesting is that Ziada worked at *Al-Ahram* for two years and tweets and blogs in Arabic, but *Al-Ahram* never mentioned her win.

DNE was the only newspaper to use social media for reporting in 2010 and use prominent bloggers as eyewitnesses before the trend caught on in 2011. Gigi Ibrahim's Twitter account of a workers' protest is quoted in an article covering the protests and she was used as an eyewitness to the protests.

Print in October 2011: Bloggers were mainly identified as activists in 2011 (40 times) but their blogger identities were also mentioned 27 times (23 as only bloggers and 4 as both bloggers and activists). This signifies that while the leading frame is still their activism, the blogging frame also appeared frequently, although almost half as frequent as the activism frame. Framing bloggers as defendants came mainly in *Al-Ahram* (4 times) but also in *Al-Masry Al-Youm* (2 times). In print, when the Representation Frame was applied—which was applied far less than in broadcast—they were only framed

as revolutionary youth representatives (24 times). They were framed mainly as political analysts (19 times) and only 3 times as eyewitnesses. They were framed mainly as heroes (31 times) and victims (22 times). But they were also framed as criminals (9 times) and only once as defendants. This shows that they were mainly positively framed in the news (either heroes or victims of unjust trials and charges) but they would also sometimes be framed as criminals, mainly in *Al-Ahram* (6 times) but also in *Al-Masry Al-Youm* (3 times). *DNE* never framed them as criminals. It is also significant that *Al-Ahram* was the least frequent to frame bloggers as heroes; only 3 times compared to 11 times in *DNE* and 17 times in *Al-Masry Al-Youm*.

The three newspapers covered news of the bloggers being possible Nobel Peace Prize nominees. *DNE* covered bloggers' nomination the most (5 times), however, followed by *Al-Masry A- Youm* (twice) and then *Al-Ahram* which only covered it once. The three newspapers carried similar positive frames in covering the news. However, only *DNE* and *Al-Masry Al-Youm* published reactions of bloggers to Tawakol Kerman winning the Nobel Peace Prize, but while *DNE* quoted three bloggers and gave them 330 words, *Al-Masry Al-Youm* only quoted two bloggers in 78 words.

The three newspapers coverage of bloggers cooperating with Occupy Wall Street protestors used similar frames and context. The three activists are quoted giving advice to their fellow protestors and commenting on the situation in Egypt and were framed as activists and representative of the revolutionary youth as they are quoted speaking in the name of the protestors in Egypt and the revolution's youth. They are also framed as political analyst as they are

quoted giving advice to American activists and analyzing the political scene in Egypt as well as criticizing policies of the US.

The three newspapers covered news of Maikel Nabil's case although the *DNE* covered it most frequently and in more positive lights than other newspapers. *Al-Ahram* covered his case three times and in the most negative frame, framing him as a criminal and putting his coverage in the criminal section twice. The *DNE* covered Nabil eight times, always framing him as a victim while *Al-Masry Al-Youm* covered him five times framing him twice as a victim, twice as a criminal and once as a defendant. This means that while *Al-Ahram* coverage was overwhelmingly in a negative frame and the *DNE* a positive one, *Al-Masry Al-Youm* had the most balanced positive and negative framing of Nabil's case.

Mina Daniel was also covered by all three newspapers but *Al-Masry Al-Youm* was the most to show sympathy to his death and portray it in the most emotional frames. *Al-Masry Al-You*m covered him the most, eight times, and most often framing him as both a hero and a victim frame. *Al-Ahram* only mentioned Daniel once but carried heroic frames and showed apparent sympathy. *DNE* covered Daniel three times, framing him always as a victim and never in an emotional tone or a heroic frame. His coverage in *DNE* was less sensational and came in the form of solid news. The other newspapers, however, covered him in an emotional tone and often used a heroic frame.

Only *DNE* covered the bloggers' reactions to the Khaled Said's killers verdict. This is an indication of how important the *DNE* editorial team believes bloggers' reactions to a milestone case like Khaled Said is. They have also quoted several bloggers and activists and only one human rights lawyer.

While *Al-Ahram* did not cover Alaa Abdel Fattah's case and Asmaa Mahfouz winning the Sakharov Prize, the *DNE* and *Al-Masry Al-Youm* did.

A blogger, Ayman Mansour, is covered in *Al-Ahram* and *Al-Masry Al-Youm* for getting a three-year-prison sentence for insulting religion and other charges, but not in *DNE*. In both papers he is identified as a blogger but is framed mainly as a criminal as the whole article is about his charges and how they affect 'national unity' and insult Muslims and Islam. This shows similar editorial tendencies when it comes to less-known bloggers.

Blogger Mohamed Dahshan's nomination for the Anna Lindh Journalist Award was only covered in *DNE*. Although this article was not included in the qualitative analysis as he was identified as a journalist, not a blogger, it is an indication of how dedicated *DNE* is to covering news of a certain segment of journalists and bloggers that other, more mainstream media channels do not. This might be due to the nature of the *DNE* readers who might be familiar with the nominees as well as a general editorial direction that supports activists and bloggers as shown in other articles.

Similarly, an article covers the release of a book by Egyptian bloggers and journalists recounting their personal experiences of the revolution. Although no frames were applicable here, it is worth analyzing in terms of why DNE chose to cover this news that was not carried out by other newspapers. One of the authors, Sarah El Sirgany and another author are editors at the *DNE* while Dahshan contributes regularly to it. Co-author Nadia El Awady also runs in the same circles as the *DNE* editorial team.

The above two articles indicate a certain familiarity that led the newspaper to cover news of the book launch that was not covered elsewhere. Not only is

this agenda setting guided by the sort of audience *DNE* has, but also the editorial agenda, guided by the social circles of the team.

5.2.2. Broadcast

5.2.2.1. Ten PM

Ten PM 2011 Totals:
Identification Frame:
Activist: 4
Blogger: 0
Blogger + Activist: 0
Defendant: 1
Party Member: 3
Martyr: 1
Familiarity Frame:
Familiar: 9
Professional: 2
Representation Frame:
Personal: 1
Revolutionary Youth: 3
Street: 0
Analytical Frame:
Political Analyst: 3
Eyewitness: 1
Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant:
Defendant: 2
Victim: 3
Hero: 3

Table 5.17: Ten PM*'s framing of bloggers in 2011*

The fact that *Ten PM* never framed bloggers as such in either 2010 or 2011 shows that even though they might have been hosted for being prominent activists and bloggers, to the audience of the show, their status as activists is more prominent and familiar than their status as bloggers. Accordingly, the presenter did not feel the need to acknowledge the fact that the guest is a blogger, even when he is a prominent one like Mostafa El Naggar. The presenter also presents the bloggers hosted mostly as representatives of the youth, but never the streets. She also frames them more as political analysts

than eyewitnesses, meaning their expertise of the protests, protestors and the Square transcend the role of simple eyewitnesses.

El Shazly framed bloggers twice as defendants, being neutral towards charges against them, when covering the arrest of Michael Adel and the detention of Alaa Abdel Fattah. She has, however, framed Abdel Fattah once as a victim, rather than a defendant, when she expressed how news of his renewed detention came as a disappointment to many. This shows that while El Shazly maintains a relatively neutral tone when covering bloggers news of detention, she shows some sympathy towards Abdel Fattah, a star blogger, but not the lesser-prominent Adel. While Adel was introduced as "defendant," not activist or blogger, Abdel Fattah was always introduced as activist even though they are both facing charges and have not received verdicts yet. She also re-opens the issue of Abdel Fattah a week after and talks about how depressed all fellow activists were with the court decision to renew his detention but has no mention throughout the month of Adel.

One segment especially stands out in the analysis of the 21st of November, 2011 episode where El Shazly calls her guest blogger, Mohamed El Kassas, "Ya 'am" a slang expression that is the equivalent of "man." This shows a great deal of familiarity with him. She repeatedly asks him about what the square and the revolutionary forces have to say about this and that, what their demands are, what they have to say to the people at home, what they are looking to see happen so the crisis is over. She then says she will ask him a question that expresses "our fears and confusion," referring to herself and the general public, and asks him to assess whether it is too late to act now or if there is still hope. This question is very important because she's looking for an

assessment from him that might reassure the public that the revolution is still okay or that there's still hope. Here she asks him to play the role of the analysts as well as a revolutionary leader who can reassure the public about the path of the revolution. The segment is also titled a conversation with the "Revolutionary Youth Coalition" signifying the two guests represent the revolutionary youth.

The only times El Shazly adopted a Professional Frame with a guest blogger were with Ahmed El Eish and one of the two times she hosted Mostafa El Naggar—even though the second time she hosted El Naggar was largely informal and strongly framed as familiar.

A significant segment is a 28-minute one dedicated to the parliamentary win of El Naggar. The tone of Shazly's introduction and her speech throughout the segment signifies a highly familiar tone, she never refers or addresses him as Dr. Mostafa and is also rather casual in her address, laughs often and makes an emotional introduction that portrays familiarity and also heroism:

> "Mostafa El Naggar […] was one of the most important and first faces who appeared on the media to speak of Tahrir Square and defend it and defend the martyrs. From the first moment Mostafa El Naggar appeared on screens, people could feel his sincerity, as opposed to many others who were rather controversial. But his attitude, which was maybe sometimes emotional or his way of speech that could sometimes be romantic, made him one of the most sincere faces. […] this sincere, familiar face surprised us all and won very aggressive elections in Nasr City."

Her emphasis on his "sincere face" and how people came to trust him shows a great degree of familiarity and bias towards him. She jokes about how he is single and ladies might have supported him for that reason and makes several other casual jokes. She maintains the tone of glorifying his win as the youngest member of the Parliament and one of the very few revolutionary youth to secure a seat in the parliament. She even concludes the segment saying "A million congratulations and long live the youth."

When Malek Mostafa was covered, his identity or what his injury exactly was often not introduced. This indicates that the guest or presenter assumes his injury and identity are known to the reader that he does not need introductions.

And while bloggers were framed as political analysts three times, El Eish—a lesser-known blogger—was framed as an eyewitness.

5.2.2.2. Baladna Bel Masry

Baladna 2011 Totals:
Identification Frame: Activist:9   Blogger: 0   Blogger + Activist: 8   Defendant: 0   Party Member: 2   Martyr: 1
Familiarity Frame: Familiar: 17   Professional: 3
Representation Frame: Personal: 3   Revolutionary Youth: 4   Street: 1
Analytical Frame: Political Analyst: 5   Eyewitness: 7
Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant: Defendant: 0   Victim: 9   Hero: 10

Table 5.18: Baladna Bel Masry*'s framing of bloggers in 2011*

In November 2010, there were no mentions of bloggers.

Bloggers were also mostly framed as heroes and victims rather than defendants. They were never framed as only bloggers, the times their blogging identity came up was always along their identity as activists. When speaking of the detained bloggers Alaa Abdel Fattah, Nabil or Bahaa Saber, Magued never referred to them as defendant, even when reading out their charges, but always as bloggers or activists.

Bloggers were also mostly interviewed to be asked about the revolutionary youth's stand and only three times for their personal opinion. Wael Khalil was framed once to present a personal opinion and another revolutionary youth's opinion. What's significant, is that Abdel Rahman Fares was framed to

represent the voice of the street. Bassem Fathy, Mohamed Marei and Lobna Darwish are all lesser-known bloggers, and were all framed as eyewitnesses rather than political analysts. It is also worth noting that Fathy was one of the three to be framed to represent a personal opinion as well.

Magued also adopted a rather familiar tone with them, except three times when she was interviewing Malek Adly, Mostafa El Naggar and Mohamed Marei. The formal tone adopted with Marei and Adly might be because they are less known or less familiar to her.

The formal tone adopted with blogger and then-parliamentary member El Naggar came in a 30-minutes segment about new members' opinions of the new cabinet of ministers. He is hosted alongside other parliamentary members. He is not identified as a blogger but rather as a member of the parliament and member of Al Adl Party. She addresses him as Dr. Mostafa and only asks him about his own, personal opinion. Hence, he is framed as a party member, political analyst and representing his personal opinion only. Magued also adopts a professional tone talking to him. He is never asked about the youth, the demonstrators or similar questions often posed to activists. It is worth mentioning that even though El Naggar is a prolific blogger and one of the oldest ones, he came to be known as the founder of Al Adl party and a candidate during the parliamentary elections of 2011. The framing used with him was rather that of a political player, not a blogger or an activist. This means that his status as a prominent political player overrode his status as a blogger once he became mainstreamed into the public space. So once he became a part of the historical bloc, the treatment he received and his status changed from an activist or blogger to a more formal political player.

Magued often introduces Alaa Abdel Fattah as the activist Alaa Abdel Fattah but does not mention any background on his case or arrest when discussing updates.

When blogger and activist Mona Seif was featured for an interview in a conference, producers chose to identify her as Alaa Abdel Fattah's sister, despite the fact that the conference was about the movement she founded to oppose military trials of civilians. This further shows the status Abdel Fattah has as a blogger and the fame he achieved that took over his sister's identity, even when it's in coverage of a movement she founded.

An interesting quote by Alaa Al Aswany in *Baladna Bel* Masry's 3rd of November 2011 episode mentions Alaa Abdel Fattah and another detained blogger, Bahaa Saber, at a conference against military trials of civilians shows the status of heroes some of those bloggers have achieved. "This phenomenon will not end unless we all act like Alaa and Bahaa; you practice your right, and this is what they did." These words were echoed by a clergyman at the conference as well. This shows two things; how they perceive the bloggers and how familiar they feel with them, referring to them with their first names only. Al Aswany and the clergyman both portrayed Abdel Fattah and Saber's reactions to the military prosecutors (both refusing to answer questions posed by military prosecutors) as the role model of how we should all act. This puts them at a heroic stand; risking prison to show a stand.

Portraying Abdel Fattah as a hero was the most prominent frame used in the show's coverage of him. His stance of refusing to answer military prosecutor's questioning as well as his appeal for the right to vote in the parliamentary elections because he was not convicted yet were often

highlighted over the charges against him. This also shows, not only sympathy with the blogger, but also admiration and a heroic frame. "He asserted his initial stand to refuse questioning any citizen by any military entity even if the price was his freedom and remaining in jail," Magued said.

Magued also covered Abdel Fattah's news much more intensively than any other media outlet, dedicating three segments solely to Abdel Fattah's case.

The Victim Frame was much more prominent than the Defendant Frame when covering Maikel Nabil. Often his hunger strike was much more highlighted than the charges against him or his case, showing sympathy with Nabil.

Like other media outlets, Malek Mostafa was covered along with Ahmed Harara and an *Al-Masry Al-Youm* photographer when speaking of those who lost an eye during the November 19th events. Yousry Fouda even told Magued in a phone interview that the first thing he insisted on doing that day, even before heading to Tahrir Square, was to visit those who lost their eyes during the events. "They are all in good spirit even though they lost the light of their eye and the most precious thing a person can possess, physically," he says, in a reference to their strength and resilience. It is also worth noting that even on such an eventful night, Fouda led his interview with the news of Harara, Mostafa and the photographer before going into the events of the night before or the political implications.

At one instance, Magued did a phone interview with Malek Adel, who is a lawyer at the Center for Economic and Social Rights and an activist. She addressed him as Mr. Malek and posed him questions that were only about the autopsy process of those killed during the November 19th events, as he was

present at the morgue. It is interesting to notice here how different frames are applied when the bloggers are of less famous status. For instance, all questions posed to Adel were in his capacity as a lawyer present at the morgue and so only an eyewitness. He was not asked about the implications of events, his view, the revolutionary's view or questions of that sort. The presenter also adopts a more formal tone with him than that used with other more prominent bloggers. This is an indication that the more famous the blogger is, the more the presenter framed him as a political analyst rather than an eyewitness and the more familiar she gets with him.

A telephone interview with Malek Mostafa brings about an interesting finding. Magued asks Mostafa whether he is saying he is lucky because his eye will recover, because his medical report was written correctly, unlike that of Harara's, or because he reached the media and he answers, "all of that." This is important in indicating that the presenter and the blogger both realize how Mostafa is luckier than others who were injured because his case was covered on the media, which is not necessarily the case with others injured.

An interview with member of the Revolutionary Youth Coalition, Abdel Rahman Fares, shows a strong indication that the guest is considered the pulse of the street. Lilian Daoud, who was co-hosting the show with Magued for special coverage of the events, asks Fares, "The question is to you, specifically, Abdel Rahman, you were in the streets and know the overall atmosphere. Is it possible that this speech has a positive effect with some people especially with the talks about the economy falling and the production wheel and that some of the demands are being fulfilled? What did the speech present?" This raises the issue of representation; to know the pulse of the square, she asked Fares and

not the older guest, a professional journalist. She is clearly framing him as a representation of the street. Similarly, Magued tells Fares:

"There is a responsibility that falls on those who made this revolution happen and your fate is that you are the youth of the revolution and it is as if you are the only party who made this revolution. […] You are now criticized of [being] dictatorial […] how will you overcome this?"

This strongly indicates a Street Representation Frame, but also a strong preference to know or predict the pulse of the street from the younger activist present, rather than the older professional journalist.

Similarly, in many cases, the bloggers are asked about the pulse of the street, but also about their predictions of the effect certain events might have on the public or the political situation. Accordingly, they were often framed to be more than eyewitnesses and often transcend to the Political Analysts Frame.

Leftist blogger Mohamed El Agaty was hosted speaking of colleagues who were injured, killed or detained. He only mentioned the names of the prominent bloggers Alaa Abdel Fattah, Malek Mostafa and Mina Daniel, whom he calls members of his political direction. The only non-blogger mentioned was Harara who lost both eyes during the uprising.

Wael Khalil is hosted alone in a 30-minutes segment to speak in a segment titled "Tahrir Square's Position from the Elections." The title of the segment as well as the questions she poses strongly imply that he is hosted to represent the views of the revolutionary youth. She poses questions such as "What does the revolutionary legitimacy see?"

In the same interview with Khalil, Reem's tone is familiar and she calls him by his first name. Even more strikingly, when Aida Seif El Dawla, a

prominent activist, human rights activist and mother of Alaa Abdel Fattah, is interviewed by telephone during the same segment, she and Khalil adopt the same familiar tone with each other. Khalil calls Seif El Dawla by her first name and they both laugh, implicating a certain degree of familiarity, despite the fact that Magued calls her Dr. Aida. This shows that not only is the presenter often familiar with bloggers interviewed—more so than other guests—bloggers are also often familiar with other activists and bloggers. This is also apparent when bloggers speak about each other or shed light on each other's cases, like the case with those speaking of Alaa Abdel Fattah's detention or Mostafa's injury.

A three-minute segment covering the news of the birth of Alaa Abdel Fattah's son, Khaled, amidst coverage of elections shows strong feelings by the presenter towards the blogger. It shows strong references to the heroic role Abdel Fattah plays and uses an emotional tone that shows admiration, sympathy and support of Abdel Fattah. Magued calls the newborn the youngest revolutionary in Egypt and a "revolutionary by birth like his father, grandfather, mother and aunt" and comes from solid roots. She goes on to say that he comes from a line of strong and free men and that she wishes he would have been born in a world that is remotely similar to that his mother and father imagine. She dubs Khaled and his parents "more famous than fire on a flag," and goes on to say how unfairly his father is being detained and how his family members are all freedom fighters that even his aunt, Mona Seif, was born to an imprisoned father "paying the price of his freedom and resilience." She concludes saying "Alaa made us all proud and to all those who deprived Alaa to look at his son's face when he is opening his eyes to the world and deprived Khaled to open his eyes and see his father: Let the flowers flourish." This

segment shows the degree of support, sympathy and admiration Magued has for Abdel Fattah. He is framed as a hero who fought all injustices and endured the pain of being locked up as his son sees the world. It also shows a high degree of familiarity between the presenter, Abdel Fattah and his family.

A segment titled "The Rights of those Like Alaa Abdel Fattah to Vote" is dedicated to using Abdel Fattah as a case study of the rights of those detained without verdict in voting. Even though at this point there were about 12,000 under military trial and many others under normal trials, she mentions Abdel Fattah as the case study, which says a lot about his status.

5.2.2.3. Reflections and total statistics for framing analysis of broadcast

Comparing Total Broadcast 2010 and 2011	
Total Broadcast 2010	**Total Broadcast 2011 Ranked by Order**
Identification Frame:	**Identification Ranked by Order**
Alternative Media: 2	Activist (13)
	Blogger + Activist (8)
	Party Member (5)
	Martyr (2)
	Defendant (1)
	Blogger (0)
	Representation Ranked by Order
	Revolutionary Youth (7)
	Personal (4)
	Street (1)
	Analytical Ranked by Order
	Political Analyst and Eyewitness equally (8 e
	Hero/Criminal Ranked by order
	Hero (13)
	Victim (12)
	Defendant (2)
	Criminal (0)
Familiarity Frame:	**Familiarity Ranked by Order**
Familiar: 1	Familiar (26)
	Professional (7)

Table 5.19: Comparing total broadcast's framing of bloggers in 2010 and 2011

The figures in table 5.19 signify that bloggers came to be hosted to analyze the political scene and represent the revolutionary youth. Their hardships—be it injuries or arrest—were highlighted and often sympathized with and they were often portrayed as heroes who set role models of strength, resilience and strong

beliefs and victims of the violent and unjust regimes. The more prominent the blogger is, the more likely his charges will be dismissed by the presenter who shows sympathy and admiration of the blogger. Their identity as bloggers often goes hand in hand with their identity as activists and they are never portrayed as bloggers alone. This shows that even if the show itself realizes their identity as bloggers, they need to add the 'activist' identity to show importance and status to the general audience. Also, the more prominent the blogger, the more familiar the tone the presenter adopts when speaking with him or of him.

There is a large discrepancy between the space given to coverage of Alaa Abdel Fattah's by El Shazly and Magued. Magued also shows strong sympathy towards Abdel Fattah while El Shazly maintains a more neutral tone. For instance, Abdel Fattah was never identified by Magued as a defendant, but Shazly identifies him once as a defendant and once as an activist.

It is also interesting that while Magued introduced some of the bloggers as "bloggers and activists" 8 times, El Shazly never introduced any of her guests as a blogger; rather always an activist or a party member. This shows a difference in the importance each presenter puts on the guest's identity as a blogger. While El Shazly prioritizes bloggers' identity as activists or party member, an identification frame that might be more familiar to her audience, Magued uses both frames. This might indicate that Magued places a bigger importance on their identity as bloggers than El Shazly does. But it also might signal that El Shazly's audience is more familiar with the term activist than they are with the term blogger while Magued's might be familiar with both.

Both shows adopt the same Familiar Frame most of the times when bloggers are hosted even though other guests in the same segments are normally addressed with more formality.

Both shows also mostly frame bloggers are revolutionary youth representatives but Magued framed a blogger once as a representative of the street while El Shazly never did; showing more weight given by Magued to bloggers.

Magued framed bloggers more often as eyewitnesses (7 times) but she also framed them as political analysts (5 times). El Shazly only framed bloggers as eyewitnesses once and they were most often framed as political analysts (3 times).

While Magued never framed bloggers as defendants, El Shazly twice maintained a neutral tone to charges against bloggers and framed them as defendants. This shows that Magued often shows more sympathy towards bloggers in her coverage while El Shazly maintains more neutrality.

5.2.3. Comparing and reflecting on print and broadcast framing analysis findings

Total Broadcast + Print 2010 Ranked by Order	Total Broadcast + Print 2011 Ranked by Order
Identification Frame Ranked by Order:	**Identification Ranked by Order**
Activist: 5 Blogger: 2 Blogger + Activist: 0 Defendant: 0 Party Member: 0 Martyr: 0	Activist: 53 Blogger: 23 Blogger + Activist: 12 Defendant: 7 Martyr: 7 Party Member: 5
Representation Frame Ranked by Order:	**Representation Ranked by Order**
Personal: 0 Revolutionary Youth: 0 Street: 0	Revolutionary Youth: 31 Personal: 4 Street: 1
Analytical Frame Ranked by Order:	**Analytical Ranked by Order**
Political Analyst: 1 Eyewitness: 1	Political Analyst: 27 Eyewitness: 11
Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant Ranked by Order:	**Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant Ranked by Order:**
Victim: 4 Hero: 1 Criminal: 0 Defendant: 0	Hero: 44 Victim: 34 Defendant: 3 Criminal: 9
Familiarity Ranked by Order	**Familiarity Ranked by Order**
Familiar: 1 Professional: 0	Familiar: 26 Professional: 7

Table 5.20: Comparing total print and broadcast's framing of bloggers in 2010 and 2011

It was apparent in the analysis of both print and broadcast that even though more than 40 were arrested during the Maspero events, only Alaa Abdel Fattah's arrest took the spotlight and was consistently covered by the media. In the same events 27 died, but only Mina Daniel's death was publicized and of all the martyrs dying that day, Daniel is the only name that came up in the media. Even in the report by the official committee appointed to investigate the events, Daniel's name is the sole name mentioned of the 27 martyrs. Both Abdel Fattah and Daniel are prominent bloggers and so the focus on their news took far more space than the news of other martyrs and detainees.

Similarly, even though 800 were injured and 10 were killed during the November 19th Tahrir events, only Malek Mostafa, Ahmed Harara and an *Al-Masry Al-Youm* photographer were intensively covered and mentioned by name. The photographer is one of the press' own, and so was naturally highlighted. Harara also came to be an icon of those injured in the revolution as he had lost one eye during the January 25th events and the other during the November 19th events. The focus on Mostafa, however, can be explained by the fact that he is a rather prominent blogger and well-known in the circles of revolutionaries and bloggers. This was an interesting finding in the analysis as it shows the status of bloggers and how different they came to be from other activists on the scene.

Often bloggers were hosted with prominent political analysts, senior journalists, leading party members and people holding top positions in human rights organizations. This shows the status bloggers were given that put them in the same importance as key figures in the public space.

Overall, both print and broadcast referred to bloggers as activists the

most on the Identification Frame (13 times in broadcast and 40 in print). But while the second most used Identification Frame in broadcast was the "blogger and activist" frame (8 times), it was the bloggers frame in print (23 times). "Bloggers and activist" frame came in fifth in print (4 times) and while the blogger frame was second most used in print (23 times) it was never used in broadcast. This indicates that while the activist frame reigns over any other identification frame the media uses for bloggers, the blogger frame is not used in media as mainstream as television channels. This also shows in the fact that *DNE* was the newspaper that framed bloggers as bloggers the most; which indicates a certain tendency to use the bloggers frame in more targeted, less mainstream media channels. When the programs did mention their identities as bloggers, it came in parallel with their identities as activists, the second most used Identification Frame. This, however, shows that even mainstream media channels have recognized the importance of the blogging side of their personalities.

COMPARING BROADCAST AND PRINT TOTALS IN 2011	
Total Broadcast 2011 Ranked by Order	**Total PRINT 2011 Ranked by Order**
Identification Ranked by Order	**Identification Ranked by Order:**
Activist (13)	Activist: 40
Blogger + Activist (8)	Blogger: 23
Party Member (5)	Defendant: 6
Martyr (2)	Martyr: 5
Defendant (1)	Blogger + Activist: 4
Blogger (0)	Party Member: 0
Representation Ranked by Order	**Representation Ranked by Order:**
Revolutionary Youth (7)	Revolutionary Youth: 24
Personal (4)	Street: 0
Street (1)	Personal: 0
Analytical Ranked by Order	**Analytical Ranked by Order:**
...tical Analyst and Eyewitness equally (8 each)	Political Analyst: 19
	Eyewitness: 3
...ero/Victim/Defendant/Criminal by order	**Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant by Or...**
Hero (13)	Hero: 31
Victim (12)	Victim: 22
Defendant (2)	Criminal: 9
Criminal (0)	Defendant: 1
Familiarity Ranked by Order	
Familiar (26)	
Professional (7)	

Table 5.21: Comparing total broadcast and print's framing of bloggers in 2011

Both broadcast and print often framed bloggers as revolutionary youth representatives (7 and 24 respectively). Bloggers were framed 4 times to represent their personal opinions on talk shows and only once to represent the opinion of the street. It is worth mentioning, however, that they were never framed to represent their personal opinion or the street in print. This discrepancy might be due to the fact that while on talk shows we can hear the question being asked and how it's being framed, the same is not true for print where not only do we not know of the question asked to get the answers published, but the editorial process also includes much more filtering than that involved in live talk shows.

Both print and broadcast framed bloggers mostly as heroes (13 and 31

respectively), followed by the victim frame (12 times in broadcast and 22 times in print). But while print framed bloggers as criminals 9 times (mostly in *Al-Ahram*), broadcast never framed them as criminals. It is important to note here, however, that *Al-Ahram* skewed this rank significantly, framing bloggers 6 times as criminals.

5.3. Findings from Interviews with Media Professionals

Interviews were conducted with five media professionals from each media platform studied; Rania El Malky, managing editor of the *Daily News Egypt* at the time the newspaper was studied, Ehab El Zelaky, managing editor of *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, Hesham Younes, a journalist at *Al-Ahram* and the executive managing editor of its website, Reem Magued, *Baladna Bel Masry*'s presenter and Salma Rostom, producer of *Ten PM* at the time the show was studied.

5.3.1. Increasing coverage of bloggers after January 25th

All media professionals interviewed agreed that the increase in coverage of bloggers was due to the fact that those bloggers were now the story and the news itself and because they were able to cover events on the ground better than any professional media platform could.

Rostom believes the initial attention to bloggers came because the uprising was called for online through the We Are All Khaled Said Facebook page and so people and the media started becoming interested in online activists. One of the page's founders, Wael Ghoneim, appeared for the first time on *Ten PM* in a moving episode on February 7th, 2011, immediately following his release after 11 days of detainment by the police. "So people

started seeing that there are people behind those pages and who aren't getting paid but spend lots of effort to push towards the general good, not a personal benefit," (Rostom, 2014).

Because at certain events during the uprising the protestors were wary of mainstream media, bloggers were able to cover the events on their own platforms as well as give out interviews for mainstream media about them at a time when the mainstream media was not even allowed in Tahrir Square. "They were providing me with something, professionally, that I couldn't do. Sometimes we couldn't be on the ground, or we would have been beaten if we got inside [the square] because at a time television cameras weren't even accepted in. But they [bloggers] were there, they were part of the events," (Magued, 2014). Similarly, Younes called them "a main source of information that is accessible anytime without restrictions because they aren't like official spokespeople who can only speak at certain times. They have no limits and no restrictions and they don't adopt that diplomatic tone," (2014). *DNE*, for instance, used social media to see what people are talking about and as a source for story ideas to compensate for the small team they had, El Malky explained. "When you don't have like a 100 reporters everywhere, this, to you, is a resource to you," (El Malky, 2014) but she stresses that because there are a lot of rumors floating online, they always had to double check and get back to the source before reporting on something they read on social media.

An interest in what those bloggers were doing, the role they played during the uprising and what they thought of the events also arose. El Malky calls them "the movers and shakers" at that time, (2014). El Zelaky says bloggers moved from opinion writers to news makers and public figures and

icons of the revolution and so were covered in those capacities. "It was a mixture between the political change that took place and the re-introduction of the old players of blogs in a new image," (El Zelaky, 2014). He compares the media coverage of bloggers to those of politicians; he says he would cover their political activities just like he would cover those of political parties because they became political powers. Magued agrees, "They were a big part of what happened and played a big role...So the initial interest in them was what happened on the ground and then at a later phase the interest was in what they themselves were doing...Instead of going to them to compensate for the shortage we had in coverage, they became the stories" Maged (2014) said.

Only Magued and El Malky, however, gave violations against bloggers as one of the reasons why their coverage increased and both expressed their media platform's interest in human rights cases. "After this phase they became more exposed and so more subject to oppression and so the stories became about the violations happening against them; be it against their freedom of expressions or ones that actually limit their freedom like cases against them, detaining some of them and so others would take stands to support them and so they became the news again," (Magued, 2014). El Malky says the *DNE* was focused on human rights, democratization efforts, street protests and labor rights and bloggers were involved in al of those issues. "They weren't just theorizers sitting around their laptops just typing away, they were out there on the street... what they were doing fell perfectly in line with our agenda as a newspaper," (El Malky, 2014).

On why the *DNE* gave the most space to bloggers and put them on their front page and headlines, El Malky says it was the composition of *DNE*'s team,

all young journalists, made the newspaper interested in shedding light on the perspective of the youth who initiated the political change the country was going through. "These people are the news makers, they were young, fit the profile, were very good speakers and they are accessible…They represented a voice, an attitude and a way of thinking about the future of the country that we felt we wanted to amplify and give voice to," (El Malky, 2014).

5.3.2. Choosing which bloggers to host

Bloggers, media professionals interviewed agreed, were not hosted only because they were blogging, but because they were bloggers and part of the revolution. "The main frame was the revolution; it was the origin of the story…So he would be hosted to tell his account of what happened or tell us about a post he wrote about an event that took place or a post him that got him threats from the authorities," (Magued, 2014). El Zelaky says it's the value of the news itself that matters and not their identities as bloggers or otherwise. "You will see that most bloggers who were in the front page were mainly there for their identities as political activists not bloggers," El Zelaky (2014).

For media outlets, some bloggers were easier to host than others; be it because they were more accessible to the media, more credible and trusted because they're known or because their names were famous and so people were interested in them over others. "If there are many people to choose from I will surely choose the person I know and trust because at this point there was a large number of people claiming to be activists and part of the Revolutionary Youth Coalition and so on. So for the sake of my credibility and to make sure I don't host someone who turns out to be a liar, I choose the person I know and

know and was present at that event," (Magued, 2014). She adds that she would not host someone "who isn't known" unless they are the heroes behind the story she's covering. El Zelaky echoed similar feelings saying that the fame bloggers received after the uprising made them "figures I can interview," (El Zelaky, 2014). Likewise, Rostom says they would not host someone who is not known on the blogosphere. "We chose those who had documents they published, those who were most viewed and had the most participation on their pages, those who were able to mobilize people in protests," (Rostom (2014).

Magued says it was easier to cover the story of a famous bloggers' detention because the buzz created around it was bigger, his circle of friends had a wide reach and could easily access the media and because it was easier for them to trust news coming from this blogger or his entourage than from people they did not know. "Maybe if that person wasn't famous and his friends knew he was kidnapped [detained without a warrant] they wouldn't have been able to reach us. They might not have had the access to reach the media…This isn't humane, but it's the truth; if a group of people of people called me telling me our friend was kidnaped I will have a hard time publishing the story until I check that it's true and then find a way to attract people to the story. But when they call me telling me Amr Gharbeya was kidnapped, I have a story and it's ready. In other cases I will still have to form the story," (Magued, 2014). So at a period where events were happening fast and the media was overwhelmed with news to cover, Magued believes the media made the mistake of shedding light on some figures and ignoring others. "It was unintentional and wasn't only limited to bloggers, some names got famous and others didn't. The events were happening too fast the last three years to the point where you didn't have

time to look for stories; they imposed themselves. So despite of Alaa [Abdel Fattah] he became the story," (Magued, 2014). Magued adds that "Those whose court cases were alongside famous people didn't necessarily receive any personal exposure, but their cases have."

5.3.3. Frames used with bloggers

Magued and El Malky believe the frame used for every blogger depended on the context they were hosted in; be it in his capacity as an activist, a blogger, a political party member or a detainee in a military court case. Rostom agrees adding that they always asked their guests how they would like to be introduced. Younes, on the other hand, says once the blogger becomes active on the ground, they would use the term activist, and not blogger, to introduce them. But El Malky says they would normally identify a blogger as such because the word was familiar to their readers, which is not necessarily the case with other newspapers.

El Zelaky comments on the different frames used for different bloggers saying "This is a sad topic," (2014). He explains that the vision of the person in charge editorially and his evaluation of the person he's covering is what mostly set whether the frame used for that person is positive or negative. "We can talk about guidelines, but in practice, it unfortunately isn't entirely applied, especially if this particular story is coming from sections that have certain editorial styles," (El Zelaky, 2014). He explains that some sections, like crime sections, are more sympathetic to the state than others and so might frame bloggers more negatively in news covering their court cases. He adds, however, that more famous bloggers "have gained a certain image or frame"

that can only change slightly from one reporter or editor to the other, but the frames might change drastically for others who do not have a set frame and image with the readers or the reporters, (El Zelaky, 2014). Younes, on the other hand, believes bloggers like Mahfouz and other prominent ones have connections and friends in the media and so receive more sympathetic coverage than others.

When it came to familiarity, Magued says she adopts a formal or a familiar tone depending on the guest's age and the way he wants to portray himself. This is why she will, for instance, adopt a more formal tone with prominent blogger Mostafa El Naggar if she's hosting him, not as an activist or blogger, but as a parliamentary candidate alongside other candidates.

When asked whether they were hosting bloggers as representatives of the revolution, Rostom starts off saying nobody is a representative of the revolution but some bloggers have the legitimacy to speak on behalf of the revolutionary youth, including bloggers like El Naggar who was a member of the parliament. "There are some who people trust to speak on their behalf," (Rostom, 2014).

5.4. Conclusion and Discussion

It is clear that the media coverage of bloggers in both print and broadcast has seen dramatic shifts in editorial direction and increases in space given to coverage of bloggers and their opinions. Media professionals interviewed explained that increase saying bloggers were the movers and shakers at that time, they were able to cover events on the ground that the media could not cover and they started taking on more roles on the ground after the uprising,

including forming political parties and movements. Their coverage increased from a total of 9 mentions in 2010 to 118 mentions in 2011 across all three newspapers although *Al-Ahram* gave them the least space while the *DNE* gave them the biggest space. They were making headlines and, especially on the *DNE*, their coverage was often placed in front pages. This was an intentional editorial policy by *DNE* as they wanted to give voice to the youth who were making the news. *Al-Ahram*, however, never put bloggers on the front page, showing that although the editorial direction changed across the board, it remained true that the state-owned newspaper showed less support of bloggers than the other two. *DNE* remained favorable towards bloggers, covering less-prominent and English-language bloggers that other newspapers did not cover. It is worth noting that the two newspapers have different audience; while *Al-Ahram* is more mainstream and reaches a wider audience, *DNE*'s readers are English-spoken, more middle and upper class and more familiar with bloggers than others. Broadcast also showed a significant increase in the space given to bloggers from 18 minutes in 2010 to 253 minutes in 2011,with *Baladna Bel Masry* covering bloggers the most extensively. *Baladna Bel Masry* also hosted a wide range of bloggers while *Ten PM* hosted the more mainstreamed bloggers. Both Maged and El Malky also expressed interest in bloggers because they were being targeted and oppressed at the time, something that no other media outlets expressed and so showing that the *DNE* and *Baladna Bel Masry* have different editorial directions than the other platforms studied.

More importantly, the tone and frames used have changed in 2011. The frames used to portray bloggers were overwhelmingly positive with a few exceptions mostly in *Al-Ahram* and with less prominent bloggers. In print, the

leading identification frame was their activism, followed by their blogging identity. On broadcast, they were framed less as bloggers and more as activists and often received positive frames, especially the more prominent ones, possibly because television targets a wider audience that might not necessarily be familiar with the term blogger. The media highlighted their credibility, importance, heroism and expertise rather than using neutral frames that did not necessarily reflect what they did in terms of activism or blogging. They are framed to represent the youth, to be heroes or victims and they are quoted and hosted as political analysts. Talk shows hosted them to speak on behalf of revolutionaries on several occasions. During the parliamentary elections, bloggers were hosted alongside political analysts. They were normally asked to analyze the situation, predict the development of the events and speak on behalf of the youth. There was also an obvious familiar tone between the presenter and the blogger hosted on talk shows studied, especially when the blogger was more prominent. In print, they were quoted to comment on hot topics like Khaled Said's case, for instance. Their pictures were often featured and news of their accomplishments, arrests and activities they took part in were also covered across all media studied.

All five media people interviewed agreed that the frame differed according to the context the blogger was hosted or quoted in. Some expressed that the identity frame differed according to the blogger's will. Commenting on the positivity or negativity of the frame used for different bloggers, El Zelaky argues that this largely depends on the reporter's own view of the blogger but that the ore prominent bloggers who have a set image in the minds of the readers are normally portrayed in a more consistent frame. Similarly, Younes

argues that prominent bloggers' connections with the media mean they are covered more positively than others. Finally, Rostom believes that some prominent bloggers have earned the right to speak on behalf of the revolutionary youth and so they are often framed as representatives of this segment.

This reflects a dramatic change in status of bloggers in the span of one year that made them not only the center and maker of news, but also experts on current events and sources that give the article or segment certain revolutionary credibility. They became more trusted than mainstream reporters and their social media accounts became sources for credible coverage and analysis that represents a key sector of the political scene at the moment; the revolutionaries. News of their wins, and more importantly, their arrests became hard to ignore, especially with more prominent bloggers. An example of that, for instance, is Alaa Abdel Fattah's arrest, which received large media attention and overwhelmingly positive media framing in 2011 but he did not receive a friction of this attention and positive framing when he was arrested in 2006.

This gives prominent bloggers a certain immunity that is drawn from the notion that their arrests or detentions are now cases of public opinion and acknowledged by the now-sympathizing mainstream media. It is this fame that drove many media outlets to solicit columns from prominent bloggers who established audience credibility. In the period studied Mostafa El Naggar wrote a column for *Al-Masry Al-Youm* and Abdel Fattah wrote one for *Al-Shorouk*, which is also a shift in the relationship dynamics between mainstream media and the prominent bloggers that has its own implications.

But it is also important to note that with this immunity and fame, come risks. Bloggers covered by the media have more to lose now as they become more familiar to the public and the media and so are put more into the mainstream light. Their mistakes and opinions will be far more visible than before. They grew to establish credibility with members of the offline public that they will now be concerned with maintaining.

It is important to differentiate here between the coverage of prominent bloggers, which is mostly positive, and others less prominent, who might not receive the same attention or similar framing.

Media professionals interviewed agreed that they preferred popular bloggers who were active during the uprising over lesser known ones. The popular bloggers who are prominent, at least on the blogosphere, have more credibility than others and are more trusted by both, the media, and the audience. Those bloggers are also more interesting to the audience, which means that the media covered them more intensely and used them as case studies to represent general issues, Magued believes. Others might not have the same reach or connections the prominent bloggers have and so might not be able to get their stories across to the media.

Less prominent bloggers like Maikel Nabil and Ayman Mansour were portrayed in a less positive light than cases involving star bloggers like Abdel Fattah. And while *DNE* often quoted less prominent bloggers, newspapers like *Al-Ahram* and *Al-Masry Al-Youm* ignored less prominent bloggers and only covered star bloggers. Prominent bloggers were often framed as political analysts, revolutionary youth representatives and heroes by print and broadcast while lesser prominent ones were often framed as eyewitnesses and defendants.

It is also important to note that although 40 were arrested during the 2011 Maspero events, only prominent blogger Abdel Fattah was covered intensely by the shows studied. Similarly, although 800 were injured and 10 killed during the November 19th Tahrir events, only prominent blogger Malek Mostafa, Ahmed Harara — who lost an eye during the uprising and another during those events — and *Al-Masry Al-Youmn* photographer were intensively covered by the media.

Bloggers have also shown tendencies to support each other's cases and bring it to the media spotlight when they're interviewed. This is an indication of them running in the same circles, but also of them promoting one another.

The findings suggest that in the process of reproducing hegemony in the new social order under the political situation in Egypt, bloggers are being coopted into the historical bloc, (Gramsci, 1971). Because elements of the previous historical bloc had peeled off, namely individuals leading an uprising and the mainstream media, civil society and some political parties following suit, hegemony had to be renewed. In the reproduction of the new social order after the uprising, consent had to be renewed through coopting counterhegemonic elements that have become influential players. A main component of the elements used to manufacture consent is collaboration with cultural institutions and the mainstream media (Hall, 1977), which, based on the findings, have started including elements of counter-hegemony that they were not paying attention to before, possibly to gain legitimacy. As Gramsci argues, civil society rules through achieving consent and propagating the ruling class ideology through influencing people to adopt dominating classes' values and ideas as the general interest. Looking at the frames used with bloggers, we

can instantly see that bloggers, especially the prominent ones, are often framed to represent the revolution and the youth. They are often asked to analyze and comment, not as individual activists, but rather as representatives of the revolution itself. This means that the interests they represent, although not necessarily in-line with the previous regime's interests, are framed as the general interests of the public. The priorities they present are then presented as the priorities of the public.

The above-mentioned findings of mainstream media concluded analysis reflect on an increasing readership and followership of prominent bloggers, and so ultimately the domination of those few bloggers over blogosphere as the majority of other bloggers struggle to get heard. This support previous Arab bloggers theorists, like David Faris', findings. Faris argues that only star bloggers are able to set mainstream media agenda and push stories onto the media (2008), which is proving true with the choice of bloggers hosted. Most media hosted the more popular, star bloggers and only covered their issues and cases. This proves that "some bloggers are vastly more influential than others, continue to gain further influence, and make it harder for newer bloggers to crack the scene," (Faris, 2008: 3). Lotan et al argues that those star bloggers and Tweeps become influential and their prominence and influence are amplified due to an information cascades effect whereby it's easier for people to adopt influential, credible people's opinions rather than forming their own (2011). This adds to the possible polarization of the blogosphere and the micro-blogosphere in the Egyptian context as users cluster around prominent bloggers whose beliefs coincide with their own and turn to those bloggers to form further opinions on current issues. The more prominent bloggers are also

gaining more influence and popularity, online and offline, while others struggle to get heard.

Chapter VI: Comparative profiles of prominent and less prominent political bloggers interviewed.

This chapter looks at the findings from bloggers' interviews as well as the quantitative content analysis of their respective blogs to compare prominent bloggers to less prominent ones as well as the nature and frequency of their blogs' content before and after January 25th. It mainly serves to see who the most prominent bloggers are and compare their profiles to other bloggers studied as well as see the effects of prominence and their post-January 25th status on their blogs' content.

6.1. Blogger profiles in blog statistics, background and education

6.1.1. Prominent: Esraa Abdel Fattah

Twitter Followers: 456,000
Number of Tweets: 67,100
Joined Twitter in: July 2009
Started blogging in: N/A
Times mentioned in the media: 11 (4 by *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, 2 by *Al-Ahram*, 3 by DNE and 2 by *TenPM*)
Followers/Likes on Facebook: 18,527
First Facebook note showing: Notes not showing
Blog mentioned on Facebook: None
Blog mentioned on Twitter: None
Description on Twitter: Journalist and digital marketing specialist at *Youm7*
Description on Facebook: "Civil society consultant, a columnist and social media specialist at *Youm7* and political activist." On her personal page, the description is "digital and social media consultant at *Youm7*."

Framed as:
      Activist: 6
      Blogger: 2
      Revolutionary Youth Representative: 4
      Political Analyst: 3
      Hero: 6
      Familiar: 1
      Personal Representative: 1

The interview with Esraa was held at her regular restaurant in Mohandessin, a relatively smart area of Cairo. She was dressed formally in readiness for attending the inauguration of a library to which she had been invited. Although

the interview was conducted in Arabic, she often used English terms and expressions showing an average command of English although with an accent. She had with her an iPhone, a Samsung smart phone and an iPad.

Abdel Fattah is a journalist and describes herself as digital and social media consultant at *Youm7* newspaper. She was born on July 10th, 1978 and moved to Oman with her father, a mechanical engineer, and mother, a teacher, before returning to Egypt and graduating from the Faculty of Languages in Ain Shams University (one of the two main public universities in Cairo) in 2000.

Five years after graduation, Abdel Fattah started getting politically involved when Ayman Nour was arrested during the presidential elections in 2005, after which she became active in Nour's Al-Ghad Party. Three years later, she founded a Facebook group in 2008 to support textile workers and call for the April 6th strike. The group attracted 74,000 followers and was the first Facebook group calling for a general strike and the group and Abdel Fattah subsequently gained a lot of media and state attention. She was then dubbed Facebook Girl, becoming the first Egyptian woman to gain media popularity as a social media activist.

She was soon after arrested and detained in prison for more than two weeks before getting released and maintaining a low-profile for subsequent months. She worked with multinational companies in the field of human resources and says she was harassed into quitting after her arrest in 2008. She was not able to find a job in the same field afterwards due to the publicity surrounding her arrest and made a career shift into civil society. A few months later, she became active again with Mohamed El Baradei's presidential

campaign before founding the Egyptian Democratic Academy in 2009 and becoming active in several other NGOs and initiatives.

During the 2011 uprising she became active in covering and Tweeting the events as well as speaking to the mainstream media. She publicized the January 25th protests on Facebook through an *Al-Jazeera* forum and other social media tools and then fundraised for the logistics of the event. After the uprising, she won the New Generation Democratic Activist Award from Freedom House, was named one of the Arabian Business Magazine's 100 most powerful Arab women and was rumored by the media to have been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

She remained the deputy chairman of the Democratic Academy she founded until she left in June 2014 to join *Youm7* newspaper. She was a regular columnist for *Al-Masry Al-Youm* after the uprising but was stopped from writing at the newspaper under the new management in 2012. She was then approached by *Youm7* in March 2013 to become a consultant and was asked back in by *Al-Masry Al-Youm* but refused the latter. Following the uprising, she had pitched a television program idea to Egyptian business tycoon and media owner Naguib Sawiris, whom she refers to by his first name. Sawiris's channel, OTV, called her later and she presented the program for a short span. At the time of the interview, she was planning to run in the parliamentary elections that were to take place by the end of 2014.

Abdel-Fattah describes herself as upper-middle class. She says she was financially independent since being a university student, had her own computer since 2004 and never had a problem accessing computers, smart phones or the

internet. She had a smartphone during the 2011 uprising and used it to cover the events.

6.1.2. Prominent: Loai Nagati

Twitter Followers: 107K
Number of Tweets: 47.3K
Joined Twitter in: May 2008
Started blogging in: 2008
Last blog post: January 2011
Times mentioned in the media: 4 (all by DNE)
Followers/Likes on Facebook: 4,281
First Facebook note showing: April 2010
Number of Facebook notes: 8
Blog mentioned on Twitter: None (in August 2014 it mentioned two satirical websites/blogs he ran)
Blog mentioned on Facebook: None (in August 2014 it mentioned two satirical websites/blogs he ran)
Description on Twitter: "Freelance web developer" (used to mention two satirical websites he ran)
Description on Facebook: "Freelance web designer and developer"

Framed as: N/A

The interview was held at Nagati's office in Maadi. He used a lot of technical and professional English terms with a good accent. Born in 1990, Nagati lived with his family in Minya, Upper Egypt, before moving to Cairo to study computer science at the private Shorouk Academy. His father is a doctor. He has owned a private business, *Abajora* (Lampshade) Productions, in the field of media and web development and design since October 2013. He also founded and managed Abolhol (Sphinx) News, an online satirical news website, in December 2013.

He blogged in the technical fields as well as political and social fields, forming several blogs, the first of which was in 2008.

Nagati was detained in June 2011 during the Tahrir clashes he was Tweeting about, but was released due to health concerns and pressure from social media activists who created a Facebook in his support, stressing that Nagati is a blogger and an activist not a thug. Bloggers also called for a blogging day to demand the release of Nagati. Three similar days were held during that time to oppose SCAF, military trials and sexual harassment.

He then became a social media editor at *Al-Shorouk* newspaper in November2011 and then moved in May 2012 to become a digital marketeer at *Al-Masry Al-Youm* after the newspaper approached him to join their team. He left a year later in May 2013.

Although Nagati uses social media for his work and free time, unlike other bloggers interviewed, he mainly uses his laptop for his blogging and social media. He says he never had an issue connecting to the internet, even in Minya.

Content Analysis of Blogs: Loaispeaks.blogspot.com

Topics discussed in October 2010: (10 posts)
Philosophy (5 posts)
Society (2 posts)
Literature (2 posts)
Topics discussed in October 2011: N/A (no posts in October 2011)
The only post in 2011 was in January and it was a poem called "Get Angry"

Literature (1 post)

Number of posts by year:
2010: 10 posts
2011: 1 post

Blogs in: Arabic
Ads: Google ads
Links: No

6.1.3. Prominent: Sandmonkey

Twitter Followers: 15K
Number of Tweets: 100K
Joined Twitter in: April 2007
Started blogging in: 2004
Last blog post: January 2015
Times mentioned in the media: 2 (1 on *Baladna Bel Masry* and 1 on DNE)
Followers/Likes on Facebook: 3,291
First Facebook note showing: February 2009
Number of Facebook notes: 118
Blog mentioned on Twitter: None
Blog mentioned on Facebook: None
Description on Twitter: "Award winning Blogger (Best ME blog in 2006, BOB Best English Blog in 2011), Daily News columnist, Social Media strategist, & occasionally topples governments."
Description on Facebook: Creative Director at Tanuki

Framed as:
> Activist: 1
> Familiar: 1
> Revolutionary Youth representative: 1
> Political analyst: 1
> Hero: 1

The interview was held at Sandmonkey's office in Zamalek. He spoke excellent English. He identifies himself on his blog as a "micro-celebrity, blogger, activist, new media d-bag, pain in the ass."

Born in 1981 in Heliopolis, Cairo, Sandmonkey comes from an upper class family and has attended one of the most expensive English-language private schools in Cairo before living for five years in the U.S. to study. He has a dual master's degree in business administration and accounting. He was an investment banker and consultant for two years in Cairo and Qatar before quitting to focus on the revolution, as he puts it. During this time, he worked with a company dealing with luxury brands and freelanced on projects with several of the leading companies in Egypt. He now has a private business in

digital consultancy and social media and an office in the upscale area of Zamalek. Sandmonkey's mother was a member of Mubarak's now-defunct ruling party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), and the reason he became a blogger. He says he started blogging because he "had a personal vendetta with the NDP," (Sandmonkey 2014) which, he says "ruined" his mother. This shows the family's political affiliations affected Sandmonkey and got him interested in the field of writing and politics, much like many other prominent bloggers interviewed.

He was one of the first Egyptian bloggers, starting in 2004, and was frequently quoted by international media as he spoke fluent English. He is a bridge-blogger (Lynch, 2007) who mainly blogs in English and targets English-speakers locally and an international audience. Unlike most first-wave bloggers who are leftists, Sandmonkey is a libertarian. He showed pride in being one of the "30 old-guard" bloggers in Egypt, a term he uses to describe the founding generation of the Egyptian blogosphere. He believes those 30 bloggers used blogs and Twitter before anyone else and in a different way from the majority of users. Although has a large English-reading following, an article he wrote in Arabic and published on Tumblr in January 2014 was read two million times and shared 10,000 times.

Despite this prominence, he only revealed his identity for the first time in February 2011. He was active during the 2011 uprising, covering events on social media and giving interviews to local and international media. He then joined El Masreyin El Ahrar party, founded by businessman Naguib Sawiris, and ran on its lists for the parliamentary elections of 2011-12. Afterwards he started writing regular columns for *Daily News Egypt* under its new

management, from April 2012 until March 2014. He also writes for Al-Monitor

and several others and appeared in a scene of a popular Ramadan sitcom in

2014 playing himself as the 'famous blogger Sandmonkey'.

Sandmonkey calls himself an upper-class blogger and has always had

access to the internet. He now uses his smart phone and laptop to blog and

micro-blog.

Content Analysis of Blog: sandmonkey.org

Number of posts in September 2010: 1
Topics discussed in September 2010:
Religion

Number of posts on September 2011: 2
Topics discussed in September 2011:
Politics and SCAF (2)

Number of posts by year:
2006: 7
2007: 444
2008: 345
2009: 0
2010: 8
2011: 28
2012: 43
2013: 4
2014: 1

Ads: No

Blogs in: English mainly but sometimes in Arabic
Links: No

6.1.4. Prominent: Mostafa El Naggar

Twitter Followers: 775K
Number of Tweets: 18.2K
Joined Twitter in: March 2008
Started blogging in: 2007
Last blog post: 03 July 2014 (the one before it was in November 2010)
Times mentioned in the media: 4 (2 by *TenPm*, 1 by *Baladna Bel Masry* and
1 by *Al Masry Al Youm*)
Followers/Likes on Facebook: 153K

Started writing Facebook notes in: October 2008
Number of Facebook notes: 244
Blog mentioned on Twitter: None
Blog mentioned on Facebook: http://anam3ahom.blogspot.com/ and http://wenekdar.blogspot.com/
Description on Twitter: "Dentist, Writer and former MP"
Description on Facebook: Dentist

Framed as:
>   Party member: 3
>   Professional: 2
>   Revolutionary Youth: 2
>   Political Analyst: 3
>   Familiar: 1
>   Hero: 1
>   Personal Representative: 1

The interview with El Naggar was held at his dentistry clinic, which he co-owns with two colleagues, in the middle-class area of Nasr City. He spoke Arabic mainly but knew conversational English.

Born in 1980, El Naggar graduated the faculty of dentistry at the public Cairo University, one of the two major state universities in Egypt. But he also got a scholarship to study Mass Communication at the elite private American University in Cairo. He then worked for a year as a researcher in the political science department before he quit to join Baradei's presidential campaign after January 25th. El Naggar was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood until 2005, when he left after disagreeing on core ideals and became an active member of the Baradei National Association for Change. He was very active during the January 25th uprising, afterward helping to found Al Adl Party and was a general coordinator in Baradei's presidential bid. He stirred controversy when he signed a statement, along with 13 other parties, that allowed SCAF to uphold the extension of emergency law but later retracted the endorsement. He then ran in the 2011-12 parliamentary elections and won for the Nasr City district despite limited funds having been available for his campaign. He was

the only Al Adl member to win a seat in the elections and one of very few of the revolutionary youth.

El Naggar writes regular columns at *Al-Shorouk*, *Al-Dostour*, *Al-Masry Al-Youm* and *Youm7*. Although he only wrote for mainstream media twice before January 25th, both times for *Al-Shorouk*, he was asked by *Al-Masry Al-Youm* and *Youm7* to contribute to them regularly after the uprising. He has been arrested four times; in 2000, 2003 and twice in 2010 but was never convicted or imprisoned.

El Naggar comes from a certain elite as he comes from a highly educated and cultured family and most of his family members are politically engaged. Half his family members are members of the Muslim Brotherhood and the other half leftists and socialists, El Naggar said, and so he was always encouraged by them to become involved in politics. In fact, his grandfather was a Brotherhood leader. "I was raised joining the social activities of the Brotherhood," he says (2014) indicating his family's political orientation shaped his interests. His whole family, he says, are either engineers or doctors, showing a certain financial elite as well. El Naggar, he maintained his dentistry practice because he wanted to be financially independent and did not want money to be a tool to pressurize him.

He has had a smart phone since 2009 and used it to post on social media but blogged from his laptop. He now mainly uses his tablet. He said he never had an issue with internet connection, at home or elsewhere.

Content Analysis of Blog: http://anam3ahom.blogspot.com/

    Number of posts in October 2010: 3
    Topics discussed in October 2010:
      Philosophy (2)

News on his award (1)

Number of posts on October 2011: 0
Topics discussed in October 2011: N/A

Number of posts by year:
2007: 15
2008: 320
2009: 31
2010: 35
2011: 0
2012: 0
2013: 0
2014: 3

Ads: No

Blogs in: Arabic but seldom in English (twice since 2007)
Links: No

6.1.5. Prominent: Asmaa Mahfouz

Twitter Followers: 419K
Number of Tweets: 38.7K
Joined Twitter in: December 2008
Started blogging in: January 2009
Last blog post: July 2012
Times mentioned in the media: 13
Followers/Likes on Facebook: 213.2K
Started writing Facebook notes in: 2011
Number of Facebook notes: 207 but only 4 show
Blog mentioned on Twitter: None
Blog mentioned on Facebook: http://wolf-inside.blogpost.com
Description on Twitter: Her Facebook profile
Description on Facebook: None, just her official Facebook profile and her blog

Framed as:
Hero: 2
Blogger: 2
Activist: 3
Revolutionary Youth Representative: 3
Criminal: 1
Political Analyst: 2

The interview with Asmaa Mahfouz took place at her house in a middle class area of Ain Shams. She spoke mainly Arabic but used a few English words.

Born in 1985, Mahfouz studied business administration at the private university of Modern Academy Maadi and worked for international companies and locally renowned ones like LinkDOTNet. She started working in her first year of university as an office manager in the field of sales in call centers and then got gradually promoted. Although she worked for five years in LinkDOTNet, she left as she needed time off to focus on politics. "I was making good money; I was making LE3,000 a month and about LE6,000 every three months in commission," Mahfouz said during the interview. She then joined a documentary-making company, handling their public relations but left as they could no longer pay her. After that she lived off her savings as well as television appearances and occasional freelance contributions to newspapers.

Although not previously a follower of the news or engaged in politics, Mahfouz started developing an interest in 2008 through Facebook groups and forums. She co-founded the April 6th movement and it was her experience and training in sales and marketing at those companies that equipped her to become the group's media coordinator, communicating with the people on the street, using plain language to get the movement's message across to the maximum number of ordinary people.

Mahfouz's name became famous when she posted a video on YouTube a week before the January 25th uprising, calling for everyone to join the protests against a corrupt regime. She sought to shame men into taking part, saying she, a woman, would take the risk and take to the streets and not be afraid. Egyptian media have since talked of her as one of the sparks of the

uprising. During the uprising she was very active speaking to the media and covering the events and became a leading member of the Revolutionary Youth Coalition.

After the uprising she became one of the five people to receive the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought awarded by the European Parliament and was ranked number 381 of the World's 500 Most Influential Arabs by *Arabian Business* magazine. With her name and that of her April 6th co-founders were among names considered eligible to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011, which went to Yemeni activist Tawakol Kirman. Mahfouz was arrested in 2011 for defaming SCAF and underwent a military trial that stirred support from various activists and political leaders, including Ayman Nour and Mohammed Baradei. She was released on a bail of LE20,000 and acquitted later, along with blogger Loai Nagati. Fellow activists had collected her bail money. In 2012 she was tried in absentia on charges of assaulting and slandering a man. She was sentenced to a year in prison and a LE2,000 fine, a sentence that was appealed and revoked three months later.

Mahfouz is now married with a child and so is focusing more on her family life. She says she would love to work for a newspaper or have regular columns but she was never offered this opportunity except with newly-launched websites that often have no budget to pay her. She does not consider herself a professional writer, saying there are others who can do the job better. Aside from occasional online news outlets, she wrote only once, for *Al Badil* newspaper

She uses her laptop and her smart phone to write but her smart phone to Tweet and write statuses on Facebook.

Content analysis of blog: http://wolf-inside.blogpost.com

Number of posts in April 2010 (the last post in 2010)**:** 2
Topics discussed in April 2010:
    Politics (2)

Number of posts on October 2011: 1
Topics discussed in October 2011:
    Politics

Posts by year:

2009: 26
2010: 11
2011: 12
2012: 2

Ads: No
Blogs in: Mostly in Arabic but has four English posts.
Links: Yes (Only three, including one of April 6th's blog and Ahmed Maher's)

6.1.6. Prominent: Amr Ezzat

Twitter Followers: 188K
Number of Tweets: 40.9K
Joined Twitter in: January 2008
Started blogging in: 2005
Last blog post: June 2013
Times mentioned in the media: N/A
Followers/Likes on Facebook: 35.6K
Started writing Facebook notes in: July 2007
Number of Facebook notes: 93
Blog mentioned on Twitter: Mabadali.blogspot.com
Blog mentioned on Facebook: None
Description on Twitter: His blog and page on *Al-Masry Al-Youm*
Description on Facebook: Researcher at EIPR and writer at *Al-Masry Al-Youm*

The interview with Amr Ezzat took place at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal

Rights (EIPR) head office where Ezzat works as a researcher and is in charge

of the religious freedom program.

He studied at a state school in Cairo and studied engineering in Cairo University, graduating in 2002. He then studied for a degree in philosophy at the same university and graduated in 2010. His father is an engineer and was the director of the then-newly privatized chain department stores Omar Effendi. Before that his father was an employee in the ministry of investment and his mother works in tourism. He says his parents are well-educated and cultured and his brother was a doctor then became a documentary and film director.

Ezzat's involvement with politics started when he was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood's media committee, where he had a network of media contacts. He started writing for Islamist media platforms, including the Brotherhood's *Islam Online*, before writing on arts and culture at the local *Al Mawwkef Al Arabi* magazine, which he describes as "of low quality." Although the magazine was not mainstream, it was more liberal than the platforms he used to write for before then. His online writing started in 2004 with online forums and then in 2005 he separated from the Brotherhood, joined Kifaya movement and started his blog, writing about a diversity of topics. In 2007 he decided to leave the field of engineering and focus on writing and journalism, joining *Al Badil* newspaper in its start-up year. He then started writing for *Al-Shorouk* from 2008 to December 2010. During those two years he was not a columnist, but rather a reporter in the society section, covering cultural and social issues. He then left for *Al-Masry Al-Youm* where he was supposed to be a reporter, also for the society section. But a month later the uprising took place and he became a columnist at the newspaper. After the uprising, Ezzat started getting more space in mainstream media platforms, writing regularly for

Al-Masry Al-Youm and contributing to *Mada Masr*, *Jadaliyya* and *Al Arabiya*, among others. At the end of 2011 he joined the EIPR but continued writing columns until April 2014 when he stopped writing anywhere due to what he called a "general state of depression," and a need to focus on his research work.

Ezzat was never arrested but was threatened by the state security several times. He says his father was "known" so the security apparatus called his father to warn his son. This might also be one of the reasons he was safer from arrests than other bloggers who did not have the same connections as Ezzat's father.

Ezzat has two blogs, one studied here and the other, amr-ezzat.blogspot.com, is a journalistic archive for what he wrote in *Al-Shorouk* from 2008 to 2010.

Content analysis of blog: Mabadali.blogspot.com

Starting 2011, and especially in 2013, most posts on Mabadaly, were articles he wrote for *Al-Masry Al-Youm* or other newspapers, websites or magazines and reposted on his blog. He explained that he had started feeling it's easier and quicker to post blog-like posts on Facebook.

Number of posts in May 2010: 3
Topics discussed in May 2010:
   Personal (2)
   Culture (1)

Number of posts in May 2011: 1
Topics discussed in May 2011:
   Politics (an article he had published in *Al-Masry Al-Youm*)

Posts by year:

2005: 32

2006: 69
2007: 53
2008: 54
2009: 24
2010: 23
2011: 26
2012: 44
2013: 39

Ads: No
Blogs in: Arabic
Links: Yes (Include Malek Mostafa, Mona Seif, Hossam El Hamalawy and Wael Abbas)

6.1.7. Less-Prominent: Mohamed Abo-elgheit

Twitter Followers: 6,374
Number of Tweets: 3,320
Joined Twitter in: April 2011
Started blogging in: 2010
Last blog post: 2012
Followers/Likes on Facebook: 30.2K
Started writing Facebook notes in: June 2008
Number of Facebook notes: 27
Blog mentioned on Twitter: None
Blog mentioned on Facebook: http://gedarea.blogspot.com
Description on Twitter: Trying to be a human, then a blogger then a doctor.
Description on Facebook: Researcher/Editor at *Al Hurra*

The interview with Abo-elgheit took place at a coffee shop in the middle-class area of Bab El Louk, by his home.

Abo-elgheit studied at a school founded by the Brotherhood and went on to study medicine at the public Assiut University, later moving to Cairo to work at Imbaba Hospital. He says political science did not seem to offer a viable livelihood but nevertheless quit medicine to focus on journalism. His family members are affiliated with the Brotherhood and his father is a doctor and his mother a teacher. He says his family's political interest affected him as they raised him to object to the regime and not be afraid of the state. His parents participated in Brotherhood protests and his father was often arrested

and "his prison bag was always prepared," said Abo-elgheit (2014) "so this ambiance isn't strange to me."

He was involved in online forums, reading groups and cultural salons and moved in the same circles as some of the now-prominent bloggers who were once affiliated with the Brotherhood, although he did not necessarily receive the same attention they have. He was coordinator of the Islamist presidential candidate Mohamed Abo El Fottouh's campaign in Assiut.

Abo-elgheit contributed to *Aswat Arabiya* and worked for *Al-Shorouk* newspaper. Unlike more prominent bloggers who were invited to write columns, Abo-elgheit asked an acquaintance who was then the managing editor of *Al-Shorouk* to help him get a job there and he started out as a non-paid trainee in the last page of the newspaper. Because he was the only one who spoke a little English, he was asked to cover Salman Rushdie in 2012 and it was because of this coverage that his skills were appreciated and he was able to finally start writing in the newspaper. From then he worked his way up and proved himself before he started writing opinion pieces in the newspaper in 2013. He was also asked by blogger and journalist Nora Younes to write for *Al-Masry Al-Youm*'s website. It has to be mentioned, however, that Younes' attitude is favorable towards bloggers and at this time she invited many bloggers to write for the portal, but not the print edition.

Abo-elgheit made a few media appearances with the BBC, *Tahrir TV*, *ONTV* and *Jazeera Mubashir*. The media coverage he received was generated mainly by a blog post he wrote after the uprising, talking about the rights of the poor. The post went viral and was soon picked up by a popular satellite show

and then the media started contacting him. He believes it was his connections with prominent bloggers and writers that gave his article this attention.

He is now a producer for *Al Hurra* channel, a US public diplomacy project, and writes columns and investigative pieces for *Al-Shorouk*.

Content Analysis of Blog: http://gedarea.blogspot.com

Number of posts in November 2010: 1
Topics discussed in November 2010:
    Blogs and social media

Number of posts on November 2011: 10
Topics discussed in November 2011:
    Politics: 5
    Human Rights: 6
    Culture
    Economics
    Religion
    Literature
    Personal: 2

Number of posts by year:
2012: 2 (Both articles he published in *Al-Shorouk* and *Bos w Tol*)
2011: 9
2010: 15

Ads: No
Blogs in: Arabic

6.1.8. Less-Prominent: Ahmed Badawy

Twitter Followers: 48K
Number of Tweets: 125K
Joined Twitter in: October 2009
Started blogging in: 2006
Last blog post: February 2015
Followers/Likes on Facebook: 2,175
Started writing Facebook notes in: 2007
Number of Facebook notes: 755
Blog mentioned on Twitter: bad-way.blogspot.com
Blog mentioned on Facebook: bad-way.blogspot.com
Description on Twitter: "I can't find words to describe myself even though my hobby is writing, I am lonely and trying not to be depressed, I believe in freedom and I am active in public work."
Description on Facebook: Teaching Assistant at Physics Academy.

The interview with Ahmed Badawy took place at his office at the Egyptian Democratic Academy, where he was an instructor and a project manager from December 2013 to November 2014.

Born in 1984, Badawy went to a private Islamic school in Cairo and then studied electrical power engineering at Helwan University in Greater Cairo, graduating in 2007. Badawy's father is a lawyer and a former member of the NDP and his mother is a director at the Police Academy. He was working at the local business tycoon Sewedy and "getting paid four times more" than his current job but left it to make politics his work and so he can be sustainably active and engaged. He also published a book in Arabic titled *Thoughts of a Modern Egyptian Prophet*.

Before January 25th, Badawy was a member of the higher committee of Ayman Nour's Al Ghad party, and was in charge of handling his presidential campaign's social media. He co-founded Abol Fottouh's Masr Al Qaweya party in October 2012 and has been a leading member since then and was a member in his presidential campaign, handling social media.

Despite the fact that he was in two presidential campaigns (those of Nour and Aboul-Futtouh) and an important civil organization in Egypt, Badawy was hosted only three times on mainstream media after the uprising and only wrote one article for *Al-Shorouk* although he had approached publications before but received no response. One of those times was on a show with Esraa Abdel Fattah as presenter —he worked with Abdel Fattah at the EDA, which she had co-founded. He believes his limited media appearances are due to him attacking the former president's son, Gamal Mubarak.

He does not have a DSL connection at home but has internet on his

smart phone and tablet.

Content Analysis of Blog:

Number of posts in October 2010: 18
Topics discussed in October 2010:
  Religion: 3
  Politics: 6
  Personal: 8
  Human Rights
  History
  Philosophy

Number of posts on October 2011: 4
Topics discussed in October 2011:
  Politics: 4

In 2011 he was in Abol Fottouh's presidential campaign after Abol Fottouh

announced his bid in May 2011 and so his posts were all politics-related.

Number of posts by year:
2015: 7
2014: 54
2013: 88
2012: 130
2011: 106
2010: 186
2009: 168
2008: 125
2007: 30
2006: 32

Ads: No
Blogs in: Arabic
Ads: No
Blogs in: Arabic
Links: No

6.1.9. Less-Prominent: Mahmoud Saber

Twitter Followers: 12.3K
Number of Tweets: 40.9K
Joined Twitter in: September 2007
Started blogging in: 2005
Last blog post: 2011

Blog mentioned on Twitter: None
Description on Twitter: "Everyday counts, unfortunately"

The interview took place at a coffee shop in Zamalek. Saber spoke Arabic and used several English expressions.

He studied sociology at Ain Shams University and now works as the MENA coordinator for an American civil society for advocacy and video. Saber was part of Youth for Change movement and several others and was politically active since 2005 and took part in major protests and sit-ins.

Born in 1987, Saber was one of the early bloggers, starting in 2005 at the age of 17 under a pseudonym. Although he moved in the same circles as the most prominent bloggers, Saber believes he had neither the emotional capacity nor the support of activist bloggers like Alaa Abdel Fattah. Although he was present with Wael Abbas, Malek Mostafa and the bloggers who covered the sexual harassment incident in 2006, he never wrote about it because he was too depressed to do so. He says he has an issue with fame as he always wanted to maintain his privacy; so whenever a blog became famous he would shut it down and start another. He adopted a more personal and emotional attitude towards blogging that was not shared by other bloggers interviewed. He stopped blogging in 2011 and was inactive on social media during the uprising and during Morsi's presidency; two crucial times for social media.

Saber wrote for *Al Badil* once and one blog post to *Huffington Post* in 2008 when he was in a workshop in the U.S.

Content analysis of his blog was not possible as he shut down all his blogs.

6.1.10. Less-Prominent: Bassem Fathy

Twitter Followers: 36.2K
Number of Tweets: 41.5K
Joined Twitter in: June 2009
Started blogging in: May 2014
Last blog post: April 2010
Times mentioned in the media: 2
Followers/Likes on Facebook: 366
Started writing Facebook notes in: April 2010
Number of Facebook notes: 50
Blog mentioned on Twitter: 4democracy.wordpress.com
Blog mentioned on Facebook: 4democracy.wordpress.com
Description on Twitter: "Vive moi, pas le roi. Patriotism is the virtue of the vicious. Dolce far niente."
Description on Facebook: Former Program officer at Freedom House.

The interview took place at a coffee shop in Heliopolis. Fathy spoke mainly Arabic but is fluent in English, French and German.

He graduated the faculty of sciences at Cairo University in 2006 and studied Mass Communication at the university's Open Education Center. His parents are both Arabic teachers and he describes his family as middle class.

Fathy worked as an assistant program officer at Wadi Environmental Science Center from July 2007 to March 2009 before switching to a civil society career, interning at Mobilize.org Network in Washington and training in the field of human rights. He says he left engineering to work in politics and civil society because he wanted the work he gets paid for to be in sync with his interests and to have more time to dedicate to those fields. He also co-founded and worked with several initiatives advocating democracy, including EDA, April 6th, the Baradei presidential campaign, One World Foundation, Fredrich Naumann Foundation and Freedom House, where he worked as a program officer from July 2011 to October 2013. He also served a consultant monitoring the Egyptian elections in 2011 using a software called U-Shahid.

He is a member of the Revolution Youth Coalition and was also the editor in chief of *Elma7rosa.com* radio.

Fathy was detained in January 2008 and July and November 2009. He received a one-year suspended jail sentence in 2013 and Freedom House's office in Cairo was shut down so he went back to engineering until making plans to travel to the UK to study conflict and security. He writes for Fikra Forum, sponsored by Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He said he tried writing for newspapers but was only given an opportunity at *Al-Masry Al-Youm* online. He calls this 'internet writing' and says it did not meet his objective of writing columns.

He reported never having an issue connecting to the internet at home or on the go and said money was no issue to him.

Content Analysis of Blog: 4democracy.wordpress.com

The nature of content he posted differed from 2010 to 2011; while in 2010 he would use it to call for action, in 2011 and onwards it became more theoretical.

Number of posts in September 2010: 3
Topics discussed in September 2010:
      Politics: 3
      Human Rights: 3

Number of posts on September 2011: 1
Topics discussed in September 2011:
      Politics

Number of posts by year:

      2014: 1
      2013: 4
      2012: 10
      2011: 17
      2010: 27

Ads: No
Blogs in: English and Arabic
Links: No

6.1.11. Less-Prominent: Ali Hisham

Twitter Followers: 20K
Number of Tweets: 77.3K
Joined Twitter in: February 2011
Started blogging in: 2008
Last blog post: January 2015
Followers/Likes on Facebook: 361
Started writing Facebook notes in: February 2011
Number of Facebook notes: 2
Blog mentioned on Twitter: kobbaya.com
Blog mentioned on Facebook: kobbaya.com
Description on Twitter: An Egyptian writer and blogger
Description on Facebook: Freelance writer

Born in 1997, Hisham is the youngest blogger interviewed. We met at a coffee shop in Heliopolis as he was visiting Cairo from the Delta town of Tanta, where he lives. He says his family is not politically active, being mostly made up of doctors but they apparently encouraged his writing. His great uncle was Salah Gahin, one of Egypt's most renowned poets, a lyricist, playwright and cartoonist.

Hisham is in his final year of high school but has been writing since 2007 and blogging since 2008. He published a book in April 2014 titled *Nakl 'Am* (*Public Transport*), now in its fourth edition, which is a collection of short stories reflecting current events. He wrote two articles for *Al-Dostour* newspaper in 2010, at the age of 12, in a column targeting younger readers. He also published articles in several other online portals. Ten of the short stories in his book that received particularly positive online feedback were picked up by *Al-Ahram* newspaper and re-published. His blog is a political and social satire.

He appeared twice on television after January 25th; once with popular talk show host Mahmoud Saad and another with renowned journalist and host Yousri Fouda.

Content Analysis of Blog: kobbaya.com

No comparison between 2010 and 2011 could be done as Hisham only started that blog 2011 and his previous blog was shut down.

Posts by the year:

2015: 1
2014: 8
2013: 21
2012: 33
2011: 43

Ads: No
Blogs in: Arabic
Links: No

6.1.12. Less-Prominent: Mohamed Sherief

Twitter Followers: 345
Number of Tweets: 8,159
Joined Twitter in: May 2009
Started blogging in: 2007
Last blog post: January 2013
Followers/Likes on Facebook: 1,262
Started writing Facebook notes in: February 2009
Number of Facebook notes: 27
Blog mentioned on Twitter: Kelmawildwing.blogspot.com
Blog mentioned on Facebook: Kelmawildwing.blogspot.com
Description on Twitter: "If I knew who I was I would say"
Description on Facebook: None

The interview took place at a coffee shop in Heliopolis.

Born in 1986, Sherief studied law but never practiced it, turning to teaching instead. He then joined the Military Production, although as a civilian employee, before getting a job with Egypt Air.

Sherief started writing in forums before moving on to a blog in order to have more freedom to write very short posts that are to the point. He says that

El Sayed 221

there was little interaction at first, but soon he started interacting and meeting other bloggers through his posts and then started being active on the ground with them. He remembers writing daily at a time of intense interaction with his blog, from 2007 to 2009, but then "the curve went down," he said (2014).

One of his blog posts in late 2011 was picked up by *Al-Shorouk* magazine and *Al-Ahram*. He was interviewed once by *New York Times* in 2009 in an article about political bloggers in Egypt.

He says he is most concerned with human rights, followed by politics.

He has a laptop and a smart phone.

Content Analysis of Blog: Kelmawildwing.blogspot.com

Number of posts in October 2010: 2
Topics discussed in October 2010:
 History
 Freedom of expression

Number of posts in October 2010: 2
Topics discussed in October 2010:
 History
 Politics (2)

Posts by the year:

2013: 2
2012: 11
2011: 9
2010: 8
2009: 37
2008: 197
2007: 131

Ads: No
Blogs in: Arabic
Links: Yes (including links to parties and movements, media outlets as well as prominent bloggers' like Malek Moustafa, Wael Abbas, Alaa and Manal's blog, Mostafa El Hamalawy, Amr Ezzat and Abdel Moneim Press).

6.2. Comparative study of bloggers' prominence, blog content and social status

6.2.1 Twitter follower, Twitter activity and media prominence

Prominent bloggers covered by the media ranked by Twitter popularity

Rank	Blogger	Twitter Followers	Number of Tweets	Joined Twitter in	Times mentioned in the media
1	Wael Ghoneim	1.51M	7,884	Mar-09	7
2	Mostafa El Naggar	775K	18.2K	Mar-08	4
3	Alaa Abdel Fattah	701K	303K	Mar-07	24
4	Esraa Abdel Fattah	465K	67.1K	Jul-09	11
5	Asmaa Mahfouz	419K	38.7K	Dec-08	13
6	Wael Khalil	298K	85K	Mar-07	3
7	Mona Seif	239K	120K	Jul-07	2
8	Rasha Azab	243K	23.3K	Jan-11	2
9	Hossam El Hamalawy	224K	175K	Oct-07	2
10	Ahmed Maher	204K	15.6K	May-08	12
11	Malek Adly	200K	119K	Apr-11	2
12	Sandmonkey	153K	100K	Apr-07	2
13	Malek Mostafa	151K	30.2K	Feb-07	8
14	Loai Nagati	107K	47.3K	May-08	4
15	Ahmed Douma	107K	11.1K	Jul-08	2

Table 6.1: Prominent bloggers covered by the media ranked by Twitter popularity

Prominent bloggers covered by the media ranked by Twitter activity

Ranking in terms of Twitter Activity	Ranking in terms of Twitter popularity	Blogger	Twitter Followers	Number of Tweets	Joined Twitter in	Times mentioned in the media
1	3	Alaa Abdel Fattah	701K	303K	Mar-07	24
2	9	Hossam El Hamalawy	224K	175K	Oct-07	2
3	7	Mona Seif	239K	120K	Jul-07	2
4	11	Malek Adly	200K	119K	Apr-11	2
5	12	Sandmonkey	153K	100K	Apr-07	2
6	6	Wael Khalil	298K	85K	Mar-07	3
7	4	Esraa Abdel Fattah	465K	67.1K	Jul-09	11
8	14	Loai Nagati	107K	47.3K	May-08	4
9	5	Asmaa Mahfouz	419K	38.7K	Dec-08	13
10	13	Malek Mostafa	151K	30.2K	Feb-07	8
11	8	Rasha Azab	243K	23.3K	Jan-11	2
12	2	Mostafa El Naggar	775K	18.2K	Mar-08	4
13	9	Ahmed Maher	204K	15.6K	May-08	12
14	15	Ahmed Douma	107K	11.1K	Jul-08	2
15	1	Wael Ghoneim	1.51M	7,884	Mar-09	7

Table 6.2: Prominent bloggers covered by the media ranked in terms of Twitter activity

Bloggers interviewed ranked by Twitter popularity

Ranking in terms of Twitter activity	Ranking in terms of Twitter Poularity	Blogger	Facebook Followers	Number of Notes	Number of Tweets	Twitter Followers
10	1	Mostafa El Naggar		244	18.2K	775K
4	2	Esraa Abdel Fattah	18,527	No notes to show	67.1K	456K
9	3	Asmaa Mahfouz	212.4K	4	38.8K	420K
8	4	Amr Ezzat	35,650	93	40.9K	188K
2	5	Sandmonkey	3,291	118	100K	153K
5	6	Loai Nagati	4,281	8	47.3	107K
1	7	Ahmed Badawi	2,175	755	125K	48K
6	8	Bassem Fathy	366	50	41.5K	36.2K
7	9	Mahmoud Saber			40.9K	12.3K
3	10	Ali Hisham	361	2	77.3K	20K
12	11	Mohamed AboelGheit	30,251	27	3,320	6,374
11	12	Mohamed Sherief	1,262	27	8,159	345

Table 6.3: Bloggers interviewed ranked by Twitter popularity compared to their Twitter activity

Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 show that the ranking of bloggers in terms of popularity is vastly different than their ranking in terms of activity on Twitter. A blogger like Wael Ghoneim has almost double the followers of the next most popular person in the ranking and yet has the least activity on Twitter out of the 15 prominent bloggers. Alaa Abdel Fattah, who has the most media coverage, ranks third in terms of popularity. El Naggar ranks first in terms of Twitter popularity among the bloggers interviewed for this study but 10th in terms of

his Twitter activity. Similarly, Hisham ranks third in terms of activity but 10th in terms of popularity.

The tables show, however, that while the frequency of their Tweeting seems inconsistent with their popularity, the media coverage seems more consistent. Whether the media coverage was negative or positive seems not to affect their social media popularity. El Naggar says his followers increased by 100,000 in just a few weeks after television host Abdel Rahman Aly launched a character assassination campaign against him. Similarly, Nagati reported seeing dramatic increases in his followers after his detention. "Military prison is the best way to increase your Twitter followers," (Nagati, 2014).

Only 3 of the 12 bloggers interviewed noticed no increase in their followership after media appearances. It is worth noting, however, that because popular bloggers already have large numbers of followers, the change occurring after media appearances probably presents small percentages compared to the less-popular bloggers. Bloggers like El Naggar and Abdel Fattah, for instance, are used to receiving 750 to 1,000 new followers every week anyway and so there is no significant percentage increase post media appearances. On the other hand, Hisham reported dramatic increase in his followers; after he appeared on Fouda's show his followers increased by 3,000 immediately afterwards. Although the boost of 3,000 is significant as a proportion of Hisham's 20,000 followers, it would be barely noticeable to those who have hundreds of thousands of followers, like Abdel Fattah (456,000) or El Naggar (775,000).

Bloggers interviewed ranked by Twitter popularity

Ranking in terms of Facebook Popularity	Ranking in terms of Twitter Poularity	Blogger	Facebook Followers	Number of Notes	Number of Tweets	Twitter Followers
2	1	Mostafa El Naggar		244	18.2K	775K
5	2	Esraa Abdel Fattah	18,527	No notes to show	67.1K	456K
1	3	Asmaa Mahfouz	212.4K	4	38.8K	420K
3	4	Amr Ezzat	35,650	93	40.9K	188K
8	5	Sandmonkey	3,291	118	100K	153K
7	6	Loai Nagati	4,281	8	47.3	107K
9	7	Ahmed Badawi	2,175	755	125K	48K
6	8	Bassem Fathy	366	50	41.5K	36.2K
	9	Mahmoud Saber			40.9K	12.3K
11	10	Ali Hisham	361	2	77.3K	20K
4	11	Mohamed AboelGheit	30,251	27	3,320	6,374
10	12	Mohamed Sherief	1,262	27	8,159	345

Table 6.4: Bloggers interviewed ranked by Twitter popularity compared to Facebook popularity

Table 6.4 shows, however, that their Facebook popularity is relatively consistent with their Twitter popularity, with the exception of Mohamed Aboelgheit who ranks third in terms of his Facebook popularity but 11th in terms of his Twitter popularity.

Bloggers interviewed ranked by Facebook activity

Ranking in terms of Facebook Popularity	Ranking in terms of Facebook Activity	Blogger	Number of Notes	Facebook Followers
9	1	Ahmed Badawi	754	1,928
2	2	Mostafa EL Naggar	244	153K
8	3	Sandmonkey	118	3,291
3	4	Amr Ezzat	93	35,650
6	5	Bassem Fathy	50	247
10	6	Mohamed Sherief	27	1,256
4	7	Mohamed AboelGheit	22	23,357
7	8	Loai Nagati	8	4,281
1	9	Asmaa Mahfouz	4	212.4K
11	10	Ali Hisham	2	302

Table 6.5: Bloggers interviewed ranked by their activity on Facebook, compared to their popularity on Facebook

Consistent with the findings in tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3, table 6.5 shows that, much like Twitter, it seems that bloggers' activity on Facebook is inconsistent with their popularity. While Asmaa Mahfouz ranked first in terms of Facebook followership, she ranked 9th in terms of her activity on Facebook. Similarly, Ahmed Badawy ranked 8th in terms of his popularity on Facebook but first in terms of his activity. It is important to note, however, that activity here is only measured by one aspect; the number of notes, because the

frequency of posting statuses on Facebook cannot be measured. Therefore, the degree of activity measured here is only partially reliable as an indicator of their use of the platform.

It seems there is no necessary correlation between popularity and the date of joining social media or starting blogging.

6.2.2. Prominence, blog post frequency and issues discussed on the blog

Content analysis of blogs: Blog posts by year

Blogger	Number of posts in 2015	Number of posts in 2014	Number of posts in 2013	Number of posts in 2012	Number of posts in 2011	Number of posts in 2010	Number of posts in 2009	Number of posts in 2008	Number of posts in 2007	Number of posts in 2006	Number of posts in 2005
Loai Nagati	0	0	0	0	2	10					
Sandmonkey	2	1	4	43	28	8	0	345	444	7	
Mostafa El Naggar	0	3	0	0	0	35	31	320	15		
Asmaa Mahfouz	0	0	0	2	12	11	26				
Amr Ezzat	0	0	39	44	26	23	24	54	53	69	32
Mohamed Aboelgheit	0	0	0	2	9	15					
Ahmed Badawy	7	54	88	130	106	186	168	125	30	32	
Bassem Fathy	0	1	4	10	17	27					
Ali Hisham	1	8	21	33	43						
Mohamed Shereif	0	0	2	11	9	8	37				

Table 6.6: Content analysis of blogs: Blog posts by year

Looking at table 6.6, one can see that bloggers were most active before 2011. After 2011, the curve went down for all the blogs studied. By 2014, half of the blogs studied were inactive and two of them had only one post throughout the year. El Naggar's had 3 posts, Hisham's had 8 and Badawy's had the highest number of posts, at 54. By March 2015, only 3 out of the 10 bloggers studied were posting: Hisham once, Sandmonkey twice and Badawy seven times. Out of the 6 prominent blogs studied, only one blog was still active in 2015 (that of Sandmonkey), compared to 2 out of the 6 less-prominent ones. Similarly, 2 of the 6 prominent ones were active in 2013, compared to 4 out of the 6 less-prominent ones. So while the frequency of blogging is dwindling across both prominent and less-prominent bloggers, the trend seems stronger among more prominent bloggers. This might be due to the fact that they are having more

outlets to express themselves, including through mainstream media, than less prominent bloggers. This is discussed further in Chapter 7.

Content analysis of blogs: Topics discussed in 2010 vs 2011

Blogger	2010	2011
Loai Nagati	Philosophy (5) Society (2) Literature (2)	Litarature (1)
Sandmonkey	Religion (1)	Politics (2)
Mostafa El Naggar	Philosophy (2) Personal (1)	N/A
Asmaa Mahfouz	Politics (2)	Politics (1)
Amr Ezzat	Personal (2) Culture (1)	Politics (1)
Mohamed Aboelgheit	Politics (5) Human Rights (6) Personal (2) Culture, Economics, Religion, Literature (1)	Blogs and Social Media (1)
Ahmed Badawy	Religion (3) Politics (6) Personal (8) Human Rights, History, Philosophy (1)	Politics (4)
Bassem Fathy	Politics (3) Human Rights (3)	Politics (1)
Mohamed Shereif	History, Human rights (1)	Politics (2), History

Table 6.7: Content analysis of blogs: Topics discussed in 2010 compared to 2011

It is apparent from 6. 7 that blog posts went down from 63 in the month studied in 2010 to 14 in the month studied in 2011 across all blogs, which is consistent with the finding from the number of posts over the years.

Although in 2010 blog posts studied were of mixed nature, covering society, philosophy, literature, economics, human rights, history and other issues, those studied in 2011 were overwhelmingly about politics due to the state of the country at the time. With the exception of Nagati, Abo-elgheit and Sherief who had non-political posts, all blogs studied posted only about politics in the month studied in 2011. This means that 11 out of the 14 posts studied in 2011 were political.

While only 1 of the 5 prominent bloggers studied did not discuss politics in the month studied in 2011, the number doubled to 2 out of the 4 less-prominent bloggers interviewed. This shows that the more prominent bloggers were keener on discussing politics and current events than other bloggers, who reported writing about whichever subject they were in the mood for, and not necessarily in line with what the readers wanted to read at the moment, or what others were writing. In 2010 things were different. While the more popular bloggers discussed subjects like philosophy and culture and only 1 out of the 5 popular bloggers discussed politics in the months studied, their less prominent counterparts were more concerned with politics, with 3 out of the 4 studied writing on politics. This translates as 2 out of 18 blogposts for the total of prominent bloggers compared to 14 out of 45 blogposts for the total of less-prominent bloggers. This could either indicate that the more popular bloggers

were more politically active in that period and so blogged more about politics than the less-prominent ones, or that the more prominent ones are keener on staying in tune with the hot topics of the period and giving the readers what they want to read about.

Of the less-prominent bloggers, Abo-elgheit seemed consistently concerned with issues of poverty during the interview. His two biggest hits were articles about the poor and the issues they face. He realizes this and says everything he writes he ties into this issue. Sherief prioritized human rights in our interview. It is fair to say there is a core difference in the issues a less-prominent blogger like Abo-elgheit covers compared to other more philosophical or theoretical issues or calls for actions that the more prominent bloggers seem to be interested in. This shows up in both the interviews and the content analysis: while the more prominent bloggers discussed more philosophical issues, the less prominent ones were consistently looking at human rights. None of the prominent bloggers discussed human rights in the month studied in 2010 while all the less-prominent bloggers studied discussed human rights; this means 11 out of the 45 posts on less prominent blogs in 2010 compared to 0 out of 63 posts on prominent blogs.

6.2.3. Prominence, networks and social immunity

The content analysis of blogs shows that few bloggers carried links to other blogs. The exceptions were two prominent blogs (Mahfouz's and Ezzat's) and a less-prominent one (Sherief's). Those who carried links to others carried links to prominent blogs like those of Hossam El Hamalawy, Wael Abbas, Manal and Alaa Abdel Fattah and Malek Moustafa.

Although the bloggers tend not to promote one another, Twitter plays into the networking effects through making the prominent users more prominent. "Twitter suggests whom to follow," (Fathy 2014), "and those are users with the most followers."

The effect of networks, however, can be strongly seen in the bloggers' social and professional circles. Prominent bloggers seem to be moving in more influential circles that give them certain degree of immunity against prosecution. Therefore, the network effect manifests itself, not in prominent bloggers promoting one another, but in prominent bloggers being supported by fellow prominent bloggers when they get arrested or are subjected to any harassment. Their colleagues, who have large followerships, then widely defend them on social and mainstream media, creating pressure on the state authorities. This sort of solidarity is not seen with the lesser-known bloggers because they may not have the same family or celebrity blogger connections.

Most bloggers interviewed believed the mainstream and social media cover the arrests of prominent bloggers more intensively than those of less-popular bloggers, creating pressure on the authorities. Sherief believes prominent bloggers get that attention because they are already famous and known to the media, and have a network of friends who have better reach. Nagati's arrest sparked a wide uproar from fellow bloggers calling for his release and they even arranged a blogging day dedicated to call for the release of Nagati; at that time only three similar days were held to oppose SCAF, military trials and gender violence. Soon after the charges against him and Mahfouz were dropped. Although thousands of others were arrested during the same period, only few received the same attention as Nagati. Blogger and

activist Mona Seif told the *LA Times* on July 2011 that the military authorities tend to release well-known social media activists like Nagati on suspended sentences to avoid unwelcome publicity. Nagati (2014) realizes the influence of the support he received; "I had friends and connections who spoke out; people like Wael Ghoneim and others," (Abdel Fattah, 2014). Esraa Abdel Fattah said she knows if she gets arrested she will be supported by fellow activists and so she is not scared of state crackdowns. "I am sure everyone outside [prison] will make a huge fuss to get me out," she said (2014). Similarly, Mahfouz believes the arrests of more famous revolutionaries who ran in the same social circles, like fellow April 6th founder and blogger Ahmed Maher, would cause a bigger uproar in social and mainstream media and trigger more support than the arrest of others. Mahfouz added that the lesser-known revolutionaries who get arrested are often portrayed as thugs by the media and attacked by the public; which is not the case with more prominent ones. Sandmonkey believes there are many who are very active but not as prominent on the scene, despite their efforts, because "they do the dirty work" for more prominent activists who take the credit. Those, Sandmonkey argues, often get killed or arrested but are never heard of.

Sandmonkey argues that this solidarity with arrested bloggers and activists creates an issue for the authorities in dealing with these bloggers because their arrests become widely publicized by local and international media. Indeed, El Naggar sees his media appearances and political work as personal protection against security crash downs. "People like Alaa Abdel Fattah, Asmaa Mahfouz and Mostafa El Naggar — the layman in the street knows them, but he doesn't know me," says Abo-elgheit (2014). "The

revolution was personified by them, so if they want to praise the revolution they praise them. If they want to attack it, they attack them."

Prominent bloggers often have family connections that the less-prominent ones lack, which means they might be freer in what they post as they know they are less likely to be arrested. Saber believes that Abdel Fattah's "father and family support him and he has the psychological capacity [to handle arrests,]" Saber (2014). "I am not that way." This is one aspect where elite backgrounds give prominent bloggers immunity and so an advantage over less-prominent ones. Abdel Fattah's family is politically active and influential in cultural and activists' circles - his two sisters, his mother and his aunt are all politically engaged activists and his father was one of the most renowned human rights lawyers in Egypt; not all activists have this moral support. It is worth noting, however, that although Abdel Fattah has a wide network supporting him and receives large media attention, he was recently sentences to five years in prison. Sandmonkey's mother was a member of the defunct NDP and Ezzat's father worked with the Ministry of Investment; both activists were never arrested despite being widely engaged on the ground. Ezzat explains that although he has been threatened by state security apparatus several times, they always called his father to warn him if Ezzat crosses a line.

Their family connections as well as their own social circles that secure them a degree of immunity against state oppression puts the more prominent bloggers' freedom of expression ceiling at a higher level than the less-prominent ones. Saber, for instance, was always in fear for his security, making him use a penname, change blogs often and ultimately shying away from the spotlight or uploading content that might put him to risk. This made him

refrain from uploading content like cases of police violence that other bloggers uploaded and received wide popularity for, even though he was present when the other bloggers received the footage.

The networks also help them secure jobs and get a wider reach. Esraa Abdel Fattah had secured a television show on *ONTV*. Many of them were invited by mainstream media to write either because of their name or because they had personal connections with the outlets, like the case with Nora Younes who invited many fellow bloggers to join *Al-Masry Al-Youm*'s online portal as seen in the profiles. These connections are not achieved by the less-prominent ones.

The less prominent bloggers, however, make more effort to widen their reach. A strong case is Abo-elgheit who showed a conscious effort to reach out to "other circles," he said, referring to the circles of blogs as he moved from writing notes on Facebook to starting a blog in 2010. Throughout the interview, Abo-elgheit spoke of his efforts to network and reach out to circles other than those in his city through joining forums and attending debate and reading circles. The effect of this intensive networking showed when he wrote an article that was well-written and came at the right time. He lacked the tools to promote it online but his friends had them. "I only had around 1,000 friends. But from those 1,000 friends there were many journalists and writers and so on, because whenever I came across a journalist or a writer I would add him or try to get to know him. So this is one of the reasons why this article was a huge hit like that," (Abo-elgheit, 2014). So while he may have had the talents, had he not had the right connections of prominent bloggers and social media makers, he would have never been able to reach out virtually or in the

mainstream media. This is also something that does not apply to prominent bloggers who are in and by themselves the movers and shakers of the online world. They are the stars of the online sphere and they control whether a blogger like Abo-elgheit would get noticed in that sphere or whether his post would only be seen by the 1,000 friends on his list.

6.2.4. Prominence, class, access to technology and activity during January 25th

All the bloggers interviewed have always lived in the capital except for two prominent ones who moved to Cairo to attend university and a less-prominent one who moved there after graduation. They all have university degrees and speak English with varying degrees of fluency. The more prominent ones seemed to have better command of the language and sometimes blogged in English. They also all had constant access to the internet at home and on the move and all had smart phones and laptops. Some also had tablets. Although Saber said he always had internet connection, he believes that with data plans becoming cheaper, it allowed him more live coverage that he was not necessarily able to do before. Cheaper data plans allowed him, for instance, to live-stream the Mostafa Mahmoud events on November 19th, 2011.

Bloggers who had politically active families also seem to be affected – at the earliest stages of their writings – by their families' political interests. El Naggar and Abo-elgheit, for instance followed their families in becoming members of the Muslim Brotherhood but broke away from it later on. Abo-elgheit's parents participated in protests and his father was even arrested several times so he was "used to this ambiance" and was interested in politics at an early age and not afraid to oppose and criticize. Those whose families

were not politically active, seem to believe they were affected by one or more family members who encouraged them to read and kept a rich library at home, like Fathy and Nagati.

The striking pattern in table 6.5 is that all of the prominent bloggers interviewed have been actively covering the January 25th events on social media while none of the less-prominent ones have. Those who were more popular before the uprising but did not cover the actual events did not achieve the same following as those who reported live on social media, often also collaborating with mainstream media, reporting on the events they were part of. Sandmonkey argues that "those who became famous and became symbols of the revolution were those who were covering it and so people started following them," (2014). Ezzat says that his followership on social media increased dramatically after the uprising as he was always covering the events. This, Ezzat adds, gave him and his fellow bloggers and micro-bloggers more influence and allowed them the ability to move the masses because people came to trust them as a source of credible news on current events at a time when media did not offer the same on-ground coverage.

Comparative profiles of bloggers interviewed

Blogger	Twitter Followers	Blog listed on Twitter account	Studied in Private University	Financial/ Intellectual Elite	Worked in management or multinational companies	Covering events during the revolution	Has/had private business
Mostafa El Naggar	775K	No	Yes	Intellectual elite	Yes	Yes	Yes
Esraa Abdel Fattah	456K	N/A	No		Yes	Yes	No, but founded civil org
Asmaa Mahfouz	420K	No	Yes		Yes	Yes	No
Amr Ezzat	188K	Yes	No	Intellectual elite	Yes	Yes	No
Sandmonkey	153K	No	Yes	Financial and poltiical elite	Yes	Yes	Yes
Loai Nagati	107K	No	Yes	Financial and Intellectual elite	No	Yes	Yes
Ahmed Badawi	48K	Yes	No		No	No	No
Bassem Fathy	36.2K	Yes	No		Yes	No	No
Mahmoud Saber	12.3K	No	no		yes	No	no
Ali Hisham	20K	Yes	N/A	Intellectual Elite	N/A	No	No
Mohamed AboelGheit	5,828	No	No	Intellectual elite	No	No	No
Mohamed Sherief	345	Yes	No		No	No	No

Table 6.8: Comparative profiles of bloggers interviewed

Table 6.8 shows that the more prominent bloggers interviewed mostly do not include their blogs on their Twitter accounts while the less prominent ones do. Only 1 in the 6 prominent bloggers interviewed has his blog listed on Twitter, compared to 4 out of the 6 less-prominent bloggers. This shows that while the more prominent bloggers prioritize other identities, often journalism or politics related, the less prominent ones seem more likely to prioritize their blogging identity.

Four out of the 6 prominent bloggers studied at private universities while none of the less prominent ones have. Sandmonkey had a particularly privileged upbringing; studying in one of Cairo's most expensive private schools and doing his post grad studies in the U.S. He has a dual master's degrees in business administration and accounting and was an investment banker for two years. He calls himself an upper class blogger.

Looking at their backgrounds — based on the data they gave during interviews about their families — it also seems that the more prominent bloggers are more likely to come from financial, political or intellectual elites and upper classes while most less-prominent ones are leaning more towards middle class. Intellectual elite refers to the family being well educated, cultured and politically active, political elite refers to the family having political influence and financial elite refers to the financial status of the family. Four out of the 6 prominent ones come from elite backgrounds compared to only 2 of the less prominent ones. The most striking of whom is Sandmonkey who comes from an upper class family who have both political and financial privileges. Similarly, while 5 out of the 6 prominent bloggers have worked at multinational companies, only 2 of the less-prominent ones have. Three of the more prominent bloggers have established their own private businesses in addition to Esraa Abdel Fattah who established a civil organization. Comparatively, none of the less prominent ones have private businesses. This shows that although all bloggers interviewed come from a privileged background, as shown by their language skills and access to technology, the more prominent ones seem to come from a more privileged background than

the less-prominent ones and seem to have a certain eliteness, although to varying degrees.

Prominent bloggers' eliteness also allowed them the luxury to dedicate more time to writing and activism and even the ability to afford being jobless for periods of times. The bloggers seemed to realize they come from financially-stable backgrounds that allowed them to dedicate time to a cause without a permanent job for certain periods of time; including Sandmonkey who quit to focus on the causes of the uprising. "It's a luxury that is only available to very few people," Nagati (2014) said on dedicating time to a cause.

6.3. Conclusion and Discussion

The findings show that bloggers' popularity, measured by their followers on Twitter and Facebook, is inconsistent with their activity on both platforms but consistent with the media coverage they have received during the periods studied. Bloggers who are popular on Twitter are also mostly those who are popular on Facebook. Their popularity is also irrelevant to the date they joined Twitter but strongly related to whether they were covering events during January 25th, both on their social media accounts as well as mainstream media that quoted their coverage and interviewed them. This leads to a blogosphere where a small number of more prominent bloggers receive more media coverage and get more and more prominent while the less popular ones struggle for visibility and resources. And as the internet becomes overflowed with information and social media popularity increasing exponentially, users tend to follow social media makers suggested by Twitter, who are normally those with the most followers in the country of origin, or those whose names are familiar to them from their media appearances. This re-instates prominent

bloggers' status as online media elite as well as causes a polarization of the blogosphere as users follow those their names their familiar with but also those whose beliefs are in line with their own.

The analysis of blogs shows that by 2014, half of the blogs studied were inactive and 2 of them had only one post throughout the year. The frequency of posting decreased dramatically across all blogs after 2011. The decrease in frequency was generally seen more with the more prominent bloggers than the others but held true across both categories.   To achieve a plural public sphere, the public space for discourse need to have a diversity of topics, which stopped being true on blogs after January 25th. While blogs used to discuss various topics before the uprising, the only topics discussed after were political, showing a lack of the content diversity needed to achieve a Habermasian public sphere. Topics discussed on the blogs were diverse in 2010, ranging from philosophy and literature to economics and politics. But in 2011, however, posts were overwhelmingly about politics due to the state of the country are the time. And although prominent and less prominent blog posts were largely political, the less-prominent blogs had more non-political posts than their prominent counterparts in 2011. This shows that, after 2010, the more prominent bloggers are keener on discussing current events that are the hot topics of the moment and interest their readers the most while the less-prominent ones reported writing about whichever subject they were in the mood for at the time. Another finding that appeared both in bloggers interviews as well as blogs content analysis is that the more prominent bloggers discussed and prioritized more philosophical issues while the less prominent ones were more interest in human rights and issues like poverty.

This could point to the more prominent bloggers being more concerned with more elite topics than that the majority of the public prioritizes. The blogosphere has also shown to be disengaged from the general public as Iskander argues commenting on the results of the first referendum after the uprising (2011). Iskander believes that the views and discourse on social media in Egypt does not represent the voice of the majority (2011, p.1235), which is evident in the findings of the bogs content analysis. So while the workers and mid-level employees were protesting and striking for things like minimum wages, the blogosphere at the time was buzzing with talks about freedom of expression and democracy. What Gramsci describes then as class struggle kept at bay through the ruling bloc presenting particular interests as general interests in which all classes have an equal stake is then evident in the findings of the blogs analysis. This is what Lukes describes as those holding power believing to know what is best for the majority that is not capable of truly knowing their wants and preferences (2005, p.38).

Only a few blogs carried links to other blogs, but those who did carried links to prominent blogs only. The network effect, however, was manifested in the social and professional circles bloggers ran in. As prominent bloggers move in influential circles, it gave them a degree of immunity against prosecution as they enjoy the support of other prominent bloggers and activists and so, consequently, the mainstream. Because their arrests manage to gather wide virtual and media attention and support from civil society, it puts pressure on the authorities. This solidarity of the networks is not manifested with less-prominent bloggers whose networks have less influence and less exposure. The more prominent bloggers have shown to come more elite backgrounds and in

many cases family connections that give them ore freedom to write without fear of prosecution than the less-prominent ones. Those networks also helped prominent bloggers secure jobs in more elite institutions and get wider reach than the less-prominent ones.

Bloggers studied all seem to come from privileged backgrounds than that of the majority of the population although the more prominent ones seemed to come from more elite backgrounds than the less-prominent ones. They all currently live in the capital, have university degrees and speak English with varying degrees of fluency with the more prominent ones having better command than the others. They also all have laptops and smart phones and never had issues accessing high-speed internet at home or on the go. The more prominent bloggers were also more likely to attend private universities and own private businesses or work in multinational companies than the other bloggers interviewed. It was evident that the more prominent bloggers are more likely to come from financial, political or intellectual elites and upper classes than the others. All bloggers have also reported realizing they have the luxury of dedicating time to writing and activism that others cannot necessarily afford.

Although education and access to technology might not be constituents of a power elite worldwide, one needs to look at bloggers' profiles in comparison to the majority of the population. With an illiteracy rate of around 26% and 40% of the population living under poverty line, university education and access to high-speed internet at home and on the go are considered luxuries to the majority of the population. Those bloggers are therefore what Mills describe as power elite; born into elites and possessing the tools to become

power elite of their own. As the interviews and the media findings show, the more prominent bloggers — who also happen to be the more elite ones — are evidently becoming power elite of their own, securing jobs at top media organizations and gaining more and more political and social influence. The findings from bloggers' profiles are consistent with those Lichter et al (1986) published in their research of media elite in the US. The researchers conclude that the editors and writers of the US media elite are largely different from the general public in their backgrounds, status and political orientations; something that has proven true with the Egyptian bloggers, who are arguably Egypt's own online media elite. Taki also found similar results in her research on bloggers in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, who are mostly males, well-educated and have at least a master's degree (2005). As subsequent interviews with bloggers prove they are joining mainstream media, one could argue that not only are they the media elite of the online world, but they are also becoming the new media elite of the mainstream.

Being born in elites and becoming elites of their own accord means that the Egyptian blogosphere bears resonance to the exclusive bourgeois public sphere Habermas painted and was heavily criticized for. One can see that for a blogger to become relatively heard online, even the less-prominent ones, they need to at least have one of the two elements Habermas described in his pre-revised bourgeois public space; education. The more prominent bloggers also enjoyed the second element of the first Habermasian sphere; property ownership. This eliteness in their profiles compared to the majority of the population led to what Mouffe (2000) warns would be an exclusive and single-voiced space that is not conductive to democracy as it lacks plurality. One of

the key elements to a revised Habermasian public sphere, disregard to status, is therefore also lacking. This is due to the fact that if someone is not university-educated, does not have ready access to the internet allowing him to post live and frequently and cannot afford the time or cost of blogging, they cannot become active players of the blogosphere or social media. This also contradicts utopian theorists' like Rash (1997), Grossman (1995) and James (1997) view of the internet as a place for everyone to express their opinions and influence the public opinion (cited in Papacharissi, 2004). The three aspects of online communication that Malina (1999), Papacharissi (2008 and 2002) and Sassi (2000) lay out for online communication to affect social and political benefits, access to information, reciprocity of information and commercialization of online space, are all at risk on the Egyptian blogosphere and social media, as findings have shown.

Therefore, much like the bourgeois cultural salons of the past, the virtual public sphere is becoming dominated by a few who possess means of communication online and became inclusive in principle but not in practice. It is therefore becoming an exclusive counterpublic for elitist voices, rather than a pluralistic sphere of its own.

Chapter VII: Interviews Findings: Bloggers' transition to mainstream and the sustainability of blogging

This chapter looks at the findings from the interviews with bloggers in terms of the effects of mainstreaming on prominent and less prominent bloggers. It starts out looking at the effects of prominence on the content and the blogger himself then moves to the sustainability of blogging as it stands given bloggers' ages, social media replacing blogs and the lack of sustainable revenue streams. The second part of the chapter looks at some bloggers' transition to mainstream media and how it affects their content and voices both online and offline.

7.1 Effects of prominence on content and blogger

Prominence and the change of bloggers' status in the two years following January 25th had several implications on the nature of blogging in Egypt as well as bloggers themselves.

7.1.1 The founding generation's pride and newcomers

During the interviews, several bloggers interviewed, especially the more prominent ones, showed certain pride in being the founding generation of bloggers who were blogging as early as 2004. They were the same ones who have shown disdain for newcomers to the blogosphere and social media platforms, or for those who started using those platforms for opposition after January 25th and after the founding generation of bloggers had already paved the way for them. These feelings were echoed primarily amongst prominent bloggers but also among some of those who are not as prominent but have been blogging for a few years before 2011; like Fathy and Saber.

Sandmonkey, for instance, boasts that the 30 founding generation bloggers were the first to use Twitter at a time nobody knew of it and were the same ones using Facebook "very differently from the majority of users who used it to post pictures." He shows pride in being an "old-guard blogger" and speaks sarcastically of newcomers.

Similarly, El Naggar argues that the first wave of bloggers all know that the struggle for freedom and democracy has a price and have mostly been detained at some point. "Unlike those who appeared after the revolution when there was no state security and so no price to pay for opposition or political struggle," says El Naggar. He adds that it was those who appeared after January 25th who toned their writings down or started to hail the regime instead of opposing it when the security situation went back to normal and they could face detention for what they wrote, unlike the first wave of bloggers who held on to their stances and their voices.

Esraa Abdel Fattah also expressed annoyance with the newcomers on social media who were not active or famous like her and her colleagues before January 25th but were trying to steal the spotlight after 2011 and become famous.

Mahfouz echoes similar feelings as she argues that the media would host people they never heard of as "representatives of the revolution" and when she or others opposed they would be accused of monopolizing the revolution. "Yes, everyone participated in the revolution, but when they meet or interview people who are supposed to speak on behalf of the revolution they need to at least have experience and a history," says Mahfouz.

Although other bloggers spoke strictly of the earlier bloggers and Mahfouz was speaking about activists in general, she echoes the same feelings of eliteness of the earlier bloggers who have the right to speak on behalf of the people and revolutionaries. This is a right that they do not believe others who are not famous have earned.

These feelings also led bloggers to look for other, more exclusive, platforms such as mainstream media, as social media and the blogosphere became too crowded. Some bloggers explained that they have resorted to Twitter when Facebook became too mainstream, but that even Twitter is becoming too mainstream. Fathy, for instance, says he started writing far less when he started feeling that "the market was saturated" and started having "content chaos" leading to the "dilution of revolutionary ideology online, which was not the case during our days." He argues that in 2007 and 2008, the discourse on Facebook represented "elitist revolutionary ideology" and everyone using it were against the regime. Then when Facebook became popular, those "old-guard bloggers" resorted to Twitter and it was the "crème de la crème of politics," says Fathy. "Now there's an influx of users."

Nagati sums it up saying "the trade is now open for every Tom, Dick and Harry."

7.1.2 Altering voices

All of the prominent bloggers interviewed realize they're under more scrutiny. They realize their words are often read and used by the press and they will be held accountable for what they write. Those who have become famous, like El Naggar, have also shown that they have to express certain opinions or speak in certain tones to fit an image the audience has for them. Some, like Esraa Abdel

Fattah, have adjusted their tones, while others, most noticeably those who are not as prominent have not.

Some bloggers have expressed fears for their security that leads them to toning their voices down. Nagati says he thinks several times before writing as he knows anything he writes will have repercussions and so calculates his steps far more than he did before. He has removed many posts he had published in fear for his life saying, "they were dangerous, some of them could really harm me." He had also received threats asking him to tone down his writings. "In the past I said whatever I wanted and joked about whomever as I pleased and knew nothing would happen to me because I knew I was only followed by a few people. Now the pressure has increased, so I am now exerting more self-censorship," says Nagati adding he has toned down his voice after his exposure increased. Ezzat has also once deleted a Tweet that became very popular and widely shared as he feared it would lead to him getting charged with disrespecting religions.

Similarly, Sandmonkey says he was "freer before the revolution," speaking of the pressures and demands to tone his voice down. Esraa Abdel Fattah also says that she feels the pressures of fame, which make her monitor what she says on social media as she is a "figure the media takes news from," and so has to be "more careful" when writing. "Some newspapers take what I say on social media as news and this is annoying because sometimes I am only joking," says Abdel Fattah. "That made me realize I can't just write anything on social media." She realizes as a prominent figure, there are pressures on how she writes; "You have to be objective, you can't write anything that would be taken against you and you have to take care of each word you say," says

Abdel Fattah. She believes that news outlets will use her Tweets out of context according to their own agendas. This made her especially wary of Twitter and so more careful on it.

Less prominent bloggers did not express the same concern over a certain mold, or a public image. Saber, for instance, says he does not feel any pressures to alter his language or voice on social media "I never worried what I would say; it was always about venting and speaking my mind and I don't make any calculations before doing so," says Saber. "I don't get paid; just un-follow me if you don't like what I say."

7.1.3 Interaction with followers

The discourse is becoming different on blogs and social media, instead of elite ideologies discussing among one another, with the infusion of different ideologies and users, it's become more and more a one-way-conversation. "Instead of going back home to stay up late and answer people, I now simply block them," Fathy says. Esraa Abdel Fattah also said she stopped arguing with followers and would block users, especially those insulting her. Sandmonkey said he was happier with 10,000 followers than he is now and says when someone recognizes him and expresses that he loves him he is not happy, but rather annoyed.

7.1.4 Losing jobs

Many prominent activists had lost or quit their jobs after January 25th. Activist Samira Ibrahim said in an interview with *What Women Want* magazine in December 2012 that she got fired from work for being "against SCAF [the Supreme Council of Armed Forces]" and that she works in marketing where "it is all about capitalism and no one wants their interests to be threatened by a

superior power." She added that she doesn't think she can work in that field anymore. These cases suggest that although bloggers might have moved into the field of mainstream media or human rights organizations willingly, they might have also been left with no other choices given their prior fields were no longer an option as they became more prominent.

Mahfouz quit her work, which was paying about LE 5,000 a month, to focus on the revolution as she was in and out of meetings with the prime minister and SCAF and her supervisor refused to give her time off. "This is a crucial phase and I felt like I had a very important role to play," says Mahfouz. Mahfouz's salary was a decent one and she was on the verge of becoming a manager at a young age but she quit her job to focus on the causes of January 25th, like several other activists and bloggers. This, she says, made people question whether she is profiteering from the revolution. Abdel Fattah was harassed into quitting her job and then could not find another job in the same field after she got arrested. Sandmonkey also quit his job after January 25th. Fathy also lost his job after his 2008 arrest.

Mahfouz believes that jobs outside the scope of public work or the media were impossible as companies would deem her a "troublemaker" and would not want to hire her.

7.1.5   *Fragmented and divided blogosphere due to prominence of some over others*

Bloggers have painted a rather fragmented blogosphere after January 25th. Although bloggers were once more united in their opposition of the regime, after January 25th, the media has caused them to be more divided.

Mahfouz spoke of how even the positive media coverage served to divide revolutionary ranks instead of working in their favor. Mahfouz argues

that they were united before the uprising but that did not last after as the media started highlighting some over the others. She recounted that her colleagues would be jealous that the media hosted her and not them and made her famous. "They would tell me 'you don't represent us, why do you get to appear on television and speak in the name of the revolution and we don't? We all took to the streets,'" she says. She adds that divisions started happening as members of the same movements start accusing their colleagues of being no longer active on the street and falling behind on joining protests but still appearing on television and stealing the spotlight. "The media managed to create grudges," says Mahfouz. Nagati agrees with Mahfouz and Sandmonkey speaks sarcastically of how other activists rose to fame and heroism and are actively seeking popularity and fame.

Mahfouz says that because her face is now familiar, she gets the spotlight whenever she joins a protest. "I got famous despite of me, so when I join a protest the cameras come to interview me," she says. "Then people attack me saying I only join protests to take the credits." She has then stopped accepting interviews when she's in protests, only to start being attacked by journalists claiming she is arrogant even though the media made her.

This state of jealousy is also aggravated by social media response to the arrests of more prominent activists. Because they run in influential circles online and on the streets, prominent activists get far more support than less prominent ones. The media uproar they get is often attacked by people, arguing that it's unfair others get arrested without anyone raising a voice to defend them. Mahfouz adds that people would also start attacking the detainees

themselves, claiming that they're trying to be martyrs and heroes and that the only merits they have is being arrested.

The media, Mahfouz argues, would also look for figures to make into heroes. Mahfouz had posted the famous YouTube video to mobilize the masses on January 25th, which led to the media dubbing her "the woman who triggered the January 25th revolution. This, Mahfouz believes, worked against her favor as "all the effort that was exerted by all the movements was attributed to me, so people in the square were angry that I was taking all the credit and they started hating me," she says. These divisions ultimately led to her quitting her position as April 6th media coordinator and shying away from the media.

Fathy believes the media highlights those they want and those who go with their editorial agendas, this, in turn, affects alternative media. "The mainstream media helps form the anti-mainstream media by highlighting people who then start getting followed in alternative media arenas," says Fathy.

"The media kept making us bigger and bigger and this ultimately caused our division," concludes Mahfouz. "The media isn't trying to destroy the revolution through attacking the revolution itself, but rather the people related to the revolution."

7.1.6 Oppressing the prominent ones after anonymity is gone

The more prominent ones have all expressed concern over feeling they are now under attack by the media and the state more than they had been before January 25th. In fact out of the 21 possible bloggers to interview, 4 were in prison during the time the research was conducted and one was abroad in fear for his security. After interviewing Esraa Abdel Fattah, she was put on a travel ban by

the authorities. Seven out of the 12 bloggers interviewed have faced court cases at some point; of those 7, 4 were prominent bloggers.

El Naggar believes oppression is especially practiced now against pioneering activists, many of whom are of the most prominent bloggers, because they are "viewed as a danger by the regime." "[The state] sees us as those viruses that multiply and so can change the regime and this is why the degree of oppression practiced against those people is very high," says El Naggar.

Sandmonkey has also expressed that he suffers lack of privacy now that he is no longer anonymous and people recognize him in the street. He says he did not want his blogging to affect his career and did not want anything he writes to be used against his mother as she was a member in the National Democratic Party (NDP) and "had enemies."

This feeling of being oppressed and targeted by the media or the regime has led some of them to refrain from writing on social media. El Naggar says he does not Tweet or write on Facebook as much anymore because of a general state of depression over the situation of the country, but also because the war against him was so strong, that he felt targeted whenever he wrote anything. He, however, continued publishing his articles.

What's significant in this is that while El Naggar felt a duty to publish in the mainstream where he has a space he is compelled and paid to fill every week, he did not feel the same need on his micro-blogging platforms. This was the same with other bloggers interviewed, like Abdel Fattah, who felt committed to their mainstream media writing but felt too targeted or depressed to write on blogs or social media. El Naggar felt he is targeted and refrained

from commenting as often on the political situation on his social media accounts, but continued to comment on them on mainstream media, nonetheless. It could either signify that he feels more personally invested in his social media accounts and so the attacks are taken more personally, or that he has an obligation towards his employer to write his weekly column even if he's scared of being targeted or if he's feeling depressed and passive.

7.1.7 Influence, ego and expectations

The growing popularity some of the more prominent bloggers have started gaining led them to achieve a growing influence on people. It also led to them being molded into certain images the public developed for them and so made it hard for them to stray from this persona or opinion their readers expect of them.

Sandmonkey in particular saw an issue with bloggers rising to fame so quickly. "You're also dealing with egos that expanded very quickly and people who each believe their ideologies made the revolution," he said. He believes fame offers social capital, which has the potential to corrupt people. He argues that bloggers' fame caused their words to be much stronger in effect, which caused more harm than good.

Sandmonkey sees the dangers of prominence and popularity in that, he argues, those activists are starting to hold powers over people and influencing their opinions. He feels they might not realize the implications of now being a public persona. This makes him feel responsible for the dead and injured youth because he feels that him and his colleagues called for action and people were influenced by them and then were killed or injured. "We are starting to become

icons, which is catastrophic, persons shouldn't be icons, they shouldn't hold power over people."

Sandmonkey believes his own words had a huge impact at a time. When asked whether he feels his words have more weight now and so he became more conscious, he answers, "It's worse than that, your words at a specific moment in time in Egypt meant the destiny of a country." Sandmonkey shows obvious confidence in his fame and popularity. He believes his words can change the destiny of a country; he believes he made the op-ed area of the *DNE* a strong one and gave them presence online to compete against other online media outlets and feels a responsibility towards the fact that he is influential within a group of society.

El Naggar says that he was a parliament member in late 2011 and had a certain image and influence among people. He believes this status was the reason why he was approached by the regime and political forces to tone down his opposition to Sisi. It was also the reason behind the threats he received, he adds, and the court case against him accusing him of insulting judges for something he said in the parliament when he still had immunity. This signifies that he believes his activity in the parliament gave him an importance that made the state try to level with him and then threaten him. He also believes this status saved him from getting imprisoned like other bloggers and activists.

El Naggar says he was asked to join Sisi's presidential campaign, endorse it and endorse the new constitution. This means that the state realizes the influence El Naggar has as a former blogger and alternative opposition figure and a current mainstream figure who has an influence over a segment of the

population they are looking to reach through him; namely the younger population and some of the revolutionaries.

This growing influence that came with the move to the mainstream light meant that bloggers now have an image to maintain in the public arena and so need to maintain audience's expectations of them behaving in certain ways and expressing certain opinions. El Naggar is aware of the pressures that came from moving from the blogosphere onto becoming a public figure. He says, for instance, he cannot use profanities or not be the serious, decent public persona his readers are used to because his readers have a certain image for him and will not accept otherwise. "It is very annoying because if I want to curse, I can't because people have a certain image for me and I can't, for instance, write the way Wael Abbas [a blogger who often uses profanities] writes," says El Naggar. "I can't even joke because I am molded in a certain mold and people will not accept me behaving otherwise." He adds that although he can criticize and write at his will, he has to look at two things; the legality of his writings, as well as the political stand people might assume he is taking when he writes certain things and how acceptable they are. He says, "I have to assess every word so it isn't used against me legally," says El Naggar.

"I also can't write, for instance, about the complete freedom of religion even if I am convinced with it because it has its price, so even though it is my personal conviction, I can't write it now and this is part of the terror that society imposes."

Similarly, Esraa Abdel Fattah feels she has to pick a certain direction and never stray away from it, otherwise people expect her to be critical of the regime no matter what. "Now, if you praise El Sisi once and criticize him once

then you are hesitant, you don't know what you want, you're a hypocrite, and you should settle on a stand," says Abdel Fattah. "And at the same time when you praise something El Sisi did then I am attacked from the revolutionaries who say that I sold out on the revolution and my values. When I praise the revolution then I am attacked that I am a fifth line and a Muslim Brotherhood supporter." She recounts a Tweet she wrote about El Sisi encouraging people to ride bicycles. She says she Tweeted that she bought a bicycle but can't use it until the infrastructure is fixed. "So I got insulted from both sides; 'Esraa is pledging allegiance to El Sisi and went and bought the bike to kiss his ass,' and from the other side 'Are you going to lay your terms? Are you humiliating the man? You buy a bike and shut up! Who are you to tell him what to do and what not to do?'" recounts Abdel Fattah. This pressure led her to deactivate her account for a month when she got too tired.

Abdel Fattah said she considered her followers' reactions before joining *Youm7*. El Naggar's followers even criticize his media appearances if he appears with presenters who are not known to be strong supporters of the revolution.

7.1.8   Electronic committees

Most bloggers interviewed expressed concern over what is dubbed 'electronic committees,' which are normally fake accounts created by political parties or the state to attack prominent social media makers and comment on their Tweets.   These accounts often use standard answers to attack opposition bloggers and promote certain directions. Bloggers, including El Naggar, Mahfouz, Abdel Fattah and Saber, have expressed that electronic committees

are becoming one of the biggest challenges on social media as they target certain micro-bloggers and cause an overflow of information.

Mahfouz, like most bloggers interviewed, mentioned electronic committees have repeated certain statements so frequently on social media that users are now echoing these statements after being over exposed to them.

Fathy believes electronic committees played a big role in diluting the online information and causing information overload for readers and bloggers alike. This made it hard for micro-bloggers who do not have strong followership to get their voices heard on social media.

7.2 <u>Sustainability of blogging</u>

All bloggers interviewed have largely stopped blogging, either because they do not have enough time to do so as they're busing making careers, or because they have resorted to writing on mainstream media or social media what they would normally write on their blogs.

7.2.1   Social media replacing blogs

All 12 bloggers interviewed believe social media is easier to use in terms of its interface than blogs and have a wider audience reach and so have all said they are now using Facebook and Twitter rather than blogs. El Naggar says his personal blog space moved onto Facebook notes. He actually believes social media is the second wave of blogging, replacing blogs altogether and introducing micro-blogging. "Blogging has an identity crisis now; why would I publish a picture on my blog and not on Instagram, Deviant Art or Tumblr?" says Nagati. Although Sherief blogged daily until 2009, he says his blogging decreased tremendously as social media replaced blogs. "Facebook and Twitter

are much more popular than blogs, they have wider reach, there's a lot more interaction and they're much quicker," says Sherief.

Blogs are also deemed outdated by some of the bloggers interviewed. Ezzat believes the interface on WordPress and others have stopped improving since 2008, unlike social media, which is constantly updated. "Social media gives you more statistics on your followers and subscribers and so on. So this was a hit to blogs," says Sherief. Nagati argues that it's easier to set up social media accounts, from a technical point of view, than it is to create a blog. It also allows users to benefit from the database of social media subscribers as opposed to building their own databases to get traffic specifically for their platform. He adds that the Arabic names of some blogs are also creating an issue finding the blogs online due to the fact that the blogs' addresses are written in Latin letters and so Arabic names could be spelled in different ways.

Because of its popularity, reach and ease of use, social media, bloggers argued, is also much easier in covering current events, calling for action and mobilizing the masses. They would use Twitter, for instance, to ask for medical aids during sit-ins or warn people that this certain area is under attack.

Social media is also easier for the readers who are on social media; on their internet browsers or their smart phone applications, this, bloggers believe, means more interaction with readers and a steadier followership. This means they do not have to go specifically to the bloggers' websites to follow their content, they are already on social media and so can easily follow their Tweets, statuses and notes from the convenience of their smart phones on their personal accounts' newsfeeds. "The audience changed, they became lazy," says Sandmonkey. Sherief believes Facebook and Twitter save his and his readers'

time and effort. Badawy says Facebook's interactivity, engagement with the followers and the feedback he gets encouraged him to write more. Abdel Fattah, Fathy and Sherief all expressed similar opinions. Ezzat believes social media allows for instant interaction with people only a few seconds after an event takes place. This, he says, leaves little to blog about as social media "took away a large bit of that need-to –express-yourself energy and the energy to write." Ezzat is now able to express himself and interact with followers, engaging in debates and so feels less need to blog. In fact, it's this ease of reach and interactivity that made Abdel Fattah reluctant to create a blog and always use Facebook and Twitter to write. Facebook and Twitter also gave bloggers a steadier and wider readership base due to the fact that users are already on these platforms and they can make use of this aspect. A blog on the other hand does not have that sort of steady followership because, no matter how popular, they cannot always count on their regular readers checking the blog post. Users on social media, on the other hand, can see their posts once they open the social media platform in their news feeds. Ezzat explains that fellow bloggers and himself started getting unexpectedly influential; "we would call for a forum expecting 20 or 30 people then find the space full and lots of people standing, so we started thinking bigger, getting bigger spaces."

7.2.2   Overflow of information on social media

Bloggers interviewed expressed concern over social media getting too popular and so leading to an information overload and diluting the founding generation of the Egyptian blogosphere's voices in the process. This led some of them to feel like their voices are not needed on social media and led to them being far less active.

Saber, for instance, stopped blogging because he felt there was no longer a need for his voice as everyone resorted to social media, especially Twitter, as platforms for activism. Before 2011, he believed what he blogged about needed to be said, but now, he says everyone is saying what they want, so there's no longer need for him to blog or micro-blog. Likewise, Nagati felt his social media activity had more impact in the past when micro-bloggers were few. Even younger generations of bloggers like Hisham expressed the same concern. "In 2011 and 2012 I was always on Twitter; it was like raising a kitten. I would follow it hour by hour and comment on the news on the spot," Hisham says. "Now I would Tweet once every two weeks." He also feels Twitter has become depressing due to the lack of interaction these days and the fact that he feels "Twitter no longer promotes you and this is why I am looking for another platform to write."

7.2.3   Social media losing momentum

Those who managed to make a career of social media have maintained a presence online throughout the day more so than others who have not been as successful staying active on social media. Abo-elgheit, for instance, says he would not have been able to maintain the level of activity had he remained a doctor. Abdel Fattah argues that those whose careers are not related to the media or politics cannot be active on social media due to their schedule and work nature, even if they are active on the ground like Ahmed Maher, for instance, who's an engineer. Likewise, Nagati spends an average of four hours a day on social media because it's now related to his work.

On the other hand, Fathy says he Tweets far less now that he is focused on his life and career and cannot afford the time for social media and blogs.

Although he used to spend 10 hours daily online until 2010, now he only spends two hours a week actively engaging on social media. In 2010, social media was relevant to his work and he used it and blogs to promote his work, but now this is no longer the case.

This means that the discourse online is limited in the sense that those who get heard because they're the most active come from certain social and professional making that is not similar to the general public. Most of those are prominent bloggers, in fact, 4 of the 5 bloggers whose work is related to social media are prominent.

Due to prominent bloggers' popularity on social media, they have managed to land jobs in the field or start their own. Sandmonkey, Abdel Fattah and Nagati, for instance, are all now in the field of social media. To Abdel Fattah, social media is now a career, not just a part-time activity.

"Despite yourself, you are more expert than all of the experts out there because you used those platforms in way they never thought of," said Sandmonkey. "So what happened is that because of this huge followership, my name became influential and people started approaching me." Sandmonkey has founded a digital consultancy firm and a social media agency.

7.2.4 Founding generation growing older and focused on careers

The interviews showed that the founding generation of bloggers were growing older and more focused on their careers and professional lives, leading to their bloggers identities taking a backseat as new identities took over. Those identities were forged as bloggers pursued mainstream media careers, careers in politics or in civil work. This, as shown above, left far less time for social media or blogs as seen from the blogs' content analysis.

"There is a difference between being in your 20's and being in your 30's," Sandmonkey said, "It has to do with business and your financial situation." Sandmonkey now posts less than before because of his duties to mainstream media and the hours he puts into his private business. His mainstream writings get him a wider reach and financial reward that his blog does not. Fathy explains that although he could afford to be active and get arrested when he was younger, this is no longer a lifestyle he wants to live. "I was okay with losing an opportunity and leaving a job I have and not attending a job interview and so on; at a certain age it is nice and all. But after this age, it becomes difficult. When we're young we are ready to do this, but not now," says Fathy. He adds that younger people should take a few years to "take risks, run about and serve their causes," but when they grow older, "we need to serve ourselves." Similarly, Nagati was able to post more when he was a university student but once he got a job, it was no longer possible to maintain the same frequency. Mahfouz says she stopped posting as much when she got married and had a child.

Studying the blogs, one can see that it was around the time bloggers got involved with new careers that they stopped updating their blogs. For instance, El Naggar stopped blogging when he started becoming more active on the ground and joined then led the Baradei presidential campaign. Which he says left him no time to write as it was a period of political momentum. Similarly, Ezzat stopped blogging around the same time he started writing more intensely on mainstream media and so expressing himself on those platforms and having little time and content for blog posts. "I like the blogs' style of writing and want to go back to it but practically, during the past period, my time became

very tight because it was all spent fulfilling my duties to newspapers. This affects blogging a lot; writing for *Al-Masry Al-*Youm and other; the audience base is very wide and so since I started in 2011, my articles had a lot of interaction and attention so it took a lot of my time," says Ezzat. El Naggar believes blogging was a phase that a certain generation that is now in their thirties went through together to form an alternative sphere and practice public work but that this phase, and accordingly blogging, has ended now that this generation moved onto ground work and the mainstream sphere. This view is significant as it shows the bloggers are well aware of their shift from virtual to mainstream and that this particular blogger views his move onto the mainstream as an end to his virtual activity or a replacement of his virtual world, rather than a continuation or an addition to it.

These new identities are often conflicting with that of blogging; Hisham, and others like Sandmonkey and El Naggar, stopped publishing on their blogs what they write for newspapers or, in Hisham's case, his book. Sandmonkey feels it's unethical to drive traffic to his blog instead of the newspaper that paid him for this content while Hisham sees he has to make the book content exclusive to the book and not freely available online.

As the previous chapter shows, many of those who used to identify themselves as bloggers now identify more with other identities like journalists and social media consultants, like Abdel Fattah, Abo-elgheit and Nagati. A blogger like El Naggar, for instance, went from an alternative voice of opposition to a party founder, a parliament member and now a public figure. Ezzat explains that until 2007 journalists put him in the mold of "the blogger who couldn't find his voice but found it online." After the uprising, however,

the identities he was hosted as on mainstream media became many; journalist, activist and lately researcher. His identity as a blogger then started receding and he started refusing to be hosted as a blogger because he felt it was overdone and it was only one aspect of his identity that is no longer significant now that everyone became a micro-blogger, he said. Similarly, El Naggar said his situation was different because he was not an activist "sitting all day on Twitter insulting people and so on," which shows that he believes his status as a parliamentary member is more significant than his role as an online activist.

7.2.5 *Lack of sustainable revenue streams*

Although online advertisers interviewed said that the market has been expanding in the past years, this has not trickled down to political bloggers in particular. Most bloggers never considered monetizing their blogs although none of them objected to the concept.

Among the 12 bloggers interviewed, only Mahfouz, Sandmonkey, Nagati and Badawy considered monetization although only Sandmonkey has advertisements on his blogs. It is worth noting that of the 4 bloggers who considered monetization, 3 of them are prominent bloggers.

Sandmonkey had an interesting model where he had a few advertisements posted on his blog and a PayPal account that he used to ask his readers for help when he wanted. For instance, he would ask the readers to contribute towards a digital camera and the following day he would find "$1,000 and two cameras sent," recounted Sandmonkey. His readers donated the money because they wanted him to go out and report for them and felt a sense of engagement and civil action. He never considered it a money-making platform, however, and believed money would come from other sources.

Similarly, all bloggers interviewed said they did not think blogs were financially rewarding. Nagati, for instance, says he cannot be successful in monetizing the satirical blog he founded because he believes the market is small and because he criticizes situations and people, which might cause an issue with advertiser. He does not believe the market is as rewarding as it is in Europe and the U.S. and argues that generating income through things like affiliation marketing is not suitable for Egyptian audience.

Others, however, viewed blogs as their personal spaces and the thought of monetizing them never crossed their minds. El Naggar, for instance, never considered his blog as a tool to make money, but rather a way to express himself and work towards human rights and political reform. El Naggar, therefore, kept his main profession, dentistry, to be able to do all of that freely without financial pressures from entities wanting to shape him into certain molds. Ezzat also felt his blog is a space to express himself freely and said he was not consistent in the frequency and topics of his posts so felt that monetizing his blog would put pressure on him to fulfill his responsibility towards the readers and advertisers. Similarly, Saber says "If I post ads I might one day be forced to post a blog so I get more traffic and […] I write whenever I feel like it."

But interviews have shown that even if bloggers had attempted to generate revenue from their blogs, they wouldn't be able to succeed without compromising their voices and directions to be less controversial and mellower. All three marketing experts interviewed have expressed that while they have seen a drastic increase in the online advertisement world, this did not apply to political bloggers. Mohamed El Mehairy, managing director of the

leading online advertisement agency, Connect Ads, says that in the past two years online advertisements market has picked up significantly. Noha El Sherbiny, group project manager at L'Oreal, says 20% of her marketing budget goes to online and she's interested to promote her brands amongst bloggers. Sondos Effat, account director at FP7 Cairo, a leading advertising agency, says that while advertisers were spending around one percent of their budgets online before January 25th, they are now spending around seven percent. "This is a huge figure in terms of volume given the difference in prices between digital and traditional advertising, says Effat. She adds that online advertisements reach the major segment of consumers in Egypt; the youth. El Mehairy, however, says that while most companies are dedicating bigger and bigger chunks of their marketing budgets to online, they all shy away from association with political bloggers. He adds that brands do not want to be associated with one side over the other and political bloggers often represent a side of the argument, which alienates those disagreeing with opinions expressed. El Mehairy also sees the language used by some political bloggers as a major factor alienating advertisers who do not want their brands associated with profanities or extreme language. El Sherbiny also says she would not advertise with political bloggers because she would not want her brands to be associated with anyone whose content may alienate a chunk of society, which is the case with political bloggers who voice strong opinions. Effat agrees, "Most brands in Egypt are avoiding political connotations, so they wouldn't go for bloggers or opinion leaders focused on politics." Additionally, El Sherbiny prefers advertising with bloggers whose readers have an interest in her products, like fashion bloggers, although she might be associated with more mainstream, but

neutral, news platforms. Effat and El Sherbiny both say that social media are the bulk of where online advertising money is spent because of the platforms' wide reach.

7.2.6 Paid media appearances

One revenue stream that was offered to bloggers after the uprising is paid television interviews. It is worth noting, however, that the policy for each channel and program differ when it came to whether or not they pay their guests as well as the amounts they pay them. The amount and whether they are paid or not also largely depended on who the guest is and his importance to the show.

Mahfouz, for instance, started getting small sums from her media appearances after January 25th; "I would appear on *Al-Jazeera Qatar*, for instance, and they would pay me $100, which would keep me for the week," she said. Although she was not consistently paid for appearances, depending on the medium's policy, she now understands that it was a source of income she should've seized while still available. Abdel Fattah, Badawi and Abo-elgheit are also comfortable with paid media appearances.

Some bloggers, however, refused to get paid for their appearances. Fathy, for instance, believes the media provides a platform to advocate and promote his cause and not earn a living off it. Nagati also said he does not believe in paid media appearances. El Naggar also viewed paid appearances as pressure that might force him to alter his opinions or tone them down.

7.3. Editorial compromises and moving to mainstream

Several bloggers have resorted to mainstream media, be it through being offered fixed opinion columns with leading newspapers, as was the case with several prominent bloggers, or through joining their teams as social media consultants or reporters, the latest being the case with the less prominent bloggers. Other bloggers were also offered occasional spaces on less popular newspaper portals.

Before January 25th, these opportunities were rarely available to even the most prominent bloggers. But after the uprising, newspapers like *Al-Masry Al-Youm* started providing space for online voices through their website and under the website's managing editor, Nora Younes, who was a prolific blogger herself. This allowed a space for prominent and less prominent bloggers alike. But the space provided in print and other newspapers like *Al-Shorouk* remained more exclusive to the more prominent bloggers. Before the uprising the media often also used content from blogs without any accreditation. Nagati says that the online publishing market in Egypt was narrow before the uprising and so there were only a limited number of jobs offered, "There weren't even online editors back then," he adds.

7.3.1. Transitioning to mainstream

Many opportunities came to the bloggers due to, not only their fame and experience in online and social media and their strong presence in covering and reporting during the uprising, but also the expanding online job market and the boom that occurred in that field. Many online jobs were created during that period due to the interest that social media got after the uprising. Newspapers wanted their names associated with revolutionary figures. Mahfouz says "I

don't think newspapers bother with what I write as much as they just want to have my name on their papers." Many of those bloggers, therefore, found opportunities to join the mainstream media in their area of expertise. Abdel Fattah, for instance, was recruited as s social media consultant for *Youm7* because of her experience and popularity on social media. Similarly, Nagati was approached by *Al-Masry Al-Youm* to join their team based on his social media experience.

"Most bloggers resorted to professional work; they joined channels and worked as producers and journalists," said Saber adding that they still use social media but to promote their work in mainstream. Hisham agrees, saying that half of the bloggers he knows are now writing for newspapers. Ezzat, for example, used to publish articles on some online Islamist portals and what he describes as "low quality" magazines followed by a reporter position at the prestigious *Al-Shorouk* newspaper, But after the uprising, he started writing regular columns for several newspapers and news websites, including *Al-Shorouk, Al-Masry Al-Youm*, *Mada Masr*, *Jadaliyya* and *Al-Arabiya*. His status *in Al-Masry Al-Youm* from a society column reporter to being asked to become one of the newspaper's most prominent columnists in the period of one month is a reflection of the change that happened in that period in the status of prominent bloggers like Ezzat. He adds that "blogging opened all the doors" for him in journalism and elsewhere.

Sandmonkey believes that one of the main changes that occurred to bloggers is that all of a sudden people like him started getting paid to write instead of their writings being solely for themselves. Mahfouz echoed a similar

opinion saying she used to write for newspapers online and some portals but was never paid for it; "after the revolution, I discovered this was an income,"

Although Sandmonkey and a few other prominent bloggers wrote occasionally for publications abroad or less popular online publications before the uprising, such opportunities locally with popular newspapers did not come until after January 2011. One key change in bloggers' relationship with newspapers as well is that although they might have been able to publish one or two articles on mainstream media before the uprising through approaching them and asking them to publish their writing, after the uprising it was those newspapers that approached bloggers and offered them space. El Naggar, for instance, had only been able to publish two articles for *Al-Shorouk* newspaper before the uprising, but afterwards, the newspaper approached him offering him a fixed column and so did *Al-Masry Al-Youm* and *Youm7*. "Before the revolution it was very difficult for our generation to write in newspapers like this," he said.

Bloggers are often tempted by the promise mainstream media holds to connect them to a wider audience base. El Naggar expresses that being well-read and reaching a large audience is valuable to him and it's a goal for many writers. Abo-elgheit believes that a breakthrough that bloggers achieved after the uprising was being taken from the alternative spheres and into the mainstream journalism. "A huge breakthrough Nora Younis achieved was taking us [bloggers] out of the mold of 'you're the bloggers read only by a few' to 'you are opinion writers and journalists,'" he said.

This wider audience base, as well as financial rewards achieved from mainstream media, might therefore be worth sacrificing some of the

advantages the blogosphere provides; including complete autonomy over content.

Sandmonkey, however, sees an issue with bloggers transitioning to journalists and going beyond opinion-writing as they do not necessarily adhere to the professional codes journalists adhere to. He believes bloggers tend to be opinionated and so cannot function well in non-column writing. He adds that this gave way to rumors spreading when the press takes content from blogs without verifying the source of validity of the information. "So when anyone called me a primary source of news I said no, I am not news, I am biased. Look for news elsewhere," he adds.

7.3.2. *Comparing prominent and. non-prominent bloggers' transitions*

What was apparent during the interviews is that while the more prominent bloggers were more willing to collaborate with mainstream media and had more chances to do so, the less prominent bloggers often could not make that transition; either because they did not want to undergo pressures of mainstream media or because they did not have the right opportunity. Nagati believes it was only the elite who managed to make it into mainstream media, adding that some of those writing now do not have the required talent but they are famous so were approached by the media.

While prominent bloggers like Abdel Fattah, Ezzat, El Naggar and Sandmonkey made their way to mainstream in popular publications, getting regular column spaces, the less prominent ones have either been unable to do so or have joined mainstream media in less prestigious positions. The less prominent ones were also able to get editorial space but in less popular or less

prestigious newspapers or on less popular online portals. Hisham, for instance, got turned down by several publications he approached.

So while Abdel Fattah became a columnist and a social media consultant, Abo-elgheit, for instance, became a television producer. This means that while Abdel Fattah and others of her prominence are on the forefront of mainstream media, less prominent bloggers are on board but in less prominent positions. And while Ezzat and El Naggar were offered one of the few, exclusive editorial space in *Al-Shorouk*, Abo-elgheit was one of many reporters. Hisham's editorials, on the other hand, got published but in less popular newspapers like *Al-Mougaz* and *Al-Badil*.

Other less-prominent bloggers were not able to land opportunities in mainstream media at all or refused to yield to the pressures of mainstream. Less-prominent bloggers showed a more emotional approach compared to the practical approach prominent bloggers took to their writings. El Naggar, like several other prominent bloggers who made it into mainstream, believes he can be flexible in his writing to be able to publish and get the biggest number of readers instead of abstaining and not getting his voice across. So while El Naggar and others expressed they are aware of the limitations of mainstream media and often tweak their content to fit it without forsaking the integrity of their opinions, less prominent ones felt strongly against tweaking or toning down content. Fathy, Saber and Badawy expressed frustration with mainstream media's demands when it came to writing. "I don't like imposing censorship on myself or changing my style," said Badawy, "this is probably why I am not successful at this [publishing in mainstream.]" Saber also says he could not tailor his style to fit mainstream; "I write how I speak. I can write in classical

Arabic, but it's not really me." He adds that his writing is what he calls "brain farting," and venting about whatever is on his mind, a style that cannot compete with professional journalism. Unlike El Naggar who sees that one should fit his voice into what the mainstream allows instead of abstaining from writing, Fathy left a publication he was writing for when they did not want him to write about a certain topic he was interested in.

Less prominent bloggers also seemed more lax with their writings and did not want to have to write under the pressures of deadlines. Saber, for instance, says he cannot abide to writing schedules and might not want to write for long periods and then write intensively for others. He also says he needs to be "poked and teased" to write about something. Hisham feels the same adding he cannot feel compelled to write.

Sherief did not want to reach out to mainstream media because he felt it would impose restrictions on him on what to write or not to write, the length of the articles and the deadlines. He preferred having his own, private space; "I find many who change [after collaborating with mainstream]," he says. "I want to be free. I often consider it, especially that many of the bloggers I know and started writing with are now writing in mainstream, but then I change my mind because I want to be free."

The last difference is that while prominent bloggers are approached by the media with job offers, less-prominent ones said they had to seek out the media to get opportunities.

7.3.3. *Restrictions of the media in prominent versus non-prominent bloggers*

All bloggers interviewed realize mainstream media is more restrictive than social media and blogs because they require more structure, they have to

follow certain editorial guidelines and style and they are subjected to censorship that blogs are not subjected to. They are also more conscious to adapt their writings to fit the audience of the publication and generally a less elite and a more diverse and wider audience.

Some bloggers have faced issues with censorships, asking them to either publish the article on the newspaper's online edition only, or tone down their voices. The most prominent ones who continue to write for mainstream media have agreed to do that believing it's best to reach the audience, even in a subtler way, than not to reach them at all. Ezzat had issues with *Al-Masry Al-Youm* when they changed a sentence in his column for being too strong to publish. Abdel Fattah and Ezzat were allowed to publish an article online but not in print as the online ceiling of freedom is generally higher than that of the print editions. The less-prominent Fathy refused to accept those restrictions and left the publication he was working for after being banned to write about an issue.

Some of them, however, were banned from writing for certain newspapers, like Abdel Fattah who was stopped from writing for *Al-Masry Al-Youm*. Others opted out of writing for mainstream due to these pressures. Nagati says he did not want to join mainstream because he cannot be objective and adhere to the editorial styles and directions or compromise his writing according to the publication's own ceiling of freedom.

Someone like Abo-elgheit, for instance, realizes the pressures of mainstream but chooses to stay in it because it allows him wider reach, especially a segment that might disagree with his political directions, and so tones down his voice to get through to them. "I tend to tone it down a bit; I

can't tell people 'you're slaves,' even if I believe that … I can't insult them if I want them to listen to me," he says. "Even though there are pressures [from mainstream publications], we [voices of opposition] are adamant to maintain our positions in mainstream because it reaches a larger number of people and I, personally, feel a responsibility to deliver my voice to the people," says Abo-elgheit.

What is striking about Abo-elgheit is that he explains he now makes a conscious effort to write articles that would be well-read by every category, direction and background of the society's strata and that would be widely liked and shared by these categories. This conscious mass-writing style was not necessarily one he used before writing for mainstream. He started simplifying and shortening his articles when he moved from writing to the "elite" on his blog, as he calls them, onto the mainstream. "I now know that when I write in a certain way it will bring more people and readership and what buttons will resonate more with people," explains Abo-elgheit. "So I now play psychological games with people. What will make people read all the article and press like and share? I will fool you into doing this."

Ezzat echoes a similar style; he recognizes that each platform he writes for has a different audience than the other and customizes his writings according to the readers of each. He recounts how he uses a different style in writing for *Al-Masry Al-Youm* and two other newspapers he writes for. The complexity, voice and persona he has differs with each of these.

This shows one of the biggest effects of mainstreaming bloggers after the revolution; they not only realize what will work well on alternative media will not necessarily succeed on mainstream, but they are also far more

conscious of how to write to make their article interesting and attractive to the wider audience to get the most readership and likes. They are also more willing to adapt to publications' ceilings of freedom, editorial and style guide and to what the general, not the elite, reader will accept to appeal to the widest audience possible. This could be attributed to feeling the pressure of mainstreaming writings into a now more commercial platform that requires catering to each reader's needs and not just the blogger's own wishes and styles.

7.4. Coverage by the media before and after January 25th, 2011

Bloggers relationship with mainstream media, in terms of the media hosting, quoting and covering them, has gone through drastic changes before and after January 25th, as shown from the content analysis performed and the interviews with both prominent and less-prominent bloggers. The interviews also show that a further change took place in this relationship after June 30th, 2013 when the Brotherhood regime was ousted.

 The findings from bloggers' interviews were consistent with those of the content analysis conducted. All bloggers interviewed said the media covered bloggers more intensely and favorable after the uprising but added that they've gone back to their old habits after June 30[th,] 2013. Bloggers have also said that international and English-language newspapers were different in their editorial policies than most local newspapers.

 El Naggar, for instance, believes his relationship with the media has gone through different stages whereas the media quoted him as a former member of the Brotherhood, then an official at the Baradei presidential

campaign before January 25th, then as a representative of the revolutionary youth, parliament member, party founder and then politician after the uprising. This highlights the changes that happened in the relationship between bloggers and the media during the past few years. Before the revolution, bloggers were rarely quoted or covered by local media and if they were, it was not for their own personal opinions but rather their affiliation with certain political powers. This is manifested in the media using El Naggar as a source from the Brotherhood or Baradei's campaign. After the uprising, however, they started getting hosted for their own personal opinions and political stances, rather than certain affiliations, which is shown in the media hosting El Naggar to speak of the revolution or his political activity and to analyze the current events. This shows a shift in the media's perception of him and the weight given to his opinions.

Bloggers interviewed also argue that editorial policies of newspapers differed when it came to the media coverage of bloggers and it was the English-language publications that was interested the most in them, as the content analysis has proven. Fathy argues that online portals also tend to cover bloggers more so than the publications' print editions; something the content analysis of *Al-Ahram* newspaper has also shown.

7.4.1. Before January 25th

The local media, bloggers said, rarely covered them before the uprising and when they quoted them they often did so through copying content off their blogs without accrediting them. The media rarely, however, gave them space in print or in broadcast.

Mahfouz, for instance, said she has decided to upload the video mobilizing people before January 25th on her personal YouTube account because the media had refused to host her or her colleagues or cover news of the protests at all.

Ezzat, like many others interviewed, said the media would copy his posts without his permission or any accreditation and that happened the most around 2007.

It was also during this period that international media paid special attention to Egyptian bloggers, portraying them as the activists who could not find their voices and resorted to alternative platforms, said Ezzat. Similarly, Fathy said that before the uprising it was mainly foreign and English-language media that quoted him. Nagati explains that saying social media and blogs were not widespread among the majority of people in Egypt, but were much more popular in the West. This is why, Nagati argues, Western media paid attention to Egyptian bloggers whereas the local media did not.

Once this initial interest in bloggers, mostly by international media, dwindled so did the space given to bloggers in mainstream media coverage.

7.4.2. *After and during January 25th*

Bloggers agree that the media was most actively and favorably covering and hosting them during and right after January 25th. Abdel Fattah argues the frequency of coverage and hosting bloggers was very high after the uprising immediately. It was around this period, Ezzat believes, that the idea of "famous bloggers" started coming about.

Mahfouz believes the media became most favorable towards bloggers right after the uprising; "You couldn't even sleep from the number of

journalists coming in and out of the house and calling us," she says. Ezzat agrees, adding that the press at the time did not represent the voices of the revolution as prominent bloggers and revolutionaries had not started writing for mainstream portals yet. Therefore, Ezzat adds, the media resorted to bloggers who were active on the ground and represented the voices of the youth to reflect on current events and voice their opinions.

Badawy argues that bloggers were covered during the uprising because they were influential in the street, and not due to their identities as bloggers. Nagati, however, argues that it was because people started realizing the importance of social media and how effective it can be, "naturally, the media covered what was important to the people," he says. "Then the social media stars and big players started appearing on television and people started to try to understand who they are and what they do."

Abo-elgheit believes some people during this period became the "one-scene hero" as the media covered them intensively for a day or two for something that they have done and then they're forgotten about. These are not, he adds, the faces of bloggers that are recognized by laymen but were covered amidst the frenzy of media coverage during that period. So while laymen know bloggers like Esraa Abdel Fattah and Alaa Abdel Fattah, only a certain intellectual and educational elite recognize certain bloggers like Abo-elgheit and others. The more prominent bloggers were those who are covered over and over by the media and not only for a day or two, unlike others who might have gotten their one-minute of fame but disappeared after.

Bloggers and social media makers were also sometimes the only reporters able and accepted on the ground to report on what's happening not

only on social media but also to the mainstream channels that were not able to get in or could not get reporters in quickly or were simply rejected from covering on the ground by protestors there. "There were days when I was the only one reporting, just me in Egypt, with only two other reporters sending stuff from their phones later. So a day like April 8th, 2011, *ONTV* was reporting after me," says Nagati. "We are individuals, we move easily, our costs are low, and we are at the heart of things, we move quickly and we have been doing that for long and we are doing it for free."

Abdel Fattah and Mahfouz, however, both believe that this frequent and favorable coverage has gone down around 2012; around a year after the uprising.

7.4.3. After June 30th, 2013

A few months before June 30th, Abdel Fattah argues, their coverage started picking up again as Morsi announced constitutional declarations that were opposed by many. But after June 30th – when protests broke out calling for the end of the Brotherhood regime and the army detaining then-president Mohamed Morsi – bloggers agreed, their coverage and hosting have gone down tremendously. When they were covered, Mahfouz, El Naggar and others added, they were mainly portrayed in a negative light. Fathy adds that when they do quote bloggers now they quote the lighter side of micro-blogging; namely the jokes they post on social media in the form of satire.

Saber believes that the media coverage of bloggers changed because the media directions have. He argues that when bloggers' agendas aligned with that of mainstream media, their coverage was favorable; as in the case during January 25th and right before June 30th. Saber adds that when their agendas did

not align, it was either no coverage at all or negative coverage. This aligns with what Mahfouz believes as she says the only times the media calls her are when she Tweets things that are in favor of the particular media platform's direction. Nagati also believes their coverage decreased after June 30th because their importance has.

The media also started attacking some activists after June 30th, including prominent bloggers like Mahfouz and El Naggar who were attacked by a certain television show that claimed they were profiteering from activism and paid by foreign countries. "The media is almost destroying my life," says Mahfouz. She also believes the media was banned from hosting her. Sandmonkey believes that this scrutiny and attack is due to their new positions as public personas and key political players.

El Naggar believes the negative media coverage actually makes people trust him and his colleagues more as honest revolutionaries who do not waver or compromise their positions. This means that he realizes their portrayals as the opposition underdogs, or the anti-hegemonic elements who must be defending the general good, is actually beneficial for their popularity, even if they're speaking to this public through hegemonic or mainstream platforms.

"Islamists electronic portals, for instance, would want to speak to me because they know I am against El Sisi. If I write a Tweet against Islamists, you find pro-Sisi and pro-regime media outlets calling me to hear what they want to hear," says Mahfouz. "They don't want my opinion, they want to have this person, who was a revolutionary, say this particular thing." She adds that they often twist her Tweets and take them out of context to fit their own directions.

"In 2011 and 2012 we were stronger, we set the mainstream media agenda. This is regressing now," Fathy concludes.

7.5. <u>Conclusion and Discussion:</u>

7.5.1. Summary of findings and reflecting on theoretical grounding

The media prominence bloggers received after January 25th, 2011 had several effects on mainstreaming what was previously a counterpublic, as described by Fraser (1992) that changed the very nature of the online sphere and ultimately led to the demise of the blogosphere.

7.5.1.1. Intellectuals' superior attitudes

The effects of this mainstreaming were not only apparent in how bloggers altered their voices to fit their new status in mainstream media but also in the way they spoke of the founding generation of bloggers, their readers and of newcomers.

Bloggers, and especially the more prominent ones, showed reluctance to accommodate different opinions among their readers and interact with them as they used to after the increase in popularity of social media. This not only eliminates the reciprocity element of the online communication that Malina (1999), Papacharissi (2008 and 2002) and Sassi (2000) argued is necessary to affect social and political benefits from online media, but also turns the online sphere into a space of one-way communication. This one-way communication is dominated by a few popular micro-bloggers who have the most visibility online and offline who might be "excommunicating those who disagree and demonizing outsiders to enforce internal unity," as Lynch (2006, p.3-4) puts it. This phenomenon of conversing only with the like-minded is what Coleman (2004) calls social herding and leads to the polarization of the online sphere.

The founding generation of bloggers view themselves as having earned the right for this spotlight and status through sacrificing their personal security and risking state scrutiny and jail. This right they feel newcomers to the online sphere have not earned and so have no right to steal the spotlights or speak on behalf of online activists.

Those feelings of eliteness resonate with some definitions of intellectuals. These feelings of being a group of intellectually superior heroes risking security and more bears resemblance to what Benda describes as intellectuals. It is then relevant to look at how the bloggers' move to mainstream media affected the type of intellectuals they were. The interviews show that the less prominent bloggers seemed to view their role as intellectuals the same way Benda does; romantically and ideally with a total disregard for modern society pressures and practical pursuits. They do not all, however, live up to his condition that intellectuals are ready to sacrifice their lives for their cause. So while several less-prominent bloggers refused to join the mainstream or alter their voices to fit it, implying that their view of their role is theoretically aligned with that of Benda's, the fact that they stopped blogging altogether and minimized their activity on social media, opting for more practically rewarding careers and activities, means they do not practically fit that definition. Bloggers' interviews also show they embody the struggle Said depicts in balancing pressures such as shaping a career and finding financial sustainability and self-achievement through reaching wider audience bases and maintaining a level of independence. And even though they do fit Said's definition of intellectuals in various ways — for example, they are endowed with the faculty to influence and articulate arguments and opinions and defy

the orthodox — contrary Said's definition, many of the more prominent bloggers have been coopted by media institutions. That does not mean, however, that they are not intellectuals, but it might mean that a more practical theory of intellectuals is needed to account for an answer to the struggle Said describes. Gramsci's view of organic intellectuals is the closest to bloggers' reality here; they had once been traditional intellectuals detaching themselves from society and more concerned with conceptual matters but have turned into organic intellectuals who are part of organizations in the historical bloc; namely the media.

7.5.1.2. The demise of the blogosphere

The findings have shown that four factors led to the demise of the Egyptian blogosphere; the changing situation in Egypt, bloggers' failure to make blogging financially sustainable, the founding generation of the blogosphere growing older and more career-oriented, and social media replacing blogs.

Many bloggers expressed depression over the state of affairs in Egypt post-January 25th that led them to not wanting to blog anymore. But those feelings only kept the more prominent ones from writing online. They did not stop writing in mainstream media because they felt a sense of obligation to the newspaper or website they write for. This indicates that, while bloggers view their blog as a personal space and attach more feelings to it, mainstream writing is more of an obligation or a responsibility that cannot be affected by personal feelings.

The founding generation of bloggers have expressed that they were growing older and so more focused on their professional lives. This led them to develop identities other than bloggers and so blogging took a backseat to their

new responsibilities. Those whose identities were forged as bloggers pursued careers in mainstream media, politics or civil society work. This has left them far less time and energy to write online, as seen from the content analysis of blogs and the interviews. Mainstream media provided them with sustainable revenues and a wider reach that the blogs could not achieve. Looking at the blogs' content analysis, one can see that the frequency of the posts started going down around the same time bloggers started new careers. Bloggers interviewed also felt online platforms' rising popularity led to content chaos and the dilution of revolutionary ideology, or as Nagati says, "the trade is now open for every Tom, Dick and Harry." In fact, 5 out of the 12 bloggers said they felt their roles online are much less important than in the past due to the information overload on social media. This information overload was further amplified by electronic committees, fake accounts set up to propagate an idea or harass prominent micro-bloggers through flooding newsfeeds with similar posts or Tweets. Prominent bloggers then started looking for more exclusive platforms, like mainstream media. In return, the media wanted to have revolutionary legitimacy through having voices from the revolution on their pages and increase their traffic online through publishing columns by popular social media makers and bloggers. Their new positions in mainstream, be it media or politics, also give them a sense of pride that they expressed during interviews, that blogging alone did not. They transitioned from opposition writers to getting paid to write in well-esteemed newspapers. It is important to note, however, that out of the 7 bloggers interviewed collaborating with or in the field of mainstream media, 6 were prominent. It was also evident that the more prominent the blogger, the larger and more prestigious space they

received. The less prominent bloggers were seemingly unable to transition to mainstream, not only because they lacked opportunity, but also because they felt more emotionally attached to their writing and could not adapt to restrictions of mainstream media and adhere to deadlines, censorship and editorial styles and agendas. This means that those prominent bloggers – who are arguably power elites (Mills, 1956) – are not only becoming power elites of their own accords, influencing the public in their influential posts in the media, civil society and politics, but they are also becoming online and offline media elites. Joining mainstream media or other elements of the historical bloc means that the once counterhegemonic elements, or the déclassé (Ayubi, 2011: 3-5), have been coopted (Gramsci, 1971) and incorporated in the process of re-manufacturing consent (Herman and Chomsky, 1988) during the political transition Egypt went through. Although they remain opposition voices, their coopting into the historical bloc had significant effects on their content and the severity and direction of their voices as they became more institutionalized.

Bloggers could not achieve a sustainable revenue stream off their blogs and most bloggers interviewed never considered monetizing their blogs although none of them objected to the concept of doing so. The marketeers argued that while advertisers are looking to spend more money in online advertisements to reach the widest consumer segment in Egypt, the youth, they are not willing to be associated with political bloggers because they often represent a side of the argument, which alienates those disagreeing with opinions expressed. They added that language used by some political bloggers was a major factor alienating advertisers who do not want their brands associated with profanities or extreme language. Advertisers then look

for more neutral platforms to represent their products. These findings are consistent with Herman and Chomsky argument that the private sector whose interests often intertwine with that of the state shies away from advertising with media outlets that strongly oppose the state and corporate policies, (1988).

All 12 bloggers interviewed believe social media is easier to use and has a wider audience and so have all almost stopped posting on their blogs and resorted to social media instead.

7.5.1.3. Limiting the plurality of the online sphere

There are several factors that make for a revised Habermasian public sphere, taking into account Mouffe's revisions of the concept (2000); those are namely inclusivity, liberal exchange of views, disregard of status and plurality and diversity of voices. The findings suggest that the blogosphere is losing some of those key factors given the changes that occurred to the online sphere after January 25th as well as the nature of the population in Egypt.

In theory, the blogosphere and the micro-blogosphere have become more inclusive, given the rise in internet penetration rates after 2011. But the reality is that the less-prominent bloggers still struggle to get followership in an overloaded online sphere and the chaos of content. On the other hand, the more prominent bloggers gain more followers as they become even more prominent online and offline. This hinders the inclusivity of the online sphere because while it is in theory inclusive, in practicality, the newcomers or those who didn't receive as much media attention still struggle to get heard and the online discourse is dominated by only a select few. It also eliminates the argument some made in favor of the internet's merit in the democratic process; its ability

to take us into an era of communication of the many to the many instead of small numbers of people enjoying privileged positions as speakers (Kapr, 1994). This prominence is amplified by the effects of search engines, which promote certain platforms over others and Twitter suggesting the most popular micro-bloggers to follow, further limiting the plurality of voices online. Faris describes this as the network effect online that leads to a few, star bloggers dominating the online sphere and influencing the offline agenda. He argues that the Egyptian blogosphere is a scale-free network, which means that most nodes will be relatively poorly connected, "while a select minority of hubs be very highly connected," (2010, p.28). This was evident in the findings as prominent bloggers seem to run in the same circle.

Prominent bloggers' attitude towards newcomers online also hinders the 'disregard of status factor' that is necessary to form a plural public sphere. Another factor hindering the 'disregard of status' and plurality of the online sphere is prominent bloggers' profiles that indicate their elite backgrounds. This means that the online discourse is not only dominated by a few, but that those few come from elite backgrounds that allow them the tools to become influential online. This factor is even at stronger play as those dominating the discourse online express their intolerance of newcomers and of disagreeing voices. This means that the online sphere – a once counterpublic for the marginalized, unfamiliar voices – is becoming the exclusive sphere that led to its formation in the first place, marginalizing newcomers and different voices.

Bloggers' move to mainstream means that the once-counterpublic that is the online sphere is no longer independent from the state and economy, an aspect that constitutes a strong public sphere. The switch to mainstream media

not only led them to blogging far less than before, but it also led them to alter and tone down their voices online as they became subject to more scrutiny due to their growing prominence. The wider audience base and the financial rewards achieved from mainstream meant sacrificing a key advantage the blogosphere provided; complete autonomy over content. All bloggers interviewed see traditional media as more restrictive than online platforms. Those who joined mainstream media also expressed that they had to alter their voices offline given the political, editorial and advertorial pressures of mainstream media. Becoming renowned public figures in the political arena or renowned column writers also meant they had a certain image in the eyes of the public that they had to adhere to and so had to tweak their voices accordingly. They realized their words can be used against them by the press, the audience of the state. They also wanted to appeal to a wider audience base in the platforms they started writing for and so had to use certain tones and simplify their arguments or writing according to the readers of that specific platform now that they were no longer writing for an elite online audience. Six out of the 12 bloggers interviewed explicitly said they felt the pressures of being in the mainstream sphere. Unlike the more prominent bloggers, however, the less prominent ones did not express concern over fitting a certain public image or mold. These findings resonate with Morozov's theory that the internet is not emancipatory in nature (2011) as well as Papacharissi's argument that online discourse is an "orchestrated performance with the Other in mind," (2008).

Although bloggers do not directly monetize their blogs, this does not negate the effects of commercializing online space that dystopian theories of

the internet warn about. The move into mainstream then eliminates a merit that authors like Beacham (1995, cited in McChesney, 1995) and others argued the internet carries; its freedom from government and corporate constraints. Even though the blogs themselves are not monetized, the bloggers have still capitalized on their online popularity and commercialized, not their spaces, but their status and fame. This is a revenue stream that online organization authors call "personal revenue." The media realizes bloggers and social media makers are gateway to a lucrative audience segment of upper and middle class youth and so they want to include them onboard to reach out to that segment. So while they may not post an ad on their blog that would subject them to pressures of the media economics, they are still influenced by political economy of the media as they join mainstream media and become aware of those pressures and thus altering their content on social media platforms and blogs accordingly. Herman and Chomsky argue that market dynamics, media economics and availability of sources lead to self-censorship in favor of the state (1988). As Golding and Murdock argue, "the premium prices are commanded by shows that can attract and hold the greatest number of viewers," (2000, p.75). This side effect of commercializing bloggers is evident in bloggers reportedly wanting to reach out to the largest number of readers and altering their content to achieve that. The counterpublic then now indirectly intertwines with the mainstream as a spill-over effect from the main players in the counterpublic joining the mainstream. This fusion brought this counterpublic into the spotlight of not only mainstream media, which became more involved online, but also the state, leading to bloggers and micro-bloggers becoming increasingly under the authorities' radar and subjected to

various crackdowns. In fact, 7 out of the 12 bloggers interviewed have faced court cases at some point, and of those 7, 4 were prominent. The attention they received in the mainstream also caused the blogosphere to become fragmented after the uprising. Mahfouz, for instance, stressed on how the media attention she received made many jealous of her and led to her quitting the April 6th movement after people would question why she appears on the media and they do not and accusing her of stealing the spotlight. Sandmonkey also paints a divided picture of the blogosphere. This fragmentation of a once united online sphere is a possible side effect of the commercialization of the online space as dystopian theories of the internet argue.

7.5.2. *Difference between discourse and content on social media platforms and mainstream media*

7.5.2.1. Social Media vs. Blogs

Although social media provides easier interface and a wider reach, interviews have shown that they have quite a few limitations given the technology and that the quality of content on social media is drastically lower than that on blogs.

- Technical Issues: Five of the major different aspects of social media and blogs is that social media has limited archives while blogs do not, social media content is not searchable on search engines, there is no way to tell the traffic on social media, the user has to allow followers and comments and there is no way to post advertisements on one's profile.

Social media does not archive posts well, the notes on Facebook are sometimes only shown to friends and not followers and posts on social media do not appear on search engines. This makes bloggers feel like their content is

lost. Twitter does not go back in archives beyond 3,200 Tweets and Facebook's archiving methods are difficult to navigate and not always thorough. Facebook also does not automatically show notes and some are hidden to friends only and so more difficult to navigate than blogs.

Ezzat sees Facebook notes as a good alternative to blogs but is bothered by how the archives are not easily accessible and how the notes would not appear on Google searches. This made several bloggers interviewed view their blogs as archives for their writings. Although Badawy says he now uses social media rather than blogs, his blog serves as an archive. Ezzat is also planning on moving his notes onto the archives to be able to go back to them and so that they're accessible through search engines but he has not done so yet. Sandmonkey believes it is laziness that made the 30 "old-guard" bloggers turn to platforms like Twitter rather than blog as it's easier and faster.

Furthermore, there is no way to tell traffic to a note written on Facebook or a Tweet, as opposed to the many softwares that allow bloggers to know how many people visited their blog and read certain posts. Although a micro-blogger can tell how interactive readers were on notes or Tweets he wrote from likes, shares and comments, he cannot tell how many of his followers actually read what he wrote. The function that allows users to track who read their content on Facebook is only available to pages, and not personal accounts that most bloggers use.

Lastly, although users can constantly monitor how many people are following them, Facebook and Twitter do not allow users to profiteer from their accounts' popularity or audience through ad placements. Users could still monetize their content on social media through sponsorship; endorsing certain

brands in return of monthly fees, but this form of revenue stream may not be favorable to bloggers as they might view it as a threat to their credibility and it is not as easy or as straightforward as simply posting advertisements on blogs.

- Easier Writing: Bloggers interviewed, both prominent and less-prominent, have all expressed that they do not feel the same pressure to research ideas well, think about them, develop them and structure them before writing on social media like they did with blogs. Ezzat says that around 2013 he started focusing on social media and mainstream media and his blog posts all became archives of articles he wrote for mainstream media. He explains that blogs require more time and effort to prepare for, write and upload while he could be more lax on social media with what he writes. So while he spends a couple of minutes to post on social media, he used to spend days thinking, researching and writing blog posts.

"On blogs you had to sit and prepare for what you write, add links and pictures, write in a specific structure with conclusions and all. You also had to use a certain style. The blogosphere's entourage made you want to write in a certain way. But Facebook is simpler; you sometimes write blog-like posts and add a picture and a link and other times you write quicker, shorter posts in two or three lines about something you want to get out there…I don't have the time," says Ezzat. "Personally, I feel greater responsibility when writing on my blog than I do on Twitter."

This has a significant meaning on the quality of discourse on social media compared to the quality of discourse on blogs; while bloggers used to research their posts well and spend hours and days writing it, they admit that Tweeting only takes a couple of minutes and not nearly the same effort that

goes behind a post. This signifies that while it's a place to make a statement and vent, the deeper, more thought-out and researched posts have now vanished.

"I am no longer waiting to think of the idea, develop it and research it to post it on my blog. I can now write it in 140 characters on Twitter and it reaches people and it's more effective because people don't have to visit your page and they will re-Tweet it," says Saber. "Social networks now take the ideas immediately."

- Easy access: Facebook and Twitter's interactions mean that if a user is following a micro-blogger, anything this micro-blogger posts will appear on the user's newsfeed whenever they log in. This provides a steady followership and makes it easier for users to follow bloggers without leaving the platform they are already on, be it Facebook or Twitter, like they would have to do to check a certain blogger's blog. Unlike blogs, they do not have to go to a specific website to read what a specific blogger wrote. Therefore, bloggers can make use of the wide popularity of social media and of people already being on them and not going specifically to read them.

Furthermore, people who own smartphones are able to get bloggers' updates right on their mobiles as they would most likely have Facebook and Twitter applications on their phones. They can also set up these applications so they can get notified whenever someone they're following updates their profiles. This makes for a much easier interface.

- Freedom and followers: Some bloggers felt freer on Facebook than they did on Twitter while others felt more restricted but they all felt freer on their blogs than they do on social media, which are often more monitored by the media

and often have acquaintances, friends and families amongst the followers. Abdel Fattah, for instance, feels that because the media monitors Twitter more so than Facebook, she is freer on the latter. Meanwhile, Badawi feels that Facebook is more restrictive than Twitter because all his family and friends are following what he writes and so may be offended, leading to personal issues and disputes.

On social media, family and friends are always seeing whatever they post, even if they only followed or added bloggers to stay connected, and the mainstream media has easy access to their posts because the channels and newspapers are already on social media and get instant feeds. Those who read their blogs, however, will be going specifically onto their unique domain for the sole purpose of reading their blog posts; unlike social media. Therefore, the fact that people on social media are more diverse and are on these platforms for purposes more than solely reading a blog post, and that the content is more exposed than blogs mean social media serves might prove more restrictive than the blogs.

- **Different uses:** Interviews with bloggers show that Twitter is used more like news agencies to update followers about news on the ground and current events or call for action to mobilize people for protests or warn them about violence in certain areas.

Meanwhile, Facebook is used more like newspapers whereby users can write longer posts about current events that are often more timely than blogs but less brief than Tweets. Mahfouz believes Facebook is a safer environment as she can control who she speaks with and who can comment or see posts; something she's not able to do on Twitter. Ezzat also believes that Facebook is

now more dynamic than Twitter, although this was not the case before, as people can interact more.

Lastly, blogs are used like archives for bloggers to archive either social media content they deem important because social media does not archive content well, or to archive their writings on mainstream.

Therefore, while Twitter allows for brief comments and breaking news, Facebook allows for more commentary and the blog is more about researched, well-planned articles. This means that if one of these forms dies, it leaves a gap in the type of readings available online and in the public sphere in general that the other platform does not necessarily fulfill. It was apparent from interviews that the quality of discourse on social media is lower than that on blogs as bloggers do not research or think the content through before posting like they did with blogs.

7.5.2.2. Blogs and Micro-blogs Vs. Mainstream media

Bloggers interviewed all see the difference between writing on their social media and their blogs and the style and voice they need to adopt to write for mainstream media. In addition to the restrictions that are imposed on them in mainstream media, and adapting their tone, style and direction to fit wider audiences and editorial agendas, bloggers also felt freer as they considered blogs their own personal spaces. A major difference is writing to meet deadlines and not just when the bloggers feels like it; in fact, Ezzat believes his blogger background made him unable to write to meet his deadline obligation if he's not in the mood to do so.

Sandmonkey, for instance, feels restricted on mainstream media because he cannot write freely and use the same profanities he used in his blog.

He also says he misses the freedom to experiment with more creative styles of writing. "I was freer before the revolution," he adds speaking of pressures to tone down his writing. Abdel Fattah and Mahfouz also say she was freer on social media than she is in mainstream media to take whichever direction and tone she wanted to use. Mahfouz often shies away from traditional media as they try to direct her articles in certain directions and because she says she cannot adapt to the classic Arabic and journalism rules newspapers ask her to abide by. She has now resorted to writing to two online portals that publish blog-like articles so she does not feel restrained.

Saber believes bloggers write on social media and their platforms in a more emotional voice. He believes their accounts are more biased, their voices more sensational and their language more casual than that used in mainstream media, which can sound detached to maintain objectivity and neutrality. Ezzat agrees, adding that as a blogger he was often involved in events and not just reporting or analyzing them and so his background as a blogger made it impossible to separate between his mood and his writing, which is one of the main reasons he stopped contributing columns.

El Naggar also says writing for mainstream meant changing his writing to make it simpler and easier for a wider audience to read. He also keeps his readers in mind when writing and changes his style and the complexity of his articles according to the readers of each platform he writes for.

Blogs have started losing what defined them as blogs to start with, "It's updated regularly … It doesn't patronized the end user, dumbing things down too much…. It even has somewhat of a community, maintained by repeat visitors and list members who contribute many of the links," (Barrett, 1999).

Bloggers have stopped updating regularly, if it all, they have started being more conscious of their audience and believing they are no longer followed by the elite they once thought read their blogs and so started simplifying their content and their blogs no longer represent communities where bloggers and readers interact and share regularly. Winer even defined blogs as the unedited voices of author, collectively representing an amalgam of many voices. As findings have shown, the blogs no longer represent unedited voices as the authors have mostly expressed conscious editing and censorship of their content. It is also no longer an amalgam of many voices as the blogosphere and even micro-blogosphere become dominated by certain elite bloggers and micro-bloggers whose voices are the only ones successfully getting across to users as others struggle to find time to post or followership to engage with. And while blogging carried elements of Habermas' revised public sphere, taking into account plurality and diversity introduced by Fraser and Mouffe, the new face of the online sphere does not. The new online space for discourse does not have the same two-way discussions that were once present on blogs and social media and so eliminates the "liberal exchange of views" aspect needed to achieve a public sphere. It also does not have the elements of inclusivity, diversity and disregard of status necessary for a plural space for discourse, especially with bloggers' move to mainstream media. And even though those same counterhegemonic elements that formed the counterpublic are still voicing their opinions, they are now doing so on platforms that are part of the historical bloc and so subject them to the pressures and limitations of it. This also spills over onto their presence online, thus making what could have

been a diverse, plural online public sphere into an exclusive mainstream sphere that echoes censored and controlled voices of the elite only.

Calhoun argues that, "a public sphere adequate to a democratic polity depends upon both quality of discourse and quantity of participation," (1992: 2). Findings show that both the quality of online discourse as well as its quantity are now being hindered by the online sphere intertwining with mainstream.

"Blogging is free: When you write a blog entry, it's your personal space and you can write whatever you want and you're not tied to the rules of writing. When you write an article you need an introduction and a certain style and so on. Blogging is like personal thoughts and so it's easier; you write whatever is on your mind. But when you're writing an article you're tied to a certain image the reader has for you and the standard of writing you do so you can't write everything. Also, my work in politics made my writing more disciplined than before because anything I write can be used against me and can add or subtract from my credit with people. Writing in newspapers in general is one restriction, but writing when you're politically engaged is another restriction as well. One article can make a difference," says El Naggar.

"You can use your account to mobilize masses, you can't do that in a column," Abdel Fattah sums it up.

"Blogs are freer than the media; I can do as I wish with it. I can speak about politics in a very personal way and discuss philosophy. But the newspaper controls your writing to a certain mold … On your blog you can write short or long posts, be sarcastic or serious and write about whatever subject you want," concludes Ezzat.

Chapter VIII: Conclusion: The death of the Egyptian blogosphere and the rise of micro-blogging and column writers

The further this research went, the clearer it became that while studying the social and political impacts of blogs and the internet, one has to look beyond the much-discussed narrative of how bloggers and micro-bloggers have driven change in authoritarian countries. While it was understandable that earlier studies of blogging look at the potential for the medium in the democratization process, one cannot look at blogs or micro-blogs today without acknowledging other less romantic and more practical aspects of the blogosphere and social media in different contexts. Discussing the financial and organizational aspects of the blogosphere and questioning the plurality it adds to the public space for discourse served for a more comprehensive at and a deeper understanding of blogs and micro-blogs that goes beyond solely the role the internet played in the Arab Spring.

This research started out attempting to bridge the gap in research and literature between the financial sustainability and organizational aspects of blogging and the degree of plurality they add to the public sphere after the January 25th 2011 uprising in Egypt's authoritarian setting. The findings, however, do not reflect only the status quo of the Egyptian blogosphere and micro-blogosphere, but have wider, longer-run implications. The findings point to the importance of bloggers' contribution to the plurality of the public space for discourse in a media environment like the Egyptian one, but they also point to how this plurality can easily be limited by various factors at play in developing countries like Egypt, but also by free market dynamics rather than the much-debated state coercion. Although coercion was often discussed as

limiting to the discourse in authoritarian countries, this research indicates that consensus and free market dynamics pose a bigger, more permanent threat on alternative media platforms like blogs and micro-blogs. This is evident in the current situation where the main Egyptian blogs are not updated regularly anymore and the bloggers are wary of their own readers. They started simplifying content for a mass audience, they no longer represent an amalgam of voices and they have stopped being unedited voices with the mainstreaming of their authors. Inactive blogs are taking up space on search engines and so users are still directed to the inactive, but famous blogs, which became familiar to the general audience either through the media, search engines or endorsements from other star bloggers and micro-bloggers. This then leaves little opportunity for other rising, but much more active bloggers, to find space and readership in a crowded virtual sphere. The findings also point towards a certain eliteness of social media makers and bloggers that, given Egypt's socio-economic structure, mean that the internet may be inclusive in principle, but it is as exclusive as elite media in practice as the discourse gets dominated by a few possessing the tools to be heard.

8.1. <u>Romanticising bloggers and the demise of the blogosphere</u>

It is limiting to only consider blogs romantically without looking at them from an organizational standpoint and factoring in financial sustainability and this ultimately contributed to their demise.

When first contacted for interviews, bloggers were at first surprised that I included the financial aspect of blogging in my research. But as the interviews unfolded, they came to realize, through their own answers and narratives, that financial sustainability is key and that the lack of it was one of

the main factors in them drastically decreasing the frequency of blogging or quitting it altogether as they got older and more career-oriented. As the findings have shown, the blogosphere's demise has resulted from bloggers' failure, or unwillingness, to develop a hobby into a financially sustainable activity that would ensure the blogosphere's survival. This led them to join mainstream establishments where they were subjected to pressures that affected the nature, quantity and quality of their content. The voices of bloggers who have been co-opted into the historical bloc mellowed down as their interests intertwined with those of cultural institutions of this bloc; namely mainstream media. The overtly romantic view of political blogging as solely activism, and not a media platform like any other that requires developing and a sustainable revenue stream, failed to envision the current scenario in which, by 2014, prominent bloggers switched their writing to the more sustainable mainstream media whereas less prominent ones simply stopped blogging. This had implications not only in terms of the content they stopped producing on their blogs, but also the content they produced on micro-blogging platforms; namely Facebook and Twitter. The findings pointed to drastic differences between the nature of content that bloggers produce for blogs, social media and the mainstream media, indicating that the death of one of those forms creates a gap in the possible variety of content online.

These findings, therefore, indicated why it was important for me to look at bloggers, not in terms of what they contributed to the Egyptian uprising or the democratic process, but as micro-organizations that, much like mass media, can and were subjected to political and financial pressures that affected their voices.

8.2. <u>How much is the blogosphere an alternative space for the marginalized?</u>

It isn't comprehensive to look at blogs and micro-blogs as alternative spaces for the marginalized voices without looking at exactly who gets heard online as well as just who is online. It was studying those two elements that led to the conclusion that the Egyptian blogosphere is inclusive in principle but not in practice; a notion that can easily be applied to several cases in countries with similar socio-economic compositions.

Much like elite media, only a handful of social media makers and bloggers are leading and influencing discourse online while others struggle to get heard. Those influencers are normally from more privileged social and economic backgrounds that are different from the vast majority. Although this trend was consistent across the board, it proved stronger among prominent bloggers than less-prominent ones. It is important to remember than in a context like the Egyptian one, the internet is not inclusive as access to technology and education are considered privileges not accessible to everyone. Internet penetration stands at 89.9% in the UK, 86.75% in the U.S. and 86.78% in Germany (Internet Live Stats) while the UK's Office for National Statistics reported in 2012 that 34.4% of people aged between 16 and 64 and 40.2% of the workforce achieved at least a degree level qualification. Meanwhile, according to a 2012 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report, 74% of the 34 OECD countries – which include Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, the UK and the U.S. – have achieved upper secondary education and 38% of those aged between 25 and 34 have finished tertiary education. So while education and access to technology might not be constituents of the power elite worldwide, one needs

to look at bloggers' profiles in the Egyptian context and in comparison to the majority of the population. With an illiteracy rate of 26%, and 40% of the population living under the poverty line, university education and access to high-speed internet at home and on the go are considered luxuries to the majority of the population. Those bloggers are therefore what C. Wright Mills (1956) described as power elite; born into elites and possessing the tools to become a power elite of their own. As interviews and media findings show, the more prominent bloggers – who also happen to be the more elite ones – are evidently becoming power elite of their own, securing jobs at top media organizations and gaining more and more political and social influence. The eliteness of prominent bloggers also allowed not only support from influential circles on occasions when they were subjected to state crack-downs, but it also allowed them access to the media that meant their stories got coverage and popular attention that was not available to other less-prominent bloggers or the general public. This eliteness in their profiles, compared to the majority of the population, leads to an exclusive, single-voiced space that is not conductive to democracy as it lacks plurality. If a user is not university-educated, does not have ready access to the internet allowing them live and frequent posts and coverage, and cannot afford the time or cost of blogging or micro-blogging, they cannot be active players in the blogosphere or social media.

Popular loggers have commandeered spotlight from other lesser-known bloggers, in a way monopolizing who gets to speak on behalf of the revolution. Even when it came to their arrests or injuries, popular bloggers have been given far more attention by the public and media as they publicize each other's cases, while others didn't enjoy the same attention and consequently the same

relative immunity against crackdowns. Looking beyond the Egyptian context, the case could be applied almost universally; certain social media makers will gain increasing fame and so increasing legitimacy to speak about their respective topics of interest — both online and in mainstream — while others increasingly struggle to get heard online or offline.

8.3. <u>Acknowledging the limited plurality of blogs' discourse</u>

The discourse on social media's influence on the democratic process in Egypt and other authoritarian countries needs to look at how the plurality the blogosphere and social media add to the public space for discourse is limited given the influencing bloggers' backgrounds, which is vastly different from the population. We cannot hope to discuss how the internet contributes to democratization without looking at who gets heard online to truly assess the scope it can and does play.

To achieve plurality, a public space for discourse needs to have a diversity of topics and content makers, which stopped being true for blogs in Egypt after they had been mainstreamed in media and politics in the months following January 25th. This is largely due to the lack of diversity in online content, the elite nature of bloggers, the polarization of the online sphere that is dominated by a select few who speak to the unheard many and the lack of inclusivity, disregard to status, liberal exchange of ideas and independence from state and economy.

While blogs used to discuss a diverse range of topics before the uprising, including philosophy, literature, politics and economics, the only topics discussed after it were political, due to the state of the country at the time, showing a lack of content diversity. The findings point to the more prominent

bloggers possibly being more concerned with more elite topics than the majority of the public prioritizes. The blogosphere was also shown to be disengaged from the general public, which is evident in this research's analysis of blog content. While workers and mid-level employees were protesting and striking for things like minimum wages, the blogosphere at the time was buzzing with discussions about freedom of expression and democracy.

Despite the increasing internet penetration in the years following 2011, making the blogosphere and social media platforms potentially more inclusive, in practice, the situation was different. Less prominent bloggers reported struggling to get their voices across as the internet that became overloaded with content. While most voices got diluted and struggled to find an audience, the prominent bloggers' followership kept increasing as they were covered by mainstream media and then started writing for popular newspapers, gaining more prominence. Taki's research on Syrian and Lebanese bloggers show that the primary motivation her respondents gave for blogging is to get others to read their ideas and thoughts (2010, p.147). It is natural, therefore, that they might be willing to sacrifice some of the freedom they hold over their content to maximize the number of people who read those ideas and thoughts and thus moved to mainstream media.

Bloggers' haughty attitudes towards the new-comers online not only hindered the inclusivity of the online sphere, but also the disregard to status factor necessary for a plural public space for discourse. This attitude was also reflected in their relationship with followers, which became a one-way communication rather than an exchange of ideas. This particular finding is strikingly different from El-Nawawy and Khamis' research on five blog posts.

Those posts were studied a year and a half before the uprising and eight months after it, leading El-Nawawy and Khamis to conclude that blogs allow for "electronic debate and virtual democracy," through engaging in fruitful discussions (2014). Indeed the present research shows a dramatic change to the blogosphere and micro-blogging platforms between 2010 and 2015. The online sphere was therefore seen to be becoming a one-way conversation dominated by a select few who agreed with their immediate circles' views and only interacted within them.

The polarization and domination of the few over the online sphere is further strengthened with the increasing information overflow and social media popularity, which means that users tend to follow social media makers suggested by Twitter, which are those with the most followers in the user's country of origin, or those whose names are familiar to them from their media appearances. They would also follow those familiar to their own circles; so Brotherhood supporters would automatically be more familiar with, and so follow, Brotherhood micro-bloggers and bloggers whereas those who are more left-leaning would follow leftist bloggers.

The online sphere is now dominated by a group of elite voices in privileged positions as speakers, even though its popularity is widening. The majority of users, however are either only heard by a small number of friends and family who would listen as they struggle to reach others or remain passive receivers of the information set by those prominent social-media makers and bloggers.

This is not to say that the internet has no role in democratization as it has proven an effective tool in forming the opinion of several strata of society,

but we have to remember that this role is limited by the discourse presented online, which is turn is limited by those running and producing it.

8.4. The need for a different narrative on blogs, micro-blogs and democracy

It is important to put the study of the internet in a historical context because, much like other media platforms, it can and was commercialized, mainstreamed and neutralized through consensus of the free market dynamics, and not necessarily coercion as the literature on Arab bloggers suggest. If we look at the history of labor press, for instance, we can trace a similar story; while state crackdowns proved ineffective in censoring labor newspapers, free market dynamics ultimately lead to the labor press demise in light of their failure to attract advertisers or achieve other sustainable financial models as advertisers favored capitalist-oriented newspapers.

Similarly, bloggers grew older and more career-oriented, and so needed financially sustainability and self-achievement, this then pushed them into mainstream media or politics and away from blogs. Not only so, but mainstream media excessive attention on a handful of bloggers and social media makers while it ignored the rest has proven a far stronger tool than state coercion. The state often cracked down on activists and controlled the media through censorship, confiscations, cracking down on investors and raising court cases against media platforms. In Egypt, hegemony was often coerced and not co-opted with the absence of an ideology to legitimize hegemony. This coercion was seen not only in the form of the state cracking down on activists but also in controlling state as well as private media through censorship, confiscations, cracking down on investors and raising court cases against media platforms. So political and economic coercion (in the form of

threatening investors to exercise censorship over the media they owned) was exerted to force the public and the cultural institutions, including the media, into hegemony. Because coercion alone is not sufficient to suppress revolts and maintain the status quo, ultimately activists, who also include bloggers – started calling for changes in the status quo, eventually leading to a revolt against the ruling class. After the uprising, bloggers continued facing efforts of coercion from the state, they had been subjected to arrests and crackdowns from authorities. However, what was more efficient in mellowing bloggers' voices down, or hushing some of them in the process of reproducing hegemony, has been mainstream media co-opting prominent bloggers. Similar to the shift Eley (1992) describes happened in France, England and Germany with the formation of the bourgeois public sphere, there was a shift from the repressive mode of domination to a hegemonic one that is based primarily on consent that is also supplemented with a degree of repression. Yes, they still remain opposition voices, but their new roles affect their personalities, content and severity and direction of their voices as a result. This is also more apparent with prominent bloggers who received more opportunities to become institutionalized than the less prominent ones. So whereas their arrests caused uproar among activists online and offline, thus not achieving the hegemony hoped for, co-opting them proved more successful in Egypt. This is not to say, however, that coercion efforts have failed. Some bloggers have reported mellowing down their voices to be able to continue publishing in mainstream media and reach a wide audience. Others said they feared for their security and so some stopped blogging altogether, like the case of less-prominent bloggers, while others mellowed their voices down to avoid being legally prosecuted.

However, most of them reported altering their voices to fit mainstream far more often than they have reported altering it to avoid being fired, censored or arrested.

The effects of their mainstreaming were reflected on their content and presence online and offline, as blogs and social media transition from platforms read by a few and operating largely safely and independently from state and economy pressures to platforms widely followed by mainstream media, general public and the state. While bloggers may not post an advertisement on their blog that would subject them to pressures of the media economics, they are still influenced by political economies of the media as they join mainstream media and become aware of those pressures and thus alter their content on social media platforms and blogs accordingly, as interviews have shown. Bloggers often expressed wanting to reach out to the largest number of readers and altering their content to achieve that.

Looking at the frames used with bloggers, we can instantly see that bloggers, especially prominent ones, were often framed to represent the revolution and the youth. They were often asked to analyse and comment not as individual activists, but rather as representatives of the revolution itself. This means that the interests they represent, although not necessarily in-line with the previous regime's interests, were framed as the general interests of the public. The priorities they present, like democracy and elections, were presented as priorities of the public even if protests and strikes were taking place throughout the country calling for minimum wage, a priority the working class seemed to hold above holding elections. Because prominent bloggers came to be portrayed as representing the general good and the general interest, one can see

why their mainstreaming and co-opting or institutionalization would be problematic, as their voices get mellowed down due to their interests colliding with that of the mainstream media.

8.5. <u>Switch to social media in the international context</u>

The switch to social media is not specific to Egypt as studies, including one done by Neiman Lab in December 2014, show a similar move in the US. Veteran blogger Jason Kottke predicted the death of blogs as online users adopt social media platforms and added that 30% of traffic to his website comes from social media and that marketeers are urging him to promote their products on social media channels rather than his blog (2013). PewResearch Center indicated in 2010 that the number of teenagers working on their own blogs had halved since 2006 whereas the rate of blogging among adults increased from 11% of those aged 30 and above in 2008 to 14% in 2010. In the Egyptian context, those bloggers who constituted most of the blogosphere were adults who then grew more interested in their careers than in blogging. Nielsen, a market research company, also found that while traffic to blog hosting sites like Blogger and WordPress stagnated in 2009, traffic to Facebook grew by 66% and to Twitter by 57% (*The Economist*, 2010). The data resonates with the findings from this research, indicating that the bloggers themselves moved to micro-blogging platforms. Others argue, however, that blogs are not dying but morphed into mature parts of the publishing ecosystems and social networks (Dean, 2010 and Kabadayi, 2014). Kabadayi argues that the loss of casual bloggers has shaken things out, with more committed and skilled writers "sticking it out" (2014). Kabadayi argues that the decreasing number of active blogs is actually increasing the quality of the

blogosphere as a whole. He adds that publishers also took notice, adopting blogs and launching content aggregating platforms. This, Kabadayi says, creates an opportunity for bloggers to monetize their blogs and get advertising revenue they were not able to get before. "We have arrived at the essence of the blog – a highlight trafficked, commercially appealing platform whose best years are ahead of it," (Kabadayi, 2014). Leading blogger Andrew Sullivan agrees with Kabadayi in a post he wrote arguing against the death of blogs. Sullivan wrote that blogs are not dead, but they have rather evolved "What began as one person being mean to Maureen Dowd around 12.30 am every night is now an organism in which my colleagues and I try to construct both a personal and yet also diverse conversation in real time," he wrote about his aggregated blog. "But that doesn't mean the individual blogger – small or large – is disappearing."

Yet the situation in Egypt is not exactly comparable with that in the U.S. or Europe. Although it remains true that the abundance of blogs that was seen around 2007 has decreased worldwide in favor of the increasing popularity of social media, other aspects of this trend have not been replicated in Egypt. The model of aggregated, more structured blogs, has not been replicated in Egypt – with the exception of a handful of blogs. In Egypt, instead of publishers adopting blogs and providing content aggregating platforms for leading bloggers, they have recruited them to work on their own platforms. There has also been no interest from advertisers in bloggers and it is not true that the leading bloggers who provide quality content are those who survived in the past years because these have apparently turned to mainstream media, as this research indicates. It remains to be seen whether the blogosphere

in Egypt will evolve the same way they have in the U.S. and Europe. But unless bloggers move back to their blogging platforms, or a new wave of bloggers replaces them and finds more sustainable models, there is little indication that blogs in Egypt will evolve the same way they have in the U.S. and Europe.

8.6. <u>Areas for further research</u>

The findings point towards several possible areas for future research to explore but two questions seem nagging to explore.

Whether a new wave of bloggers might form a revival of the Egyptian blogosphere through finding ways to make blogging sustainable. But is also viable to look at an alternative hypothesis that blogs and social media are there to stay, even if never made financially sustainable, but the players will keep changing as their needs change. This is to say that financial sustainability would not lead to the demise of the blogosphere, but that one needs to accept that the blogosphere will always be dominated by a certain, younger age group that is not career-oriented yet and can afford dedicating hours to blog and micro-blog without expecting financial or moral reward. That means that the current state of the Egyptian blogs is simply a transitional one waiting for another wave of young bloggers to dominate the blogosphere and eventually fade out in favour for the next wave.

Also, assessing the bloggers' status after June 30th as the media changes its attitude towards them once more and where that leaves them is an important question. This means looking at whether bloggers will continue writing for mainstream media, even though their agendas might not necessarily align anymore, further mellowing down their voices as they reported doing?

And if they do not, might they revert back to posting on their blogs? Exploring the sustainability of bloggers' newfound media eliteness has implications on how malleable they are willing to make their voices to maintain their status in prestigious media establishments and whether they or others might fill the discourse gap this created in social media and blogging circles.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR BLOGGERS
This interview is for academic purposes. The results will be used as part of a doctoral thesis on the plurality the blogosphere adds to the public discourse in Egypt.

- The interview should start off by explaining who I am, the institution I belong to and that the findings are for academic purposes. It should also state that I am interviewing political bloggers, not any activists, and the questions posed only have to do with their identities as bloggers and their activity on social media and blogs. This is basically to separate between activists and political bloggers who are also active on the ground.

- Questions 1 to 6 serve to understand bloggers' backgrounds and whether or not they come from certain elites or upper classes and how, in turn, this affected their status as bloggers (as shown from the framing and quantitative content analysis conducted).

- Questions 7 to 16 help understand how the media's relationship with bloggers changed post-January 25th from the bloggers' own point of view and how this affects them. (This is then compared to findings from framing and quantitative content analysis).

- After question 16, this segment of the interview was dedicated to finding out how the nature of issues discussed pre and post January 25th, especially in the periods analyzed, changed. Using the laptop available on the interview, the blogger walks me through the posts covered in October 2010 and October 2011. This section will be tailored to each blogger.

I want to start off by asking you a few questions about your background, your family and how they feel about what you do.

1. Tell me a bit about your background; where you went to school, university and your current/former occupation. (This is to know whether they went to private/public schools and universities as well as whether they were or are holding prestigious/modest posts or modest ones in local/multinational companies. It also serves to let them tell me whether their current livelihood is related to blogging or the media without my having to ask and I can then prove further without sensitivities).

2. What about your family? Do they have a political or journalism background? (This is to probe further into parents' occupation, background and involvement in politics or the media).

3. What was their reaction when you took up political blogging? (This serves to understand how relevant the parents' backgrounds were to bloggers' choices and whether the theory that people born to power elites possess the tools to become elites of their own holds true. I will then probe further into how they affected his activity, in terms of whether they supported it and how).

The next three questions are going to be about the technical side of blogging.

(The below three questions aim to determine the tools available to them and how this impact their activity).

4. Tell me a bit more about the logistics of blogging. Where would you say you do most of your blogging, posting on Facebook and Tweeting? From your home or elsewhere?

5. And what are the devices you use most to blog and Tweet; a desktop, a laptop or a smart phone?

6. Technology-wise, do you find it easy to post videos, for instance, at home and on the streets? Does your phone or Wi-Fi/telephone plan support this?

I want to ask you a little bit about your relationship with mainstream media, in terms of coverage, for instance, whether or not your collaborate with them and so on.

7. Before January 25th, how did the mainstream media cover you and other bloggers? Was there any sort of coverage at all and if so, would you say it was favorable or not? (I will probe here further for specific incidence based on individual bloggers being interviewed).

8. How would you assess the mainstream media coverage of bloggers after January 25th? Is it any different or more or less the same? (I will probe further about whether certain media platforms stood out as any different than others if the blogger doesn't single ones out).

9. Before January 25th, did you ever collaborate with the media, be it in the form of interviews, for instance, or syndicating some of your content for them?

10. And did that change after January 25th?

11. Have you tried, for instance, reaching out to producers or editors to voice a certain opinion on a show or a newspaper, or to tell your account of a specific incident you witnessed? (Will further probe on the reaction from the newspaper or show and how this compares between before and after January 25th).

12. What was the reaction of your followers when you were hosted/quoted on such and such? (This question will be asked to the five prominent bloggers with specific examples)

13. You've been covered several times in the media after January 25th, so how has your followership changed after January 25th? Are you getting more followers? What kind of followers are you getting now that you weren't getting before January 25th? (This question will be asked to the five prominent bloggers only and I will probe further with specific examples on whether specific appearances and how and whether they have increased their followership right after the show).

14. Blogging carries a lot of similarities to traditional journalism. Did you ever consider contributing columns or articles to a newspaper? (Will further probe on why yes or why not and specific incidents).

15. So how different did you find writing columns is from blogging? (Posed only to bloggers who have answered yes to the above. I will then probe further on censorship, editorial policies and tweaking content for mainstream media, depending on the blogger's answer).

16. The media has hosted and covered you after January 25th, do you feel any pressures now that you haven't felt before January 25th? Are you

more conscious of the types of issues you cover, for instance, or the language you use than you had been before? (This question is mainly for prominent bloggers, for non-prominent ones, I will ask whether they feel free to post whatever they want because of the anonymity blogosphere presents. I probe further on whether they have been receiving more criticism from audience, for instance, than they had before and what does being on the spotlight mean for their own safety).

I want us to go through the posts you have posted on October 2010 and October 2011 and I want you to walk me through why you've chosen to cover these specific issues over others.

(Based on each blogger and guided by posts from his own blog, I pose questions on the nature of issues covered, how it changed post-January 25th, whether they faced any criticism or pressure over a certain issue they covered and why they chose certain issues to cover over others mainstream media studied was covering in the same period).

The next few questions are related to how financially sustainable blogging is and whether or not you face any difficulties finding the time to post and Tweet.

17. How much time do you roughly dedicate to posting on Twitter, Facebook and your blog?

18. Are you now posting more or less than before January 25th? (Will probe further based on results from content analysis of his blog as well as whether he had a full-time job before January 25th and now doesn't).

19. When are you most active on social media and your blog? Is it before work or after or during breaks at work? (This will only be posed to bloggers who reported working full time earlier, for others who don't

20. How easy is it to find the time to post on your own blog? And how does Twitter and Facebook compare to blogging in terms of ease of posting and time and effort you put into the posts?

21. Since the introduction of Twitter, have you been as active on your blog? (Will probe further here on whether they find it easier to Tweet as opposed to writing long posts on their blogs).

22. Do you know of bloggers who were successful in generating revenue form their blogs through ads, sponsorships or party-backing? (Probe further on income generated from those ads and whether there are certain terms they have to follow with regards to language or content).

23. And how do you, personally, feel about posting ads or sponsoring your blog? (Probe further on why he/she feels that way based on analysis of their blogs and the lack or existence of ads).

24. How do you feel about bloggers syndicating their content to mainstream media or joining mainstream media as freelance or full-time journalists?

25. Have you, personally, ever been approached by mainstream media for a job or even a freelance gig? (Probe with specific examples as well as pressures or censorship they encountered if they have).

26. We have been seeing many activists quitting their jobs after January 25th to dedicate themselves to the causes of the revolution. Many of those activists are prominent bloggers as well. How sustainable do you think this is across the board on the longer run? (Further probe on his

27. How would you say blogging stands in terms of your priorities; is it a hobby, an activity, a duty, a job, a passion? How do you place it in terms of how important it is compared to other occupations in your life, like you job, for instance?

28. On the longer-run, how sustainable do you think the hours you put into social media and blogging are?

29. We see many professional bloggers in Europe and the US who were successful in maintaining their passion and yes generate revenue to make it sustainable. Do you think we have that model here?

30. What are the most difficulties you would say you are facing as a blogger?

31. How do you feel about paid TV appearances?

32. Do you feel all bloggers' cases get as much support and pressure, be they popular and known ones or not?

33. Would you mind suggesting financially-sustainable bloggers and non-prominent bloggers to interview.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MEDIA PEOPLE

General questions:

- Before January 25th, how often did you cover the news of bloggers or quoting them?

- Before January 25th, did you ever check social media for story ideas or used it for reporting?

- How would you say the way you dealt with bloggers and social media changed after January 25th?

- Did you start using social media for reporting or otherwise?

- And how would you say the frequency and nature of your coverage of blogs changed?

- How did you use social media in reporting and writing articles after January 25th?

- When it happened, why did you quote or cover bloggers, meaning did you use them to ask them their opinions about certain issues, to cover their news or otherwise?

- On what basis did you decide which sections bloggers' news or interviews went in (front page, politics, news, crime section)? **(FOR PRINT)**

- On what basis did you decide whether the headline included the bloggers' name or identity? **(FOR PRINT)**

- On what basis did you decide whether to include his photo? **(FOR PRINT)**

- On what basis did you decide whether to interview the blogger over the phone or host him in the studio? **(BROADCAST)**

- Why did you introduce some bloggers as bloggers at times and at others as activists or party members or other ids? What defines how they are identified and which identity prevails?

- In some incidents you called bloggers "hadretak" and generally adopted a familiar tone with them while other incidents you were more formal. Why do you think that is? And how does that compare to your other guests? **(BROADCAST)**

- Do you feel a blogger's opinion represents only his own or do you interview bloggers to get a feel of the revolutionary youth's opinion or the street's opinion? Is that the same for all kinds of bloggers or only the more prominent ones?

Questions for *Al-Masry Al-Youm*:

- Before January 25th, how often did you cover the news of bloggers or quoting them?

- Before January 25th, did you ever check social media for story ideas or used it for reporting?

- How would you say the way you dealt with bloggers and social media changed after January 25th?

- Did you start using social media for reporting or otherwise?

- And how would you say the frequency and nature of your coverage of blogs changed?

- How did you use social media in reporting and writing articles after January 25th?

- When it happened, why did you quote or cover bloggers, meaning did you use them to ask them their opinions about certain issues, to cover

their news or otherwise?

- On what basis did you decide which sections bloggers' news or interviews went in (front page, politics, news, crime section)?

- On what basis did you decide whether the headline included the bloggers' name or identity?

- On what basis did you decide whether to include his photo?

- Why did you introduce some bloggers as bloggers at times and at others as activists or party members or other ids? What defines how they are identified and which identity prevails?

- Do you feel a blogger's opinion represents only his own or do you interview bloggers to get a feel of the revolutionary youth's opinion or the street's opinion? Is that the same for all kinds of bloggers or only the more prominent ones?

- In coverage of Mina Daniel, *Al Masry Al Youm* used the most emotional tone, why do you that is so?

Comparng Al Masry Al Youm 2010 to 2011

Year	Full Coverage	Mentions	General Mentions	Quoted	Total Number of Mentions	Total Words	Headlines Total	Headlines with Names	Headlines with General Reference	Front Page	Pictured
Al Masry Al Youm 2010	0	0	0	1	1	119	0	0	0	0	0
Al Masry Al Youm 2011	9	17	9	9	44	5,520	13	6	7	2	5
Percentage Change					4300%	4358.60%					

Comparing newspapers in 2011

Newspaper	Full Coverage	Mentions	General Mentions	Quoted	Total Number of Mentions	Total Words	Headlines Total	Headlines with Names	Headlines with General Reference	Front Page	Pictured
Al Ahram	5	3	0	4	12	1,838	9	8	1	0	3
Al Masry Al Youm	9	17	9	9	44	5,520	13	6	7	2	5
The Daily News Egypt	9	35	6	12	62	4,791	9	1	8	12	9
Total Print	23	55	15	25	118	12,149	31	14	17	14	17

The space results were skewed, however, due to six articles covering social media reactions to current issues vaguely calling all social media users online

activists. Users quoted were often not bloggers at all, but rather casual social media users.

Bloggers framed as revolutionary youth representatives and political analysts in the print issues studied were prominent bloggers like Alaa Abdel Fattah, Esraa Abel Fattah and Maher. Non-star bloggers like Tarek El Khouly were framed as eyewitnesses. Out of the 27 martyrs of the Maspero events, Mina Daniel was the one often mentioned.

Maikel Nabil was framed as a defendant in two articles, a blogger in three, a criminal in two and a victim in two.

Questions for the *Daily News Egypt*:

- Before January 25th, how often did you cover the news of bloggers or quoting them?

- Before January 25th, did you ever check social media for story ideas or used it for reporting?

- How would you say the way you dealt with bloggers and social media changed after January 25th?

- Did you start using social media for reporting or otherwise?

- And how would you say the frequency and nature of your coverage of blogs changed?

- How did you use social media in reporting and writing articles after January 25th?

- When it happened, why did you quote or cover bloggers, meaning did you use them to ask them their opinions about certain issues, to cover their news or otherwise?

- On what basis did you decide which sections bloggers' news or

interviews went in (front page, politics, news, crime section)?

- On what basis did you decide whether the headline included the bloggers' name or identity?

- On what basis did you decide whether to include his photo?

- Why did you introduce some bloggers as bloggers at times and at others as activists or party members or other ids? What defines how they are identified and which identity prevails?

- Do you feel a blogger's opinion represents only his own or do you interview bloggers to get a feel of the revolutionary youth's opinion or the street's opinion? Is that the same for all kinds of bloggers or only the more prominent ones?

- Did you use Arabic-language and English-language bloggers equally? Does your staff all speak and read Arabic?

Comparing the Daily News Egypt 2010 to 2011

Year	Full Coverage	Mentions	General Mentions	Quoted	Total Number of Mentions	Total Words	Headlines Total	Headlines with Names	Headlines with General Reference	Front Page	Pictured
DNE 2010	2	1	3	2	8	832	3	0	3	6	0
DNE 2011	9	35	6	12	62	4,791	9	1	8	12	9
Percentage Change					675%	475.80%					

Comparing newspapers in 2011

Newspaper	Full Coverage	Mentions	General Mentions	Quoted	Total Number of Mentions	Total Words	Headlines Total	Headlines with Names	Headlines with General Reference	Front Page	Pictured
Al Ahram	5	3	0	4	12	1,838	9	8	1	0	3
Al Masry Al Youm	9	17	9	9	44	5,520	13	6	7	2	5
The Daily News Egypt	9	35	6	12	62	4,791	9	1	8	12	9
Total Print	23	55	15	25	118	12,149	31	14	17	14	17

DNE was also the only newspaper to cover and quote less prominent bloggers like Lilian Wagdy and Evronia Azer. *DNE* also quoted and covered bridge bloggers like Sandmonkey and Gigi Ibrahim who blogged mainly in English while other newspapers opted for star bloggers who blogged in Arabic.

Daily News Egypt 2010 Totals	Daily News Egypt 2011 Totals
Identification Frame:	**Identification Frame:**
Activist: 4	Activist: 19
Blogger: 2	Blogger: 13
Blogger + Activist: 0	Blogger + Activist: 2
Defendant: 0	Defendant: 0
Party Member: 0	Party Member: 0
Martyr: 0	Martyr: 0
Representation Frame:	**Representation Frame:**
Personal: 0	Personal: 0
Revolutionary Youth: 0	Revolutionary Youth: 15
Street: 0	Street: 0
Analytical Frame:	**Analytical Frame:**
Political Analyst: 1	Political Analyst: 9
Eyewitness: 1	Eyewitness: 1
Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant:	**Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant:**
Defendant: 0	Defendant: 1
Victim: 4	Victim: 12
Hero: 1	Hero: 11
Criminal: 0	Criminal: 0

Obvious sympathy towards bloggers and focus on human rights issues.

Only *DNE* covered Dalia Ziada and Dahshan winning the Anna Lindh Journalist award. Ziada worked at *Al-Ahram* for two years and tweets and blogs in Arabic.

DNE was the only newspaper to use social media for reporting in 2010 and use prominent bloggers as eyewitnesses before the trend caught on in 2011.

Questions for *Ten PM*:

- Before January 25th, how often did you cover the news of bloggers or quoting them?

- Before January 25th, did you ever check social media for story ideas or used it for reporting?

- How would you say the way you dealt with bloggers and social media changed after January 25th?

- Did you start using social media for reporting or otherwise?

- And how would you say the frequency and nature of your coverage of blogs changed?

- How did you use social media in reporting and writing articles after

January 25th?

- When it happened, why did you quote or cover bloggers, meaning did you use them to ask them their opinions about certain issues, to cover their news or otherwise?

- On what basis did you decide whether to interview the blogger over the phone or host him in the studio?

- Why did you introduce some bloggers as bloggers at times and at others as activists or party members or other ids? What defines how they are identified and which identity prevails?

- In some incidents you called bloggers "hadretak" and generally adopted a familiar tone with them while other incidents you were more formal. Why do you think that is? And how does that compare to your other guests?

- Do you feel a blogger's opinion represents only his own or do you interview bloggers to get a feel of the revolutionary youth's opinion or the street's opinion? Is that the same for all kinds of bloggers or only the more prominent ones?

Comparing Ten PM 2010 to 2011

Year	Coverage	Caption	Mentions	Interview In Person	Phone Interview	Total Number of Mentions	Total Minutes	Number of times segment titled after blogger
Ten PM 2010	0	0	1	1	0	2	18:10	0
Ten PM 2011	2	0	6	3	2	13	80 mns 39 seconds	1
Percentage Change			500%	200%		550%	344.40%	0%

Comparing TV Shows in 2011

Show	Coverage	Caption	Mentions	Interview In Person	Phone Interview	Total Number of Mentions	Total Minutes	Number of times segment titled after blogger
Baladna Bel Masry	16	3	15	7	6	47	172 mns 52 seconds	7
Ten PM	2	0	6	3	2	13	80 mns 39 seconds	1.00
Total Broadcast	18	3	21	10	8	60	253 mns 31 seconds	8

Ten PM also had a weekly segment dedicated to the Internet in 2010. But the two mentions of bloggers were inside a documentary about neighborhood channels.

Ten PM covered issues like the death of Mina Daniel and Abdel Fattah and Michael Adel's arrest, although Abdel Fattah's arrest didn't take up nearly as much space as it did with *Baladna Bel Masry*. While *Baladna Bel Masry* had 16 mentions of Abdel Fattah, *Ten PM* only had 3 in a total of 1:50 minutes, compared to 66:16 in *Baladna Bel Ma*sry. They mentioned Malek Mostafa's injury only 2 times (compared to 6 in *Baladna Bel Masry*) but didn't interview him.

The show included bloggers at more length but less frequently than *Baladna bel Masry* whereas they rarely did phone interviews with bloggers.

Ten PM were less concerned with human rights of bloggers and more with political analysis and current events.

Ten PM 2011 Totals:
Identification Frame: Activist: 4 Blogger: 0 Blogger + Activist: 0 Defendant: 1 Party Member: 3 Martyr: 1
Familiarity Frame: Familiar: 9 Professional: 2
Representation Frame: Personal: 1 Revolutionary Youth: 3
Street: 0 **Analytical Frame:** Political Analyst: 3 Eyewitness: 1
Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant: Defendant: 2 Victim: 3 Hero: 3

While Abdel Fattah was framed once as a defendant and once as a victim, Michael Adel was framed as a defendant in the same segment.

Ya 3am with Kassas and a motherly and joking tone with Naggar.

She frames Kassas severely as youth rep.

Questions for *Baladna Bel Masry*:

- Before January 25th, how often did you cover the news of bloggers or quoting them?

- Before January 25th, did you ever check social media for story ideas or used it for reporting?

- How would you say the way you dealt with bloggers and social media changed after January 25th?

- Did you start using social media for reporting or otherwise?

- And how would you say the frequency and nature of your coverage of blogs changed?

- How did you use social media in reporting and writing articles after January 25th?

- When it happened, why did you quote or cover bloggers, meaning did you use them to ask them their opinions about certain issues, to cover their news or otherwise?

- On what basis did you decide whether to interview the blogger over the phone or host him in the studio?

- Why did you introduce some bloggers as bloggers at times and at others as activists or party members or other ids? What defines how they are identified and which identity prevails?

- In some incidents you called bloggers "hadretak" and generally adopted a familiar tone with them while other incidents you were more formal. Why do you think that is? And how does that compare to your other guests?

- Do you feel a blogger's opinion represents only his own or do you interview bloggers to get a feel of the revolutionary youth's opinion or the street's opinion? Is that the same for all kinds of bloggers or only the more prominent ones?

Comparing Baladna Bel Masry 2010 to 2011

Year	Coverage	Caption	Mentions	Interview In Person	Phone Interview	Total Number of Mentions	Total Minutes	Number of times segment titled after blogger
Baladna Bel Masry2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Baladna Bel Masry 2011	16	3	15	7	6	47	172 mns 52 seconds	7
Percentage Change								

Comparing TV Shows in 2011

Show	Coverage	Caption	Mentions	Interview In Person	Phone Interview	Total Number of Mentions	Total Minutes	Number of times segment titled after blogger
Baladna Bel Masry	16	3	15	7	6	47	172 mns 52 seconds	7
Ten PM	2	0	6	3	2	13	80 mns 39 seconds	1.00
Total Broadcast	18	3	21	10	8	60	253 mns 31 seconds	8

Baladna covered news of Alaa Abdel Fattah intensively (16 times in November 2011 in a total of 66:16 minutes). Malek Mostafa was also covered intensively (mentioned 6 times and interviewed over the telephone in a total of 10:29 minutes) and Maikel Nabil's case remained a prominent part of the media of bloggers in November 2011, although not as extensive as in October. Mina Daniel was also mentioned several times in the show.

The show hosted bloggers more frequently than *Ten PM* but gave each less time than *Ten PM* and they also did much more phone interviews with them. They were also more dedicated to human rights issues of bloggers.

Baladna 2011 Totals:

Identification Frame:
Activist:9
Blogger: 0
Blogger + Activist: 8
Defendant: 0
Party Member: 2
Martyr: 1

Familiarity Frame:
Familiar: 17
Professional: 3

Representation Frame:
Personal: 3
Revolutionary Youth: 4
Street: 1

Analytical Frame:
Political Analyst: 5
Eyewitness: 7

Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant:
Defendant: 0
Victim: 9
Hero: 10

Total Broadcast + Print 2010 Ranked by Order	Total Broadcast + Print 2011 Ranked by Order
Identification Frame Ranked by Order:	**Identification Ranked by Order**
Activist: 5 Blogger: 2 Blogger + Activist: 0 Defendant: 0 Party Member: 0 Martyr: 0	Activist: 53 Blogger: 23 Blogger + Activist: 12 Defendant: 7 Martyr: 7 Party Member: 5
Representation Frame Ranked by Order:	**Representation Ranked by Order**
Personal: 0 Revolutionary Youth: 0 Street: 0	Revolutionary Youth: 31 Personal: 4 Street: 1
Analytical Frame Ranked by Order:	**Analytical Ranked by Order**
Political Analyst: 1 Eyewitness: 1	Political Analyst: 27 Eyewitness: 11
Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant Ranked by Order:	**Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant Ranked by Order:**
Victim: 4 Hero: 1 Criminal: 0 Defendant: 0	Hero: 44 Victim: 34 Defendant: 3 Criminal: 9
Familiarity Ranked by Order	**Familiarity Ranked by Order**
Familiar: 1 Professional: 0	Familiar: 26 Professional: 7

Magued never referred to Alaa Abdel Fattah, Nabil or Bahaa Saber as defendant, even when reading out their charges, but always as bloggers or activists.

Wael Khalil was framed once to present a personal opinion and another revolutionary youth's opinion. Abdel Rahman Fares was framed to represent the voice of the street. Bassem Fathy, Mohamed Marei and Lobna Darwish are all lesser-known bloggers, and were all framed as eyewitnesses rather than political analysts.

Magued also adopted a formal tone only Malek Adly, Mostafa El Naggar and Mohamed Marei. The formal tone adopted with blogger and then-parliamentary member El Naggar came in a segment about new members' opinions of the new cabinet of ministers. He is hosted alongside other parliamentary members. He is identified as a member of the parliament and member of Al Adl Party. She addresses him as Dr. Mostafa and only asks him about his own, personal opinion. He is never asked about the youth, the demonstrators or similar questions often posed to activists.

Magued often introduces Alaa Abdel Fattah as the activist Alaa Abdel Fattah but doesn't mention any background on his case or arrest when discussing updates.

When blogger and activist Mona Seif was featured for an interview in a conference, producers chose to identify her as Alaa Abdel Fattah's sister.

Magued also covered Abdel Fattah's news much more intensively than any other media outlet, dedicating three segments solely to Abdel Fattah's case.

Magued tells Fares: "There is a responsibility that falls on those who made this revolution happen and your fate is that you are the youth of the revolution and it is as if you are the only party who made this revolution. […] You are now criticized of [being] dictatorial […] how will you overcome this?"

Magued calls the newborn the youngest revolutionary in Egypt and a "revolutionary by birth like his father, grandfather, mother and aunt" and comes from solid roots. She dubs Khaled and his parents "more famous than fire on a flag," and goes on to say how unfairly his father is being detained and how his family members are all freedom fighters that even his aunt, Mona Seif, was born to an imprisoned father "paying the price of his freedom and resilience." She concludes saying "Alaa made us all proud and to all those who deprived Alaa to look at his son's face when he is opening his eyes to the world and deprived Khaled to open his eyes and see his father: Let the flowers flourish."

A segment titled "The Rights of those Like Alaa Abdel Fattah to Vote" is dedicated to using Abdel Fattah as a case study of the rights of those detained without verdict in voting. 12,000 being military tried.

More than 40 were arrested during the Maspero events, only Alaa Abdel Fattah's arrest took the spotlight. In the same events 27 died, but only Mina Daniel's death was publicized. In Maspero, 800 were injured and 10 were killed, only Malek Mostafa, Ahmed Harara and an *Al-Masry Al-Youm* photographer were intensively covered and mentioned by name.

Questions for *Al-Ahram*:

- Before January 25th, how often did you cover the news of bloggers or quoting them?

- Before January 25th, did you ever check social media for story ideas or used it for reporting?

- How would you say the way you dealt with bloggers and social media changed after January 25th?

- Did you start using social media for reporting or otherwise?

- And how would you say the frequency and nature of your coverage of blogs changed?

- How did you use social media in reporting and writing articles after January 25th?

- When it happened, why did you quote or cover bloggers, meaning did you use them to ask them their opinions about certain issues, to cover their news or otherwise?

- On what basis did you decide which sections bloggers' news or interviews went in (front page, politics, news, crime section)?

- On what basis did you decide whether the headline included the bloggers' name or identity?

- On what basis did you decide whether to include his photo?

- Why did you introduce some bloggers as bloggers at times and at others as activists or party members or other ids? What defines how they are identified and which identity prevails?

- Do you feel a blogger's opinion represents only his own or do you interview bloggers to get a feel of the revolutionary youth's opinion or the street's opinion? Is that the same for all kinds of bloggers or only the more prominent ones?

Comparing Al Ahram 2010 to 2011

Year	Full Coverage	Mentions	General Mentions	Quoted	Total Number of Mentions	Total Words	Headlines Total	Headlines with Names	Headlines with General Reference	Front Page	Pictured
Al Ahram 2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Al Ahram 2011	5	3	0	4	12	1,838	9	8	1	0	3

El Sayed351

Newspaper	Full Coverage	Mentions	General Mentions	Quoted	Total Number of Mentions	Total Words	Headlines Total	Headlines with Names	Headlines with General Reference	Front Page	Pictured
Al Ahram	5	3	0	4	12	1,838	9	8	1	0	3
Al Masry Al Youm	9	17	9	9	44	5,520	13	6	7	2	5
The Daily News Egypt	9	35	6	12	62	4,791	9	1	8	12	9
Total Print	23	55	15	25	118	12,149	31	14	17	14	17

Ahram Online covered issues, like Mina Daniel's death, that weren't in the print edition of the same day. A news article on Maikel Nabil's referral to the mental health hospital was covered in the first edition of *Al-Ahram* but was replaced with an article about the Muslim Brotherhood in the second edition of the newspaper.

Al Ahram 2011 Totals
Identification Frame: Activist: 6 Blogger: 5 Blogger + Activist: 0 Defendant: 4 Party Member: 0 Martyr: 1
Representation Frame: Personal: 0 Revolutionary Youth: 4 Street: 0
Analytical Frame: Political Analyst: 4 Eyewitness: 0
Hero/Victim/Criminal/Defendant: Defendant: 0 Victim: 1 Hero: 3 Criminal: 6

Those framed as criminals were Maikel Nabil (framed 4 times as a criminal), Ayman Mansour and Asmsaa Mahfouz. While Nabil and Mansour are of much lesser prominence than other bloggers, Mahfouz, a star blogger,

was framed only once as a criminal (revolutionary and role model disappointingly gone astray) and another as a hero in the 3 times she was mentioned that month.

Maikel Nabil is covered twice in the crimes section

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS OF MARKETEERS

1. The internet penetration in Egypt has exponentially increased after January 25th, but through your work, have you noticed a correlating change in the online advertising market?

2. Have you seen advertisers dedicating bigger percentages of their marketing budgets towards online marketing?

3. If advertisers are showing a growing interest in online advertising, what platforms are they looking at? In other words, are they looking at newspapers portals, lifestyle magazines' websites, social media or other form of portals and would you kindly provide a few examples of popular portals for online ads?

4. Have you noticed any interest from advertisers in bloggers, be it political bloggers, fashion bloggers or otherwise? Interest here can be interest in collaborating on certain campaigns, on placing ads on their blogs or sponsoring them or even in inviting them to cover events or product launches.

5. How would you like to be cited in the research? (Full name and title)

APPENDIX D: LIST OF PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

ABDEL FATTAH, E. June 2014. Prestige Restaurant, Cairo.

ABO-ELGHEIT, M. 2014. July 2014. Beanos Coffeeshop, Cairo.

BADAWY, A. July 2014. The Egyptian Democratic Academy, Cairo.

EFFAT, S. December 2014. Fortune Promo7 Office, Cairo.

EL MALKY, R. August 2014. Cilantro Coffeeshop, Cairo.

EL MEHAIRY, M. December 2014. Connect Ads Office, Cairo.

El NAGGAR, M. July 2014. El Naggar's Dental Clinic, Cairo.

EL SHERBINY, N. December 2014. L'Oreal Egypt Office, Cairo.

El ZELAKY, E. August 2014. *Al-Masry Al-Youm* Office, Cairo.

EZZAT, A. August 2014. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights Office, Cairo.

FATHY, B. June 2014. Beano's Coffeeshop, Cairo.

HISHAM, A. August 2014. Cilantro Coffeeshop, Cairo.

MAGUED, R. August 2014. ONA Academy, Cairo.

MAHFOUZ, A. July 2014. Mahfouz's Home, Cairo.

NAGATI, L. July 2014. Nagati's Office, Cairo.

ROSTOM, S. August 2014. *Dream TV*'s Studios, Cairo.

SABER, M. July 2014. Diwan Bookstore, Cairo.

SANDMONKEY. July 2014. Sandmonkey's Office, Cairo.

SHERIEF, M. August 2014. L'Aroma Coffeeshop, Cairo.

YOUNES, H. August 2014. *Al-Ahram*'s Office, Cairo.

APPENDIX E: LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANHRI: Arabic Network for Human Rights Information

CAPMAS: The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics

DNE: *Daily News Egypt* newspaper

EIPR: Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights

ERTU: Egyptian Radio and Television Union

NDP: National Democratic Party

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SCAF: Supreme Council of Armed Forces