

Sitting in the shadows of subsidization in Egypt: revisiting the notion of street politics.

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Abstract

This study investigates the opinion of the Egyptian people regarding the issue of the social contract and their perception of the current Egyptian media coverage as well as attempts to find out how far media agenda corresponds to public agenda. To shed light on the complicated situation in Egypt, the study reviews the sociopolitical and economic settings as well as the legal framework not only of the laws of the media but also of the context of news gathering and framing that made the media in Egypt throughout the years "living in lies."

Two main research methods were used, namely 200 personal face-to-face intensive interviews, sponsored by the British Council in Cairo, and a national representative survey of 1221 respondents, sponsored by the Information and Decision Support Centre (IDSC). The former took place during the period from August 11 to September 22, 2005 while the latter was conducted during the period between February 4, and February 8, 2006.

Among the major findings of the study are the existence of a huge discrepancy between public and media agendas; diversity in media content is a key factor in appealing to the public regardless of their age, gender, profession, etc.; highlighting the reasons for change and engaging the public in decision making and finding solutions are among the most important media strategies that can help solve the current critical situation. The study gives some recommendations as to the means of realizing a sustainable social change that would suit and serve the public and not the elite or the military and improving media content to help solve the current problems and appeal to the publics.

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