Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Noha El Bakly
Narrator: Injy Galal
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Persons present: Noha El Bakly - I

Injy Galal - S

El Bakly: Hello Dr. Injy Galal, as I know you are thirty five and a professor in the Mass communication department, and you stay in Dokki.

Galal: Ahaa

El Bakly: In my topic today, I’ll be interviewing you about how do media’s proposals of public issues influence people’s opinions. As we all know, there is actually a huge relationship between mass media and its contribution to the revolution; especially online communication and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace. What do you think was the most important medium during and after the revolution? And why?

Galal: It is mostly active on Facebook and Twitter as well, okay before the revolution it was facebook and twitter; after the revolution, it was particularly twitter and facebook as well but I mean they were both before and after but I think before it was more facebook and then after it became more of twitter.

El Bakly: Do you think that television was that effective?

Galal: Yes, definitely during and after but not in the build-up at all. But during, it was somewhat effective because we received conflicting messages and after, for sure.

El Bakly: Do TV programs and talk shows represent the current events in a realistic way?

Galal: Not all of them, unfortunately not. Not all of them.

El Bakly: Are they that credible for people to trust?

Galal: Again not all of them are credible. Some are and some aren’t and unfortunately a lot of them are sensational. Most actually have a very sensational element. So I am not sure if, you know their credibility is really undermined.

El Bakly: Does that apply in both national and satellite channels?

Galal: National TV, I don’t believe in it anymore. It has totally lost credibility. During the revolution, it has totally lost its credibility. So now when I am speaking about television, I am talking about satellite channels. Many of which are national channels but they are not owned by the government.
El Bakly: What about the emergence of new satellite channels and TV programs such as CBC, Al Nahar, Al Tahrir?

Galal: Okay, of course this is good because it adds more value; you know it adds more diversity and more value to the media scene, in general. So it is good but unfortunately not all of them are of good quality and some of them have even their own agendas so some of them are good and are an additional asset to the media environment in Egypt while some are not.

El Bakly: How they are not?

Galal: Because as I said, some of them have their own agendas.

El Bakly: They are somehow, controlled by their owners?

Galal: Yes exactly, because there is no such thing as a hundred percent free mass media, never a hundred percent free. So again you have, you know it very complex patterns of ownership, patterns of control, everything. It all affects how the media comes out at the end.

El Bakly: They are trying to control people’s minds?

Galal: You can never control people’s minds anymore.

El Bakly: They are not affected..?

Galal: But of course yes, you can dictate the agenda, you can frame issues in a certain way but you cannot control people’s minds. And you can also create propaganda and create advocacy for certain issues and I think some of them, some of these channels that’s why they were created to create advocacy in a certain direction or another.

El Bakly: How about TV hosts?

Galal: What about them?

El Bakly: They do influence people?

Galal: Definitely, definitely. They have become stars. Like for instance, you watch Mona El Shazly, you watch Mahmoud Saad, they are the stars not the show.

El Bakly: Is it okay for journalists and other politicians to interfere in presenting such shows?

Galal: Sorry, sorry, what is the question?
El Bakly: Is it okay for journalists and other politicians to interfere in presenting such talk shows in the media?

Galal: I am sorry, I don’t follow the question. Is it okay for whom?

El Bakly: Politicians and journalists.

Galal: What do you mean to interfere?

El Bakly: Their main job is working as journalists and reporters not as TV hosts and presenting programs.

Galal: Most TV hosts have sprung off from journalism, maybe not most but many. For instance, Mona El Shazly, she hasn’t sprung off from journalism; she has always been a professional presenter. Moataaz, I think Moataaz was also a presenter. For example, Mahmoud Saad, he was a journalist, Hussein Abdel Ghany, a journalist. Okay, that’s how they started off.

El Bakly: Magdy El Gallad

Galal: Magdy El Gallad, etc. Lamis, a journalist. So it has always, this is an intermedia thing, when people move from a journalist to… that’s okay. What is not okay, you know I was just discussing this today with my class, civic journalism and professionalization and anti-media professionalization. Some people see that the media should be limited to media professionals only while others are saying it is better to have people from all walks of life. I agree and disagree. Yes, for instance, it is nice to have people from, for instance, if you have a referee present a talk show about sports, that’s good but do not ask me to watch a referee presenting a talk show about politics, simply because he became famous and he became the star, that does not entitle him to present such talk shows. He doesn’t, he is not equipped. Okay, but for instance, when someone starts his career off as a journalist and he moves to present in shows, that’s okay, because it is a relevant field.

El Bakly: He is knowledgeable and specified in such field.

Galal: Yeah, yeah, I guess. And some people should not. As a matter of fact, it is not only, it’s not just a matter of studying and being knowledgeable. It is an art, I think, now, to present a talk show with people screaming and shooting their heads off at each other, you as a viewer or as an audience member, you stop, you don’t benefit, you can’t even watch anymore. It takes a certain talent for them to mediate, for the presenter to mediate the session or to mediate the episode or the program if you like.

El Bakly: In general, do you think the media was influenced positively by the revolution or negatively?
Galal: Both, both. I think that the media, I always say that the media is a reflection of the society, right now, we are a society in transition. Okay, we are going through a very very very important transition and period in Egypt and the media is no different. The media is part of the society as a whole so the media too is going through transition. It is like a labor, a very difficult labor but it is for the best, it’s for everyone’s best.

El Bakly: Okay, thank you so much.

Galal: You are welcome.