Comparative Media Policies Between Israel, and the Arab Regions of Egypt, Turkey and Qatar

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Abstract
Every country has its own policies guarding the operation of its mass media. No media operates in a vacuum. Being the fourth estate of the realm, the mass media deserves to be given a free hand to enable it function effectively as the watchdog of the society. During the days of yellow journalism, so many unethical practices were adopted by media professionals in their bid to edge out their competitors. This has called for the need to closely monitor the media to ensure that they do not mislead the general public while trying to make profit. In trying to monitor the excesses of the media, it is also out of place to place restrictions that will prevent them from functioning effectively. The Arab regions and Israel continue to attract a lot of media attention. This study is a comparative study of the media policies in Israel, Egypt, Turkey and Qatar. The study explores the history of the political terrain of the countries under study and ties these histories to the nature of operations of the media in these countries. The Authoritarian Theory and the Libertarian Theory are the supporting theories for the study. The study relies on researches conducted in the past on press freedom, new media and ownership and control by scholars and media organisations to draw out its comparison.
Keywords: Comparative Media Policies, Israel, Arab Regions

1. Introduction

Media policies in countries around the world differ. An American president once said that the American public gets the type of media it deserves. But how fair have the governments of these countries been on the media found in their domains? The Middle East is one area that has been in the news for different reasons. If it is not the issue of Islam and "Islamaphorbia", it is the conflict between democracy and monarchy. Of recent, the issues of terrorism and the Arab Spring have brought the region in the focus of global media. As a region that had complained of either being negatively or under-reported, the presence of *Al-Jazeera* network has helped in trying to reshape global views about the Middle East, its people and their ways of life. According to Saleh (2007) "till recently, mainstream media in most of the Arab countries lacked transparency and plurality. The news was disseminated from the perspective that governments wanted their publics to see. A lot of issues were never unveiled until recently when the level of freedom significantly increased." This implies that national media caged the public, keeping the complete picture related to national affairs away from them. In the same vein, in the international arena, the West has cocooned their publics by painting in their minds an unfair picture of the Arabs by projecting the exceptional cases of extremism as the norm. On account of this, Arabs and Muslims have been facing a lot of attacks, discrimination, detention, and harassment. Taylor (2003) observed that "Mass communication and mass media are comparatively recent phenomena but provide the conditions in which politicians, statesmen and soldiers have been increasingly forced to operate." Media texts are constructed in the multi-layered organizational, cultural, economic, and political frameworks. Although mass communication and the mass media are comparatively recent phenomena, barely a century old, we have scarcely begun to appreciate their relationship to the international system, whether as contributors to, or merely conveying a sense of, its order and disorder (Taylor,2003). Peruvian communication theorist Rosa Maria Alfaro (2006) asserts that:

> Today the media constitute a crucial source of civic education and legitimization of democratic power. Political elites legitimize themselves or join dissident discourses through their interactions with newspapers, magazines, radio and television. Notions of political authority, political values and general understanding of a nation's political institutions are consolidated through the daily programmes of the mass media and particularly via news. The national and international agenda emerge from daily mass media processes of production and consumption. Both the concept and feeling of nation and of the world are also articulated in the production and consumption of media.

It is in this context that Blankson and Murphy (2007) posited that "questions of media access, diversity, ownership and content regulation define the type and quality of public sphere at work within a nation or region, because the media have become the key scarce resource in the struggle over 'publicness' in contemporary political systems". According to Eickelman and Anderson (2003), "Turkey is one of the most media-saturated Muslim countries in the world." Because of its stand on secularism, issues of ethnicity are the common things in the media, with minority groups like the Kurds and the Alevis trying to gain media attention. Recent developments in Turkey however, have seen a twist in ideology of government towards the media with

government trying hard to suppress the voice of the mass media. How free then is the media in the Middle East and Turkey?

THE MEDIA IN THE ARAB REGION AND TURKEY
Arab region as captured in this study refers to the countries of North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia), the Arab Levantine states (Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine), the Arabian Peninsula countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen), and Iraq. Long-time observers of the Middle East and its media have never been more optimistic. Such observers were of the strong opinion that change is something that will never come to the media in this region. Recent happenings around this region will however suggest that change has indeed come to the media industry in the Middle East. Once dominated by protocol news, low production values, stale and sterile reporting of insignificant events, official secrecy and censorship, and tight-fisted government control of news and information, Middle East media are moving slowly toward a form of journalism most of the West would recognize (the so-called international standard of objective journalism) as practiced mostly by the United Kingdom, the United States, and other core countries (Berenger, 2006). This is coming at a time when the region is a source of major news events on a daily basis. Iraq, Iran, Israel, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, oil, war, and tensions catch the front pages and newscasts around the globe. The regional television network, *Al-Jazeera*, is now one of the most recognized media outlets in the world. Israeli newspapers are numerous and diversified, although many of the leading dailies reflect partisan or religious interests. Censorship is largely on national security grounds. The media ownership in this region started with government owning the major media outfits in the region but gradually, with so much noise around the world on freedom of expression, the governments in the respective countries in the region gradually de-regularised the media, leading to private ownership. A common scenario however is that despite the governments' decision to soft-pedal on their authoritarian stand, matters concerning the state and religion are still censored with earring journalists receiving heavy penalties that could range from strokes of the cane to heavy prison terms and in some rare case of blasphemy, the death penalty. Turkey, which is more or less in the European Union is not totally free when it comes to the issue of censorship. According to Banks, Muller and Overstreet (2008), Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which punishes those who "publicly denigrate Turkishness or the Republic of Turkey," has been repeatedly invoked to allow persecution of journalists and intellectuals who express opinions contrary to official Turkish views on a number of political issues.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK
The Authoritarian Theory of the Press and the Libertarian Theory of the press are the supporting theories for this study.

AUTHORITARIAN THEORY OF THE PRESS
According to Siebert as quoted in McQuail (2005), the authoritarian theory requires direct governmental control of the mass media. This system is especially easy to recognize in pre-democratic societies, where the government consists of a very limited and small ruling-class. The media in authoritarian system are not allowed to print or broadcast anything which could undermine the established authority, and any offense to the existing political values is avoided. The authoritarian government may go to the step of punishing anyone who questions the states ideology.

The fundamental assumption of the authoritarian system is that the government is infallible. Media professionals are therefore not allowed to have any independence within the media organization. Also, foreign media are subordinate to the established authority, in that all imported media products are controlled by the state. The assumptions of the theory are as follows:
-The press should do nothing which could undermine established authority but rather support and advance the policies of the government in power and to serve the state.
-The press should ultimately be subordinate to established authority.
-The press should avoid offence to majority, or dominant, moral and political values.
-Censorship can be justified to enforce these principles.
-Attacks on authority, deviations from official policy or offences against moral codes should be criminal offences

THE LIBERTARIAN PRESS THEORY
The libertarian theory, also known as the free press theory, was adopted by England after 1688 and in the U.S.A, the libertarian view rests on the idea that the individual should be free to publish whatever he or she likes (Mcquail, 2005). In the libertarian system, attacks on the government's policies are fully accepted and even encouraged. Moreover, there should be no restrictions on import or export of media messages across national frontiers. Moreover, journalists and media professionals ought to have full autonomy within the media

organization. There is no explicit connection between the government and the media in the libertarian theory. A critical review and analysis of the libertarian theory shows that libertarianism chiefly seeks to discover truth and check on government as well as maximize individual human freedom. The press, in this theory, offers a marketplace of ideas, pursuing profits in a natural process believed to support democracy.

MEDIA POLICIES IN THE ARAB REGION AND TURKEY

In this study, the countries under consideration are: Egypt, Qatar, Israel and Turkey. Media as used in this study will consist of newspapers, magazines, television, radio, film and the social media. Other issues to be considered in line with media policies, include: ownership and control, press freedom, and the new media.

TURKEY: Modern Turkey rose from the wreckage of the Ottoman Empire, which expired almost mercifully as a result of World War I after centuries of decline. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the father of modern Turkey, manoeuvred his fellow countrymen into embracing a secularist Turkey, which looked to Europe for inspiration in political structure and socioeconomic development, bypassing traditional ties to the Middle East and the Islamic world. Ataturk also established a tradition of civilian government that several times was honoured in the breach by the assumption of power by the military in the name of preserving the democratic process. Turkey has long considered itself European and aspires to membership in the European Union (EU). In furtherance of its application, Turkey points to its Western-style democracy, its long and full membership in NATO, and the hundreds of thousands of Turks living in Western European countries, particularly in Germany. The EU formally recognized its candidacy for membership in 1999 but placed it in a class separate from other candidates because it had not met substantive requirements for membership. Among the outstanding issues were questions concerning the existence of stable institutions guaranteeing democracy and the rule of law, the functioning of a market economy ready to face increased competition, and adherence to the aims of political, economic, and monetary union.

EGYPT: Egypt, although geographically part of Africa, lies at the centre of the Middle East and Arab worlds. Although they participate in Middle Eastern politics and affairs, they exhibit a distinctive regional and African identity. Situated in the northeast corner of Africa at its juncture with Asia, Egypt occupies a quadrangle of desert which is habitable thanks to the waters of the Nile, which bisects the country from south to north. Although the greater part of the national territory has traditionally been regarded as wasteland, Egypt is the most populous country in the Arab world. Egypt has long been considered the most important Arab state in terms of history, politics, demography, and culture. The selection of Cairo for the headquarters of the League of Arab States at its founding in 1945 symbolizes Egypt's centrality in the Arab world. From the stand of Nasir-al-Gamal on Israel in 1958 to its role in the Arab- Israeli war of 1967, Egypt has been in the global news circles. The coming of Anwar el Sadat to power in 1970, his severing of ties with the then Union of Soviet Socialists Republics, his assassination by militants and the ascension of Hosni Mubarak to power in 1981 all attracted international attention. In the area of the social media, though the Arab Spring was not triggered by an Egyptian, the role of the social media in terms of mobilization of the citizens to organise a peaceful protest was popular with the occupation of the Tahrir Square by Egyptians looking for change. The success of this mobilization created ripples which led to the ouster of Hosni Mubarak and the brutal murder of the former Libyan president, Muammar Gaddafi.

QATAR: A flat, barren, peninsular projection into the Persian Gulf from the Saudi Arabian mainland, Qatar consists largely of sand and rock. The climate is quite warm with very little rainfall, and the lack of fresh water has led to a reliance on desalination techniques. The population is almost entirely Arab, but indigenous Qataris (mainly Sunni Muslims of the conservative Wahhabi sect) comprise substantially less than a majority, as thousands have flocked from abroad to cash in on Qatar's booming economy; the non-indigenous groups include Pakistanis, Iranians, Indians, and Palestinians. The percentage of women in the work force grew substantially in the 1990s, and religious and governmental strictures upon women are less severe than in most other Gulf states. However, most women continue to wear veils in public, accept arranged marriages, and generally defer to the wishes of the male members of their families. Qatari culture as a whole continues to reflect the long history of feudal tribal autocracy and the puritanical (in the eyes of many Western observers) nature of Wahhabism, which is also practiced in Saudi Arabia, Qatar's influential neighbour. The economy remains largely dependent upon revenue from oil, which has been produced for export since 1949 and under local production and marketing control since 1977. During the oil boom years of the 1970s, Qatar became one of the world's wealthiest nations. The sheikhdom was therefore able to develop a modern infrastructure, emphasizing schools, hospitals, roads, communication facilities, as well as water and electric plants. With respect to the mass media, Sheikh Hamad relaxed censorship of the press following his assumption of power in 1995. The constitution guarantees freedom of the press, and Qatari newspapers generally operate in a less restricted fashion than their counterparts in other

Gulf states. The major broadcast stations in the country are state owned, including *Al-jazeera*. Though the west had earlier accused the television station of reporting inaccurate stories in the early 1990s, especially during the Gulf War, the station has become a major source of news with its launching of an English language channel in 2005. Countries around the world, especially in Africa, where the people believe that the western media is either under reporting the continent or negatively reporting it and its mountain of problems, found solace in the medium.

ISRAEL: The irregularly shaped area constituting the State of Israel is not completely defined by agreed boundaries, its territorial jurisdiction being determined in part by military armistice agreements entered into at the conclusion of Israel's war of independence in 1948–1949. The territory under de-facto Israeli control increased substantially as a result of military occupation of Arab territories in the Sinai Peninsula (since returned to Egypt), the Gaza Strip, the West Bank of the Jordan River (including the Old City of Jerusalem), and the Golan Heights following the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. The Gaza Strip is now under Palestinian control, as are sections of the West Bank. Those currently holding Israeli citizenship encompass a heterogeneous population that is approximately 80 percent Jewish but includes important Arab Christian, Muslim, and Druze minorities. As of 2007, women constituted 47 percent of the paid workforce, concentrated in agriculture, teaching, administration, and health care. Following independence, Israel emerged as a technologically progressive, highly literate, and largely urbanized nation in the process of rapid development based on scientific exploitation of its agricultural and industrial potentialities. Israeli newspapers are numerous and diversified, although many of the leading dailies reflect partisan or religious interests. Censorship is largely on national security grounds. The media though diversified, is owned by government cronies and hence, information from these media are largely pro-government.

1. OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

With the exception of Israel, all Middle East and North African (MENA) countries have a state monopoly over television broadcasting. State ownership of news papers (which averages 50% share of circulation) is also high in MENA countries (World Bank 2001). In Qatar, members of the ruling family or proprietors who enjoy close ties with government officials, own all print media. Invariably both private and state-owned television and radio stations have the tendency to reflect government views. The government owned the Doha-based Al-Jazeera satellite television network, carries regional, international, and theme-based programming. Although management of *Al-Jazeera* and the government maintain that the channel operates free of government influence, it is the government that funds it, and many are of the opinion that the government controls the content. The situation in Israel and Turkey in terms of media ownership and control is similar. The state owns part of the media and the remaining part are in the hands of investors who are friends of the state. This does not give a positive impression of press freedom as it suggests that most of the owners will always tilt their opinions to favour government. A good number of the ownerships are cross-and-diagonal ownership. Cross-ownership in this case refers to owning shares in more than one media company (for instance, a television broadcaster and newspaper). Diagonal ownerships mean that the company owns shares in a media company and other business interests. Tamir Agmon and Ami Zadik, director of the Knesset's Department for Budgetary Control carried out a research on economic concentration and cross media ownership in Israel. Some of their discoveries are listed below:

1. Stifling freedom of expression: Concentrated ownership structures could narrow the range of published opinions. They could also reduce the amount of information brought to the public's attention and skew public opinion about political or commercial aspects, for the greater convenience of the media owners.

2. News coverage is biased in favour of economic interests. This could lead to impairment of freedom of expression and opinions.

3. Another problem is that conflicts of interest arise when the owner of a big business group that spends heavily on advertising seeks to economize by advertising through its media holdings - but the media holdings want to maximize their income from advertising.

Tunc(2011) gave a similar explanation on the Turkish situation in his write-up, Media ownership in Turkey. He explained that owners of the biggest media groups are also involved as investors and shareholders in different sectors of the economy, such as health, education, construction and telecommunication. He further pointed out that no news critical of government is ever mentioned in the public media.

2. PRESS FREEDOM

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers." It is on this premise that journalists the world over have been fighting authoritarian governments to let the media be free from government's gagging.

Although there is still a debate going on over the fact that too much liberty for the media will be detrimental to a nation's development, countries all over the world have tried as much as they can to check the level of freedom of expression in their countries; with this level varying from country to country.

EGYPT
According to Freedom House report (2008),
"While Egyptian journalists succeeded in expanding the diversity of media coverage by pushing back the "red lines" that previously restricted their work, press freedom continued to suffer owing to the government's repressive laws and the extra-legal intimidation of journalists. The Emergency Law, the Press Law, and other provisions of the penal code circumscribe the press, despite constitutional guarantees of press freedom."Hosni Mubarak's removal in February 2011 raised hopes of an improvement in respect of fundamental freedoms but they were quickly dashed after a Muslim Brotherhood government headed by Mohamed Morsi was installed in 2012. President Morsi promulgated a decree in November 2012 that gave him special powers but backtracked in the face of an outcry. The constitution that was approved by referendum the following month lacked sufficient safeguards for freedom of expression. It did not guarantee the independence of the state-owned media and, in practice, opened the way for the Islamization of media legislation. As soon as the Muslim Brotherhood took office, it began asserting its control over the state media. The government appointed Muslim Brotherhood supporters to run the state-owned newspapers. These appointments had a big effect on their editorial policies. At the same time, there was a big increase in lawsuits and physical attacks against journalists.

Since Morsi's removal by the army under Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, the new authorities systematically targeted foreign and Egyptian media assumed to be affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood. *Al-Jazeera* was particularly targeted and three of its journalists detained on state security related issues. The journalists were only released in 2015, after a global outcry. Arbitrary arrest and torture of journalists was a common occurrence. An anti-Brotherhood witch-hunt that targeted not only Egyptian journalists but also their Turkish, Palestinian or Syrian colleagues was also rife.

TURKEY
Thanks to its diplomatic and economic influence, Turkey is establishing itself as a regional model of democracy, especially for governments that emerged from the Arab Spring. After ten years of rule by the moderate Islamist AKP, the army's sway over politics and the media has ended and a number of taboos linked to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's heritage are crumbling. New red lines are nonetheless emerging to replace them. Despite a few limited reforms, judicial practices continue to be repressive and the number of detained journalists is still at a level that is unprecedented since the end of the military regime. Around 60 journalists were in detention at the end of 2013, making Turkey one of the world's biggest prisons for media personnel. Despite directives intended to limit use of provisional detention, journalists often spend months if not years in prison before being tried. With 153 journalists injured and 39 detained, the media paid a high price for their coverage of the wave of anti-government demonstrations from May to September and the police use of force against protesters. Journalists were systematically targeted by the police and sometimes by demonstrators. The violence was sustained by a climate of hysteria fuelled by the speeches of government officials and pro-government media branding critical columnists, social network users and foreign reporters as agents of an international plot to overthrow the government or even as terrorists. The level of self-censorship was such that 24- hour TV news channels completely ignored the violent clashes rocking Istanbul in 2013. Recalcitrant journalists were sidelined. No fewer than 14 were fired and 22 resigned. Astronomical fines were imposed on those TV channels that covered the protests closely.

QATAR
Journalists and publishers continue to self-censor due to political and economic pressures when reporting on government policies or material deemed hostile to Islam, the ruling family, and relations with neighbouring states. The Qatar Media Corporation, the Ministry of Culture, and customs officials, all censor materials. There are no specific reports of political censorship of foreign broadcast news media or foreign programmes but the government reviews and censors foreign newspapers, magazines, films, and books for objectionable sexual, religious, and political content. For instance, in September 2014, authorities banned an Indian comedy, "Grand Masti," for vulgar dialogue and obscene content. In March, 2015, the newspaper, Doha News conducted interviews with journalists who complained about the lack of access to government officials, a problematic legal framework for journalists and reporters, and advertisers' undue influence over editorial decisions. Qatar laws restricted the publication of information that could incite the overthrow of the regime, abuse the regime, or harm supreme state interests; slander the emir or heir apparent; report official secret agreements; ridicule or express contempt for one of the Abrahamic faiths; prejudice heads of state or disturb relations; harm the national currency or the economic situation; violate the dignity of persons, the proceedings of investigations, and

prosecutions in relation to family status; defame the state or endanger its safety.

ISRAEL

Israel's history as a state under constant military threat has strongly influenced its approach toward the control of information. Censorship of the media was legitimized in law in 1945, when the military censor was authorized to ban the publication, printing, importing, and exporting of any material that will or is likely to cause damage to the security of Israel or public order. Since then, censorship of sensitive, security related information has operated through voluntary agreements between military authorities and the Israeli Committee of Daily Newspaper Editors. These agreements provide a platform for practical negotiation with a built-in arbitration body and have been renewed periodically since 1949 with some significant amendments. Despite the lack of full consent from all media, all news organizations operating in Israel, including foreign agencies, must agree to abide by the censor's rulings. According to Freedom House report of 2008, Press freedom is generally respected in Israel, and the country features a vibrant media landscape. Nevertheless, several incidents in 2007 tested the scope of press freedom, particularly with regard to coverage of events in Lebanon and Syria. In general however, an independent judiciary and an active civil society adequately protect the free media. Hate speech and publishing praise of violence are prohibited, and the 1948 Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance prohibits expressions of support for terrorist organizations or groups that call for the destruction of Israel. Journalists operating in Israel require accreditation by the Government Press Office (GPO) to have access to government buildings and official press conferences or passage across military checkpoints. The GPO has been known to occasionally refuse press cards on political and security grounds, especially to Palestinians. But in 2012, Freedom House's report on press freedom downgraded the country to the level of one that is partially free. Freedom House cited several reasons for this shift. Indeed, the year 2012 saw a rise in harassment and physical attacks on Arab journalists. Instances of political interference with the Israeli Broadcasting Authority (IBA), and the corrosive effects foreign investors were having on the domestic media market were also mentioned as reasons. The Uri Blau indictment also dented the freedom of the press record of the country.

In the Palestinian territory, The 1995 Basic Law guarantees freedom of conscience and expression (Article 19). The main regulation of media is the 1995 Press and Publications Law. Although the Law provides for freedom of the press and of publishing, it also stipulates that it is illegal to publish anything contrary to principles of freedom, national responsibility, human rights and respect for truth. The Law contains a list of restrictions, including prohibition of publishing material that is inconsistent with public morals or which may "shake belief in the national currency, or harm national unity. These restrictions are backed up with censorship powers as publications must deposit copies with the government prior to distribution. The Law also establishes a licensing regime for the printed press, including high initial capital requirements. It further imposes a number of conditions on who may be an editor-in-chief, a responsible director and an owner of a publication.

3. THE NEW MEDIA

Social media in the region under study is a festering area of significant developments. According to a report on Arab media outlook (2009-2013), there are three key categories of social media sites in the Arab Region:

1. International sites such as Facebook, which have managed to gain the most popularity in the region, due to their strong brand names and their early entry into the market.
2. International players such as Twitter and FMyLife which have introduced Arabic interfaces which are expected to grow in popularity as internet penetration in the bigger Arabic-speaking markets, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, increases and awareness grows.
3. Local companies such as Maktoob, Jeeran and UAE Women's Network which are growing their user bases since their launch, while they face strong competition from international players.

The impact of the social media on the lives of people in the Middle East and Turkey has continued to generate comments from people all around the world. Reckoning from several incidences, the Mohammed Bouazizi incidence in Tunisia in 2011, to the gathering in Tahrir Square in Egypt also in 2011, to the Taksim Gezi Park protests in Turkey from 2013-2014, reflect gatherings coordinated through the use of social media platforms like facebook, youtube, twitter, instagram etc, with live pictures and videos sent to friends and international media across the world. The social media has also given voice to the women and minority groups in the region who in the past could not express themselves because of marginalization. This has given rise to citizen journalism in the region.

TURKEY

Until 2005, the Internet in Turkey was a largely free medium. However, in 2005 this situation quickly changed when laws were introduced to restrict Internet content. Widespread use of the Internet and growing concerns about the uncontrolled amount of sensitive content available online pushed authorities to adopt a special law on the Internet. The Law on the Internet (or the Regulation of Broadcasts via Internet and Prevention of Crimes

Committed Through such Broadcasts) No. 5651 was passed by the parliament on May 4, 2007, and signed by President Ahmet Necdet Sezer on May 22. This law introduces criminal liability for people who post certain categories of illegal content online. According to this law, if such content is posted it should be taken down immediately either by authorities or by the ISPs themselves. The law establishes a model that allows a large group of actors, including the government, to petition the court or the Telecommunications Authority to filter certain Internet content. ''Sufficient suspicion'' that an offense is committed is a sufficient test to meet under the Internet Law to allow block of access. As a result of this law and related legislation, a number of Web sites were in Turkey. This censorship led to an uproar from large communities within Turkey and abroad, and placed concerns about filtering of Internet content high on the national agenda. The common crimes included posting obscene content, promoting gambling, prostitution, child abuse and drug abuse, crimes against Ataturk.

Turkey implemented a series of reforms in its telecommunications and Internet sectors, showing its firm determination to stay on the membership path to the European Union. There were reforms instituted to break the de facto monopoly of the main telecoms and Internet service provider Turk Telecom. All Internet traffic passes through Turk Telecom's infrastructure, thereby allowing centralized control over online content and facilitating the implementation of shutdown decisions. Unless the government rethinks its current Internet policy and abandons blocking Turkish web sites as a method for combating illegal content, freedom of expression in Turkey will remain compromised.

QATAR

- The government-owned internet service provider, known as "Ooredoo" restricts the expression of views via the internet and censored the internet for political, religious, and pornographic content through a proxy server, which monitored and blocked websites, e-mails, and chat rooms. A user who believed authorities had censored a site mistakenly could submit the website address to have the site reviewed for suitability. People have claimed that there were no reports that any websites were unblocked based on this procedure. Ooredoo is responsible for monitoring and censoring objectionable content on the internet.

The censors in Qatar admit to filtering pornography, political criticism of Gulf countries, and material deemed hostile to Islam. The authorities also pervasively filter gay and lesbian content, sexual health resources, and privacy and circumvention tools. Political filtering is highly selective, but journalists self-censor on sensitive issues such as government policies, Islam, and the ruling family. There are no reports of specific Internet surveillance in Qatar, but a report by Reporters Without Borders in 2015 wrote that Qatar telecommunication company (Qtel), "has the means to spy on messages sent through the other ISPs."

ISRAEL

The Ministry of Communications (MOC) regulates the Internet as part of the telecommunications sector. Prior to the 1980s, the Israeli government controlled both telecommunications regulation and operations. In 1984, those functions were split, and all telecommunications facilities were transferred to Bezeq, a state-owned company. Bezeq's monopoly on fixed-line transmissions within Israel led to a relatively high cost of Internet service in Israel. After Bezeq's legal monopoly on fixed-line services expired in 1999, the MOC began liberally issuing licenses to competitors. This and other regulatory changes led to a burst of competition within the Internet sector, lowering prices and contributing to a large increase in Internet penetration after 2001. In 2007, Israel's Minister of Communication, KM Ariel Atias, who belongs to the Orthodox party Shas, tried to pass a bill to filter all "abomination and violence" content from Israeli Internet users who do not explicitly ask their ISP to remove them from the filtration process. Atias's original proposal included mandatory installation of biometric identification technology to prevent minors from manipulating the filtering system, but this article was dropped later. The bill, nicknamed "Bill 892," caused concern among Israeli Internet experts, NGOs, academic institutes, and media and technology companies, who cooperated to lead a campaign against the bill. Despite their efforts, in April 2008 the Knesset Committee of Economics passed the bill on its first hearing by a surprisingly large majority. The Committee's Chairman, KM Gilad Arden, who strongly opposed the bill, postponed the second and third hearings until after the 2009 elections. Critics are of the opinion that Bill 892 is unlikely to resurface, given Israel's governmental changes and the length of time that has passed since its first hearing.

EGYPT

Despite the government's initiatives to encourage Internet use, the Egyptian authorities continue to place restrictions on how Egyptians use the Internet. For example, in February 2005, Egypt's Ministry of Interior ordered Internet café managers and owners to record their customers' names and ID numbers and threatened to close the cafés if they refused to comply. Under the pretext of protecting public security, the Egyptian government asked mobile phone companies to block service to anonymous subscribers in May 2008. According to Reuters, "the move comes as Egypt tries to combat a wave of public discontent over rising prices and low

wages that have sparked a series of labour and anti-government strikes, organized largely by mobile phone and over the Internet." As the Egyptian blogosphere continues to grow, so does the government's crackdown on bloggers and Internet users. For example, blogger Abdel Kareem Nabil Suleiman Amer ("Kareem Amer") was sentenced in February 2007 to four years in prison for "incitement to hatred of Islam" on his blog and for insulting the president. He has since become the symbol of online repression for the country's bloggers. Other Egyptian bloggers have also been arrested for their online activities, and some have been sentenced to prison. Another example is blogger Mohamed Refaat, editor of the blog Matabbat (matabbat.blogspot.com), who was arrested in August 2008 under the state emergency law. He was charged with offending the state institutions, destabilizing public security, and inciting others to demonstrate and strike via the Internet.An administrative court had rejected in December 2007 a lawsuit brought by a judge calling for the banning of 49 Web sites in Egypt. The court emphasized the support for freedom of expression as long as such Web sites do not harm the beliefs or public order. However, in May 2009, a Cairo court ruled that the Egyptian government must ban access to pornographic Web sites because they are deemed offensive to religion and society's values. The crackdown on bloggers and Internet use has increased in Egypt since the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak. It is common to hear of cases of arrests based on links to terrorism of the Brotherhood.

1.1 Comparative Analysis of Media Policies in Egypt, Qatar, Israel and Turkey
According to a report in 2015 by the American based Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ): "from Mexico, Russia to Syria, journalists are increasingly coming under attack. They are murdered, imprisoned and intimidated for doing their job. If this continues, we will face a growing crisis in information." Governments around the world have come up with excellent media policies that will from afar paint a picture of 'all is going well.' A closer look at what is happening the world over however suggests that the state still gags the media, thereby compelling it to do the state's bidding either willy-nilly or subtly. Taking a look at the media policies in the countries under this study, we present a tabular comparison of the situation in the countries. In 2010, a report by www.pressreference.com gave the breakdown of media in the countries under study as given in table 1.The number of media organisations in each of the countries has increased over time. The number of internet users in these countries has also increased with all the countries having more than 50 percent of their population having access to the internet.

1.1.1 Media Ownership and Control.
In terms of ownership and control, the media in the countries under study have their own peculiarities in the nature of ownership. However, the government is responsible for the final control on what the media give the people. The breakdown of ownership and control is as given in table 2

1.1.2 Press Freedom
The Freedom House Report of 2014 and the 2015 report from Reporters Without Borders gave the following ranking (out of 180 countries) as well as status of countries under study, as presented in table 3. The status of Israel changed from being free to partially free after the Uri Blau incidence.

THE NEW MEDIA
In all the countries under study, the use of the internet is monitored through surveillance, with the major excuse being protection of state secret, and also guarding against blasphemy as applicable to the Muslim countries.

CONCLUSION Media and communication policy emerged as an identifiable field within the broader domain of Western media and communication studies in the 1950s. According to Mansell and Raboy (2011), "during this period, scholars were studying the relations between different types of media and communication and raising questions about economic and social development, mainly at the country level, and with an emphasis on tensions between autonomous and dependent development paradigms. In the 1960s and 1970s, challenged by young, critical scholars and the postcolonial context, the field began to be characterized by comparative studies and the policy implications of unequal North–South communication flows started to be examined."The media policies of the countries under study have their peculiarities but from an overall perspective, it is clear that freedom of the press is far from these countries and indeed many countries of the world. With the exception of Israel which has been seen as practicing one of the freest press in the world, there is a high level of monitoring in the other countries. While most of the countries will lean towards the state security excuse, it is obvious that the governments in power are using these measures of control against the press to protect their offices and names. Thomas Jafferson in 1787 said: "The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." It appears the selfishness of some few in government will deny the media its ability to perform its most important role in society to the fullest. That is the duty of being the watchdog of the society.

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Table 1. Media composition in countries under study

COUNTRY	DAILIES	TV STATIONS	RADIO STATIONS	INTERNET ACCESS/1000
QATAR	9	2	12	39.0
ISRAEL	22	17	40	213.9
TURKEY	45	635	94	30.1
EGYPT	18	98	59	6.5

SOURCE: www.pressreference.com (2010).

Table 2: Media ownership and control in the Arab region and Turkey

COUNTRY	OWNERSHIP		CONTROL
	DAILIES	TV AND RADIO	
EGYPT	GOVERNMENT, PARTY, DOMESTIC PRIVATE OWNERS, OFFSHORE PRIVATE OWNERS	GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE	GOVERNMENT
QATAR	GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE	GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE	GOVERNMENT
ISRAEL	PRIVATE	GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE	GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE
TURKEY	GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE	GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE	GOVERNMENT

SOURCE: www.pressreference.com

Table 3: Press freedom ranking of countries

COUNTRY	RANKING	% OF PRESS FREEDOM ABUSE	STATUS
QATAR	115	35.35	NOT FREE
EGYPT	158	50.17	NOT FREE
ISRAEL	101	32.09	PARTIALLY FREE
TURKEY	149	44.16	NOT FREE

SOURCE: Freedom House (2014) report and Reporters Without Borders (2015) index