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Political Satire in Egypt after 2011: The effect of the second season of the satirical show “Al-Bernameg” (2012-2013) on the Egyptian audience

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The effect of the second season of the satirical show “Al-Bernameg” (2012-2013) on the Egyptian audience

A Thesis Submitted to
Journalism and Mass Communication Department

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

by Radwa ElGabry

under the supervision of Dr. Naila Hamdy

May/ 2014
The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

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Ashraf El Gabry & Sahar El Okely

My parents, you are my backbone and my inspiration. Your persistence and faith make me wish I could give the same example to my son.

Ahmad A. Ali & Yahia Ahmad Ali

My little family. I love you endlessly.
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Abstract

The introduction of the political satire program "Al-Bernameg" (The Program) in Egypt has created massive discussion in the media related to the level of acceptance of Egyptians to this new format and its effects on the audience. Satirical programming has been a key part of political discourse in Western culture for some time and a part of global art for centuries. It has also been established that such programming is of particular influence on Western voters, who turn to this nature of programming before others in order to gather political information. This study sheds the light on the effects of this programming format on the Egyptian audience as well as the perception of the viewers of its content.

The research relies on the uses and gratification theory as a starting point to analyze the heavy consumption of the program in a very short time and the cultivation theory to explore the effects of watching the program on the perception of the audience regarding the political content presented.

A survey targeting the viewers of the show was conducted among a purposive sample of Egyptians (310 participants) to analyze the reasons for watching the program, frequency of watching and the effect of the content on their perception of the political news and political engagement and participation in Egypt.

The findings of the survey explained the reasons for the audience usage of the program and their perception. In addition, the results of the survey indicated that the program has a major influence on the audience regarding their perception of the political situation; however, it does not affect their political engagement or participation. Viewers in Egypt perceive the program as an entertainment show, yet they also consider it as a source of news and become affected by its presentation of the political situation. The more the viewer watches the show, especially if he is not exposed to other sources of news, the more he becomes affected by its cynical presentation.
Chapter I

1.1 Introduction

The 25th of January 2011 revolution is, in many ways, considered a turning point in the Egyptian society. The political situation has been changing a lot, from the ruling of the Mohamed Hosny Mubarak’s regime to the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) 2011, to the first elected president Mohamed Morsi 2012, followed by Adly Mansour in 2013. In addition, the media scene in Egypt has changed intensively. Right after the Egyptian revolution, a number of new private channels have been launched with new current affairs shows with bigger space of freedom that was not granted before. A number of new television formats have evolved that are new to the Egyptian audience like the "political satire show". Such new introduction to the Egyptian media scene was not allowed before the revolution due to the massive censorship over the media during Mubarak’s regime. During the last 18 days of Mubarak's era, there were other remarkable events that would not have been done before such as interviewing “Wael Ghoneim,” Google Executive and Co-Admin of Facebook page “We are all Khaled Said,” right after his release from secret police detention. Another significant interview was Ahmed Shafik's, the first Prime Minister after the revolution, when he was challenged on ONTV on March 2 for the political situation in Egypt. This interview lead to his resignation hours after the episode. To explore the reasons why the media in Egypt has changed drastically, a comprehensive study of the Egyptian media needs to be given to understand how it changed over the years.

1.2 Media in Egypt Pre 2011 revolution

Shortly after Egypt decided to launch its first private satellite, the Egyptian authorities have decided to permit licenses to private channels; however, the licenses were subject to
specific rules. The private channels, both Egyptian and foreign, were required to be operated from a production studio complex and the terrestrial station of Egypt’s own broadcasting satellite, Nilesat (Sakr, 2012). Meanwhile, the government kept its monopoly on the terrestrial channels and prohibited the new channels to air news that could compete with the newscasts aired on the terrestrial channels.

Amongst the pioneer channels were Dream TV and Mehwar, which were launched 2001 and 2002 respectively. These channels could have only aired entertainment programs, movies and music. In less than two years from the launch date, private channels have succeeded to reach audiences and the satellite penetration rose from 7.4% in 2001 to 24% in 2002, 50% in 2006 until 65% in 2010 (Sakr, 2012). Afterward, private channels started to host new politically oriented programs presented by a number of renowned presenters and journalists like Hala Sarhan, Hamdy Kandeel, Ibrahim Eissa and Mahmoud Saad. However, the programs had been subject to severe censorship from the government especially when some of them made daring comments about the situation in Egypt resulting in the shutdown of a number of programs (Hassan, 2013). Following the same steps, the Egyptian terrestrial channel, Channel 2, decided to introduce a program “Albeit Beitak” in 2004.

In the time between 2004-2006 the political discourse in Egypt started to rise with the rising use of blogs, which gave room for everyone to share their opinion freely. In June 2004, the independent newspaper “Al-Masry Al-Youm” was launched. Journalist Hisham Kassem managed it, and the newspaper was another window for the uprising political discourse in Egypt giving room to more political discourse and daring coverage about politics in Egypt.

In June 2005, Dream TV (Dream 2) introduced the political talk show, Al-Ashera Masa’an presented by Mona Al-Shazly; a program that aimed to push the limits of political
freedom and interview political analysts and journalists as well as covering the political situation in Egypt. In August 2006, Al-Mehwar introduced its talk show “90 Dekika” presented by Moaataz Al-Demerdash. Al-Demerdash made it clear in a television interview on Al-Jazeera TV that he wanted to “concentrate on democratic reform in Egypt, constitutional reform in Egypt” (Sakr 2012, 230).

In January 2007, the businessman Naguib Sawiras launched a private channel OTV, which took almost two years to transform it to a news channel called ONTV. Al-Hayah channel is another private channel, which was launched January 2008 by the businessman and president of Al-Wafd Part, Al-Sayed Al-Badawi. According to Hafez Al-Mirazai, Director of the Kamal Adham Center for Television and Digital Journalism at The American University, the original content of Al-Hayah was supposed to include major news programs; however, it was replaced with drama and comedy content after facing pressure from Mubarak’s Information Minister (Sakr, 2012).

1.3 Internet development and usage in political reform

With the shift from 22.5% in 2004 to 131.5% in 2005 of fixed Internet subscriptions (International Telecommunication Union, 2013), there was no doubt that the Internet’s role in the Egyptians' lives was increasing. In addition, the number of Egyptian bloggers had reached almost 160,000 by 2008 (OpenNet Initiative, 2009), which indicated that the readership of the blogs was also growing extensively. In 2008, the online social platform "Facebook” was a primary tool for Esraa Abdel Fattah and Ahmad Maher, Al-Ghad political party members, to call for a massive strike on April 6 against the government for the rise of prices and bread shortages; more than 70,000 people joined their group on Facebook (Sakr 2012, 331).
1.4 **Governmental censorship of the media**

A series of events that showed the dominance of the Mubarak regime on the Egyptian private channels and online portals occurred between 2008 and the 2011 revolution. First, the activist Esraa Abdel Fattah was detained for two weeks. She announced in an interview with Amr Adeeb on Al-Qahira Al-Youm that she would withdraw from working in politics for good after her release.

Annie Mullins, Vodafone’s Head of Global Content Standards, stated in “Westminster eForum” in February 2009 that Vodafone Egypt “had complied with the demand in 2008” (of revealing the identities of customers). According to Mullins, the Egyptian authorities were convicting those who were accused of stirring protests “through mobile phone records that the government demanded from private companies,” a statement that was officially denied afterward (Sakr, 2012).

On the broadcast side, censorship was not an exception. According to Sakr’s interview with Al-Ashera Masa’an Staff, Safwat Al Sherif, former Minister of Information, “had been unable to force Mona Al-Shazli to say that 2008 Shura Council elections were not rigged”; however, in 2010, during the elections of the People's Assembly, the authorities were able to silence the media. Al-Qahira Al-Youm was suspended in September 2010 for problems with the transmission fees. However, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ, 2011), Amr Adeeb, the presenter of Al-Qahira Al-Youm was considered as “unflattering” for Mubarak’s son Gamal. Also, as reported in coverage by Ikhwan Web (2010), experts believed that the act of suspension of the program related to “newly-regulated restrictions aim at silencing Egypt's political opposition, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood, ahead of parliamentary elections,”
exemplified especially by the Salafist channel “Al-Nas” also being suspended at the same time. Hossam Tammam, an expert on Islamist groups, stated that the regime would not allow the same level of media freedom that it allowed during the 2005 elections (Ikhwan Web, 2010).

In October 2010, Al-Badawi, president of Al Wafd party, who had acquired the newspaper Al-Destour, sacked its editor-in-chief Ibrahim Eissa after he wrote an article about Mohamed Al-Baradei as a prospective presidential candidate. In an interview with Foreign Policy, Eissa claimed that this was planned ahead from the moment Al-Badawi had acquired the newspaper. Eissa also described Al Badawi as a “member of Egypt's 'soft opposition” (Kener, 2010).

The Egyptian authorities not only censored the newspapers and television, but also started in July 2010 monitoring the political activities on Facebook. According to Ramy Raoof, activist and editor of Egyptian Blog for Human Rights, the Egyptian Ministry of Information has devoted forty-five of its employees to monitor Facebook activities and comments about the political situation in Egypt (Raoof, 2010).

However, in the same year, 2010, Facebook had an impact in the political life of Egyptians. Muhammed Al-Baradei, the former Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, used the social interactive site to communicate with the voters prior to the presidential elections by a special video message that was published on a group that gained 200,000 followers (Jensen, 2010). The second and most prominent campaign was the page “Kolena Khaled Saeed” or "We are all Khaled Saeed," a page about a young man who was killed by police officers in Alexandria in June 2010. One of the secret administrators of the page was Wael Ghonim, Google’s Head of Marketing for the Middle East and North Africa. The page called for strikes all over Egypt to oppose such brutal actions. The death of Khaled Saeed and the
media coverage it gained afterward was a major factor in the uprising revolution that happened just months after this incident (Sadek, 2012).

1.5 Media in Egypt Post 2011 Revolution

January 25th, 2011 marked the day that started the Egyptian revolution against Mubarak’s regime. With Mubarak’s resignation of February 11th, many changes have been expected in the Egyptian society. People wanted everything to change for the better and especially the monopoly of the authoritarian rulers over the media. The tone of many journalists changed after the revolution and many of those who were supporting Mubarak’s regime were considering themselves as voices for the revolutionists (El-Wardani, 2011).

Shortly after the revolution, Egypt witnessed the launch of many private television stations as well as a number of new newspapers. About sixteen new television channels were inaugurated after the revolution and even more are expected to be on their way because the media atmosphere is now “free” and the “industry has been liberalized after the revolution” (Mekay, 2011). Sayed Helmi, Chairman of Egyptian Media Production City (E.M.P.C.), said that the company already has rented all the 64 available studios and will build more studios for the increasing demand (Mekay, 2011). Some of the inaugurated private satellite channels are (but not limited to) CBC network (broadcast three channels at the time of its launch), Al-Nahar Network (two channels), Tahrir TV, 25TV, and Misr25 (TV channel of the Muslim brotherhood) (Sakr, 2013).

According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), the percentage of internet users in Egypt increased from 14.8 million in 2010 to 19.7 million in 2011, making a rise of 33.1% ("Internet users increase", 2011). In 2010, the number of Facebook users in Egypt was around 3.8 million users (as cited in Raoof, 2010). After the
Egyptian revolution, the number of Facebook subscribers increased to 7.7 million ("Facebook in Egypt", 2011). One year after the revolution, 2012, the number of Facebook accounts increased to almost 14.3 million users ("Facebook in Egypt ", 2012) and reached 18 million in 2013 all over Egypt ("Advertise on Facebook", 2013) marking a great shift in the use of the networking site.

1.6 New formats to rise from YouTube

Before the 2011 revolution, the art of “standup comedy” was highly spreading among the Egyptian society. The increase in social networking site usage has been an inspiration for a number of new faces to present their talents online. “YouTube” gave the audiences the chance to know the comedians and satirists, especially those who have made use of the freedom given by the YouTube and the absence of censorship to present mini programs mocking the current political situation at that time (Hamdan, 2012). Ms. Maha Aboueleinein, Google’s spokesperson, said that users across the Middle East as well as many companies and brand managers were seeking to have their own channel on YouTube, which they can also make money from (Hamdan, 2012). Zeynep Tufekci, an Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina, argues that political satire is now evolving more in countries where freedom of expression is very constrained; that’s when people start to express their disagreements, which they could never show directly, through satire ("Making fun of leaders", 2013).

Mona Hala, a young actress, launched her program “Monatoof” with six episodes mocking the people who were opposing the revolution and satirically commenting on some of the events that happened during and after the 18 days of strike. Bassem Youssef, cardiac surgeon and satirist, launched the program “B+ Bassem Youssef Show” with eight episodes also
satirically criticizing the Egyptian political situation. According to Hassan (2013), Youssef was counting on getting 10,000 hits on YouTube but instead he got a million.

1.7 About Bassem

Youssef not only presents sarcasm, he also presents to the people the comparison between the real life politics and its presentation through the media (Sadek, 2012). In a previous interview Youssef claimed that the portrayal and information of the 2011 revolution in the media was very "misleading and hypocrite" (Sadek, 2012).

The type of comedy that Youssef presents is new to the Egyptian society; although he uses the typical wordplay that Egyptians use in their mockery, the presentation of such comedy on the screen is not common. Besides the wordplay, he uses his facial comic reactions and empower his monologues with varied Internet clips, props, graphics, montage and sound effects. Youssef’s show was trying to bridge divides by presenting the current affairs from a new angle plus making people laugh.

As Youssef has stated that “Jon Stewart”, presenter of "The Daily Show" in America, is his role model, he relies on the same formula of using politicians’ contradicting statements, and interviews guests (Sadek, 2012).

The show was criticized for “delivering humor and news in a manner that is styled on a western model of comedy which is irrelevant to the average Egyptian viewer” ("Comedy Show du Jour", 2011). Bassem Youssef did not defend this claim; however, he gave the credit of his program to the American satirist Stewart from the aforementioned “Daily Show”, a satirical program on Comedy Central in America.
1.8 **Statement of the Problem**

Considering the results of numerous international viewership researches, the political satire format has an impact on the audience and their perception of the news presented ("Cable and Internet loom", 2004). The analysis of viewership of political satire programs showed a “huge spike within that number among 18-to-29 year olds”, with 21% of the respondents saying they regularly “learn about the presidential campaign and the candidates from comedy shows such as “Saturday Night Live” and “The Daily Show” ("Cable and Internet loom", 2004). The percentage doubled from 2000 to 2004; and 50% of the viewers said they “at least sometimes” learned about the campaign from comedy shows. Such statistics show that comedy and satire shows have an effect on viewers to the point that some age groups may replace the traditional mainstream sources of news with these shows.

In Egypt, the sources of news are varied, such as state TV, private satellite channels and radio stations that air news and talk shows as well as printed and online newspapers and web portals. With the introduction of Bassem Youssef’s program on television, the content of the program relied heavily on the political situation of Egypt. Youssef focuses on the news presented throughout the week employing his sarcastic attitudes; thus the main source of his content is merely political.

The reasons that made this new programing format are numerous.

- The high viewership rate of the program
- The online interaction through the videos’ total views and sharing via YouTube and Facebook
- The results of research studying the effects of similar types of programing on the audience in America.
The above reasons are the main motives to explore the effects of this newly introduced programing in Egypt on the audience to understand how the Egyptians will perceive this new type of sarcasm, especially that it shed light on the political arena and the current affairs, an area that was considered a taboo before January 25th revolution. The research aims to study the reasons why Egyptians are watching such a new program tackling news in a new format, how they perceive the news that they hear from this program (whether they have heard it earlier in the week or not). To answer such questions, the research will begin by:

- Gathering information about sarcasm, its historical backgrounds
- Studying the usage of sarcasm in media and its emergence on television programing worldwide and in Egypt
- Exploring the studied effects of sarcasm globally on audiences and pinpointing the measured differences in the audiences' attitudes.
Chapter II- Literature Review

2.1 Satire: definition, rise and types

Satire has been used as a form of communication in the daily life of individuals before we even see it on television. Many scholars have identified the definition of the term "Satire". In her book “Sarcasm and other mixed messages: The ambiguous ways people use language”, the author Patricia Ann Rockwell (2006) stated that the Oxford companion to the English language (1992) described the word sarcasm as derived from the Latin word “sarcasmus” and the Greek word “sarkasmos” meaning “tearing flesh” or “speaking bitterly”. Sarcasm is presented in most references as a “negative behavior that is designed to wound, insult, or taunt” while other references say that it “involves teasing and joking” (Rockwell, 2006). Other scholars such as (Anolli, Ciceri & Infantini, 2002, Knox, 1961) argue that sarcasm is a form of irony “where the speaker blames by praise or praises by blame” (as stated in Rockwell, 2006).

Fredric V. Bogel (2001) claims that satire is “a full-fledged artistic mode, not merely a symptom of ill humor or personal spite or something else.” In addition, satire is identified as a way of artistic expression and its role is considered both artistic and critical in politics and culture (Williams, 2011). Williams (2011) quotes Feinberg’s definition of satire as “a playfully critical distortion of the familiar.”

The place where satire rose first as a way of expression is debatable; scholars date the presence of satire to Ancient Greeks while others claim it goes back to Great Britain (Dagnes, 2012). Dagnes (2012) stated, “The age of enlightenment was a fecund period for satire in Britain, and we look Jonathan Swift as the hero of historical satire.” On the other hand, there are evidences that satire began in Ancient Egypt. In a debate at the American University in Cairo
about the usage of satire in the Egyptian media, the moderator, Dr. Hafez Al-Mirazi, commented on the presence of drawings that have been found in the tombs of ancient Egyptians that represent the beginning of satire in that era. The drawings were showing some of the well-known figures ironically (Al-Mirazy, 2013).

Satire is seen now as an artistic form of expression; however, that was not the case historically. Juvenal (c.60-c.130) and Horace (65-8 BCE), both Roman poets, used satire to critique rather than to entertain (Condren, 2012). These poets had set a tone of the satirical form of expression that people still use until today. The Juvenalian is a formal satire that addresses critically and harshly the vices of the subjects, while the Horatian is more playful and aims to produce a “wry smile” (Highet, 1962). The effects of Horatian satire address mainly the political and social issues in order to result in a “healing” outcome; the emphasis is put on humor and on making fun of human dysfunction. “Although I portray examples of folly, he says, I am not a prosecutor, and I do not like to give pain; if I laugh at the nonsense I see about me, I am not motivated by malice” (Elliott, 2013). On the contrary, the Juvenalian intent is not to heal but to wound, as this satire was initially used to face the corruption that dominated Roman life at the time. However, the objective of both types is to “distort reality” to present to the audience another perspective of the subject (Williams, 2011). Pizer (2007) stated that some scholars claim that the role of satire is to “remodel the society”; however, no one can really verify this statement to be right or wrong. Other scholars, like Feinberg, argue that satire is only used to “criticize”, not to correct the flaws of the society (Pizer, 2007).

2.2 Historical background of satire in literature

Sarcasm has appeared through history in different media outlets ranging from literature to poetry. It is used it to mock a specific situation like what happened after the finale of the
presidential elections in 1948 between Dewey and Truman. The Media was very confident that Dewey would win the elections and has already published the headlines. However, Truman, the winner, took advantage of the situation to mock the fictitious confidence of the press and hold the newspapers in front of the cameras announcing Dewey's triumph (Rockwell, 2006).

In literature, the works of Shakespeare are a perfect example of the use of sarcasm. For example in “Julius Caesar”, Marc Anthony says “And Ceaser is an honorable man” while he lists his crimes; this shows the use of irony in this piece of literature (Rockwell, 2006). In “A modest proposal”, Johathan Swift, the renowned Irish satirist, suggests serving children as food to solve the Irish famine.

In the printed media, there are two major political satire newspapers, in Italy and France, which evolved in the beginning of the 20th century and had an impact on public opinion at that time. As Elena-Daniela Neascu stated in her 2011 research titled “Political satire and Political news”, “Becco Giallo” or “the Yellow Beak” is one of the earliest journals that gave a voice to the Italian satirists, providing an opportunity for the writers to criticize Mussolini. Another example of satirical caricature about Mussolini was published in a periodical called “L’Asino” or “The Donkey”, picturing Mussolini asking his minister what he is missing in order to be magnificent, to which his minister replies with “only a small thing, The Empire” (Masha, 2008). After World War II, Italian satire was all about anti-communism, as presented by “Giovannino Guareshi” in cartoons depicting the Italian communist party as a “subordinate to the Soviet Party and thus guilty of the Soviet Sins”. Chiesa (2008) claims that the cartoons presented by Guareschi transformed the Italian satire “from a valid critique of government policies to its current version: a form of entertainment and individual introspection” (as cited in Neascu, 2011).
In France, Martin (2005) argues that the political comedy and satire was widespread from the beginning of the 16th century, when the “Gazette” and lesser-known “Canards” publications competed in presenting to the readers information mixed with amusement. “Le Canard Enchaîné”, founded in 1915, is a Parisian weekly that might be the first ever to use the term “fake news” in its official mission statement. The journal stated that the readers had enough of serious news, and it is time to present some fake news; however, the information presented was real but in a critically, amusing manner. In 1970, the paper became “one of the major investigative French journals” with more power and effect over French politics (Neascu, 2011). Another example of French publication is “Marianne”, a weekly satirical magazine published on Fridays that succeeded to present to the readers news that was not previously reported. The articles of “Marianne” primarily rely on news commentary; however, this publication also aimed to “encourage a reassessment of the readers’ social, cultural and political values”, which is something that is not presented in any other satirical media outlet (Neacsu, 2011).

2.3 **Political Satire Programs on Television**

The history of political satire on television dates back to late 1980’s. The phenomenon started after the “Iran-Contraband scandal” which happened during Regan's US presidency when members of his administration sold weapons to Iran in exchange for the release of American hostages (Cutbirth, 2011). The Center for Media and Public Affairs underwent a massive study between 1989 and 2002 to observe politically oriented content of monologues on late-night talk shows. When they released the results, researchers found that from January 1989 to April 2002 Jay Leno told 21,245 politically oriented jokes while David Letterman told 16,118 with the number of jokes being the highest after news of the 1998 Monica Lewinsky scandal (Cutbirth, 2011). In the late 1980s as well, Chevy Chase, American writer and comedian, satirically
criticized the fall of former president Gerald Ford on the show “Saturday Night Live”. That form of criticism disappeared after that in late 1980 when the censors of the network agreed to ban such content about the former president because then president Ronald Reagan, who was from the same political party as Ford, was popular at the time (Cutbirth, 2011).

As stated in “The New Blue Media” by Theodore Hamm (2008), Comedy Central, an American cable network, decided to present a program called “The Daily Show” in 1996, presented at that time by Craig Kilborn. In the original format of the program, the presenter told jokes about the news then parodied mainstream television news coverage. In 1999, the presenter was changed to Jon Stewart who set a new direction for the program, shifting all the focus of the program to be merely political. The format of the program relied mainly on two scenarios: the first featured Stewart showing a clip for a politician saying “something stupid” followed by Stewart’s shocked face; and the second showed Stewart listening to one of his correspondents saying “Fake News” on which Stewart then commented (Weinman, 2007). The program rose in popularity, reaching more than 700,000 viewers in 2002, and with over one million viewers by mid-2003, the program gained massive recognition from the media and political elite, establishing it as a key player in the 2004 presidential campaign (Hamm, 2008).

In a recent American study researching which journalist that Americans admire the most, "Jon Stewart" tied with three network anchorman, Brian Williams, Tom Brokaw, and Dan Rather as well as cable host Anderson Cooper (Cutbirth, 2011). However, Stewart rejects the idea of being referred to as a journalist; he says that he is "just a comedian" and he uses the phrase “fake news” to describe what he presents on the show. Other journalists (as well as the audience) may disagree with this claim. Stewart stated that he seeks to convey the viewpoint of the “politically disappointed” viewer and that his program is “neither Democratic nor Republican” (Pizer, 2007).
According to Jeffrey Jones in his book “Entertaining Politics: New Political Television and Civic Culture” (2005), the success of Jon Stewart was not the first in his genre. He argues that there were two programs that pioneered comedy news shows on cable networks: “Politically Incorrect” by Bill Maher, which was aired from 1993 to 1996 on Comedy Central and then from 1997-2002 on ABC, and "Dennis Miller Live" which aired from 1994-2002 on HBO. Jones has studied and analyzed the content of these three programs and concluded that these shows can form what he calls “new political television”, a genre of programming “characterized by biting humor and satire mixed with honest and commonsensical talk by people not directly linked to the political establishment” (Taylor, 2007).

2.4 Political Satire Programs in Egypt

In Egypt, the phenomena of “Political satire programming” did not start until the January 25th revolution as previously stated. With the rise of internet usage and the popularity of standup comedy that mock the current political arena came new kinds of satirists who shed light on the political realm, like Bassem Youssef and Mona Hala, who had launched their own shows on YouTube.

Unlike Hala, Youssef was successful in turning his online program to a major television hit on ONTV channel (Hamdan, 2012). Youssef’s audience was growing very fast “as a snowball rolling down a hill” (Siegel, 2011). The B+ show succeeded to reach millions of online users; that’s when producers began to show interest in its transformation from an online show to a daily show on ONTV during the month of Ramadan, 2011 with the name “Al-Bernameg”, literally, "The Program" ("Comedy Show du Jour", 2011). Youssef had chosen the channel after turning down many non-Egyptian channels because he claimed it is the only channel that has been consistent with its politics, that’s been siding with the revolution since day one (Sadek, 2012).
Yousef commented on his show, "I don't criticize, I satirize. I make fun, which is even more shocking. Whoever is in authority will have to deal with our program" (Kamel, 2012).

This show marks the formal debut of the “political satire programs” on the Egyptian television stations, although the famous comedian Mahmoud Azab had a political comedy show filmed in 2010 mocking entirely the Egyptian government run at that time by Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif, a program that was banned until after the 2011 revolution. Youssef’s show has succeeded to receive high viewership ratings on ONTV, and then moved to the Egyptian private satellite channel CBC for a second season ("About Bassem", n.d.). The second season of the show was presented with an enriched format with two monologue segments where Youssef commentates on the current issues and another third segment where he hosts an artistic figure or band.

2.5 Al-Bernameg on CBC

CBC stands for Capital Broadcasting Center and it is an Egyptian general entertainment channel airing a variety of talk shows, movies and series. The channel was launched in July 2011 with a large number of renowned presenters introducing more political talk shows as well as variety shows to the Egyptian audience ("About CBC”, n.d.). After only seven months from its launch, CBC succeeded to place itself on the top 10 most watched television stations as per the Arab Media Outlook 2011-2015 report (2012).

CBC board members saw big potential in Bassem Youssef’s program, especially as it offered a new format to the Egyptian audience and would include a live audience for the first time in Egypt (M. Raouf, personal communication, 2013). The production of the program was held at “Radio Theatre” located in downtown Cairo, an older theatre that was remodeled to include new designs and accommodate for a live audience during the filming of the weekly
episodes. Bassem has filmed 29 episodes, which started November 2012 and ended in July 2013. The program airs selected political news of the whole week, thus, the program became a source of news information for most of its viewers; it was very common to see all the restaurants and cafes tuning to CBC to air the new episode. In addition, the number “sharing” the episodes on social networks online was massive.

During that period, the viewership of both the program and the channel increased significantly. In the beginning of November 2012, the total rating points (TRPs), the level of measurement of the size of the audience reached by a specific medium, of CBC was 134 points. In December 2012 and after airing the program, the TRPs increased to 185.5 points (M. Raouf, personal communication, 2013). As for the program’s TRPs from its initial to final airing, Al-Bernameg’s viewership rating saw a constant increase, which began with 4 TRPs and reached the ground breaking record of 28.52 TRPs by the final episode of the season, which is considered the highest viewed program on the channel.

2.6 Critics of “Al-Bernameg”

The second season of the show, which aired from November 2012 to June 2013 was the most criticized season as it was aired during the ruling of the first elected president Mohamed Morsi who represented the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) in the presidential elections, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. As the program was entirely dedicated to political satire, a major number of the Muslim Brotherhood and FJP figures were subject to Youssef’s satire on the show.

Bassem Youssef underwent an investigation related to “insulting president Mohamed Morsy” after a complaint from a lawyer. The investigation has been seen as a case of threatening a journalist, which “undermine[s] freedom of expression in the 'new' Egypt” (Amin, 2012).
Youssef targeted President Morsy several times on his show based on Morsy's official statements and interviews. Youssef wanted to highlight that Egypt is being divided under Morsy’s rule, describing the former president as “Morsi the uniter of powers”, a reference to Pharaoh Mina, who united Upper and Lower Egypt in the year 3200 BC (Kamel, 2012).

2.7 Effects of Political Satire Programs

Satirical programming has been a key part of political discourse in Western culture for some time and a part of global art for centuries. There has also been a range of discussion in academia regarding the nature of satire and its effects, particularly with regards to the more recent emergence of satire programs covering political events (Trigoboff, 2001). It has also been established that such programming is of particular influence to Western voters, which is a trend that has been recognized more towards the younger age groups, who turn to this nature of programming before others in order to gather political information (Rutenberg, 2000). Williams (2011) argues that exposure to satire affect the political attitude of the receiver and that the degree of effectiveness varies from lighthearted news parody to more direct cynical commentary. Level of income and the ideology of the receiver also determine the level of effect that the audience gets when exposed to satire (Williams, 2011).

Satire intends to “persuade” its audience whether by using the playful or the biting manner to address the subject discussed (Cutbirth, 2011). The level of effectiveness or reaction to satire will differ according to the way used to communicate the message, whether playful as in the Horatian satire or biting as in the Juvenalian satire (Hobert et all, 2011). If a person is exposed to both types of material, one considered to be persuasive such as a newspaper and another satirical content, the perceiver would more highly respond to the satirical content than to the persuasive editorial. Williams (2011) argues that the effects of satire differ upon the role of
criticism in the society; for example, if the society adopts the way of guilt to address the improper behavior of its members, satire might be a way to alter such behaviors indirectly.

The recent introduction of specific satirical television shows provides a satirical critique of a range of political and social affairs' elements, including aspects of democracy, voting and the nature of journalism as a profession. Nowadays, we can see that satirical shows are competing against traditional television programming and newspaper articles in the delivery of news presented (Baym, 2005). Many scholars have been trying to explore the effect of the competing messages on the audience, especially in the area of social psychology (as cited in Holbert, Lambe, Dudo & Carlton, 2007). The mixture of conflicting viewpoints across the media usually shows perspectives that are very different from each other. Such competition between the two forms of programming is being studied by scholars, particularly with regards to the power of influence of the messages presented in the media.

There is a range of empirical evidence in support of the claims that when presented with two political messages which are in competition with one another, the first to be consumed is more likely to be the more persuasive; this is known as the primacy effect (as cited in Holbert, Lambe, Dudo & Carlton, 2007). The primacy effect has also provided an important starting point from which to base assessment of the effects of satirical programming on the audience. Studies have indicated that political gratification of the audience is conditional to the media to which they are exposed to (Baym, 2005). In a study about the “primacy effects”, Holbert et. all (2007) studied the program ordering effects of being exposed to national television news headlines from sources like CNN as opposed to exposure to "news" from a satirical program like “The Daily Show” in order to ascertain the political gratification associated with both types of information sources. The results showed that the more entertaining political programs like "The Daily Show"
not only affect the targeted audience regarding the field of political communication (e.g., vote preference and political knowledge), but also can “affect individual-level perceptions of traditional political communication information outlets (e.g., national television news)”. According to the study, those who consider themselves as “politically incompetent and ineffective” are more affected by the messages of "The Daily Show" and its cynicism about the national news. On the other hand, the primacy effect also affected the audience who watched CNN headlines first, making them less attached, perceptually, to the messages of the satirical program.

2.8 Satire and Political Communication

Much of the academic work, which has been carried out into satire and political communication, has looked at audience reaction to both traditional forms of news media and current affairs and satirical programming as a single combination (Bennet, 1998). Krosnick & Kinder (1990) claimed that a lot of the major theoretical debate surrounding political communication indicated that traditional news was the principle way in which the audience receives political information and excluded satirical content (as cited in Holbet et al, 2007). On the other hand, recent academic investigation has not only recognized satirical content as influential, but also analyzed satirical media forms beyond the divide of entertainment and news. As Mutz (2001) has stated, the traditional distinctions between news and entertainment content are no longer very helpful, and accordingly, other academics also have accepted this viewpoint. As Williams & Delli Carpini (2002) have claimed, “the political relevance of a cartoon character like Lisa Simpson is as important as the professional norms of Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw, or Peter Jennings”.
Studies related to both mass communication and political communication are very useful when researching historical and contemporary satirical programming (Holbert, 2005b). Many scholars argue that there is an urgency to study and analyze satirical entertainment media using politics along with news content from the political perspective to understand its messages (Holbert, Kwak, & Shah, 2003). Shows that use such content like The Simpsons, The Tonight Show, The Daily Show or Saturday Night Live are examples of shows which audience members can establish contact with political messages. The messages presented in such shows are very different in presentation than what is presented on traditional news forms (Niven, Lichter, & Amundson, 2003). These messages are identified as not clear and in fact complex, that why they need to be scrutinized to study their effects (Shah, 1998). Shah (1998) also claims that entertainment television can be used for political communication and affects the audience much higher than traditional forms of political and current affairs programming. These shows can also potentially change the manner in which the audience perceives traditional political and public affairs programming (Baym, 2005).

Satirical programming such as "The Daily Show" provides the audience with a satirical view of both the narratives which are salient within the news and also the manner in which information is gathered and disseminated by television journalists. Knight (2004) refers to Jon Stewart, presenter of "The Daily Show" as the “skeptical and bemused observer”. Stewart heads a team of comedians who in turn gather political and social information and then relay that information to the audience. This information ranges from trivial to subversive and provides a platform through which a range of other comedians can voice their opinions and material on a range of topical debates (Weinman, 2007).
"The Daily show" is a unique format; however, other programs such as "Saturday Night Live" include a segment called "Weekend Update" that present all the news satirically. These programs mainly rely on a piece of news, social or political, as an original form to mock and create a satirical commentary. Accordingly, all satirical programming shares in the provision of “a playfully critical distortion of the familiar” (as stated in Williams, 2011).

Depending on experiments designed by Micheal Parkin in 2009 and Jon Zaller in 2003, on the relationship between political figures' appearance on late night shows and audiences' perceptions of these figures, comedy and entertainment programing that include political content can affect citizens’ political attitudes even when such programing is not primarily political in nature (Williams, 2011). This could be applied to a program like “The Daily Show” whose presenter, Jon Stewart, is always claiming that he is just a comedian seeking to entertain people, not trying to present political content (Pizer, 2007). Such programs shed the light on the sins of other journalists, whose work presented to the audience can sometimes lacks adequacy and credibility; their satirists are now considered as the “watchdogs” of other journalists and political figures. In fact, Peter Jennings, former journalist and news anchor, in an ABC News profiling Jon Stewart, once said that Stewart “often says on air what ABC News journalists say in the newsroom, but not on Camera” (as stated in Pizer, 2007). Nowadays, Stewart is not only considered a satirist, but a renowned media figure that other journalists invite to their shows to attract his mass audience.

2.9 **Audience's divergence to satirical shows to seek news**

The rise and popularity of these shows rise a range of questions concerning the nature of the influence of satire upon its audience especially concerning the practices in the political life. Satire has been identified as it affects their political perception and participation, yet, there
remains an inadequate amount of investigation conducted into the manner in which these outlets perform in relation to each other and how satire can affect the perception of other media (Weaver & Drew, 2001). Hobert et al. (2007) claim that the two forms of broadcast (entertainment programs and mainstream news) concerning news can complement each other through assisting the audience and guiding them towards a more comprehensive understanding of news issues and debates. This is contrary to the claims of Young & Tisinger (2006) that state that the late-night viewing of comic television content for the purposes of political information has not replaced any other traditional forms of programming concerned with news and current affairs. Recent polls have already showed that the audiences can get their political information through entertainment programs and these changes in audiences' attitudes "have blurred the distinction between political and nonpolitical media" (Williams and Delli Campirini, 2002).

News programs have taken many formats in the last two decades. To seek news, people only had newspapers and radio stations followed by the main local television networks; afterward, televisions networks became very numerous, which calls for more programing and new content and program formats for stronger competition over the audience attention, who of course migrated to the new and up-to-date networks. For example, in United States, the rapid growth of cable TV and satellite delivery is one of the main causes that Americans may shift from public TV to numerous variety of cable to seek news, especially that they deliver their content rapidly. Many factors contribute to the decline of trust and popularity of the mainstream news, including the lack of connection that shall exist between the people and the press because the audience can feel the connection between what is being presented to them and the power expressed over the media by the authorities (Pizer, 2007). Thus, if the credibility of the news
offered is questioned, perceivers tend to tune out from what is presented and seek news from other sources.

Between the 1950’s and early 2000, the trust of Americans in their local media have been degraded; it is only after the 2001 attacks that the media gained mild recovery due to the popular public reaction to the events; however, after the financial collapse the trend of the fallout of local media credibility continued (Williams, 2011). Williams & Delli Campirini (2002) referred to the results of a national poll from the ABC News in November 2001 that showed that almost half of all Americans refer to the internet as their main source of news while "over a third of them increased their use of online sources after September 11".

In America, this migration resulted in the fragmentation of the television viewing and therefore the shrinking of the share of the three major American networks (Pizer, 2007). Americans were seeking news primarily from the broadcast television networks during the presidential elections for the second half of the 20th century. These networks still maintain their viewers; however, they face a very fierce competition from the cable networks which air the news 24-hours a day (Cutbirth, 2011).

Not only that the number of channels contribute to the fragmentation of the TV viewing; but also the viewers are having less perception about their news organizations. In a study conducted by the PEW research center for the people and the press “News Media’s Improved Image Proves Short-Lived” (2002) which researched the shift in public attitudes about the press from 1985 to 2001, the results showed a decline from 72% in 1985 to 49% in 2002 for Americans who believe news organizations are “highly professional”. Those who rate the daily newspaper as “highly believable” fell from 83% to 65%, CBS from 84% to 64% and NBC from 82% to 66%. The same study also showed that newspaper circulation is declining and the
newspapers are having trouble keeping the rate of their readers (beside that they do not attract younger generation). Statistics have found also that the “median age of American public is 35 but the average age of network news audience is approximately 60 years of age which is not the most attractive demographic for advertisers” ("News Media’s Improved Image", 2002).

The common belief and perception about people who tune out from mainstream news or reading newspapers is that they must be under educated or lower income citizens who have no interest in the political life. However, in a research by Hall Jamieson and Cappella, researchers found out that a large number of those who tune out are “highly educated followers of politics who have become dissatisfied with the state of contemporary politics, including the tone and tenor of political discourse and the news media’s presentation of the political realm” (as stated in Cutbirth, 2011). The same results were verified by the 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey showing that the audience of the “The Daily Show” have a good standard of education and a great level of awareness about politics in general (as cited in Hobert et al, 2007).

The trend of viewers shift seemed to continue with the release of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press “Cable and Internet Loom Large in Fragmented Political News Universe” in January 2004. Researchers found that a remarkable number of the American audience is replacing the traditional broadcast TV news with cable shows and the Internet for news about the presidential campaign. The nightly network news and daily newspapers dropped by almost 10% of viewership rate each, local TV news dropped by 6% whereas cable news network and the internet made a growth of 4% ("Cable and Internet Loom", 2004).

With the rise of the satirical programs that rely heavily on the political news as their content, the audience of these programs are growing and sometimes they rely on these programs as a source of news. As stated in a research by “The Center of media and public affairs”,
examining the political influence of late night humor since the late 1980s, results showed that a “a growing proportion of Americans” are considering the comedy shows as a source of news from which they got information about the presidential elections of 2000 (as stated in Pizer, 2007). The presidential historian Micheal Beschloss was quoted in this research with his new description of the late shows as “being similar to political cartoons of an earlier era multiplied by 50”. Considering the case of the 2000 presidential elections, the same research showed that the jokes are distributed evenly among the executive and candidates of presidential elections. Pizer (2007) concluded that the content of the late night comedy shows get their stories mainly from the news framed by the mainstream media as satirists seek to shed the light on the errors that are created by the news media.

Comparing PEW audience research for the presidential campaign of 2000 and 2004, the percentage of the viewership of the comedy shows as a source of news increased from 6 to 8%. However, the age groups from 18-to-29 year olds viewership increased significantly where 29% watch it “sometimes” and 21% of this age group are regular viewers of the comedy shows such as Saturday Night Live or The Daily Show (compared to 9% in 2000) (as stated in Cutbirth, 2011). The research also demonstrated that those young people who watched satirical programming were also highly knowledgeable about the subjects of social affairs and politics in general (Young, 2004a). Also, researches have concluded that late night talk shows, such as Leno and Letterman are still counted as sources for campaign information among the young adult generation; however, their rate of viewership did not make a growth over the last four years. On the other hand, "The Daily Show" with Jon Stewart made a great increase over the same period. It gets an average of 4 million viewers per week, 73% of them belongs to 18-49 demographic with age 33 as a median (Pizer, 2007). In another poll that interviewed 2000 viewer
by The National Public Radio (NPR), the poll results showed than only one in five citizens had “quite a lot” of confidence in the news media.
3 Chapter III- Theoretical Framework

The program "Al-Bernmeg" succeeded in its transaction from a station to another and its viewership ratings has been the highest among other programs in its time of airing on CBC. Many aspects should be studied about this program, primarily with the reasons of the audience members' consumption of this type of shows in Egypt and how do they perceive the cynicism presented. Not only it is important for scholars to study the potential effects of entertainment broadcasts but also to study how the consumption of different forms of entertainment might affect perceptions of traditional current affairs programing (Holbert, Lambe, Dudo & Carlton, 2007). With the introduction of such new program that rely on the political events in Egypt, some questions will rise in the academic field:

(a) Why has the audience in Egypt consumed such outlet in a short time?

(b) How will this outlet will function alongside with other mainstream traditional news sources?

(c) How will this type of programing will influence the audience’s political gratifications associated with the national television news viewing?

(d) How does the audience perceive the cynicism of the show?

In this research, the author will be interested in exploring the reasons why the audience are turning to such content (uses and gratifications) and how viewing this type of content can influence the audience’s perceptions of the social reality (cultivation). The study of the uses and gratification of political media is of a special interest to this research as it shed the light on the way people consume the political media they are exposed to and what are the effects of the exposure to certain content of the political media on the audience as well. As cited in Holbert, Lambe, Dudo & Carlton (2007), uses and gratifications of political media were first
used to explore the reasons why the audience turn to political content and to study the effects of the consumptions of such political content on the audience behavior. In addition, it is important to measure the effects of the program over the perception of the audience on the political situation in Egypt using the cultivation theory and exploring whether the audience seek it as a news program or entertainment program and how their views of the news in Egypt could be affected by the show.

3.1 **Cultivation theory**

The theory was developed by Professor George Gerbner, dean of Annenberg School of communication at the University of Pennsylvania. He began the cultural indicators research project in the mid-1960s to study whether and how watching television may influence viewers’ ideas of what the everyday world is like. The theory argues that television has long-term effects which are small, gradual, indirect but cumulative and significant. The theory also speculates that the more time people spend watching television, the more likely their conceptions of reality will reflect what they see on television (Severin & Tankar 2010). Therefore, the audience, who watch a lot of TV, will be more likely to be convinced that the television is depicting the real world, and in other cases, the individual will apply what he sees on TV in his real world. Cultivation is about the “implications of stable, repetitive, pervasive and virtually inescapable patterns of images and ideologies that television provides. It is about the effect that the system of coherent messages that the television expresses over its audience (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999).

The Cultivation theory suggests that television is responsible for shaping or “cultivating” viewers’ conceptions about the reality. The combined effect of massive television exposure by viewers over time subtly shapes the perception of social reality for individuals and, ultimately, for our culture as a whole (Gerbner, 1998). Gerbner argues that the mass media cultivate attitudes and values which are already present in a culture: the media maintain and propagate
these values amongst members of a culture, thus binding it together (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Davies and Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2004). The earliest results of the cultivation theory were published over 20 years ago and it was related mainly to violence. Over the years the research study has been developed and criticized and its field has been broadened to add topics such as gender roles, political inclinations, science, health, religion...etc. (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999)

Matsa (2010) stated that cultivation theorists have developed three assumptions, which guide research (a) the nature of TV, which considers TV as a pervasive, accessible and coherent medium; (b) the nature of viewing, which considers TV viewing a ritual, and non-selective process and (c) the cultivation effect, which considers that TV can create and maintain beliefs about the world.

![Figure 3-1 Cultivation Theory- Conceptual Model](image)

Shanahan & Morgan (1999) argue that violence was one of the first questions that led to the development of the cultivation theory; the early empirical research focused on the impact of the violent messages on the heavy viewers as well as the perceptions of the pictures televised on
who is victimized and who is not. The authors also argued that "cultivation research examines the extent to which cumulative exposure to television contributes to viewers' conceptions of social reality, in ways that reflect the most stable, repetitive, and pervasive patterns of images and ideologies that television presents" (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). Wober and Gunter (1988) found out that those who watch more of violence programing are more likely to have bigger fear of inner city violence rather than rural violence, or violence as a whole (as cited in Meade, 2009). Meade (2009) suggests that the content of what an individual watch is as important as the way he watches the content and this is how some perceptions are being cultivated. For example, if an individual watches a movie about destiny containing a relationship, he will be more likely to believe that a relationship depends on destiny.

The distinction of the frequency of television viewing is a major criteria in the study of the cultivation theory. Viewers who watch TV a lot are more likely to be influenced by the ways in which the world is framed by the television programs than those who watch less, especially regarding topics of which the viewer has little first-hand experience (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Davies and Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2004). The distinction between light and heavy viewers vary from a study to another. Morgan (1986) characterized viewers of one hour or less per day as being light users of television; two to three hours per day as being moderate users of television, and four hours and above as being heavy users of television. Ogles and Sparks (1989) had four groups of weekly viewing hours: light (0-2 hours per week), moderate (3-9 hours), heavy (10-19 hours), and excessive (20-55 hours) (as cited in Potter, 1994).

Considering the above, the cultivation theory will be used to study the effect of viewing Bassem Youssef’s show “Al-Bernameg” on the viewers. The theory will help understand how the viewership trends of the audience affect the perception of the news they hear on the show.
According to the cultivation theory, the amount of watching a specific TV content will positively relate to the belief of the ideas proposed; therefore, the amount of watching cynicism about the political system in Egypt will positively make the audience believe that the political system is corrupted and not to be trusted. Many factors will incorporate in detecting the effects of the viewing the show, such as:

- Time spent watching “Al-Bernameg”
- Public interest in politics.
- If the viewer has already knowledge about the content presented on the show because this will affect their understanding of the political situation.
- If the viewer relies on other sources of news to compare with what he hears on the show.
3.2 Uses and Gratifications theory:

Political media gratification theories have been utilized to establish reasons for the consumption of satirical programming. Scholars have often studied the reasons why the audience consume satirical shows. McLeod, Becker & Byrnes (1974) claim that when the audience members are satisfied by what they consume from the media, this could lead to certain potential political effects such as voting preferences or the setting of an agenda. Therefore, a comprehensive usage of the uses and gratifications theory is essential to this research to understand the audience’s consumption of this newly introduced format in Egypt. The uses and gratification theory focuses on the receiver rather than the way of communication; it aims to understand how the way of communication is serving the needs of the audience by exploring the reasons behind seeking a specific media outlet. Hence, the theory suggests that the audience is active and selective and has specific inclinations toward the outlet they choose.

The origins of the uses and gratification theory started by Elihu Katz when he first proposed the shift of the research about mass media from “what the media do to people” to ‘what people do with media”. According to O'Donohoe (1994), the thought was not originally his; the idea “was rooted in a research stream which emerged in the 1940s as an antidote to the “magic bullet” approach advocated by the Frankfurt School since the turn of the century. The theory was developed to study the uses of the media and what are the gratifications that the audience members get from being exposed to a specific content (Ruggiero, 2000). The study was generated by the hypothesis that the audience is active; katz et all (1973) developed a “model” of mass communication that is based on the audience activity and selectivity, a belief that was new because all the media theories have suggested that the communication process is one way directed from the sender to the receiver. Rubin (1993) argued that the uses and gratifications
theory is based on a set of assumptions. The most basic one is that the audience is an active and selective member: the audience member engages positively in the process of communication and he is the one who chooses what to be exposed to. The audience members' behavior is influenced by what they are exposed to from the media and that the psychological preferences of the viewer is the reason why he chooses to watch specific media content. Rubin (1993) also argued that the selection of specific media is based to satisfy special need for the viewer such as cognitive needs (the need to gather information), affective needs (the need to fulfil emotions), personal integrative needs (the need to empower confidence and stability) or tension release needs (the need escape daily stress and relieve pressure). Based on Katz, Hass, and Gurevitch’s study (1973), the final assumption by Rubin is that this selection is based on the relationship between media and interpersonal communication.

With every introduction of a new media tool or way of communication, the uses and gratifications theory is used to determine the reasons how and why the audience will use such mean of communication. Ruggiero (2000) argues that "In fact, uses and gratifications theory has always provided a cutting-edge theoretical approach in the initial stages of each new mass communications medium". The theory serves as a starting point for the study of a new media outlet. Before studying the effects of a medium for example, it is important to pinpoint the reasons that pushed the audience members to resort to such outlet.

Let us now apply practical perspective to this and figure out how this concept of uses and gratifications theory can be applied to real life media cases. As noted by University of Twente (2004), the audiences themselves opt for media outlets that satisfy their needs and suffice for particular gratifications. Social networking sites are a great example of this theory. With these social sites comprising of various users with different preferences, it offers people various things
(University of Twente, 2004). With the vibrant use of these sites every day, the public derive gratification from them. The practice of public relations can also be identified as a practical utility of this theory. The media creates and develops understanding of peoples demand and make best use of the public psychological cravings. Here, significant points have been raised by theorists. As per communicationtheory.org., (2010), the uses and gratifications theory symbolizes the public as active users and it is a contrast to magic bullet theory. Instead of focusing on how media molds the public, this theory caters towards how the public makes use of media. This has vociferously made the public in charge of media activities and priorities. The social media is definitely the biggest contributor to this. What people used to discuss amongst themselves in the past, the same is being put forward in public for greater democracy and achievements. However, this theory has been criticised on the grounds that it neglects the power of media and gives greater control to the public. Thus, it runs a bigger risk of getting unmanageable by hyper activity of the public domain.

Going by the above notions it can be stated that uses and gratification theory is the norm in the present days, while theories of propaganda model and similar models need to be revisited in the present context. In a latest argument developed by the BBC (2002), this model can be broken down to serve needs of surveillance- whether specific media programs address more directly to the audience and impart information that they need to know. Next is the concept of personal identity where the media enables the public to reaffirm their position in the society. Building sustained relationships both ways with the media and public is also highlighted with changing preferences. Entertainment is definitely one of the significant aspects of this theory. Hence, from psychological outbursts to emotional control, modern day media offers the public a great deal in exploring options.
Applying the above notions, this theory will make it easier to understand why the audience choose to watch the satirical programs and why they are attracted to its content. Audience members in Egypt have been watching the content of "Al-Bernameg" since its first appearance on Youtube before it moved to television stations. Its success on the internet and the high number of views of the various videos was the main reason to push the program to the big screen. Viewers made this program famous and the program succeeded to provide its audience with an entertainment and news-worthy segments in a new format. These reasons make the use of the uses and gratifications theory an essential start up for academically analyzing the audience's gratifications and perception of the program. The theory examines how the audience consume the show “Al-Bernameg” and whether they seek it as an entertainment program or a political program. The study of these points is very important as the format of the satirical shows is growing very successfully in Egypt and daily attracting more viewership.
3.3 **Research Questions and Hypothesis**

Considering the literature review and the field of study of the satirical shows in Egypt, important research questions has been set to understand this area of study

- **Research Question 1:** Why do Egyptian audience watch the satirical show "Al-Bernameg"?
- **Research Question 2:** Do audiences perceive the show as a source of political news or just an entertainment program?
- **Research Question 3:** Did the program affect the perception of the viewers about the political system in Egypt at its time of airing?

Based on the theoretical framework discussed earlier, these hypotheses are being formulated:

- **Hypothesis 1:** Watching the program “Al-Bernameg” positively affects the political engagement and participation in Egypt
- **Hypothesis 2:** Heavy viewers of the program are more influenced by the content of the show than the light viewers.
- **Hypothesis 3:** Viewers who seek other sources of news are not influenced by the content of the show.
- **Hypothesis 4:** Viewers who think the program is for entertainment are not influenced by the content of the show.
4 Chapter IV- Research Methodology

4.1 Methodology

In order to get the maximum reach of respondents who watch the satirical show "Al-Bernameg", the researcher has chosen the quantitative method (questionnaire) as it allows a bigger number of respondents. Shanahan & Morgan (1999) has stated that Cultivation theory usually uses survey method to study the expected effects of the television on the audience. The results of the surveys could be quantifiable and thus will help in answering the research questions and accepting (or) rejecting the hypotheses formulated. The questionnaire will guarantee confidentiality. A consent form was attached at the beginning of the survey to explain the nature and purpose of the study, the time consumed to answer and guaranteeing that the respondent will not be asked to provide names or any other personal information along the survey. This method was also chosen because it minimizes the interviewer bias that can affect the respondents and it is low cost.

The questionnaire is designed to understand

- The uses and gratifications of the program "Al-Bernameg"
- The effects of the program on the Egyptian audience
- How the program could alter their perceptions about the news they hear on the show depending on "the frequency of watching the show" and "their personal experience about the news heard" using the cultivation theory
- Whether having another source of news affect the audience members’ perception of the content of the satirical program.
4.2 **Survey Design**

The survey had two versions of languages (English and Arabic) to diversify the sample of respondents and to reach bigger number of respondents. It was structured to better understand the audience’s demographics, viewership preferences and trends. The purpose of the survey was to answer the research questions and induce answers to accept or refute the hypotheses formulated based on the theories of uses and gratification and cultivation used in this research.

The survey is divided into four sections, each aim to understand the respondents to analyze the Egyptian audience. It explores their interest in news, television shows, the content of satirical shows, their political participation, the influence of satirical content on their political perception and activism. The questions used a mixture of ordinal, nominal and interval Likert scale measurement depending on the nature of the questions.

The first section “General viewership trends” is questioning the general audience preferences. A general question about viewing "Al-Bernameg" show is the main filter question as the research aims to analyze specifically the viewers of satirical shows in Egypt. Following the filter question, the researcher referred to the categorization of Morgan (1986) to make a distinction between heavy and light viewers of television. Morgan characterized viewers of one hour or less per day as being light users of television, two to three hours per day as being moderate users of television, and four hours and above as being heavy users of television (as cited in Potter, 1994). All common sources of news were then cited to explore how the Egyptian viewer seek the news.

The following section B is specifically about the program “Al-Bernameg”. The questions are designed to analyze the

- The reasons why the audience members watch the program
- The audience members’ frequency of watching the show
- The audience members’ perception about the program
- To what extent they find the program politically informative
- The effect of the show on the viewers

The third section C gives statements to the respondents which they evaluate to indicate how the program affected the audience members' perception of the reality and its impact on their political participation and activism. The statements are the reflections of the various audience members’ opinions that show whether the satirical program had an effect on their perception of the political system in Egypt or not.

The demographics indicated in the final section D provide more independent variables that affect the audiences’ choices and preferences.

4.3 Research Variables, Operational definitions and level of measurements

This research study the uses and the effects of the satirical show "Al-Bernameg" through two Independent variables (1- Exposure to the program and 2- the frequency of exposure) and two dependent variables (1- Viewers’ perceptions about political reality in Egypt and 2- The political engagement and participation).

The exposure to the program “Al-Bernameg” is the main independent variable that affects audience members. Gerbner (1998) stated that the combined effect of massive television exposure by viewers over time subtly shapes the perception of social reality for individuals and, ultimately, for our culture as a whole. Respondents were asked to answer whether they have seen at least one episode of the show “Al-Bernameg" aired from November 2012 to June 2013 in a nominal level filter question. Respondents who answer with "No" are excluded from the sample to be able to focus only on those who watch the satirical show in Egypt.
The frequency of watching the program “Al-Bernameg” is determined using a nominal level measurement question to determine whether the viewer is a "Heavy Viewer" or "Moderate Viewer" or "Light Viewer". The respondent will have three choices to answer the question “Please specify the frequency of watching the program “Al-Bernameg” aired from Nov. 2012 till June 2013”:

(a) All the episodes, which makes him a heavy viewer

(b) Frequently as an indication to a moderate viewer

(c) Rarely for the light viewer, like what is indicated in the distinction between heavy vs light viewer of the cultivation theory.

The dependent variables are the audience’s perception of the political situation in Egypt and the level of their political participation. The perception of the political situation in Egypt is defined as the way the audience perceive the political situation based on the information they get from the media. The satirical show "Al-Bernameg" announces at the beginning of each episode that the presentation of news in the show is very biased; accordingly, the viewer will be affected by the way the information are presented. The viewer will be exposed to only a one-sided presentation of the political situation in Egypt. The research is only interested to know if the audience members' perception of the political situation in Egypt has changed or not after watching the program. The research does not answer how the perception has changed (positively or negatively).

A question will explicitly ask the respondents if they think the program has changed the way they understand the political situation in Egypt to analyze such variable using a nominal level of scaling; the answers provided will vary from Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely and Never. In addition, the respondents will be given statements to indicate their level of agreement
using an interval Likert scale to evaluate their perception of the show and the content presented. Statements are as follow:

- I was politically influenced by the show
- I trusted “Al-Bernameg” show as a source of news
- “Al-Bernameg” show was enough for me to get news about the political system in Egypt
- I feel that the show has stereotyped some political figures at the time of its airing
- I feel the program was politically misleading
- The program could not have been my sole source of news about the current situation at that time
- Watching the program was a must to get other views of the political environment at that time
- I agree to all the content of the show “Al-Bernameg”

**The level of the political participation and activism of the Egyptian audience** is defined as the audience members' engagement in politics through various means such as engaging in a political discussion (in a public gathering or on social networking sites)/ filed activity such as participating in a demonstration, attending political events or seminars)/ participation in a political party. The respondents were asked a number of questions to indicate their level of participation and how the program affects this participation. Using nominal level, the questions “Do you discuss or criticize with friends, colleagues or family the political news that you have watched in “Al-Bernameg” show?” and “How do you participate in the political life? Please check all that apply” and “Did the program has an influence on you political engagement or activity?” are formulated to indicate the level of participation in the political life.
4.4 **Sampling**

The population for this study is any person who watched at least one episode of the satirical show “Al-Bernameg”. The sample used for this research is a non-probability purposive sample because the research is targeting only the viewers who watch “Al-Bernameg” and others who did not watch are eliminated from the sample.

The survey was distributed online through social networking sites and emails. The questionnaire was formulated on the survey design website “Survey Monkey” and the link was easily distributed on the social profiles of Facebook and twitter. Hashtags like #BassemYoussef, #Al-Bernameg, #Thesis #AUC were used to maximize presence of the link in the search tool of Facebook and twitter as users are using the hashtags to get news easier on the social websites. In addition to this, the URL of the survey was sent via email to the contact’s list and via private messages on LinkedIn as well.

The survey link was open for twenty days period during May 2014 and reached 310 respondents. Respondents who did not watch the program are eliminated from the total count as well as those who skipped some questions to have a consistent set of data to analyze. After eliminating the uncompleted surveys, the total number of respondents reached 258 with completed surveys for the two languages versions of the survey.

4.5 **Pilot Test, validity and reliability:**

The survey was pretested by sending it to a number of mass communication experts, media professionals and graduate students. The variety of people that read the survey gave the researcher the ability to edit the questions and answers to fit all possible answers and get the
maximum accurate results. The pilot study was also beneficial to make sure that the questions are clear.

The questions in the survey were formulated to give the researcher the same results. The same questions (especially those of the public perception of the political situation) were asked a number of times in different ways to ensure the respondents give the same answer every time to ensure validity.
5 Chapter V- Research Findings

The survey was distributed through the website “Survey Monkey” to respondents. Links to the two languages of the survey were uploaded on social networking sites to reach audiences and the link was sent to fan pages of Bassem Youssef, official pages of the program “Al-Bernameg” especially during the airtime of the program to increase responses. The total number of respondents in the twenty days period reached 310 completed surveys. After eliminating those who do not watch the program (through the filter question one) and the surveys that contain skipped questions the final number of responses was 258. The results of the survey were analyzed using the statistical program SPSS and Microsoft Excel to generate charts that simplify the data analysis. As mentioned earlier, the sample targeted was a purposive sample of the audience who only watch the program “Al-Bernameg”. The description of the sample reached is as follow.

5.1 Characteristics of Sample

5.1.1 Gender:

Among the 258 respondents, the majority of the respondents were females 64% (n=164) while the males constituted 36% (n=94) of the total sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Male</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Female</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5-1 Gender type, frequencies and percentages

---

1 Percentages of this research are rounded to the nearest tenth
5.1.2 **Age:**

The age groups were specified from “younger than 20 years old” up to “50 years and above”. The majority of the respondents fell in the category of “20 and less than 30 years old” with 60.9% (n=157) followed by “30 and less than 40” with 24.8% (n=64). The oldest category “50 years and above” constituted only 3.5%.

Table 5-2 Age categories, frequencies and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Younger than 20 years old</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 20- Less than 30 years old</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 30- Less than 40 years old</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. 40- Less than 50 years old</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. 50 years and more</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>258</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.3 **Occupation**

Respondents were asked to specify their profession whether “Student, employed, unemployed or business owner”. More than 60% of the respondents were “Employed” (n=161) while 18% were students (n=47).

Table 5-3 Occupation, frequencies and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. <strong>Student</strong></td>
<td>47</td>
<td><strong>18.2%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Unemployed</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. <strong>Employed</strong></td>
<td>161</td>
<td><strong>62.4%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Business Owner</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>258</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1.4 **Income Level**

Among the 258 respondents, almost 48% earns “5,000 EGP as income per month” while 11% earn less than “1,000 EGP as income per month”. The other two categories “1000 to less than 3000” and “3000 to less than 5000” are almost the same with almost 20% each of the respondents (n= 55 and 52 respectively).

*Table 5-4 Income level in EGP per month, frequencies and percentages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income EGP/month</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Less than 1000</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1000 to less than 3000</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 3000 to less than 5000</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. <strong>5000 and above</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>47.7%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>258</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.5 **Education**

The level of education of a person is significant to the way he perceives the world around him. Respondents were asked to specify their educational level that varied from “Non Degree, Elementary education (Primary/ preparatory), High School, Technical or Commercial High school (Diploma), College Degree, Institute Graduate (High or Average degree) or Post – Graduate degree”. The majority of the respondents had a college degree (68.6%) followed by 22.5% who had a postgraduate degree, which indicated that the majority of the respondents had high level of education.

*Table 5-5 Education, frequencies and percentages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. High school</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Technical or commercial High school (Diploma)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>c. College Degree</strong></td>
<td><strong>177</strong></td>
<td><strong>68.6%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Institute graduate (High or Average degree)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. <strong>Post Graduate degree</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>258</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Analysis of Survey Responses

5.2.1 Frequency of watching television per day

The frequency of watching television is what differentiates between heavy viewers and light viewers that will consequently impact the level of influence by the content watched according to the cultivation theory. Among the sample reached, 42% watch television for less than 2 hours, and 36% watch between 2 to 4 hours.

Table 5-6 Frequency of watching Television

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Watching television</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I don’t watch television</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Between 2 to 4 hours</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. More than 4 hours</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5-1 Frequency of watching Television
5.2.2 Sources of daily news

The sources from which the respondents get their daily news are important because it will affect the perception of the satirical content. Respondents specified the sources of daily news from a number of choices, they were asked to choose "all what applies" because normally a person nowadays is exposed to various types of media. The majority of the sample 78% (n=201) relied mainly on the Social networking sites to get the daily news. The second category was "Al-Bernameg" with 38% of the respondents (n=98). Next comes the news channel Local and international which got 24% of the respondents choices each, while the newspapers got 18% of the sample's choices. The newscasts got 11.6% and another 10% said they do not seek news at all. Only 5% of the respondents have specified other** choices such as:

- The street
- Mom
- Online News Portals
- Stewart, Colbert
- Mobile applications/ Mobile Messages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>% of 258</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I don’t seek news</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Social Networking sites (Facebook- Twitter.. etc.)</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Newspapers</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Talk shows</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. News casts on Private and/or governmental channels</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Local and/or Arabic News channels (Al Jazeera- Al Arabiya- BBC Arabic.. etc)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. International news channels (CNN- BBC- Sky News..etc)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Bassem Youssef’s show</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Other**</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>619*</td>
<td>239.9*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Multiple choice
5.2.3 Participation in political life

The participation in the political life has changed a lot after the 25th of January revolution. Egyptians are more eager to participate in the political life after the revolution by many ways. Respondents were asked to list the means of their participation by choosing all the possible answers. The answers indicates that almost 82% (n=211) choose to "talk about the politics with family and friends" and 38% post their political views on social networking sites. Around 15% of the respondents have been engaged in a demonstration while 9% "attend a public political discussion". Only 2% have participated in a political party. On a side note, there are 9% of the respondents (n=24) have indicated other** ways of participation, such as:

- I stopped talking about politics
- Clarify to the people what's going on -without letting my own views be a factor
- I don't participate
- Voting
### Table 5-8 Means of political participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How participate</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Regularly posting my political opinion on social networking sites</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Attended a public political discussion</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Engaged in a demonstration</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Participated in a political party</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Talked about politics with family, friends, colleagues.</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Other**</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>401*</td>
<td>155.4*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 5-III Means of political participation

- **f. Other** 9.30%
- **e. Talked about politics with family, friends, colleagues.** 81.80%
- **d. Participated in a political party** 1.90%
- **c. Engaged in a demonstration** 15.50%
- **b. Attended a public political discussion** 9.30%
- **a. Regularly posting my political opinion on social networking sites** 37.60%
5.2.4 Frequency of watching Al-Bernameg
The frequency of watching the program "Al-Bernameg" is very important, as it will answer parts of the hypothesis of this research. Among the respondents almost 49% have watched all the episodes, 38% have watched "frequently" and only 13 % watch "rarely".

Table 5-9 Frequency of watching Al-Bernameg

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Watching &quot;Al-Bernameg&quot;</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. All the episodes</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Frequently</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Rarely</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above data descriptions were important to analyze the sample and understand the trend of the audience regarding their viewership habits, their sources of news and the means of participation in the political life. In the next section, the data included will directly answer the research questions and hypothesis of this research.
5.3 **Research questions**
The research explores three main questions related to the uses and gratifications of the program, how the audience perceive this new format and its influence on their political engagement.

- Research Question 1: Why do the Egyptian audience watch the satirical show "Al-Bernameg"?
- Research Question 2: Do the audience perceive the show as a source of political news or just an entertainment program?
- Research Question 3: Did the program affect the perception of the viewers about the political system in Egypt at its time of airing?

5.3.1 **Research Question 1- Uses and gratification of "Al-Bernameg"**
The reasons for watching the program "Al-Bernameg" are numerous. A set of convenient answers were offered to the respondent to choose from all the possible answers that apply of his/her preferences. **This question specifically answer the first research question "Why do the Egyptian audience watch the satirical show "Al-Bernameg"?**

The answers have demonstrated the following:

- 83.7% of the respondents watch the program for entertainment purposes and to have fun
- 35% watch because they agree with Bassem Youssef's opinions on the show
- 31.8% said they watch to get updated about what's happening during the week
- Respondents who watch because they like Bassem Youssef constitute 27.5% of the sample
- 20.9% said that they watch because they hear news that they do not seek to learn
- 14.3% of the respondents said they learn something new that they do not learn anywhere else
- Only 6% (n=16) have specified other** reasons for watching:
  - Comparison with other opinions
  - Curiosity
  - I like Ayman (program correspondent)
  - New Perspective for the current news
Table 5-10 Reasons for Watching Al-Bernameg

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>% of 258</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I have fun / for entertainment</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I get informed / I want to be updated</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I like the host</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. I agree with the hosts’ opinions &amp; views</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. I learn something that I don’t learn in other places</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. To hear the news that I don’t seek anywhere else</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Other**</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567*</td>
<td>219.8*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Multiple choice

Most of the respondents’ answers revolved around entertainment. However, by adding the answers of "To get informed" and "I agree with the host's opinions", the percentage will be rise to almost 67%, which indicates that a big percentage of the audience watch to seek news as well.
5.3.2 **Research question 2- Perception of the Program**

The second research question of this study mainly tackled the perception of the program "Al-Bernameg": *'Do the audience perceive the show as a source of political news or just an entertainment program?''*

The respondents were asked first to indicate how they perceive the program itself, whether satirical show, news show, both or other. 61% of the respondents indicate that they perceive the program as a satirical show while less than 1% think it is a news show. 29.5% said it could be a mix of both and another 8% (n=22) specified other* answers as follow:

- Brainwashing and opinion changing tool
- Mirror Show
- Satirical show that conveys a specific message
- Trouble making program
- Not always purposeful
- Black comedy

*Table 5-11 Perception of the show*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider &quot;Al-Bernameg&quot; as:</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Satirical/comedy show</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. News show</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Both</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Other*</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, in the Likert scale question, respondents were asked to specify their level of agreement to the following sentence "I trusted Al-Bernameg as a source of news". The level of agreement for this sentence was 60% and the average rating is three. In fact the majority of the respondents (n=81) said "Neutral" followed by (n=68) who agree and another (n=50) who disagree.

Table 5-12 Likert scale – percentage of agreement- Research question 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>average rating</th>
<th>% Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I trusted “Al-Bernameg” show as a source of news</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square $\chi^2 = 675.767$ ((28, p=0.00) highly significant agreement levels for sentences.)
5.3.3 Research question 3

The third research question, "Did the program affect the perception of the viewers about the political system in Egypt at its time of airing?" designed to understand how this new programing affected its audience members. Two questions and a Likert scale statement are answering this question.

- The first question "Has the program changed the way you understand the political situation of Egypt at its time of airing?"
- The second question, "Did the program has an influence on you political engagement or activity?"

Regarding the first question, "Has the program changed the way you understand the political situation of Egypt at its time of airing?" the answers provided were "Always- Often- Sometimes- rarely- never". 32% of the respondents (n=82) said they "sometimes", while the other three choices "often- rarely- never" got each about 20% of the total sample. The "Always" choice took only 9% of the answers (n=24).

Table 5-13 Program influence on the audience's perception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change understanding?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Never</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Rarely</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Sometimes</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Often</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Always</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second question “Did the program have an influence on you political engagement or activity?” addressed whether watching the program has a direct influence on the audience's participation in the political events. The majority of the sample 39% said the program “never” had an influence on their political activity. 34% indicated that "sometimes" it has an influence while 1% (n=3) only said "always" had an influence on their political engagement or activity.

**Table 5-14 Program influence on the audience’s political engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program influence?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Never</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Rarely</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Sometimes</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Often</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Always</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5-VIII Program influence on the audience's political engagement

As for the Likert scale question, 56% of the respondents agreed that they were "politically influenced by the show" with an average rating of 2.8.

91 out of the 258 respondent were "neutral" about that sentence 68 agree and 48 strongly disagree.

Table 5-15 Likert scale for research question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>average rating</th>
<th>% Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12- I was politically influenced by the show</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square $\chi^2 = 675.767 \ (28, \ p=0.00)$ highly significant agreement level.
5.4 Hypotheses

The content of the show is relatively new for the Egyptian audience, however, it appeared years ago for the western viewers and its impacts have been already studied several times especially during presidential campaigns in America. Depending on the research findings of PEW center of research and other academic studies about the influence of satirical programs on the audience, the following hypotheses are formulated to be tested on the Egyptian audience:

- Watching the program “Al-Bernameg” positively affects the political engagement and participation in Egypt

- Heavy viewers of the program are more influenced by the content of the show than light viewers.

- Viewers who seek other sources of news are not influenced by the content of the show.

- Viewers who think the program is for entertainment are not influenced by the content of the show.

**Hypothesis 1**

One of the goals of the survey is to test the program's effect on the viewers especially when it comes to their political participation. To test how the program affects the audience, the audience shall be specified first to categories of heavy, moderate and light viewers. The specification of the viewers was tested in question four "Please specify the frequency of watching the program aired from November 2012 till June 2013", the results indicated that 49% have seen all the episodes, 38% watch frequently while 13% watch rarely. To analyze the influence of the program, a cross tabulation of the frequency of watching and the means of political participation
is formulated and another cross tabulation of the frequency of watching and the influence of the program from the audiences' point of view. These tables are testing the first hypothesis "Watching the program “Al-Bernameg” positively affects the political engagement and participation in Egypt".

Independent variable: Exposure of the satirical show "Al-Bernameg"

Dependent variable: Political engagement and participation

The distribution of the choices of means of political participation is almost similar for the three types of viewers. The majority of the respondents are "talking about politics with family, friends and colleges" with 53% of respondents who watched all the episodes, 55% for who watches rarely and 51% for the frequent viewers. 27% of the heavy viewers are positing their political views online, 22% for the frequent and light viewers. Only 2% of the frequent and light viewers have participated in a political demonstration as opposed to only 0.5% for the heavy viewers.

*Table 5-16 Cross tabulation of the frequency of watching and the means of political participation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q10-Participate in Political life</th>
<th>Q4: Frequency of watching &quot;Al-Bernameg&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All episodes (Heavy viewers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Regularly posting my political opinion on social networking sites</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Attended a public political discussion</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Engaged in a demonstration</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Participated in a political party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Talked about politics with family, friends, colleagues.</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Other</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chi square = 55.383 (10, p=0.00) which is highly significant indicating different distributions of frequency of watching for rate of political engagement.

Respondent were asked, "Did the program have an influence on your political engagement or activity" which evaluates directly the level of their political engagement after watching the show.

The table below is the cross tabulation of the answers with the categorization of the audience of the show.

The majority of the heavy viewers of the show (40%) said that "sometime" the program had an effect on their political activity followed by 28% who said "never". Only 2.4% selected "always". 45% of the frequent viewers said the program "never" had an influence followed by 31% who said "sometimes". 61% of the light viewers also said "never" followed by 21% who said "rarely". Zero responses for the "always" answer for both frequent and light viewers.

Table 5-17 Cross tabulation of the frequency of watching and the political influence of the program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q11: Program influence political engagement</th>
<th>Q4: Frequency of watching &quot;Al-Bernameg&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All episodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never (rate 1)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>27.8%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely (rate 2)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>16.7%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes (rate 3)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>40.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often (rate 4)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>12.7%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always (rate 5)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2.4%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average rating</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% influence on political engagement</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Depending on the results of the above cross tabulations, the first hypothesis "watching the program “Al-Bernameg” positively affects the political engagement and participation in Egypt" is rejected because neither the heavy nor the light viewers indicated that the program affected their political activity.

**Hypothesis 2**

As the cultivation theory suggests the more time people spend watching television, the more likely their conceptions of reality will reflect what they see on television. Consequently, the more time people watch the program of Bassem Youssef, the more they are affected by the content of his show, which shape their political comprehension. This statement will be tested in Hypothesis two that assume that "**heavy viewers of the program are more influenced by the content of the show than light viewers**".

Independent variable: Frequency of exposure of the satirical show "Al-Bernameg"

Dependent variable: Political influence by the show.

To test the above, the frequency of watching the show "Al-Bernameg" is cross tabulated with sentences with Likert scale measurement to determine the level of agreement of each type of viewers to the following:

- I was politically influenced by the show
- I feel that the show has stereotyped some political figures at the time of its airing
- I feel the program was politically misleading
- I agree to all the content of the show "Al-Bernameg"

When comparing the level of agreement of the heavy viewers Vs the light viewers to the following statements, 61% of the heavy viewers think they are politically influenced by the show
opposed to 45% of the light viewers. 62% of the heavy viewers also "agree on all the content of the show" while 41% only of the light viewers agree on all the content.

For the question whether they think the show is stereotyping some political figures, the percentage of agreement are almost the same (67% and 65% respectively) which demonstrates that the opinions of light and heavy viewers is the same regarding this point. 40% of the respondents do not think that the program is politically misleading while 62% agree.

Table 5-18 Cross tabulation of the percent agreement of watching "Al-Bernameg" and the political influence of the program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% agreement of watching &quot;Al-Bernameg&quot;</th>
<th>chi square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was politically influenced by the show</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the show has stereotyped some political figures at the time of its airing</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel the program was politically misleading</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree to all the content of the show “Al-Bernameg”</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square:

** Highly significant indicating different distributions of agreement levels for the sentences

* Significant indicating different distributions of agreement levels for the sentences

NS= Non-significant indicating similar distributions of agreement levels for the sentences

The above results conclude that the heavy viewers of the show are more influence by the show and agree to its content. On the other hand, the majority of the light viewers think the program was politically misleading, which demonstrates that they were not affected by its content. Therefore, the second hypothesis of this research is accepted.
Hypothesis 3

In his show, Bassem Youssef relies mainly on the political news that took place in Egypt for the whole week. As stated above, 30% of the respondents perceive the show as both a satirical and news show. If the respondents have no other source of news, the program will be their only source; thus, their perception of the news would be altered. Respondents who are exposed to other sources might or might not be influenced by the content of the program. This is tested in hypothesis three "Viewers who seek other sources of news are not influenced by the content of the show".

Independent variable: Exposure to other sources of news

Dependent variable: Political influence by the show

The third question of the survey asked the respondents about their sources for daily news. The answers to this question were cross tabulated with some sentences to study their level of agreement. The purpose is to compare between the respondents who take the program "Al-Bernameg" as their source of news and other who rely on professional sources like the news channels or the talk shows.

Respondents who seek Bassem Youssef's show as their main source of news are the highest who were influenced by the show (67%) while those who seek "Other" sources are the lowest (41%) followed by those who watch international news show (53%).

56% of respondents who watch local or Arabic news channel trust the program as a source of news, opposed to 75% of people who rely on the program for news.

49% and the highest level of agreement among all categories for respondents who watch international channels feel that the program was politically misleading while the lowest percentage of agreement was for Bassem Youssef Show
When the respondents were asked if they agree to all the content of the show, the highest level of agreement came from those who watch mainly Bassem Youssef while the lowest is from the respondents who watch international news channels.

**Chi square is highly significant indicating different distributions of agreement levels for each source of news. This calculated % agreement table is a summary of 9 tables – one for each source of news with agreement levels of the 4 sentences -from strongly disagree to strongly agree**

Although the variance between the percentage of agreement of the respondents with different choices of professional sources of news are very similar regarding these sentences; the difference between respondents who take BY show as their primary source of news and all the other possible means is slightly remarkable. The answers showed that respondents who prefer the professional channels or shows are not influenced by the show like the others who rely mainly on the sarcastic show. This shows that the third hypothesis is accepted.
Hypothesis 4

As the research is trying to identify the perception of the audience and its influence, the fourth hypothesis assume that "Viewers who think the program is for entertainment are not influenced by the content of the show".

Independent variable: Perception about the satirical show "Al-Bernameg"

Dependent variable: Political influence by the show

The cross tabulation below is showing how different respondents have perceived the show and how they think the program affected their political engagement. Sixty-one percent of the respondents think the program is for entertainment; among them only 33% (n=1) who think the program had an influence on the political engagement.

Table 5-20 Cross tabulation of perception about the program and its influence on the political engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q 11 : influence on political engagement</th>
<th>Q7: considering &quot;Al-Bernameg&quot; as :</th>
<th>Sarcastic/comedy</th>
<th>News show</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76.0%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>258</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td>.8%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square = 58.002 (12, p=0.00) highly significant indicating different distributions of rate of influence for the program types. The high value of chi square may be due to the zeroes.
The Likert scale question included the sentence "I was politically influenced by the show". 51% of the respondents who think the program is only sarcastic agree that they were politically influenced by the show.

Table 5-21 Cross tabulation of perception about the program and its influence on the political engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I was politically influenced by the show</th>
<th>Q7: % agreement of considering &quot;Al-Bernameg&quot; as:</th>
<th>chisquare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sarcastic/comedy</td>
<td>chi square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>News show</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Chi square is highly significant indicating different distributions of agreement levels for the sentences

** Regarding the above two tables, the sample indicated that the fourth hypothesis is accepted as the viewers who think the program is only for entertainment are not affected by the program.
6 Chapter VI- Analysis of Findings and Conclusion

6.1 Results' analysis

The format that Bassem Youssef presents is considered "new" to the Egyptian audience, which makes it a perfect area of study. As the program relies on the political events, it will consequently have some effects on its audience. Before studying these effects, the reasons of the heavy consumption of this new program must be analyzed. Analyzing the cause of the high viewership of the program will indicate the preferences of the Egyptians. Uses and gratification theory compose a cutting edge theoretical approach to the initial stage of any study. This study is considered as a pioneer of the academic approaches of the effects of the satirical shows on the Egyptian audience, thus, the uses and gratification theory is like a solid starting point. The program rely on cynicism, however, the audience may find other reasons to turn to the program every week.

As stated previously, in their research Holbert, Lambe, Dudo & Carlton (2007) stated that uses and gratifications of political media were used to explore the reasons why the audience turns to political content and to study the effects of the consumptions of such political content on the audience behavior. Uses and gratification suggests that the audience member is active in the communication process and selective of the mean of communication. The answers of the respondents of this survey show that the majority of the viewers (84%) seek the program for entertainment. A big percentage of viewers also agree that they watch the program because they agree with what the host says on the episodes and that they want to be updated about the news of the week as well. A minimal percentage of viewers think the program presents a different perspective of the current news.
Based on several research conducted on the political influence of the comedy show, the audience have a tendency to consider the comedy shows as "sources of news" since the late 1980s (Pizer, 2007). This trend has been specifically noticed in the changes of results of the viewership habits of the audience between 2000 and 2004 concerning the sources for information about the American presidential elections (Cutbirth, 2011 & “News Media’s Improved”, 2002 & “Cable and Internet Loom”, 2004). The number of citizens who base their political knowledge on the comedy shows rose from six to eight percent in general, with a significance increase for younger age groups (18-29) of twenty-nine percent. In this study, the majority of the respondents—sixty-one percent—stated that they perceive the show as a "satirical show" and only one percent thinks it is a news show. On the other hand, when respondents were asked to specify whether they agree that they "trust Al-Bernameg as a source of news", 60.3% agreed on the later statement showing that the comedy show in Egypt is also considered a source of political news and viewers seek it for non-traditional for of news. This explains why the distinction between news and entertainment is no longer valid in western societies and the comedy shows became an entertaining source of news for many; the Egyptian audience perceive the show as satirical however 60% trust the news they hear on the show. Niven, Lichter, & Amundson (2003) claimed that the comedy shows could establish a better channel of communication with the audience and provide them with the news they need in a non-traditional format.

Literature reviews have shown that satirical programs influence the western voters, and the content positively affects the receivers' attitudes depending on the amount of cynicism on the show (Williams, 2011). In literature, there are two contradicting points of views regarding the effect of satire on the audience, Hobert et al. (2007) and Young & Tisinger (2006). In Egypt, and according to the results, almost 50% of the respondents agree that the program politically...
influence their perception, divided to 32% think the program "sometimes" changed the way they understand politics in Egypt and 18% think that "often" it changed their understand of the news. To explore better the influence of the show, respondents were then evaluating its impact on the political activity; also, 34% said "sometimes" while 39% said "never" had an influence. Although the majority of the sample are somehow influenced by the content of the show as it altered the way they understand the political situation in Egypt; the program does not impact the political activity of its viewers. The later statement is accepted also by the average percentage of agreement (56%) to the Likert scale statement "I was politically influenced by the show".

Since it has been established that the comedy shows are now sources of news to the viewers and they to some extent have an effect on the political perception of the viewers, the further parts of the research needs to analyze whether the frequency of watching the program in Egypt positively affects the political engagement. Shah (1998) claims that entertainment television can be used for political communication and affects the audience much higher than traditional forms of political and current affairs programming. These shows can also potentially change the manner in which the audience perceives traditional political and public affairs programming (Baym, 2005). These results performed on Egyptian audience indicate that the viewers do not agree at all that the program has "always" an effect on their political activity. The majority of the heavy viewers of the show (40%) said that "sometime" the program had an effect on their political activity as opposed to (31%) of the frequent viewers. Light viewers of the show said the program "never" had an influence on their political activity. Although it was previously verified that the program affected the viewers' political perceptions, it still do not affect their political participation or activity. Most of the respondents either talk about politics with
surrounding people or post their views online, with same frequencies for light and heavy viewers.

As per the cultivation theory suggests, viewers of television are categorized as heavy viewers vs. light viewers because the heavy viewers are more influenced by what they see on television than the light viewers (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Davies and Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2004). The excessive watching of a specific content will make the viewer believe that what he sees is the social reality. When the interpretation of the cultivation theory is applied to comic shows, it is possible that the stereotypes and cynicism that the presenters use in their shows affect the perceptions of the viewers of the news presented on the program. In other words, the more cynicism presented on television mocking the politics, the more the audience believe that the political system is failing.

According to the later research, if a person is exposed to both types of material, one considered to be persuasive such as a newspaper and another satirical content, the perceiver would more highly respond to the satirical content than to the persuasive editorial. In addition if the viewers perceive themselves as “politically incompetent and ineffective”, they become more affected by the messages of the comedy shows and its cynicism about the national news as per the studies on the primacy effects (Holbert et al., 2007). Relating the stated to the results of the survey, 61% of the heavy viewers think they are politically influenced by the show opposed to 45% of the light viewers. Sixty-two percent of the heavy viewers also "agree on all the content of the show" while 41% only of the light viewers agree on all the content.

The survey concluded that the heavy viewers of the show are more influenced by the show and agree to its content. On the other hand, the majority of the light viewers think the program was politically misleading, which shows that they were not affected by its content.
Although the categorization of both news and entertainment is not important in the broadcast field because they both can complement each other (Williams, 2011 & Baym, 2005); it is important to study the effects of the exposure to other professional sources of news besides being exposed to the satirical show of Bassem Youssef. In addition, the cultivation theory suggest that the excessive watching of television will affect the viewer specifically in the topics he has little first hand experience on. Consequently, if the viewer does not have other sources of news than Bassem Youssef's show, chances are the viewer is more affected by the content presented. The results of the survey demonstrated that those who are exposed to other sources are not influenced by the show like those who do not watch news and watch only Bassem Youssef. Only 58% of respondents who watch local or Arabic news channel trust the program as a source of news, opposed to 75% of people who rely on the program "Al-Bernameg" for news. Viewers of Youssef’s show identify themselves as being influenced by the show more than other audience of professional news channels.

The audiences' perception of the show (whether it is comic or news source) indicates how they are influenced. However, the Egyptian society is known by its love to cynicism and joking about everything in life. Williams (2011) claimed that the role of criticism in the society affects the level of influence of satire. Although the majority of the respondents think that the show is mere sarcastic and only 33% (n=1) who think the program had an influence on the political engagement, 51% of the respondents who think that the program is only sarcastic agree that they were politically influenced by the show. Then the show affects their political perception not their political engagement.
6.2 Conclusion

Satirical shows has a huge impact on the western societies in terms of viewership and political influence including voting preferences. The study of the same content in Egypt is crucial because the audience are still newly exposed to such new format that present political information in a different perspective.

The heavy consumptions and viewership of the program is due to many factors including the personal preferences of the viewers. The majority of the sample audience in this research tune to Bassem Youssef for entertainment and because they agree with what the host says on the episodes. Seeking news of the week is also a top reason why audience watch Bassem Youssef’s show.

The audience have found in Bassem Youssef a great sources of news mixed with fun and entertainment. Although a massive percentage said they consider the show merely satirical, they still trust the program as a source of news.

Western news channels have already established the fact that there is no distinctive between entertainment and news in the recent years. Slowly but firmly, the same thing is happening in Egypt with the introduction of Bassem Youssef’s satirical shows on the Egyptian and Arab channels. The program is presented for entertainment, yet it is consumed for news as well.

Not only that Egyptians in this sample trust "Al-Bernameg" as a source of news" but also almost 50% agree the program has in most of the times political influence on them and the program changed the way they understand politics in Egypt. However, a minimal percentage agree the program has affected their political activity or engagement.
The hypothesis of this research, the results generated from cross tabulations of many variables all indicate that the program has a positive effect on the audience's political perception, yet there is no evidence that it affected their political participation or activity. Most of the respondents either talk about politics with surrounding people or post their views online, with same frequencies for light and heavy viewers.

The cultivation theory suggests that the more the viewer watches a special content, the more he believe that this content represents the truth, or is influenced by the ideas projected. The theory is well applied on this survey as well because the heavy viewers of the program "Al-Bernameg" were more influenced by the show politically than the light viewers. Heavy viewers also tend to agree on all the content of the show more than the light viewers who perceived the program as misleading.

Respondents with variant sources of news are the least affected by the program and its content because they are exposed to other ideas prior to "Al-Bernmaeg". Viewers who rely on "Al-Bernameg" mainly for news are more influenced by the content than the audience of international news channels or local ones.

The same results of influence according to the cultivation theory are acceted again when testing whether the viewers who perceives the program only for entertainment are influence by its content or not.
6.3 **Limitation of the study**

As the format of satire programing is new to Egypt is was difficult to find sources that analyze the audiences of the satire in Egypt and its influence. All the available data were mainly administrated by American websites on American citizens.

Although the program has been on air for almost 2 years, there was no academic research about Bassem Youssef. This research is considered the first academic paper targeting the first satiric comedy show in Egypt.

The political events in Egypt are changing very fast and the people perceptions about the news and comedy shows might be influenced by other political events in the country. Such research on audience behaviors need to be revised and analyzed according to the current political situation.

The results of this research could not be generalized because the sample was purposive to meet the deadline of the paper.
6.4 **Recommendations for future studies**

- Satirical programs’ effects need to be studied in particular on the age groups of 18-29 year old as this group has showed the highest in engaging with this format.

- The program's effects need to be studied during presidential elections opposed to mainstream media to evaluate where the voters collect their information about candidates and which format affect them more and why.

- Studies should explore the ways how the government in Egypt could exploit such program to project its ideas or even propagate new programs with the same format to make use of the high viewership and popularity.
Appendix A-English Survey

Dear respondents,

This survey is designed as part of a research about the effects of the satirical program “Al-Bernameg” in its second season 2012-2013 aired on CBC channel aired during the ruling of the Muslim Brotherhood(from November 2012 till June 2013).

The research is part of a thesis as a partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Arts from the American University in Cairo.

There will be no risks or discomforts associated with this research or any personal benefits. Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or risks.

The survey shall not exceed 10 minutes of your time to complete.

The answers to this survey is completely anonymous, no personal data should be provided along the survey.
Thank you for taking the time to fill it out.

Sincerely,
Radwa ElGabry
MA Student
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
The American University in Cairo
radwaelgabry@gmail.com

Section A: General Viewership trends

1- Did you watch any of the episodes of the second season satirical program “Al-Bernameg” (on CBC or online)?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   **If your answer was NO, you may finish the survey. Thank you**

2- Please specify the frequency of watching television per day
   a. I don’t watch television
   b. Less than 2 hours
   c. Between 2 to 4 hours
   d. More than 4 hours

3- What are the sources for your daily news (Mark all that apply)
   a. I don’t seek news
   b. Social Networking sites (Facebook- Twitter.. etc)
c. Newspapers

d. Talk shows

e. News casts on Private and/or governmental channels

f. Local and/or Arabic News channels (Al Jazeera- Al Arabiya- BBC Arabic.. etc)

g. International news channels (CNN- BBC- Sky News..etc)

h. Al-Bernameg's show

i. Other, please specify____________
Section B: About the program “Al-Bernameg”

4- Please specify the frequency of watching the program “Al-Bernameg” aired from Nov. 2012 till June 2013
   a. All the episodes
   b. Frequently
   c. Rarely

5- Specify the reasons why you watch the program (Mark all that apply)
   a. I have fun / for entertainment
   b. I get informed / I want to be updated
   c. I like the host
   d. I agree with the hosts’ opinions & views
   e. I learn something that I don’t learn in other places
   f. To hear the news that I don’t seek anywhere else
   g. Other, please specify____________

6- Do you consider the show “Al-Bernameg” as
   a. Satirical/comedy show
   b. News show
   c. Both
   d. Other, please specify____________

7- How often did you learn something about political figures, the government or news events from “Al-Bernameg” show?
   a. Always
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Never

8- Has the program changed the way you understand the political situation of Egypt at its time of airing?
   a. Always
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Never

9- Do you discuss or criticize with friends, colleagues or family the political news that you have watched in “Al-Bernameg” show?
   a. Always
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Never

10- How do you participate in the political life? Please check all that apply
a. Regularly posting my political opinion on social networking sites  
b. Attended a public political discussion  
c. Engaged in a demonstration  
d. Participated in a political party  
e. Talked about politics with family, friends, colleagues.  
f. Other, Please specify____________

11- Did the program has an influence on you political engagement or activity?  
a. Always  
b. Often  
c. Sometimes  
d. Never

Section C

Please specify your level of agreement for the following sentences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12- I was politically influenced by the show</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13- I trusted “Al-Bernameg” show as a source of news</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14- “Al-Bernameg” show was enough for me to get news about the political system in Egypt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15- I feel that the show has stereotyped some political figures at the time of its airing</td>
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<tr>
<td>16- I feel the program was politically misleading</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17- The program could not have been my sole source of news about the current situation at that time</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18- Watching the program was a must to get other views of the political environment at that time</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19- I agree to all the content of the show &quot;Al-Bernameg”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section D: Demographics

20- Gender:
   a. Male
   b. Female

21- Age:
   a. Younger than 20 years old
   b. 20- Less than 30 years old
   c. 30- Less than 40 years old
   d. 41- Less than 50 years old
   e. More than 50 years old

22- Occupation:
   a. Student
   b. Unemployed
   c. Employed
   d. Business Owner

23- Income level in EGP per month:
   a. Less than 1000
   b. 1000 to less than 3000
   c. 3000 to less than 5000
   d. 5000 and above

24- Education:
   a. Non Degree
   b. High School
   c. Technical or Commercial High school (Diploma)
   d. College Degree
   e. Institute Graduate (High or Average degree)
   f. Post –Graduate degree

Thank You
عزيزي المشارك في الاستبيان

تم تصميم هذا الاستبيان كجزء من بحث حول تأثير البرنامج الساخر "البرنامج" في موسمه الثاني الذي بثته قناة سي بي سي في الفترة من نوفمبر 2012 حتى يونيو 2013 خلال فترة حكم الأخوان المسلمين على المشاهدين.

هذا البحث هو جزء من رسالة ماجستير في الآداب من الجامعة الأمريكية في القاهرة.

لا يوجد مخاطر من المشاركة في الاستبيان أو استفادة شخصية. نتائج البحث سوف تنشر في رسالة الماجستير بالجامعة.

المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ماهي إلا عمل تطوعي، الامتناع عن المشاركة لا يتضمن أي مشاكل. يمكنك التوقف عن المشاركة في أي وقت.

المشاركة لا تتطلب أكثر من 10 دقائق من وقتك لإكماله.

الإجابات لن يطلع عليها أحد، ويرجى عدم ذكر الاسم أو العنوان مع الاستجابة.

شكركم على وقتكم.

مع خالص التقدير,

رضوى الجابرى
طالبة ماجستير
قسم الصحافة والإعلام الجامعة الأمريكية في القاهرة

radwaelgabry@gmail.com
قسم الصحافة والإعلام الجامعة الأمريكية في القاهرة

القسم الأول : عادات المشاهدة العامة للتلفزيون

1- هل شاهدت أي من حلقات برنامج البرنامج، الساخر، في موسمه الثاني على قناة CBC (أو عبر الإنترنت)؟
أ. نعم
ب. لا
إذا كان جوابك "لا" برجاء إنهاء الاستبيان الآن. وشكرا على وقتك.

2- برجاء تحديد مدة مشاهدة التلفزيون يوميا
أ. لا أشاهد التلفزيون
ب. أقل من ساعتين
ج. ما بين 2 إلى 4 ساعات
د. أكثر من 4 ساعات

3- ما هي مصادر الأخبار اليومية؟ (اختير كل ما ينطبق عليك)
أ. أنا لا أبحث عن الأخبار
ب. مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية (فيسبوك، تويتر .. الخ)
ج. الصحف
د. البرامج الحوارية

89
ه. برنامج إخبارية على قنوات خاصة و/أو حكومية
و. قنوات الأخبار المحلية و/أو العربية (قناة الجزيرة، قناة العربية، بي بي سي العربية .. الخ)
ز. القنوات الإخبارية الدولية (CNN- BBC - سكاي نيوز .. الخ)
ح. برنامج البرنامج
ط. مصادر أخرى، رجاء ذكرها __________________________

القسم الثاني  

4- أرجو تحديد مدى مشاهدة "البرنامج" من نوفمبر 2012 حتى يونيو 2013
ا. جميع الحلقات
ب. أحيانا
ج. نادرا

5- حدّد أسباب مشاهدتك لـ "البرنامج" (أشر إلى كل ما ينطبق عليه)
ا. للمتعة / للترفيه
ب. للحصول على معلومات / أريد أن أعلم الجديد
ج. أنا أحب المضيف
د. أتمنى أن أتعلم في أماكن أخرى
د. أتمنى أن أتعلم في أماكن أخرى
ه. لسماع الأخبار التي لا أجدها في أي مكان آخر
ز. أسباب أخرى، رجاء ذكرها __________________________

6- هل تعتبر برنامج "البرنامج":
أ. برنامج ساخر / عرض كوميدي
ب. برنامج إخباري
ج. الإثنين معا
د. شيء آخر، رجاء ذكره __________________________

7- إلى أي مدى تعلمت شيئا عن الشخصيات السياسية، والأحداث أو الأخبار الحكومية من خلال برنامج "البرنامج"؟
أ. دائما
ب. غالبا
ج. أحيانا
د. نادرا
ه. أبدا

8- هل غير البرنامج الطريقة التي تفهم بها الوضع السياسي في مصر في وقتها؟
أ. دائما
ب. غالبا
ج. أحيانا
د. نادرا
ه. أبدا
9- هل تناقش أو تنتقد مع الأصدقاء والزملاء أو الأسرة ما كنت قد شاهدته في برنامج "البرنامج"؟
أ. دائماً
ب. غالباً
ج. أحياناً
د. نادراً
ه. أبداً

10- كيف تشارك في الحياة السياسية. يرجى ذكر كل ما ينطبق عليه
أ. أنشر رأيي السياسي على مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية
ب. أحضر مناقشات سياسية العامة
ج. أشارك في مظاهرات
د. أشارك في حزب سياسي
ه. أتحدث عن السياسة مع العائلة والأصدقاء والزملاء.
و. شريكاً آخر، يرجى ذكرها

11- هل "البرنامج" له تأثير على مشاركتك أو نشاطك السياسي؟
أ. دائماً
ب. غالباً
ج. أحياناً
د. نادراً
ه. أبداً

القسم الثالث
يرجى تحديد مدى اتفاقك على الجمل التالية

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>لا أوافق بشدة</th>
<th>لا أوافق</th>
<th>محابد</th>
<th>أوافق</th>
<th>أوافق بشدة</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

12- تأثرت سياسيا من خلال العرض
13- كنت أثق في "البرنامج" كمصدر للأخبار
14- "البرنامج" كان كافيا بالنسبة لي للحصول على الأخبار حول النظام السياسي في مصر
15- أشعر أن "البرنامج" قام بالتغطية النمطية لبعض الشخصيات السياسية في وقت بنه
16- أشعر أن "البرنامج" كان مرضي سياسيا
17- لم يكن ممكن أن يكون "البرنامج" مصدري الوحيد للأخبار حول الوضع الراهن في ذلك الوقت
18- كان لابد من مشاهدة "البرنامج" للحصول على وجهات النظر الأخرى عن الوضع السياسي في ذلك الوقت
قسم الرابع: البيانات الشخصية

20- الجنس:
  أ. ذكر
  ب. أنثى

21- العمر:
  أ. أقل من 20 سنة
  ب. 20 - أقل من 30 سنة
  ج. 30 - أقل من 40 سنة
  د. 40 - أقل من 50 سنة
  ه. 50 فأكثر

22- المهنة:
  أ. طالب
  ب. لا أعمل
  ج. موظف
  د. صاحب عمل

23- مستوى الدخل بالجنيه في الشهر:
  أ. أقل من 1000
  ب. 1000 إلى أقل من 3000
  ج. 3000 إلى أقل من 5000
  د. 5000 وما فوق

24- التعليم:
  أ. غير متعلم
  ب. شهادة ابتدائية/اعدادية
  ج. شهادة ثانوية
  د. شهادة تاونى صناعى أو تجاري (دبلوم)
  ه. معهد (عالي أو متوسط)
  و. شهادة جامعية
  ز. شهادة دراسات عليا

شكرا لك
Appendix C - IRB Approval

CASE #2013-2014-121

To: Radwa ElGabry
Cc: Nesrine Azmy
From: Atta Gebril, Chair of the IRB
Date: April 24, 2014
Re: Approval of study

This is to inform you that I reviewed your revised research proposal entitled “Political satire in Egypt after 2011: the effects of the program “albernameg” by Bassem Youssef on the Egyptian audience,” and determined that it required consultation with the IRB under the “ expedited” heading. As you are aware, the members of the IRB suggested certain revisions to the original proposal, but your new version addresses these concerns successfully. The revised proposal used appropriate procedures to minimize risks to human subjects and that adequate provision was made for confidentiality and data anonymity of participants in any published record. I believe you will also make adequate provision for obtaining informed consent of the participants.

Please note that IRB approval does not automatically ensure approval by CAPMAS, an Egyptian government agency responsible for approving some types of off-campus research. CAPMAS issues are handled at AUC by the office of the University Counsellor, Dr. Amr Salama. The IRB is not in a position to offer any opinion on CAPMAS issues, and takes no responsibility for obtaining CAPMAS approval.

This approval is valid for only one year. In case you have not finished data collection within a year, you need to apply for an extension.

Thank you and good luck.

Atta Gebril
IRB chair, The American University in Cairo
2046 HUSS Building
T: 02-26151919
Email: agebril@aucegypt.edu

Institutional Review Board
The American University in Cairo
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قرار رئيس الجهاز المركزي للتعبئة العامة والإحصاء بالتفويض

رقم (2014) لسنة 2014

في شأن قيام الباحثة / رضوى الشرifo محمد الجابر - المسدسة لدرجة الماجستير

بقسم الصحافة والإعلام - الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة - بإجراء دراسة ميدانية ذات صلة بالقضايا السياسية في مصر بعد (2011).

رئيس الجهاز


وعلى القرار رئيس الجهاز رقم (231) لسنة 1988 بشأن إجراء الإحصاءات والتعدادات والاستنتاجات والاستقصاءات.

وعلى قرار رئيس الجهاز رقم (131) لسنة 2007 بشأن التفويض في بعض الامتيازات.

و بعد الإبلاغ على مذكرة الارض على رئيس الجهاز وموافقة سيادته على ما ورد بها.

وعلى كتاب الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة الورد للجهاز في 10/5/2014.

مادتان

1- تقوم الباحثة / رضوى الشرifo محمد الجابر - المسدسة لدرجة الماجستير الصحافة والإعلام - الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة - بإجراء الدراسة الميدانية من خلال متابعة وシュرى من الجمهور المصري وبخصوص مشاركته في برنامج الأسعار بناءً على النتائج وتحفيز النتائج.

2- تجري الدراسة على عينة عشوائية حجمها (300) لثلاثمائة مفردة من الجمهور المصري مشاهدة.

3- تجمع البيانات اللازمة لهذه الدراسة طبقاً للاستعارة المحددة لهذا الفرع ومن ثم الاستمارة المحددة من الجهاز المركزي للتعبئة العامة والإحصاء بعد صفحاتها (4) مصفحة (4) مصفحة (4) مصفحة (4)

4- بحرا مواقف مفرادات كبيرة من سرية البيانات المرتبطة طبقاً لاحكام القانون وعدم استخدام البيانات التي يتم جمعها لأغراض أخرى غير أغراض هذه الدراسة.

5- يجري العمل الميداني خلال شهر من تاريخ صدور هذا القرار.

6- يوافق الجهاز المركزي للتعبئة العامة والإحصاء بالنسبة من النتائج النهائية لهذه الدراسة.

7- يقوم جميع البيانات اللازمة لهذه الدراسة بالوسائل المبينة.

8- تتلمع الباحثة / رضوى الشرifo محمد الجابر - بالاتصال ب잠포 في مناطق مختلفة من هذا القرار قبل البدء في التنفيذ، لمعرفة بيانات اللجان بالدراسة (الاسم - الرقم القومي - تاريخ بدء).

صدر في: 10/5/2014

أحمد علي محمد
مدير عام الإدارة العامة للأمن
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