

Rethinking the Dimensions of Comparing Media Systems in
Authoritarian Regimes: An Analysis of Post Arab Spring Media
Systems in Egypt and Tunisia

A Dissertation

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Declaration

"I hereby declare that this dissertation was written and prepared by me independently. Furthermore, no sources and aids other than those indicated have been used. Intellectual property of other authors has been marked accordingly. I also declare that I have not applied for an examination procedure at any other institution and that I have not submitted the dissertation in this or any other form to any other faculty as a dissertation."

Summary

This dissertation analyses the Egyptian and Tunisian media systems using the lens of Hallin and Mancini's Comparing Media Systems (2004) framework. *Comparing Media Systems* emerged as an influential theoretical framework in the comparative political communication field. Hallin and Mancini provided a theoretical framework to understand the interactions between media and politics' realms using four dimensions: 1- Role of the State, 2- Political Parallelism, 3- Media Market, and 4- Journalistic Professionalism. They classified media systems into three distinct models: Liberal, Democratic-Corporatist, and Polarized Pluralist.

This study focuses on examining Egyptian and Tunisian media systems using Hallin and Mancini's dimensions rather than attempting to submit both media systems into one of the ideal three types identified in the original framework. The dimensions themselves have proven to be more useful to compare media systems outside of the established democracies of Europe and Northern America than the ideal models put forth by the two scholars. This dissertation responds to the call for examining media systems in non-Western countries to refining the comparative variables and dimensions. Hallin and Mancini never claimed the universal applicability of the models. They acknowledge that they limited their work to a specific geographic location of Western Europe and Northern America. They suggested that their work would inspire other researchers to adapt and reconfigure their framework and their ideal models to specific contexts.

The comparison of the media systems in Egypt and Tunisia aims to critically assess how the political setting in the Middle East region after the Arab Spring shaped the comparative dimensions pertinent to understanding the media systems. Based on the assessment and the specific local political context, suggest amendments to the analytical variables and dimension. This approach shows a connection between the political systems and media systems that is sensitive to the local political context and captures the roots of the inherited structures from the past that lead to the re-invention of the old practices in the media system.

The study applied a triangulation of methodology in collecting the data and answering research questions, specifically 1- Secondary quantitative data and statistics were used in the analysis as well as industry reports. 2- The qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews were conducted with 60 media experts in Egypt and Tunisia. 3- Two case studies of the media systems in Egypt and Tunisia were then applied.

This study confirms that these countries are dissimilar and cannot fit into the same model. Tunisia, since the 2011 uprising, can be classified closer to the Mediterranean model. In

contrast, Egypt does not sit in the same model easily. This finding aligns with previous scholarly work, which has concluded that the Egyptian media shares some features with the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist model but does not fit comfortably in that model (Khamis, 2008, p. 274). Following 2011, up till the military takeover in 2014, Egypt was comparable to Hallin and Mancini's Mediterranean model of democratic media with a strong government sector and a very polarized media sector. Starting in 2015, Egypt can no longer be considered to fit in the same model of a functioning democratic system; it is an authoritarian system (Hafez, 2015). Tunisia is an exceptional case in the Arab world and can be closer to the Mediterranean model. It can be considered closer to media systems in post-transition countries such as Eastern Europe or Southeast Asia (Richter, 2017).

This study concludes with proposals for fine-tuning Hallin and Mancini's analytical dimensions. This study confirms that the role of the state has the most influential role in the analysis of the media system in the Arab region. It also calls for the expansion of the media market dimension to better understand the relationship between the state and the market in authoritarian settings, such as the role of loyal businessmen. A resilient, authoritarian political setting, where the strong state merges with the business and commercial media, leads to further deepening of the authoritarian rule with reinventing new control methods over the media. It is also critical to expanding the dimension to accommodate for all the growing roles of online media. This study also argues that the political parallelism dimension needs a different lens to explore the dynamics between the state and other actors beyond the political parties. Despite the multiple voices in the media system, the media does not provide a sense of pluralism or diversity of voices.

This study proposes that a Statist-Commercialized +media model can better describe media systems in the Arab region, especially in countries with similar political context to the Egyptian case. Authoritarian media system models can be characterized by 1- extreme state control (beyond the polarized model type of state control), 2- high media market in terms of commercialization, lack of diversity, alternative media outlets (beyond the mass-circulation press), and growing market for online media, 3- loyalist private media (that does not lead to a plurality of voices in the market), and 4- low professional standards. Tunisia remains closer to the Polarized Pluralist model as an exceptional case in the Arab region.

Zusammenfassung

In dieser Dissertation werden die Mediensysteme Ägyptens und Tunesiens unter Verwendung des „Comparing Media Systems“ von Hallin und Mancini (2004) untersucht. Der Vergleich von Mediensystemen hat sich als ein einflussreicher theoretischer Rahmen im Bereich der vergleichenden politischen Kommunikation herausgebildet. Hallin und Mancini lieferten einen theoretischen Rahmen, um die Interaktionen zwischen den Bereichen Medien und Politik anhand von vier Dimensionen zu verstehen: (1) Rolle des Staates, (2) Politischer Parallelismus, (3) Medienmarkt und (4) Journalistische Professionalität. Sie klassifizierten Mediensysteme in drei verschiedene Modelle: Liberal, Demokratisch-Korporatistisch und Polarisiert-Pluralistisch.

Der Schwerpunkt dieser Studie liegt darauf, die Mediensysteme Ägyptens und Tunesiens anhand der Dimensionen von Hallin und Mancini zu untersuchen, anstatt zu versuchen, beide Mediensysteme einem der drei Idealtypen zuzuordnen, die im ursprünglichen Rahmenwerk identifiziert wurden. Die Dimensionen selbst haben sich für den Vergleich von Mediensystemen außerhalb der etablierten Demokratien Europas und Nordamerikas als nützlicher erwiesen als die von Hallin und Mancini aufgestellten Idealmodelle. Die Dissertation ist eine Antwort auf die Forderung, Mediensysteme in nicht-westlichen Ländern zu untersuchen, um die Vergleichsvariablen und -dimensionen zu verfeinern. Hallin und Mancini räumen ein, dass die Beschränkung auf die westliche Welt eine Einschränkung war. Sie schlugen auch vor, dass ihre Arbeit als Anregung für einen Prozess der Neumodellierung dienen sollte, indem der Rahmen und die drei Idealtypen an den jeweils gegebenen Kontext anpasst und neu konfiguriert werden.

Der Vergleich der Mediensysteme in Ägypten und Tunesien zielt darauf ab, kritisch zu bewerten, wie das politische Umfeld in der Region des Nahen Ostens nach dem Arabischen Frühling die vergleichenden Dimensionen prägt, die für das Verständnis der Mediensysteme relevant sind. Basierend auf der Bewertung und den spezifischen lokalen politischen Zusammenhängen werden Änderungen an den analytischen Variablen und Dimensionen vorgeschlagen. Dieser Ansatz ermöglicht es, eine Verbindung zwischen den politischen Systemen und den Mediensystemen zu erstellen, die sowohl sensibel für den lokalen politischen Kontext ist als auch die Wurzeln der ererbten Strukturen aus der Vergangenheit erfasst, die daraufhin zur Neuerfindung der ursprünglichen Praktiken im Mediensystem führen.

Die Studie wendet eine Methodentriangulation bei der Datenerhebung und der Beantwortung der Forschungsfragen an. Sie kombiniert die Analyse vorhandener sekundärer quantitativer Datenquellen, die für das Verständnis der Mediensysteme relevant sind, mit zwei Fallstudien

der Mediensysteme in Ägypten und Tunesien. Zusätzlich zu den qualitativen halbstrukturierten Interviews mit 60 Medienexperten in Ägypten und Tunesien.

Die Studie bestätigt, dass beide Länder nicht ähnlich sind und nicht in das gleiche Modell passen. Tunesien kann seit dem 2011er Aufstand eher dem mediterranen Modell zugeordnet werden wohingegen Ägypten nicht ohne weiteres in das gleiche Modell passt. Dies deckt sich mit früheren wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten, die zu dem Schluss kamen, dass die Medien Ägyptens einige Merkmale mit dem mediterranen oder polarisierten pluralistischen Modell teilen, aber nicht ohne weiteres in dieses Modell passen (Khamis, 2008, S. 274). Zwischen den Jahren 2011 und 2014, dem Jahr der Machtübernahme durch das Militär, waren die Medien in Ägypten vergleichbar mit Hallin und Mancinis mediterranem Modell der demokratischen Medien mit einem starken Regierungssektor und einem sehr polarisierten Mediensektor. Seit 2015 passt Ägypten nicht mehr in das gleiche Modell eines funktionierenden demokratischen Systems; es ist ein autoritäres System (Hafez, 2015). Tunesien ist ein Ausnahmefall in der arabischen Welt und ist näher am mediterranen Medienmodell. Es ist näher an Mediensystemen in Post-Transitionsländern wie Osteuropa oder Südostasien (Richter, 2017).

Die Studie schließt mit Vorschlägen zur Feinabstimmung der analytischen Dimensionen von Hallin und Mancini. Die Studie bestätigt, dass die Regierungen die einflussreichsten Rollen in den Mediensystemen der arabischen Region haben. Sie fordert auch die Erweiterung der Medienmarktdimension, um ein besseres Verständnis der Beziehung zwischen Regierungen und Markt in autoritären Kontexten zu ermöglichen wie zum Beispiel die Rollen von loyalen Geschäftsleuten in dem System. In einem widerstandsfähigen autoritären politischen Umfeld, in dem in eine starke Regierung mit den geschäftlichen/kommerziellen Medien verschmilzt, führt dies tatsächlich zu einer weiteren Vertiefung der autoritären Herrschaft mit der Erfindung neuer Kontrollmethoden über die Medien. Es ist auch notwendig, die Dimension zu erweitern, um der wachsenden Rolle der Online-Medien Rechnung zu tragen.

Es wird auch argumentiert, dass die Dimension des politischen Parallelismus einen anderen Blickwinkel benötigt, um die Dynamik zwischen dem Staat und anderen Akteuren jenseits der politischen Parteien zu untersuchen. Trotz der vielen Stimmen im Mediensystem bieten die Medien keinen Sinnespluralismus oder eine Vielfalt von Meinungen. Die Studie schlägt vor, dass ein statistisch-kommerzialisiertes Medienmodell die Mediensysteme in der arabischen Region besser beschreiben kann, speziell in Ländern mit einem ähnlichen politischen Kontext wie im ägyptischen Fall.

Autoritäre Mediensysteme Modelle können charakterisiert werden durch: (1) extreme Kontrolle durch die Regierenden (jenseits des polarisierten Modelltyps der staatlichen

Kontrolle), (2) große Kommerzialisierung, fehlende Vielfalt, alternative Medienangebote (jenseits der Massenpresse) und einem wachsenden Markt für Online-Medien, (3) loyalistische private Medien (was nicht zu einer Pluralität der Meinungen auf dem Markt führt) und (4) niedrige professionelle Standards. Tunesien bleibt näher am polarisierten pluralistischen Modell und ist eine Ausnahme in der arabischen Region.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
AFTE	Association of Freedom of Thought and Expression
ATT	Tunisian Technical Agency for Telecommunications
CAPJC	African Center for Training of Journalists and Communicators
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
EGP	Egyptian Pounds
ERTU	Egyptian Radio and Television Union
ETT	L'Établissement de la Télévision Tunisienne
EU	European Union
FJP	Freedom and Justice Party
HAICA	Independent High Authority for Audiovisual Communication – Tunisia
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INRIC	National Authority to Reform Information and Communication
IPSI	Institute of Press and Information Sciences
ISIE	Instance Supérieure Indépendante pour les Élections (Independent High Authority for Elections).
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
NBA	National Broadcasting Authority
NCA	National Constituent Assembly
NDP	National Democratic Party (ruling party under Mubarak)
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NPA	National Press Authority
NRP	Nile Radio Productions
NUG	National Unity Government
PSB	Public Service Broadcasting
PSD	Parti Socialist Destourien
RCD	Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique –(ruling party under Ben Ali)
SCAF	Supreme Council for Armed Forces
SMRC	Supreme Media Regulatory Council
SNJT	Tunisian Journalists' Syndicate
UGTT	Tunisian General Labour Union

Timeline of events – Egypt

Early Uprising	Januray 25, 2011 - Start of the street demonstrations as a response to the Tunisian Demonstrations
	February 11, 2011 - President Mubarak steps down and hands power to the SCAF
	August 2011 - clashes start between the SCAF and protesters
	October 2011 - escalation of clashes with the military - Maspero Massacre
Morsi Rule	June 2012 - Morsi wins the first Presidential elections against Ahmed Shafik
	December 2012, Islamist-dominated constituent assembly approves draft constitution that boosts the role of Islam and restricts freedom of speech and assembly
	June 2013 - June - Wide protests break out against Mursi's presidency, demanding his removal and complaining of poverty and instability.
	July 2013 - Army overthrows President Morsi amid mass demonstrations calling on him to quit. Hundreds are killed as security forces storm pro-Morsi protest camps in Cairo (Rabaa clashes).
Interim government	December 2013 - Government declares Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist group after a bomb blast in Mansoura kills 12.
	January 2014 - New constitution bans parties based on religion.
Sisi rule	May 2014 - Former army chief Abdul Fattah al-Sisi wins presidential election
	November 2014 - Sinai-based armed group, Ansar Beit al-Maqqdis, pledges allegiance to extreme Islamic State movement, which controls parts of Syria and Iraq. Renames itself Sinai Province .
	May 2015 - Ousted President Morsi sentenced to death over 2011 mass breakout of Muslim Brotherhood prisoners
	June 2015 - Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat and three members of the public killed in suspected Islamist car bombing in Cairo.
	November 2016 - IMF approves a three-year \$12B loan to Egypt designed to help the country out of its deep economic crisis.
	March 2017 - March - Mubarak is freed after six years of detention and cleared of charges including corruption and the killing of protesters in 2011.
	March 2018 - President Sisi wins a second term in election against a sole minor opposition candidate. More serious challengers either withdrew or were arrested.

Timeline of events – Tunisia

Early Uprising

January 2011 - Ben Ali flees to Saudi Arabia, as Tunisia's revolution takes steps toward democracy and triggers uprisings across the Arab world.

October 2011 - Moderate Islamist party Ennahda, banned under Ben Ali, wins most seats and forms a coalition with secular parties to plan a new constitution.

March 2012 - Growing polarization emerges between Islamists and secularists, particularly over women's rights, as Ennahda pledges to keep Islamic law out of the new constitution.

February 2013 - Secular opposition leader Chokri Belaid is shot dead, prompting large street protests and the resignation of the prime minister. Jihadists start mounting attacks on police.

Ennahda government

December 2013 - Ennahda cedes power after mass protests and a national dialogue, with a technocratic government replacing it in office.

January 2014 - Parliament approves a new constitution guaranteeing personal freedoms and equal rights for minorities, and splitting power between the president and prime minister.

Essebsi rule

December 2014 - Beji Caid Essebsi wins Tunisia's first free presidential election. Ennahda joins the ruling coalition.

August 2016 - Parliament chooses Youssef Chahed as prime minister after ousting his predecessor for slow progress in enacting economic reforms as the International Monetary Fund negotiates a loan program worth around \$2.8 billion.

December 2017 - The economy approaches crisis point as the trade deficit soars and the currency slides to its weakest level in 16 years. As inflation reaches 7.8%, the Central Bank raises interest rates to record levels.

May 2018 - Ennahda does better than other parties in municipal elections, but with public frustration over the economy, only 34% of voters turn out.

Kais Saïd rule

October 2019 - Voters show dissatisfaction with the major parties, first electing a deeply fractured parliament and then political outsider Kais Saïd as president.

1 Overview

The field of communication studies has been concerned with exploring the relationship between the media system and the political system in a given country for a long time (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956). Multiple theoretical frameworks have emerged with the aim of explaining how the media system is affected by the surrounding society factors (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Media systems react to the multiple influences from society, and they seem to be embedded in their nationally and culturally shaped social environments. Scholars have called that it is better to understand media systems in the frame of their territorial borders. Simply put, “media systems of different states differ” (Thomass & Kleinsteuber, 2011, p. 25). The body of studies and influential theoretical models exploring the relationship between the media and society has mostly been rooted in Western democracies. Most scholarly work about understanding media systems has been developed in Western democracies (Hallin & Mancini, 2004) and (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). *Comparing Media Systems* by Hallin and Mancini emerged as an influential theoretical framework in the communication studies field. Hallin and Mancini provided a theoretical framework to understand the interactions between media’s and politics’ realms using four dimensions, and they classified media systems into three distinct models: Liberal, Democratic Corporatist, and Polarized Pluralist model. The book analyzed Western media systems considering the specific patterns of history and social formations of established Western democracies’ particular historical conditions. Their analysis shows that comparisons of European media systems that developed within the same regions share multiple similarities (Hallin and Mancini 2004).

Applying most of these frameworks in other contexts has proven to be problematic. The structure and functions of the media systems are strongly connected with their backgrounds, not only with the current status of the society but also the historical roots that shaped the development of the media organizations in one society. Hallin and Mancini were criticized since their framework cannot be easily applied to the rest of the world. However, Hallin and Mancini are credited to have actively contributed to initiating the debate on media typologies, systems, globalization, and convergence in the field of media studies (Strömbäck & Luengo, 2008, p. 548). In *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*, Hallin and Mancini suggested that media systems’ conceptualizations need to be rooted in a detailed empirical analysis of particular historical and structural contexts (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 279).

The basis of the comparison of the media systems in Egypt and Tunisia in this study poses the question of how the political setting in the Middle East region Post the Arab Spring

shapes the media system. This approach allows establishing a connection between the political systems and media systems. This study also concludes that Egypt and Tunisia's media systems are dependent on the political framework in which they operate, where the state has the dominant role. There are local differences between the two countries that can be detected upon closer examination of the media systems. Overall, Arab states share some similarities of characteristics, despite the specific historical trajectories. The region is oppressed by state-structured political and economic turmoil and rising inequalities along with disturbing degrees of predominant and resilient authoritarianism. A growing body of literature is emerging on the study of relationships between? media systems in authoritarian and hybrid political regimes in recent years (Hallin & Mancini, 2012).

At the core of Hallin and Mancini's work is the surrounding political context of established Western democracies. In Arab countries, the main difference is the political setting where the media system is located. The core question behind the analysis of the media system is to assess if the new democracies' political changes lead to more freedom in the media system and further pluralism and diversity. What happened in Egypt and Tunisia was a vivid rise of pluralistic media scenes following the Uprisings, then it shortly collapsed into a polarized and savage deregulated media scene. Following the Arab Spring, there appeared new forms of expression that were banned previously. The media outlets exercised freedoms openly and daringly, at least for a short period following the uprising. The state dominance managed to return back, and self-censorship was re-established. The media systems reflect the political system in the Arab region to a great deal with limited pluralism, and persistent power asymmetries. Even the tolerated margin of freedoms under Mubarak is no longer tolerated in the new Egyptian media system. In contrast, the Tunisian media system has witnessed savage polarization.

This study's point of departure is to better understand Egypt and Tunisia's media systems within their national political and cultural contexts. This study looks into the development of media systems in authoritarian regimes. The study explores the roots of the structures and practices that formed the Egyptian and Tunisian media landscape under authoritarian rules. The specific setting has shaped the outcomes of the development of the media sector following the Arab Spring. This study examines the media systems in Egypt and Tunisia using Hallin and Mancini's dimensions as a springboard, which is more relevant than seeking to classify both media systems into a specific model. This study concludes by suggesting some amendments to the dimensions pertinent to the Arab media systems. Scholars have argued that it is more relevant to revisit the toolkit underlying the three models. In other words, studies should rethink the conceptualization

of the four dimensions rather than applying the three models in a specific context (Voltmer, 2012, pp. 244-245).

The study starts with an introduction in chapter 1, outlining the research aims and surveying the classifying Arab media systems' literature review. Chapter 2 discusses the study's theoretical framework ranging from the comparative political communication research to Hallin and Mancini's framework and the criticisms to applying Hallin and Mancini's model outside of the Western World, The chapter also explores the theoretical approaches for authoritarian Arab State. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used in the data collection. Empirical data includes 60 research interviews conducted for this thesis. Chapter 4 presents the Egyptian media system assessment, and Chapter 5 presents the assessment of the Tunisian media system. Chapter 6 discusses the variation of the sub-dimensions and offers benchmarks for using the amended dimensions in the Arab media systems study. It proposes that a Statist-Commercialized media model can better describe media systems in the Arab region.

1.1 Research Questions

Main Research Question

What are the necessary refinements pertinent to Hallin and Mancini's dimensions to better fit in describing the Arab media systems in the case of Egypt and Tunisia?

Sub research questions

- How does the authoritarian state influence the analysis of the dimension of the Role of the State using the description developed under Hallin and Mancini's model?
- What type of political parallelism exists in Arab countries compared to Hallin and Mancini's formulation of the dimension? Are these variations leading to, or hindering, a pluralistic media system?
- How do the Arab region's media market structures fit in Hallin and Mancini's analysis of the media market's dimension? How do these structures hinder pluralism in the media systems?
- What is the role of the growing range of online platforms in shaping the media market's dimension?
- How do the continuity of the authoritarian state and the institutional structures and norms inherited from the past impact the media system's developments?

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to assess the Egyptian and Tunisian media systems using the lens of Hallin and Mancini's framework. It has been identified before that the Egyptian media shares some features with the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist model but does not fit comfortably in the model (Khamis, 2008). This study is attempting to apply the framework to critically assess the complex dimensions developed by the two scholars and suggest modifications or other variables pertinent to the two countries' local and political context. This study examines the dimensions themselves as a tool that enables the analysis of the media systems in the specific context of the Middle East, arguing that exploring how the dimensions must consider the specific political factors, economic relations, journalistic culture, and historical development of the media to enable a better understanding of the Egyptian and Tunisian media systems.

The main aim of the study is to identify the group of analytical dimensions ("building blocks") for best describing the differences and commonalities in the media systems in the Arab world (Egypt and Tunisia serve as case studies). Besides, the study explores the role of political factors specific to the region, such as the decades of authoritarian rule, which have shaped the media systems' developments—leading both countries to different pathways in democratic outcomes. The use of a qualitative approach through the historical and qualitative analysis better informs the study results. This method sheds light using an in-depth analysis of the ownership structures, economic and political powers, market factors, and the rise of the internet-based media as an alternative to traditional media. The approach emphasizes Hallin and Mancini's argument in *Comparing Media Systems* to the importance of the political and economic contexts in studying the media systems.

This study contributes to the field of comparative, political, communication fieldwork; at the same time, it is careful not to universalize the Western democratic experience as (Downing, 1996) and (Curran & Park, 2000), amongst others, have cautioned. The study proposes to complement the work of Hallin and Mancini's as they indicate that they "limited" their work to the West and should instead serve as an "inspiration" for a process of re-modelling by adapting their models to a given context or by the creation of new models (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 306).

In this study, the Hallin and Mancini framework is utilized as a scholarly springboard to take their framework and models beyond established democracies within the Western

world context. In addition to critically assessing the Egyptian and Tunisian media systems using the variables put forth by Hallin and Mancini, the study suggests some contextual amendments and additions. The work culminates in revisiting the importance of the authoritarian state's role combined with the emergence of private media sector investments in the media system that is commercially vibrant. Hence the suggested model for the Arab media systems is an unusual case of commercialization and liberalization of media industries. This indicates that a new model can be useful in describing media systems under authoritarian regimes, which is the "Statist-Commercialized media system.

1.3 Classifications of Media Systems in the Arab Region

Earlier studies of Arab media systems emerged from the widely used typology introduced in the book *Four Theories of the Press*, by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm in 1963. Arab media scholars, who applied media typologies explored in the book, concluded that Arab media systems fit within totalitarian systems. Most of the studies were mainly influenced by applying the ideas of either the social responsibility theory or the development theory prevalent in the Arab political scene during these years. Early attempts included Hamada (1993) identifying "social responsibility" as the most applicable to the media systems in the Arab region. Abdel Rahman (1983) proposed to classify the Arab media systems in a category that she named "dependency model" based upon the dependency theory rooted in the Egyptian economist Samir Amin's explanation of the economic backwardness of the Arab region. According to her theory, the Arab media systems are the result of centuries of colonialism and suppression. They depend on the international news media as sources and inspiration for fostering new journalistic practices (published in (Mellor, 2005, p. 69). The development theory used to describe Arab media systems refers to countries in transition from colonialism to independence. In this situation, the roots for freeing and commercializing the media sector are not available, where the media strive to develop the society (Iskandar, 2007). One of the early books that provided a historical and descriptive analysis of the broadcast media in the Arab world was Douglas Boyd's volume published in 1983, followed by another edition in 1999 on Arab broadcasting systems, which surveys the historical development of 10 mass media in the Arab states (Boyd, 1999).

Several attempts to classify Arab media emerged; a famous endeavor is William Rugh, in the book *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television* (2004), first published in 1979, where he provided a classification for the Arab media system in 18 countries. Rugh's classification was bounded by one central dimension, which is the degree of state control over the media. Accordingly, he came up with four categories: Mobilization Press

(Syria, Libya, Sudan, and Iraq, pre-2003); Loyalist Press (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman, and Palestine); Diverse Print Media (Lebanon, Kuwait, Morocco, and Yemen); and Transitional System Print Media (Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, and Algeria) (Rugh, 2004). He described the mobilization press model, where the media acted only to serve a regime and help the rulers exercise control over the public. The loyalist press acted like the mobilization press; however, it combines some aspects of private media ownership and therefore used more persuasion techniques in laying out the regime's messages. At the same time, the diverse press enjoyed less coercion and more private ownership and political debate. Later Rugh added the transitional press, which he identified as characterized by slightly more freedom as a result of a fierce struggle by journalists. However, significant government control is still prevalent (Rugh, 2004). Rugh's typologies were criticized for using categories that are not clearly defined. In addition to focusing the analysis on the political system and how it shapes the media system while ignoring other aspects such as the role of journalistic professionalism or media economics (Mellor, 2005, pp. 49-51), another criticism was ignoring the content's role in the analysis (Kraidy, 2012, p. 179).

However, the critical factor that Rugh concludes is that Arab media systems cannot be understood without specific reference to political and other pertinent conditions during the particular time of the study in one country. He refers to factors such as the existence of open political opposition groups and/or parties, the strength and legitimacy of the ruling group, its character (revolutionary or traditional), the stability of the political system, the perception of an external threat, the existence of a tradition of journalism and a fourth estate, and the economic strength of the media are all significant influences on the structure of the media. He concludes/suggests that the legal status (i.e., the laws governing the media systems) may not reveal the actual situation about editorial content and news decisions. Arab media system and theory under which they operate tend to grow out of such political, economic, and other realities that prevail in the country (Rugh, 2004, pp. 22-23). Despite the fact that criticisms were paused to Rugh's taxonomy in the 2000s, the Arab media's academic study achieved critical momentum at Western universities. More scholars started typologies of Arab media (Kraidy, 2012, p. 179).

After the spread of private satellite stations in the region, scholars explored the rise of commercialization within these totalitarian strict regimes. With the introduction of satellite television in the Arab world, media scholars shifted to describing new, emerging Arab media systems. One of the attempts to analyze the changes in the Arab media starting the 2000s was Ayish's proposed three patterns of political communication dominating Arab World Television: "the traditional government-controlled television pattern" versus "the reformist government-controlled television pattern," and the

“liberal commercial television pattern” (Ayish M. , 2002, pp. 139-142). He concludes that the emergence of commercial television and the restructuring of government-operated systems was not leading to political pluralism and diversity in Arab societies dominated by authoritarian political systems. No matter how professional and independent television is, it cannot replace actual political transformations to ensure participatory governance (Ayish M. , 2002, p. 151). His typology also remains limited to the role of the state versus the commercial role. Again he did not consider the role of journalistic professionalism, or the role of the media market, or the content within those media systems.

Another important piece of literature on Arab media is the work published by Kai Hafez in the two books: *Mass Media, Politics, and Society in the Middle East* (2001) and *Arab Media: Power and Weakness* (2008). In *Mass Media, Politics, and Society in the Middle East*, several case studies rigorously illuminate the question of the articulation between the emergence of satellite television and political openness in Arab societies (Hafez & Paletz, 2001). In this publication, various political, cultural, and economic challenges of the Arab audio-visual space are addressed. The book argues that the new transnational television channels are not driven by development or public service imperatives but rather by a need to reach a large transnational audience and to be profitable. The development of the transnational and commercial media in the Middle East shows that these new media outlets could not convey the same discourse as the terrestrial and public channels linked to the state created in the 1950s and 1960s under the authoritarian regimes. Hence “the developmentalist ideology was diluted in an ocean of selling programs (Hafez, 2008). Blum classified the Egyptian and Tunisian media using Hallin and Mancini’s dimensions using additional dimensions he had identified. He located both Egyptian and Tunisian media in what he named the Arab-Asian “patriot model” which postulates that the media are bound to support development aims and involve censorship. Blum names Egypt as typical of that model as well as Syria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Asian countries like Indonesia (Blum, 2005).

Naomi Sakr also developed another attempt to classify Arab media television corporations. She identified three types (Sakr, 2007, pp. 4-5):

- A dual-product model in which advertising revenue finances content, and television owners supply programs to viewers as a means of providing viewers to advertisers. Advertisers’ interests can influence program development and scheduling.
- The second model: there is a distinction between consumer and citizen, and the audience is addressed as the public, not as the market.

- The final model is where the broadcast is the equivalent of vanity publishing, loss-making television that caters neither to citizen nor to the consumer but to the perceived self-interest of those with deep enough pockets who are primarily concerned with organizing information to suppress or disseminate particular messages.

Sakr's typology explored how the proliferation of commercial content became rooted in the Arab world. It also did not explore other aspects of the media industry (Sakr, 2007).

Another work on the Arab media is the book edited by Mellor, Ayish, Dajani, and Rinnawi, where they surveyed the Arab media industries with chapters analyzing the press, publishing, broadcasting, and cinema industries (Mellor, Ayish, Dajani, & Rinnawi, 2011). In her chapter, Mellor stresses the importance of the role of the state in shaping the Arab media industries as a result of the control by the totalitarian regimes that exercise power over media organizations. She argues that the liberation of media, in the specific case of the Arab totalitarian regimes, has led to a nurturing environment for commercially vibrant media systems. The Arab region, in this case, represents an unusual case of commercialization and liberalization of media industries leading to continuous state intervention and an increase in self-censorship (Mellor, 2011).

Specific scholarly endeavors exist that aimed to classify an individual country of the Arab region on Hallin and Mancini's models. Most of those scholars located the media systems in the Polarized Pluralist model. Nevertheless, they highlighted that they could not easily fit any of these countries into a specific model. An early study aiming to classify the Egyptian media system tried to assess where it fits in the models. Khamis (2008) analyzed Egyptian media systems' historical transformation based on Hallin and Mancini's model. She concluded that the only media model that exhibits some similar features with the Egyptian media case is the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist model. She identifies the unique pattern of state intervention during Mubarak's era, a mixed-ownership system with a unique culture and ideology pattern. Khamis elaborates that the Egyptian media case does not fit under any of the three phases of transformation. It has not made the shift from the "authoritarian" to the "democratic" political system yet. Therefore, it poses the unique case of "transformation without democratization," which may fit under what Kleinstaubler describes as a "fourth phase of transformation" (Khamis, 2008, pp. 271-272).

Another specific country analysis is Sarah Richani's study that analyzed the Lebanese media using the Hallin and Mancini theoretical framework. She took considerable adaptation to the local context beyond the application of the models. Thus, she suggested

expanding Hallin and Mancini's work by adding the Small and Crisis-Prone countries (CriSPP) model media systems (). She concluded that the four dimensions are more useful and more itinerant than their three models. She concludes that the aspect of conflict impacts the size and nature of the market; additionally, the divisive political culture, and a weak state are vital features relevant to other media systems (Richani, 2014). Kraidy analyzed transnational media systems in the Arab World (Lebanon and Saudi Arabia) using Halin and Mancini's model as a hybrid of the Polarized Pluralist model with some features from the Liberal model, one in which the role of the state, parallelism, commercialism, and professionalism appear "in different guises and give rise to different definitions." Kraidy also suggested that the Arab media systems are only quasi liberal because they exhibit strong parallelism along with a very dominant role of the state. He also confirms the same assumption as Hallin and Mancini's assumptions, in that the Egyptian media system does not precisely fit media in the Arab world (Kraidy, 2012).

Other media theorists have classified Egyptian media as in the pre-transition stage, where the groundwork for upcoming changes is being laid. The groundwork referred to for the transition of media in Egypt includes the freeing of the media system and governments' willingness to tolerate more criticism and alternative views (Hamdy, 2008, p. 217). Abdulla also supports the argument that Egypt does not fit in any of Hallin and Mancini's media models, because the status in Egypt lacks essential components of pluralism, liberalism, and democracy (Abdulla, 2016, p. 4233).

To conclude, Rugh was correct when he argued that national political conditions are the primary shapers of Arab media systems. The work conducted to classify Arab media systems—the ideal types introduced by Hallin and Mancini—is essential to analyze media systems' complex phenomenon. Nevertheless, there is a critical need for more empirical work on the applicability of the dimensions to describe the Arab media. It is important to consider that political systems are dynamic constructions and that more comparative studies are necessary to explore the dimensions themselves within the context of Arab media systems. Specific expansion of the dimensions would also be an essential aspect of a more thorough analysis of the media systems.

The study started in Chapter one explores the study objectives and research questions. The chapter also highlights previous research relevant to the analysis of Arab Media Systems. Chapter two presents the theoretical framework of the dissertation. It emphasizes the development of the comparative political communication field. It also offers Hallin and Mancini's framework with a detailed discussion on the four dimensions.

The chapter also discusses the calls for localizing Hallin and Mancini's models and dimensions to the specific cultural, historical, political, and social contexts.

Chapter three outlines the methodology used in the study. The dissertation applied a triangulation of methodology: 1- Secondary quantitative data and statistics were used in the analysis as well as industry reports. 2- The qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews were conducted with 60 media experts in Egypt and Tunisia. The chapter also highlights the methodology in which the interviews were planned and conducted, and the transcription and analysis of the collected data. 3. This study then applied two case studies of the media systems in Egypt and Tunisia.

Chapter four includes the examination of the Egyptian media system using Hallin and Mancini's framework. Empirical data was analyzed and presented in a structured manner, in-line with the theoretical framework's key dimensions. In this chapter, the collected data is analyzed. The main elements of the political context are outlined. The chapter highlights some of the paradoxical elements of the Egyptian media system. The chapter highlights the dominant role of the state and the roles of the non-state actors. It also outlines the interactions that influence the outcomes of the media system. Chapter five presents the analysis of the Tunisian media system using Hallin and Mancini's framework. A similar case study of the Tunisian media system was conducted. The second case study helped further compare the discrepancies between media systems and take a closer look into the differences' root causes.

Chapter six provides the empirical contribution to the field of the comparative political communication field. The chapter presents the comparative results between the Egyptian and Tunisian media systems. It also discusses the empirical findings of the dimensions and sub-dimensions pertinent to analyzing Arab media systems. The chapter suggests the Statist-Commercialized model captures the media systems in authoritarian regimes. The model is a variation of the Role of the State combined with commercialization. The study concludes that the Role of the State is the most important factor shaping the media systems in the Arab region. It also suggests expanding the media market dimension beyond the mass press circulation rates and adding online media's role to the dimension. Chapter seven presents the conclusion and the recommendations for future areas of research.

2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter provides an overview of the definition, development, advantages, and critiques of comparative, political, communication research. It argues that comparative, political, communication research has been late to develop within the field of communication research. Still, it has been recently flourishing and could be a useful tool for this type of analysis. This chapter provides an overview of the Hallin and Mancini model for comparing media systems. This chapter also discusses the model's criticisms when trying to analyze media systems outside of the Western world and attempts from scholars to develop localized media models that fit other parts of the world.

2.1 Comparative Political Communication Research

Comparative political communication research aims to explain the differences and commonalities in communication practices between at least two units by looking at variation in their contexts (Blumler, McLeod, & Rosengren, 1992) and (Esser & Pfetsch, 2004). "Comparative communication research involves comparisons between a minimum of two macro-level cases (systems, cultures, markets, or their sub-elements), concerning at least one object of investigation relevant to the field of communication." (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 5). Comparative, political, communication research may also indicate different types of comparisons, such as comparison across time or different media or different units (countries or media markets) (de Vreese, 2017, p. 3).

Comparative research emerged in the field of communication studies more than four decades ago. Blumler and Gurevitch labeled the field as being in its infancy (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1975). For several years, scholars have been calling for the need for the communication studies field to develop adequate theoretical models for comparative studies (Curran & Park, 2000, p. 3). Two decades later, Blumler and Gurevitch noted that the field had only reached its late adolescence (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995). After more than three decades Blumler and Gurevitch argued that comparative political communication has still not fully developed into mature adulthood (Gurevitch & Blumler, 2004).

Nonetheless, comparative research has spread into most of the subfields of communication studies. Evidence shows that the field has acquired some methodological sophistication and theoretical basis. It is moving from simplistic descriptive studies to

more sophisticated methods. The field is also improving in the selection of case studies and from anecdotal evidence to methodological rigor (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 3). According to Hardy (2012, p. 202), the field of comparative communication research has been able to produce “a common body of knowledge, theories, and concepts.” There is a growing number of studies that elucidate the purpose and assumptions of the comparative approach. An increasing number of studies addresses the macro-micro link by interpreting the similarities and differences concerning distinct structural and cultural conditions, which constitute specific system characteristics (Canel & Voltmer, 2014, p. 3). De Vreese considers that the field of political communication research is “*En Vogue*” nowadays (de Vreese, 2017, p. 1).

Comparative political communication research has been somewhat slower in developing sophisticated analytical concepts, standardized instruments, and methodological strategies for comparison, compared to the development in the field of comparative politics (Norris, 2009, p. 322) & (Canel & Voltmer, 2014, p. 2). The field still faces the challenge of going beyond descriptive studies to generate more explanatory knowledge (Pfetsch, 2014, p. 228). Norris argues that one of the reasons was the absence of a “theoretical map or conceptual compass” for communication studies in other areas of the world. Given that, most of the political communication research was comparing media systems in one country against the media system in the US, which has particular and unique media and political systems. This deems the comparison not entirely indicative (Norris, 2009, pp. 322-323). Voltmer concludes/suggests that despite the critical volume of research describing individual countries, most volumes lacked a conceptual framework that allows drawing generalizations beyond individual cases (Voltmer, 2012, p. 224). In the same vein, the conceptual and typological models applied in political communication can be described primarily as being normative and can hardly be applied to all countries worldwide (Norris, 2009, p. 328).

This is not to say that comparative studies, in general, are not considered a useful tool for advancing scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding of any phenomena. Comparative research leads to avoiding unjustified generalizations derived from single case observations. It considers individual and collective behavioral differences depending on the political, social, cultural, and economic contexts (Canel & Voltmer, 2014, p. 2). A comparative approach is a useful tool in analyzing complex interrelations such as the interaction between media and politics (Kleinsteuber, 2012, p. 68). “Every observation is without significance if it is not compared with other observations” (Esser & Pfetsch, 2004, p. 5), or as Blumler and Gurevitch put it: Comparative research has the “capacity to render the invisible visible” (1995, p. 76).

Comparative research can shed light on some overlooked phenomena, establish typologies, and lead to the theorizing of concepts. It forces researchers to revise their interpretations against cross-cultural differences and inconsistencies (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 4). It can provide evidence against naïve universalism and countering the tendency to consider that the findings of one country can be applied to another (Esser, 2013, p. 113). Other scholars emphasize the importance of comparative research, because it expands the contextual environments for observations, allowing broader generalizations to be established in the social sciences. This reduces national peculiarities in the search for broader regularities over place and time (Esser & Pfetsch, 2004, p. 418). Comparative research also avoids making assumptions and generalizations based on a single case study at one point in time. It therefore helps in understanding each context and its particularities (de Vreese, 2017, p. 2).

Esser further argues that the field of comparative research has the potential to bring communication studies forward, especially in the age of transnationalization (Esser, 2013). Comparative political communication research can also highlight aspects of the media systems that were not captured by ethnocentric research (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 2). Comparative research approaches in the field of communication can reveal “transnational trends and similarities” beyond researching each country (Swanson, 2004, p. 46). It sheds light on the contextual environment of the communication process, which is composed of multiple, intertwined systematic layers, such as the macro-level system conditions and micro-level communication behaviors and elements variation among countries (Esser, 2013, p. 113). In Hallin and Mancini’s words, “theorizing the role of context is precisely what comparative analysis is about” (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 515).

Esser and Hanitzsch added time and space dimensions. They call for complimenting spatial (cross-territorial) comparisons with longitudinal (cross-temporal) aspects. The longitudinal comparison would account for the fact that systems and cultures “are not frozen in time,” but undergo continuous change as a result of the transformation processes like Americanization, Europeanization, globalization, modernization, or commercialization” (2012, p. 5,6).

De Vreese describes four different types of comparative political communication studies: (a) Descriptive comparative political communication studies. Academic works in this tradition ask to what extent a phenomenon occurs. (b) Explanatory comparative political communication studies. In this type, the comparison is based on the units' characteristics to explain the differences in some kind of output variable measures within each unit. (c) Comparative studies that look at the same relationships among variables in different

contexts. (d) These studies look into explaining the variation in relations across units (de Vreese, 2017, pp. 3-4). He also highlights several key areas of research in the field of comparative communication research, which are (1) media and political systems, (2) political and election news, (3) political communication in the European Union (EU), and (4) political journalists (de Vreese, 2017, p. 5).

This study belongs to the comparative studies, which aim to compare the dimensions of the media systems in the two cases of Egypt and Tunisia. An overview of Hallin and Mancini's *Approach to Comparing Media Systems* is discussed in the following pages. To illuminate, the Comparing Media Systems typologies is considered a yardstick that is informing the macro units' analysis in this study.

2.1.1 Hallin and Mancini's approach to Comparing Media Systems

The origins of the comparative work on media systems can be traced back to Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm's work. In the *Four Theories of the Press*, they classified media systems in the world into four types (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956): Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet /Totalitarian /Communist models.

The relationship between the state and the mass media was at the heart of the book since it was highly influenced by the Cold War context, positing that media systems are entrenched within the broader social and political context. The main contrast was between the Soviet authoritarian media versus libertarian media (Norris, 2009, p. 329). The main contribution of *Four Theories of the Press* goes beyond the aim of just identifying typologies. Still, it has contributed to providing an explanatory framework that acknowledges the importance of different external factors to the media system (Mihlej & Downey, 2012, p. 1). However, *Four Theories of the Press* has been heavily criticized for developing superficial analysis lacking detailed research on particular media systems and often guided by an ethnocentric approach. It also became challenging to differentiate between the Social Responsibility model and the Libertarian model. The differences in media systems became more blurry with the rise of commercial broadcasting in Eastern Europe (Norris, 2009, p. 329). The work was unable to offer a theorizing framework for media systems in developing countries and consequently not able to capture the variation of social and political theories governing media policies around the world (McQuail D., 2006, p. 4) and (Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng, & White, 2009, p. viii). Despite these criticisms, *Four Theories of the Press* was highly influential over a long period with no other viable framework. The main contribution of *Four Theories of the Press* goes beyond the aim of just identifying typologies. Still, it has contributed to

providing an explanatory framework that acknowledges the importance of different external factors to the media system (Mihleij & Downey, 2012, p. 1).

Several scholars have attempted to expand the original framework, adding several regions or social and systemic situations. Denis McQuail (1987) added two new models: Democratic Participant and Development Theories, which he considered relevant to countries in transition after independence from colonialism. Raymond Williams (1968) identified four different systems: Commercial, Paternalistic, Authoritarian, and Democratic systems. Hachten (1981) added the “revolutionary concept of the press,” where the media leads the struggle against the existing system. Sparks and Splichal (1988) suggested two basic categories of media systems: Commercial and Paternalistic (that includes all different forms of media control) typologies (as cited in (Jakubowicz, 2010, p. 2). On the contrary, Jakubowicz argues that most of the proposals to develop media typologies¹ and classifications have not successfully captured the complexities of media systems (Jakubowicz, 2010, p. 8).

Two unanswered questions exist: Why does media function the way it does? and, does it function as a result of the social and political structures in which it operates? To answer these questions, Hallin and Mancini introduced their book *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* in 2004. Their analysis focuses on historical developments and structural relationships between media and politics.

In their book *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*, Hallin and Mancini postulated the classification of the media systems in 18 countries in Western Europe and Northern America into three models, using four dimensions derived from a set of theoretical indicators and empirical data. The four dimensions they used for describing media systems in these countries are

1. The level of independence of the media system from state intervention.
2. The state of development of the media market, which explains the relation of the media system with the economy (structure of media market),
3. The links between the media system and political system and political parties (political parallelism),

¹ Typologies can describe typical patterns of journalism cultures, media policy, media markets and media use which may be interconnected in a certain society. Blumler and Gurevitch introduced the idea that these systems can be analysed to identify patterns of “systems of political communication” (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995, p. 12).

4. The degree of journalistic professionalism and the structure of journalistic practices (journalistic professionalism).

In these dimensions, Hallin and Mancini reveal the interplay between media and politics within the Western established democracies. They derive three models of media systems:

- the **Liberal Model**, characterized by commercial media with market mechanisms, high level of journalistic professionalism, high mass press circulation, and low level of politicization (United States, Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom);
- the **Democratic Corporatist Model**, which accentuates the link between commercial media and organized social and political groups, as well as an active, but limited, role of the State (Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Belgium); and
- the **Polarized-Pluralist Model**, which links the media with a high degree of party politics, with low-level mass press circulation, low-level professional media, and a more substantial role of the State (Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and France).

Hallin and Mancini argue that their three models are only “ideal types” as per Max Weber’s description. They offer an oversimplified explanation of a complex reality to allow capturing some of the essential aspects of reality in practical terms. They warn that some of the national media systems may not fit comfortably in one category. They also argue that the models allow capturing significant characteristics of media and political systems, and enable the classification of specific media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 69). They contend that these ideal types’ primary purposes are “not the classification of individual systems, but the identification of characteristic patterns of relationships between system characteristics” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 11). Those characteristics are also interrelated. They result from the pattern of historical development within the country and do not occur accidentally (p.11).

Following Hallin and Mancini, another Swiss scholar, Roger Blum (2005), introduced another comparative approach using the dimensions developed by Hallin and Mancini in addition to other dimensions developed at the University of Bern in 2001. His approach links the political and media systems to draw a possible comparison of media systems. He introduced the following dimensions besides those of Hallin and Mancini: media freedom, media ownership, funding of media, media culture, and orientation of media. For each dimension, the media system can either be classified in the liberal line, the regulated line, or the line in between. By combining the dimensions and incidences, he identified six types of media systems in different regions across the world. These systems are the Atlantic-Pacific “liberal model,” the Southern European “clientelism model,” the

Northern European “public-service model,” the Eastern European “shock model,” the Arab-Asian “patriot model” and the Asian-Caribbean “command model” (Blum, 2005). Blum was criticized for not being clear about how he assigned the countries to those specific categories. He did not explain how he created the models and why he chose those particular categories (Jakubowicz, 2010, p. 6).

2.1.2 Reviews and Criticisms to Hallin and Mancini’s Models

Hallin and Mancini are credited to have actively contributed to initiating the debate on media typologies, systems, globalization, and convergence in the field of media studies (Strömbäck & Luengo, 2008, p. 548). Indeed, the models have attracted researchers from different parts of the world in an attempt to apply these postulations in various contexts and countries. It raised a vigorous discussion among researchers in the field of communication research on how individual countries fit into these models or how the framework applies to the rest of the world (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 2).

Scholars who criticized Hallin and Mancini posed four main groups of criticisms. The first group of criticisms is related to the methodological and theoretical bases used to develop their work as rooted in the Western media systems. This body of literature argues that there need to be different conceptualization and heuristic strategies for analyzing and understanding Western media systems (Humphreys, 2009) and (Norris, 2009). They were also criticized for the omission of some salient factors in the American media system and the political context (Curran, 2011, p. 43). The second criticism is related to the fact that the theoretical work about analyzing the four dimensions is too descriptive and needs to be further operationalized. Some scholars have worked towards further quantitative operationalization of Hallin and Mancini’s four dimensions (Brüggemann, Engesse, Büchel, Humprecht, & Castro, 2014) and (Büchel, Humprech, Castro-Herrero, Engesser, & Bruggemann, 2016). Third, Hallin and Mancini were criticized because their theoretical framework did not consider the role of online media and the internet as an essential factor in today’s media systems (Curran, 2011), (Norris, 2009) and (Nielsen & Levy, 2010). Hallin and Mancini recognized that their work “says little about the internet and new media” (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 289). Finally, Hallin and Mancini were criticized that their theoretical framework cannot be generalized to countries outside of the Western world. The literature suggests that there is a need to assess the framework when applied in different countries (Hallin & Mancini, 2012).

A serious problem arises from the lack of a clear definition of the concept of media systems². Media systems are complex constructions of media that interact with the surrounding environment (Jakubowicz, 2010, p. 9). Norris notes that it is unclear what components or units should be compared within the media system. A media system is a complex and ever-growing range of platforms. The concept of "systems" suggests the interaction between different elements. This becomes confusing in defining media systems by virtue of their components, which could even be disconnected in some cases (Norris, 2009, p. 328).

Hallin and Mancini use the models in the context of a normative meaning rather than a descriptive or analytical manner. In this sense, models are considered standards by which the behavior of social agents are guided. For instance, the Liberal Model is linked to Americanization and commercialization. The Democratic Model is linked with the sense of public good and the balance between media independence and state intervention (Mihleij & Downey, 2012, p. 3).

Another criticism is to what extent those dimensions could be considered the most critical ones to map the significant contrasts in modern media systems. Norris argues that Hallin and Mancini's work suffers two problems. One problem is not using the minimalist set of elements to identify and measure the most relevant aspects theoretically. The second problem, she considers is that certain aspects are difficult to operationalize (Norris, 2009, pp. 331-332).

Critics noted the validity of Hallin and Mancini's attribution of some countries to a specific model. The fact that several countries that were grouped in one model may exhibit considerable variation. For example, some scholars have noted that the countries they identified within the Democratic Corporatist model, in many cases, should not be classified together (McQuail D. , 2005) and (Norris, 2009). The British media system does

² For a discussion on the definition of media systems: McQuail (2005) labels the media system as follows: "the actual set of mass media in a given national society, characterized by such main dimensions as scale and centralization, degree of politicization, diversity profile, sources of finance and degree of public regulation and control." (McQuail D. , *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, 2005). Cardoso (2006, 24) cites Ortoleva, who describes the media system as a set of interconnections between technologies and organizations that guide the diverse forms of communication. Hence it has an institutional and economic basis in the complex socio-cultural processes of one society (Cardoso, 2006, p. 24). Voltmer (2013) questions the ambiguity of the concept of "model" in itself, because it refers to both empirical manifestations of media institutions and practices and normative role models, i.e. how media systems are and how they (ideally) should be (Voltmer, 2013, p. 27).

not fit comfortably with the North Atlantic Liberal model, while the French media system is not easily classified as a Polarized-Pluralist model. The German media system hardly fits the democratic corporatist model without any state subsidies, while the Canadian media system is far more highly regulated than the system in the United States. Humphreys argues that Hallin and Mancini used a problematic “broad-brush inclusiveness” despite the wide variation in the Liberal-Democratic media systems (Humphreys, 2009, p. 122).

Other discussions focused on the applicability of their models beyond the Western world. Deriving analysis from the study of only 18 countries would render the results highly unrepresentative of the rest of the world of more than 190 other countries (McCargo, 2012, p. 221). The ability of their dimensions could not adequately differentiate the media systems in other parts of the world. Indeed, their proposed models need to be seen as a starting point of analysis with some useful points for comparison. They should not be seen as a set of static or fixed categories for analyzing all media systems in the world. It is a useful tool for limiting the number of variables that need to be analyzed and compared. Nevertheless, it is still insufficient to apply the model in different contexts without adaptation (McCargo, 2012, p. 221).

To conclude this section, this study aims to understand what are the most critical components or units that should be used when comparing the media systems to other contexts beyond the Western world, taking into consideration that the media systems are complex and there is a growing range of platforms with an increasing role especially during the time of turmoil.

2.1.3 Localizing of Hallin and Mancini’s Dimensions

This section highlights responses and literature relevant to one of the main criticisms posed to Hallin and Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* approach: the limitation of their analysis of the media systems in the Western world. The extensive debate around the applicability of the analytical tools derived from most media systems analysis was conducted in the Western world to other parts of the world. Curran and Park have argued that most of the media studies so far were self-absorbed in Western models and shaped to a great extent by Western media theories (Curran & Park, 2000). Some scholars called for the importance of internationalizing media studies in general (Thusu, 2009). Hallin and Mancini argue that they have limited their work to a specific set of countries to be able to work towards theory building rather than hypothesis testing, which they called “most similar systems.” They also applied a historical analysis approach of a particular group of media systems. They indicate that their analysis was not meant as a

comprehensive set of categories for understanding media systems regardless of time and space. (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 4) and (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 7).

These discussions on the applicability of media systems beyond the Western world have heralded a series of writings on the issue of de-westernizing comparative media studies, including the book edited by Hallin and Mancini in 2012 *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*. In that volume, they invited several scholars to examine the extent to which their suggested framework fits countries outside of the Western world. The volume includes contributions from different scholars who tried to locate a broad group of media systems within the models.

Albuquerque(2012) questions the idea that one model can explain media in Eastern Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and most of Asia at the same time. He suggests that the term "Polarized Pluralist " model will become the wrong concept. Voltmer (2012) noted that when applying *Comparing Media Systems* to different parts of the world other than Western countries, the Polarized Pluralist model has become a "catch-all" category for all other media systems. It seems unrealistic that one category would enable understating the media systems in all countries of the world beyond Western Europe and Northern America. The use of one category to describe other media system not only implies that other systems are deficient in one way or the other, but also that there is no significant variation in institutions and practices except for those that can be observed in the established democracies of the West (Voltmer, 2012, pp. 225-228).

Vartanova adds the importance of the dimension of cultural context. She argues that the character of Russian social institutions, as well as their interactions, have shaped the Russian media and journalism practices. She places the Russian media system in a different model than all of the three models proposed by Hallin and Mancini (Vartanova, 2012, p. 120). Vartanova highlights the importance of understanding media systems in their respective national contexts, taking into consideration how culture and traditions impact the media system. This concept allows us to distinguish the diversity of media models produced using the same variables. Hence the most reasonable way to construct media models would be not to apply Hallin and Mancini's three models globally and automatically but rather to look into outcomes and peculiarities produced by the evolution of media systems and the interplay of the significant variables identified by Hallin and Mancini (Vartanova, 2012, pp. 120-121).

One of the most obvious omissions from Hallin and Mancini's original work was the exclusion of post-communist Eastern and Central Europe from the analysis. This may be

explained by the idea that those new countries were still very young democracies at the time of collecting the data for their research. Moreover, those democracies were not yet consolidated or established enough to allow a meaningful comparison in their work (Humphreys, 2009, p. 122).

Another volume that applied Hallin and Mancini's media systems in the Central European region and other regions was *"Comparing Media systems: European and Global Perspectives,"* edited by Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska and colleagues (Dobek-Ostrowska, Głowacki, Jakubowicz, & Sükösd, 2010). In this volume, Hadland, for example, addresses how the Hallin and Mancini model cannot fit the transformative context of South African media (Hadland, 2010). de Samele locates the Russian media between both the Polarised Pluralist model and Democratic Corporatist model. He argues that there is a specific Russian model different from the Polarized Model. The media system, he concludes, is shaped by unique political, cultural, and economic factors (Smaele, 2010). Another exploration of the Turkish media system locates Turkey within the Polarized Pluralist model with emphasis on "savage deregulation" and economic parallelism (Uce & De Swert, 2010).

A third volume, *"Comparing Media Systems in Central Europe: Between Commercialization and Politicization,"* invited researchers from Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia to explore possible models of relations between media and politics in this part of Europe (Głowacki & Ostrowska-Dobek, 2008). Scholars suggested that the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist model was the most relevant to the Eastern European media compared to the other models. However, it does not fit precisely in this model (Jakubowicz, *Rude Awakening*, 2007), (Dobek-Ostrowska B., 2012) and (Wyka, 2008). Jakubowicz locates the Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) of post-communist media systems figuratively speaking along the Mediterranean on "both of its sides." Jakubowicz hints that the post-communist PSB systems resemble those of the Polarized Pluralist media systems, where in some cases, they are closer to North African regimes than any South European country (Jakubowicz, 2008).

Instead of the attempt to develop an all-encompassing typology of media systems that might be able to consider all the complexities of the media system in all different societies, it would be a valuable solution to consider identifying the building blocks that compose how the media operates in other contexts, than to use them to analyze particular media systems (Jakubowicz, 2010, pp. 12-13). It is necessary to explore a more comprehensive set of salient political and economic factors in the political and social systems where different media systems are embedded (Humphreys, 2009, p. 119).

Voltmer also called for revisiting the three models' intellectual toolkit, meaning rethinking about conceptualizing the four dimensions and not the three models. State interventions in new democracies are different from established democracies. Media markets are often weaker and fragmented, as well they have a different set of professional standards with specific norms relevant to each culture (Voltmer, 2012, pp. 244-245).

Hallin and Mancini argue that it is more useful for empirical studies to explore the four dimensions rather than the three models. While it is difficult to transfer the media systems outside of their study's original context, instead the dimensions of the comparison can be easily transferred. They argue that the dimensions seem to hold up reasonably in further research about media systems. However, some of the analytical variables of the original dimensions need some reconceptualization to fit other contexts (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, pp. 5-6) and (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 287).

This section poses some questions about the methodological implications of the current study being applied in Egypt and Tunisia using the model of Hallin and Mancini. The study does not try to fit both Egypt and Tunisia within the three models. It instead tries to re-explore the dimensions of Hallin and Mancini in the context of the Middle East. In conclusion, in order to apply Hallin and Mancini's approach, it is necessary to expand and refine the analytical dimensions³ based on specific country contexts. The current study will go beyond exploring the typologies by examining the dimensions themselves in the context of Egypt and Tunisia.

2.2 Hallin and Mancini's Analytical Dimensions

2.2.1 Role of the State

The dimension of the Role of the State is pertinent to how state interventions shape the media environment within one country. Hallin and Mancini consider this dimension influential in shaping the media system by enabling the country's public sphere. The Role of the State can be assessed according to how the state functions as a media owner, regulator, and fund provider (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 44). The Role of the State is hence a vital factor in shaping the media system in each country as well as protecting and widening its public sphere (Hardy, 2008, p. 239).

³ Voltmer points to one of the main problems of the current dimensions: breaking the categories into "high" versus "low" or "strong" versus "weak" when conducting the analysis in non-Western countries. She points to the kind and specific nature of each dimension which should be taken into account with the measurement of the degree (Voltmer, 2012, pp. 225-228).

Hallin and Mancini consider the Liberal model as the normative model with the least state involvement among the three media models. In contrast to the Democratic Corporatist model, which is characterized by high state intervention, it is mediated by the presence of a robust, rational, and legal authority. Finally, the Polarized Pluralist model is characterized by a strong influence of the state on media autonomy. They suggested that the state performs four roles with regards to the media in one society: exerting censorship or other types of political pressure, endowing the media with economic subsidies, owning media organizations, and providing regulation for the media to achieve public good (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 44).

The first sub-dimension pertinent to the analysis of the Role of the State in shaping the media system is the media regulations. An important aspect is how policy paradigms and the normative ideas they entail play an essential role in shaping the media policy and its guiding principles (Künzler, 2012). Media policy and media regulations remain firmly in the hands of the nation despite globalization and convergence, which makes it a pivotal aspect in determining the media system (Hafez, 2007, p. 148).

Media policy can be conceptualized as the broader field in which competing ideas and assumptions about the desirable structure, conduct, and performance of media systems. It encompasses the formulation and implementation of collectively binding rules and decisions that aim at shaping the media system (Puppis, 2016). The definition outlines that the media policy is the output of the policymaking and the process of formulating and implementing rules (implying the involvement and interaction of different actors pursuing potentially competing objectives), which takes place within specific instructional structures (Freedman, 2008). Media regulations, albeit, is a narrower concept than the media policy. Regulations refer to the particular legal instruments deployed on media organizations to achieve specific policy goals (Freedman, 2008) (Puppis, 2016).

Media policies originate from, and reflect, abstract paradigmatic views on the relationship between the state, society, and media (Puppis & Van den Bulck, 2019, p. 4). For example, media policies shaped by the liberal paradigm favor the free market principles and oppose market intervention going beyond safeguarding economic competition, which generally may lead to intensified commercialization of the media system. On the contrary, media policies under the social responsibility paradigm emphasize the responsibility of the state, which may lead to media policy that favors public service media and subsidies for the press (Puppis & Van den Bulck, 2019, p. 5) (Puppis, 2009, p. 13). The media policy has an impact on making decisions pertinent to

media structures, organizations, and their performance (Puppis & d'Haenens, 2012, pp. 221-222). A state may exercise other forms of intervention, such as laws and policies pertaining to access to information, media concentration, ownership and cross-ownership, and license regulations relating to libel, defamation, privacy, and hate speech.

The second subdimension is public service broadcasting organizations within the country. Hallin and Mancini refer to it as the positive form of state intervention in the media system. Public service broadcasting plays a specific role in responding to public interest objectives and contributing to media pluralism (Buckley, et al., 2008, p. 190). Hallin and Mancini called for exploring the relationship between the nature of the public service broadcasting governance models and the political system. They proposed four types of public media governance in Europe: professional, civic, parliamentary, and government (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 30-32).

The intensity of state regulation of broadcasting depends on the technical, economic, political, and cultural justifications, which has led to the formation of two legal models, that of the United States versus that of Europe. Legal traditions influence both models through different types of public management. The two models no longer exist in their pure form. In most cases, State TV is mixed with a predominance of either public or private sectors, depending on the legal and cultural traditions of the country (Pavani, 2018, pp. 11-12).

Multiple issues impact the independence and public broadcasters' ability to play a positive role in society. For example, several public broadcasters face serious funding problems. Another threat to public broadcasters is the challenge of the growth of private commercial broadcasting. In some countries with traditions of public service broadcasting, opening up to commercial competition has led to a decline in viewership, which has led to pressure to reduce public subsidies. It became more challenging to produce quality programming. Hence, channels had to resort to more populist and less costly production in some cases, even with the partnership with private producers (Buckley, et al., 2008, p. 192). Pavani suggests three elements through which public service broadcasting experiences can be categorized: 1. The degree of decentralization: this element represents the respect of specific values typical of public service such as the promotion of local culture, protection of ethnic and linguistic minorities, and regional identities; 2. Funding: This element is determined not only by the type of funding but also by how the budget is spent; and, 3. Internal organization and relationship with political institutions (Pavani, 2018, pp. 146-151).

On the other hand, public service broadcasting provides different functions to society, such as presenting national identity and culture. This role is limited by the independence of programs and quality standard setting. Multiple factors that determine the quality, diversity, independence, and distinctiveness of public service broadcasting are the legal framework in which the broadcaster operates, including the powers and duties set down in the law; the governance arrangements, including the process of appointment of the governing board and the senior management staff; and the funding arrangements (Buckley, et al., 2008, p. 192).

The third sub-dimension for the analysis of the Role of the State is media freedom. Media freedom is an intensely contested concept. It implies that communication and expression through various media should be considered a right for citizens and should accordingly be exercised freely. Nevertheless, very often in debates about media freedom, it is seen from a negative perspective (with the idea that freedom should be absolute), meaning what the media should not do or where the limitations to expressing some ideas are. This idea implies that there is no absolute freedom and that there must be a different set of regulations to organize media freedoms in each country⁴.

Normative media theories hold the view that media fulfill certain functions for democracy and society at large (McQuail D. , 1992). Under this perspective, media freedom is seen as a means to an end (not an end in itself) and an instrument to bring about public good. Under this perspective, media freedom comes with certain expectations and responsibilities, which consequently imposes certain restrictions on how media use their freedom (Blumler J. G., 1992), (McQuail D. , 2003), (Voltmer, 2010).

The struggle for press freedom in Western Europe was first articulated in the philosophical writings of 17th- and 18th-century philosophers (John Milton and Immanuel Kant). Other philosophers further developed these ideas; among them are (John Locke and John Stuart Mill) (Voltmer, 2013, p. 26). Keane (1991) considers media freedom as absolute freedom from government control, hence guaranteeing citizens' right to express themselves freely (Keane, 1991). The state is the main adversary for freedom-of-expression and media freedom. From this point of view, press freedom is understood as freedom from and against the state. Hence, the press is considered the fourth state and part of the balance between the executive, legislative, and judiciary power, from dominating public affairs (Voltmer, 2013, p. 26).

⁴ Different quantitative indicators exist and are published annually to assess the status of media freedom in each country such as Freedom House index, Article 19 and Reporters without Borders.

The last sub-dimension for the Role of the State that Hallin and Mancini identified was the press subsidies. They refer to both direct and indirect financial subsidies, such as placement or withholding of advertising or other forms of disguised subsidies. Other forms of disguised subsidies occur in the market, such as excessively steep subscription fees. Brüggemann et al. (2014) contend that state subsidies can have multiple arrangements sometimes to support commercial media organizations in the form of direct or indirect subsidies. On the other hand, some countries with influential public broadcasting organizations yet do not have press subsidies. Hence, they argue that subsidies are a separate variable of the state dimensions rather than public media organizations (Brüggemann, Engesse, Büchel, Humprecht, & Castro, 2014, p. 1033). Numerous studies indicate that subsidized newspapers do not necessarily withhold government criticism (Schudson, 2002, p. 254). In less established democracies or during political conflicts, the political elite may use state power to support clientelism whereby licenses, loans, subsidies, subscriptions and advertising, positions in state-owned media are granted based on these reasons (Curran, 2000, pp. 133-134).

Several studies empirically examined the relevance of these subdimensions to the Role of the State dimension and confirmed their applicability. Brüggemann et al. (2014) contend that the state intervention dimension includes three different variables: (a) public broadcasting (that complements private media), (b) press subsidies (to support private media), and (c) ownership regulation (that limits media activity (Brüggemann, Engesse, Büchel, Humprecht, & Castro, 2014, p. 1033). Castero-Herrero et al. (2017) confirm that press freedom and foreign ownership, along with political parallelism and public service broadcasting status, have a higher explanatory power to indicate the differences among countries (Castro-Herrero, Humprecht, Engesser, Brüggmann, & Buchel, 2017, p. 4798).

The dimension of the Role of the State and its sub-dimensions exemplifies the importance of the state and its influence on the media system within one country. The extent or nature of the state intervention, however, varies. It is essential to consider how the state intervenes to be able to assess the media system developments. In this study, the dimension of the Role of the State is operationalized into four variables: media regulations, public media organizations, media freedom, and press subsidies.

This study proposes that the debate on the dimension of the Role of the State can be further informed by political science research on authoritarian regimes. The authoritarian regime's characteristics are pertinent to non-state actors' and agents' degree of

autonomy, such as civil society, the rule of law, bureaucracy, and the market from the central state power. The key argument is that the dimension unfolds differently in an authoritarian state where the relationship between the state and the media tends to be highly ambiguous. In most cases, the state's role is different from its role in functioning democracies, where the state operates to protect rules and rights. In fact, the authoritarian state becomes the malignant force that violates these rules and destroys the existing political actors, such as civil society and political parties. This study poses the question of how the authoritarian state context influences the analysis of the dimension of the *Role of the State* in Hallin and Mancini's theoretical framework.

Exploring the aspects pertinent to the dimension of the Role of State identified by Hallin and Mancini and the previous literature, this study adopts an approach sensitive to the authoritarian state mechanisms of control over the media. This study examines how the authoritarian state can limit pluralism in the media through multiple tools originally expected to function otherwise in democratic societies. The authoritarian state manipulates the use of laws and regulations, the state-owned public media, and the status of media freedom, and provides financial support for selected media organizations in order to limit pluralism. These elements are better understood while understanding the setting of an authoritarian regime and its relation to blocking the agency of civil society organizations, political parties, and media regulatory bodies to take actions to curb state authority.

Prior to the Arab Spring there existed a long legacy of state oppression. This context has shaped the outcomes after the uprising. The culture of public broadcaster supporting the regime has gradually undermined its role in public life. The previous regimes have managed to build bureaucracies through a network of privileges to certain favored groups within the media sector, making it very difficult to dismantle the old media system and start a new one. The dilemma of the democratization process is the involvement of state institutions still infused with authoritarian structures and populated by people who, to varying degrees, have been involved in the old regime. The dimension is shaped by the autonomy of the multiple actors in contrast to the authoritarian state.

2.2.2 Political Parallelism

The dimension of political parallelism described by Hallin and Mancini is an adaptation of the concept of "party-press parallelism" proposed by Seymour Ure to describe the pattern and degree to which the press system mirrors the party system of a given country (as cited in Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 27). Hallin and Mancini defined this dimension as

“the extent and links between media outlets and organized social and political groups.” The partisanship of media content and audience, personal connections between media organizations, and social and political groups they represent, are all key features of political parallelism. Political parallelism, in that sense, has taken universal applicability in the context of comparing media systems. Hallin and Mancini considered that a high degree of political parallelism is the hallmark of the Polarized Pluralist model and the Democratic-Corporatist model. On the other hand the Liberal model, is characterised by the dominance of the market mechanisms and commercial media, Hallin and Mancini consider that media organizations in the Liberal model are unlikely to fall into strong linkages with the political parties.

The formulation of the political parallelism dimension was criticized for being problematic when applied outside of the Western world. However, Hallin and Mancini have argued that their conceptualization of political parallelism is tied to Western Europe's political history and European political practices. The concept is linked to multiparty democracy, competition among mass parties, and other organized social groups. Mass parties in Europe represent the essential means historically to participate in public life. They also call for the importance of reconceptualizing of the dimension to apply to other media systems. For example, in many countries where political parties tend to be shallow and transient, political parties tend to appear and disappear quickly. Neither voters nor political leaders have strong or stable attachments to these parties (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, pp. 292-293).

Several scholars made contributions explaining how the dimension does not fit precisely when describing political systems in other places in the world. McCargo (2012) considers that the politics in Asia Pacific areas, especially “party politics” systems, are going out of style and are challenging to locate in Asia Pacific media systems (McCargo, 2012, pp. 218-219). Peri notes the decline of Political Parallelism due to the war in Israel, where political parties ceased to exist for a long time (Peri, 2012, p. 17). Dobek-Ostrowska concludes that the political parties’ system in Poland only occurred after 1989. Parties have been problematic in their operations since then. Politicians and leaders founded parties because this was the only way to enter the parliament or to pursue a career in the state administration; one should lead a political party (Dobek-Ostrowska B. , 2012, p. 33).

Albuquerque has criticized the term political parallelism for being used too arbitrary. He emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between politically engaged media or advocacy media and “real” political parallelism. Accordingly, it becomes crucial to determine how clear the relations are between media actors and the political system

(Albuquerque, 2012, p. 93). This suggests that the analysis of media ownership patterns are a central element when analyzing political parallelism. It is essential to consider the political involvement of media owners.

Albuquerque also suggested that to make it possible to study the political parallelism dimension empirically, there are two requirements: political competitiveness and the stability of media/politics relations (Albuquerque, 2013). Another suggestion to expand political parallelism is to add other organized social groups and not only parties to the analysis. It is essential to differentiate between the role of the media outlets in political partisanship versus the active role of media actors in the political and state decision making processes (Roudakova, 2012, pp. 270-271).

Hallin and Mancini (2017) reviewed empirical work conducted about this dimension from various studies; they confirm the variables in their original framework. The political parallelism dimension, according to them, consists of the following variables: “(a) structural ties between media and political organizations; (b) political affiliations of journalists, owners, and media managers; (c) media content; and (4) news consumption patterns” (Hallin & Mancini, 2017, p. 157).

Voltmer suggests that media systems in transitional democracies are highly politicized, with individual media attaching themselves to particular groups or causes. She contends that there is no new media system where internal diversity is a dominant pattern of representing the plurality of voices in the public sphere. News media in emerging democracies will be dominated by partisanship. She considers that this is an expected consequence of freedom after many years of suppression. A phenomenon exemplifies in the explosion of voices eager to express themselves in public (Voltmer, 2013, pp. 180-181). In that sense, partisanship may not necessarily be a negative aspect; it can provide voters' orientation in newly emerging democracies. It helps citizens become aware of which political camp this medium is supporting during times of change, which consequently contributes to an “informed citizen” (p. 183). Political parallelism becomes problematic when it leads to fostering instrumentalization and media polarization. This occurs when political opponents become disrespectful to one another and start taking their own position as absolute and denying any legitimacy for the other camp (Voltmer, 2013, p. 184).

To conclude, political parallelism in itself may not be possible to avoid in transitional societies and and it is no strange phenomenon to an environment that needs to boost the democratic transformation. However, the problematic factor is the toxic partisanship

that leads to polarization and even hatred among societal groups, which means the emergence of media that does not emphasize dialogue or support the fostering of unity in one society. This study explores the type of political parallelism in Arab media systems, how the political context shapes the formulation of the dimension in the authoritarian context where limited political actors exist, and how the variation in the political parallelism dimension leads to hindering the development of a pluralistic media system.

2.2.3 Media Market

Media markets exist in all types of media systems, and the study of media markets focuses on the exchange activities that take place in those markets within the influence of a particular political system (Picard & Russi, 2012, p. 237). Media was part of this dynamic early development of Western countries and the embeddedness of democratic societies. The development of the printing press allowed ideas to spread across space at an unprecedented speed, and with the invention of the telegraph, even space no longer mattered. The instant availability of information provided new opportunities for businesses to coordinate within and across national boundaries (Thompson, 1995). Equally important were the social implications of the emerging mass media. The rise of mass press circulation significantly contributed to nation-building and nationalism. The media helped strengthen the centralization of power as well as social cohesion between the diverse segments of the population (Veltmer, 2013, pp. 161-162).

In their analysis of the media market dimension, Hallin and Mancini focused on the quantitative variable of the high press circulation rates. They argued that it could be linked with the earlier historical development of mass press circulation. They consider that the mass press circulation development in the late 19th century and early 20th century is reflected in higher newspaper circulation rates today. Hence, countries that developed mass press circulation early, such as Northern European countries, are identified by a higher press circulation degree. Southern European countries that developed mass-circulation press later, after the beginning of the 20th century, were never able to develop high circulation rates despite advancements of literacy rates or improving economic conditions. Therefore, in Southern European countries, mass press circulation patterns could be characterized by a small elite – mainly urban – well educated and politically active audience readership (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 22-24).

Multiple scholars criticized Hallin and Mancini's approach for limiting the media dimension only to mass press circulation. Scholars questioned the media market dimension's ability as formulated to describe the media systems outside of the western

world. According to this formulation, the rest of the world's media systems will consequently fall into the category of low mass press circulation, which distinguishes the Polarized Pluralist model (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 288). Scholars have argued that other factors describe the media market beyond just the circulation rates in developing countries. McCargo sites one example of the problematic dependence on the mass press circulation in different contexts. He suggests that tabloids in East Asian countries have relevant importance, despite the low aggregate newspaper circulation rates, due to collective reading. A phenomenon that cannot be observed in European markets but spread in other areas of the world such as Latin America (McCargo, 2012). Zhao argues that media are not distributed as commodities to individual consumers in China but have a broader distribution concept. Usually, newspapers are distributed through work units and village committees, and are read collectively in China (Zhao, 2012). Another reason to expand the dimension is that mass press circulation never developed due to cultural or economic reasons. Instead, a culture of broadcasting media is more prevalent. In the context of Arab media systems, Sakr has pointed to the limited press market due to the low literacy levels and low incomes combined with the market distortions caused by the government controls on press and distribution (Sakr, 2008, p. 195).

Scholars have suggested examining a set of other variables within the media market's dimension, such as the overall market size. The overall market size has a significant impact on media and media policy (Humphreys, 2009, p. 123). Puppis and d'Haenens have pointed to the importance of the market size and its influence on shaping media legislations and policies (Puppis & d'Haenens, 2012). Hallin has noted the impact of the market size as a complex factor that may not be directly consistent with the state's size (Hallin D. , 2009, p. 101). Iosifidis argues that market size defines the relative strength of the television sector in one country and its potential influence on neighboring countries in many cases (Iosifidis, 2007). Richani has suggested revisiting the media market dimension to explore the overall market size instead of the mass-circulation press variable (Richani, 2014).

Another aspect that would add to the full picture of the media market's dimension is exploring the inclusiveness of the media market. Hallin and Mancini discuss the press market's inclusiveness, which indicates how far the press reaches out to the broader audience segments. This is individually significant for examining the media reach among women or the different social segments (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 22-26). There is a lack of identifying patterns of media and information production and circulation patterns. These patterns should consider the inequality of media access and the variation in the development of electronic media (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 288). Bruggemann et al. suggested expanding the analysis of the media market dimension to focus on the

market's inclusiveness, which means not only the reach of the press to elites but also the wider audience. This would consider the reach to women versus men or the reach to the working class or different society segments (Brüggemann, Engesse, Büchel, Humprecht, & Castro, 2014, p. 1064).

The final aspect to include in the analysis of the media market dimension is the online media market and emerging platforms. The massive recent technological transformation in the field of the media is another reason to expand the dimension. New technologies, platforms, and on-demand media have led to implications such as the expansion of commercial content, new means of media production, and content distribution. These new aspects have altered the established relationships and interactions in the media sector. This suggests the need for more knowledge in comprehending these developments and the challenges arising from them (Picard R. , 2018). New technological changes have introduced new companies that are industry leaders, platforms, innovative technologies, or new entrepreneurs across the media industries, as well as the difference in the environment in which the media industry itself takes place (Albarran, 2018, p. 4). Social media became mainstream as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Pinterest emerged as popular platforms for sharing information, opinions, photographs, and hobbies. These platforms' popularity has been quickly recognized by advertisers, leading to a further shift of advertising dollars from traditional media to digital media. Netflix, Youtube, and Google are known by financial investors as are their ability to dominate the markets where they are engaged (p. 5).

Finally, Picard and Russi note that the political economy of the state also influences markets. The political economy actions shape, direct, promote, or constrain markets. Media markets are inherently subject to political and systematic influences. These influences and constraints represent a root cause for defining markets (Picard & Russi, 2012, p. 237). Hadland argues that relationship with the audience and the role of the press in the broader process of social and political communication that takes place. Media markets in the Liberal and Democratic-Corporatist models address the mass public, and they are not engaged in the political world. Hence, they function as mediating factors between political elites and citizens. While in other countries of the Polarized Pluralist model, mass press engages only with the elites who are actively involved in politics (Hadland, 2007, p. 178).

To conclude this section, limiting the media market dimension to the mass press circulation fails to capture the media market's full patterns of development. It becomes

an important reason to expand the study of the media market beyond the mass press circulation. The study explores the expanded dimension of 1. Mass Press Circulation, 2. Overall Market Size, 3. Inclusiveness of the Media Market, and 4. Online Media Market Size. The analysis will combine quantitative and qualitative information to explore the ambivalent relationship between the media market and the democratic transformation process. This study argues that the impact of the political context and society-specific factors have affected the media industry's operation, which led to the hijacking of multiple independent and pluralist voices that appeared after 2011. The study is concerned with how Arab media market structure can be fit into Hallin and Mancini's conceptualization of the media market dimension. It also seeks to understand how the existing media market structure is shaped by the authoritarian environment, which can hinder diversity and pluralism in the media system rather than lead to more freedom and diversity. The study also explores the role of online platforms in shaping the media market dimension in authoritarian states.

2.2.4 Journalistic Professionalism

This section discusses the dimension of journalistic professionalism and the norms and standards that constitute the kind of outputs that are generally recognized as quality journalism. However, while professional journalism's discourse seems to imply some universally shared norms of good journalism, journalistic practices differ significantly across cultures. Journalistic norms are interpreted and socially constructed through the actions and cognitive filters of those who are engaged in journalistic work (Voltmer, 2013, p. 198). Hallin and Mancini consider the dimension a highly debated one, especially when the concept of instrumentalism is considered. They argued that this dimension is specifically controversial since journalism has "ambiguous" boundaries and no "systematic body of knowledge" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 33).

Journalistic professionalism becomes even a more disputed notion with the rise of social media and citizen journalism. Ordinary citizens now can use the internet as a platform to post their opinions or can even report events. Weaver and Willnat argue that the emergence of new media has provided alternative and uncensored voices and allowed citizens a platform to express their views. However, they argue that traditional media remains the source of accurate news (Weaver & Willnat, 2012).

Hallin and Mancini proposed four sub-dimensions for analyzing the dimension of journalistic professionalism: 1. The autonomy of the profession, 2. Consensus on professional norms, 3. devotion to serving the public good, and 4. Degree of

instrumentalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 33-37). The journalistic professionalism dimension tends to be an essential structural factor in determining how the media system functions. It also sheds light on the state of professional media development and training along with their relationship with the management structures of the media organizations.

The first sub-dimension is professional autonomy. Hallin and Mancini argue that journalism has never achieved a relevant degree of autonomy as a profession because it “lacks esoteric knowledge,” unlike other traditional professions (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 34). Besides, journalists are also employees of specific journalism organizations, which usually function as any other enterprise. Organizations pose certain autonomy levels to journalists as they are hired (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 35). Autonomy is a “central component of professionalism.” It indicates the tendency for applying occupational techniques based on a person’s self-direction (McDevitt, 2006, pp. 155-157). Hadland suggests that autonomy comprises job security, the extent of interference in reporting, the amount of pressure applied by senior managers, and the role of journalists in decision making within media organizations (Hadland, 2007, p. 188)

Autonomy in itself is a multidimensional concept; it includes a variety of elements such as the levels of freedom of journalists, as well as the organizational and geopolitical factors that can limit their autonomy (Mellado & Humanes, 2012, p. 998). Autonomy can also be classified into two levels: external and internal. The external dimension is related to imposing restrictions on the organization’s political autonomy including policy, state censorship, legislative framework, and regulation. At the same time, internal autonomy refers to internal restrictions on journalists’ freedom to make decisions without management or commercial forces affecting the newsroom's work environment. Individual and organizational autonomy are interlinked and cannot be easily separated (Reich & Hanitzsch, 2013, p. 135).

Commercialization, politicization, and dependency on elite sources are all elements that pose threats to professional autonomy (McDevitt, 2006, pp. 155-159). Autonomy is a “central component of professionalism”; it indicates the tendency for applying occupational techniques based on a person’s self-direction (McDevitt, 2006, pp. 155-157). Hadland suggests that autonomy comprises job security, the extent of interference in reporting, the amount of pressure applied by senior managers, and journalists' role in decision-making within media organizations (Hadland, 2007, p. 188).

A problematic point to how autonomy is universally applied is the description “perceived.” This is to emphasize the subjectivity of the notion and the difficulty of

gauging autonomy. This suggests autonomy remains a subjective notion that is difficult to measure. Hallin and Mancini pointed out that autonomy also differs considerably over time and across media systems as well as among different types of organizations (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 35). Despite that autonomy is a controversial term, it was still used by Hallin and Mancini in their framework as one of the indicators to assess media systems.

Another variable of journalistic professionalism dimension is professional norms. This subdimension refers to the “style of life, code of ethics, self-conscious identity, and practical routines” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 35-36). For Hadland, the development of professional norms reflects the maturity of the media system’s ethical framework, media organizations' efficiency, and the effectiveness of self-regulation (Hadland, 2007, p. 188). Journalists subscribe to a set of norms that guide their activities and set the standards for what is regarded as ‘good journalism’ (Voltmer, 2013, p. 198). Journalism is a “moral enterprise,” thus emphasizing the centrality of norms and ethics for the profession (Seib, 2002, p. xi).

Journalism culture has become an increasingly important term because it can include a diverse range of journalistic practices. The concept captures how the field of journalism is being constituted and reaffirmed by negotiated professional values that are adapted to each culture (Hanitzsch, et al., 2011, p. 273). Journalism culture seems to indicate “a particular set of ideas and practices by which journalists make their role in society legitimized and render their work meaningful” (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 369) and (Donsbach & Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 262)

Journalism culture integrates very diverse and often isolated scholarly debates about professionalism, objectivism, perceptions of professional roles, and ethical standards. Journalism culture explores how this culture has been constructed, considering that journalism culture is in a continuous state of change. Journalism culture incorporates the earlier work on professional norms and, at the same time, how journalists make sense of their work and profession (Hanitzsch, et al., 2011, p. 274) and (Hanitzsch, 2011).

Journalistic culture has become a key analytical concept in the field of study of journalism scholarship; for example, studies of (Deuze, 2002), (Hanitzsch, 2007), (Donsbach & Hanitzsch, 2012) and (Zelizer, 2005) (Gurevitch & Blumler, 2004). Studies show a difference in journalistic practice based on one country’s culture. Some studies show the considerable differences in how journalists understand their role and the difference in ethical norms guiding professional decisions (Donsbach & Patterson, 2004). Journalists’ roles and attitudes can differentiate journalistic practices in countries with social systems

(Weaver & Willnat, 2012). A comprehensive study of journalists in 18 countries concludes that journalists from non-Western contexts tend to be more interventionist in their role perceptions and flexible in their ethical values (Hanitzsch, et al., 2011).

Hallin and Mancini add the sub-dimension of journalists' senses serving the public interest to their analysis of professionalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 36). They argue that this public service orientation has significant consequences for the practice of journalism. This can be an indicator of the relationship of the media with other social institutions.

Hallin and Mancini describe some forms of commercial instrumentalization, such as product placement or advertisers' demands for media content influence. Instrumentalization refers to the extent to which journalism is controlled by external factors such as political parties, social groups, politicians, or other actors that have political influence. Those actors would generally aim to use media for political or commercial benefits (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 33-37). Hallin and Mancini concur that instrumentalization of the media is more prevalent in countries of the Polarized Pluralist model. In this case, the power of media corporations are used to share government policy, and politicians' fear of attack, both personally and collectively, underlies critics' fears about the creation of politically insulated and sustained, if never entirely self-perpetuating, media empires" (Hardy, 2008, p. 115).

The importance of the journalistic professionalism dimension stems from its potential role to balance the influential role of state intervention in the media sector, the intervention of other political organizations, or economic parties that may interfere for multiple political or commercial purposes. It also remains a problematic dimension to measure empirically. It is highly problematic to assign labels and levels to professional standards of journalists and especially when conducting the analysis on the state level.

2.2.5 Convergence, Divergence, and Hybridity

Convergence refers to the observation Hallin and Mancini made that the differences among media systems are diminishing considerably with a shift towards the Liberal model. Convergence happens in the sense of increasing the role of commercial media, and adopting professional conventions similar to those of countries in the Liberal model –“informational, politically non-aligned, dramatized; and shifts in political communication toward more personalized, marketing-oriented forms of political communication” (Hallin & Mancini, 2017, p. 162). Hadland considers that this process is driven by multiple factors

such as the increased use of technology, the global interaction of journalists, and what Hallin and Mancini named secularization (the decline of representative organizations such as political parties and churches and their replacement with mass media) (Hadland, 2007, p. 42).

Voltmer argues that the globalization of media markets is one of the driving forces towards convergence. Media organizations are owned by a decreasing number of transnational media conglomerates. Those conglomerates are vigorously trying to expand their audiences at the international level. She argues that this convergence made today's media markets, both local and international, at the same time. This has brought a unique mix of media products and practices (Voltmer, 2012, p. 231)

Hallin and Mancini warn against the interpretation that convergence is inevitable and that all systems eventually will turn into the liberal model. They pinpoint that even within the Western media systems, there is a wide range of differences with intricate patterns of change in different directions. Hence it becomes essential to study the impact of the process of commercialization and globalization on media systems. The hypothesis should not be posed as a complete convergence towards the liberal model, but a more sophisticated hypothesis about media system change (Hallin & Mancini, 2017, p. 164). Commercialization can be seen as the most influential force of change in the European context. Commercialization is linked with the decline in party press competition with the commercial press and the accelerated introduction of commercial television. Mass press parties declined favor "individualized, media-centered political forms of mobilization". These changes represent some evidence of the transformation of the European media system towards individualized forms of communication that characterize the Liberal model (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 284).

Some of the participants of the volume *Comparing Media Systems beyond the Western World* rejected the idea of global media systems converging towards the Liberal model. They highlighted some manifestations of change towards commercialization, however. (Balcytiene, 2012) and (Dobek-Ostrowska B. , 2012) found convergence of East European media systems towards hybrid models that fall between the Polarized and Liberal models (although they are closer to the Polarized model). Vartanova argued that the Russian media system has also abandoned some of its traditional practices (Vartanova, 2012).

In this study, the Hallin and Mancini framework is utilized as a scholarly springboard to take their framework and models beyond established democracies within the Western world context. This study aims to assess the Egyptian and Tunisian media systems using

the lens of Hallin and Mancini's framework. This study utilizes the framework to critically assess the complex dimensions and suggest modifications or other variables pertinent to the two countries' local and authoritarian political contexts. The study explores how the dimensions can be aligned to consider the specific political factors to enable a better understanding of the Egyptian and Tunisian media systems. The main aim of this study is to identify the group of "building blocks" (analytical dimensions) for best describing the differences and commonalities in the media systems in the Arab World (Egypt and Tunisia serve as case studies). The study also explores the role of political factors specific to the region, such as the decades of authoritarian rule, which have shaped the media systems' developments—leading both countries to different pathways in democratic outcomes.

2.3 The Authoritarian State: Arab Regimes – Transitional or Authoritarian?

From the 1970s and onwards, a wave of democratization has occurred in the world starting in some counties in Europe, Latin America and some parts of Asia, Eastern Europe, and Africa (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986), (Huntington, 1991), and (Hollifield & Jilson, 2000). Earlier democratization processes were believed to be following a specific pathway within a framework of gradual linear transition paths: 1. A liberalization period, where the old regime opens up; 2. A democratization phase where the old regime is dismantled, and new democratic institutions replace them; and 3. Consolidation or stabilization of the democratic order, leading to a peaceful transfer of power from one party/elite to another and back (Karl & Schmitter, 1991) (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986) (Schneider & Schmitter, 2004).

The notion of a transition paradigm to suggest countries are moving from authoritarian regime towards democracy in a group of linear stages has been widely rejected (Carothers, 2002). However, this linear transition model has been criticized frequently for multiple reasons. First, the models are rooted in a very Western view of how democracy is defined. Second, democratization is not a one-way street. Democratization processes are never smooth or conflict-free (Veltmer, 2010, p. 137). In some cases, transitions could be towards a political democracy or could lead to the restoration of a new and possibly more severe form of authoritarian rule, instability, or violent confrontations (O'Donnell, Schmitter, & Whitehead, 1986, p. 3).

Classifying regimes into a dichotomy at the two ends of the spectrum may seem like an easy solution, which results in liberal democracies versus dictatorship. However, it becomes much more difficult to classify the countries in the "grey zone." These countries cannot be described on either end of the spectrum. Along with all the democratic

advances achieved during the third wave of democracy and afterward, the number of countries that have actually transitioned to democracy or are in the course of transition has increased, as well as the literature that explores democratization as a process of political system changes across the world. Scholars have noted the tremendous variation in the democratization experience across countries (Geddes, 1999, p. 117). The variation in democratic experiences occurs even within the same geographic region. Countries in the same region, even with similar conditions, could pass through different transitional experiences (Lijphart, 1990). Most countries from the third wave of democracy seem instead to fall into a “grey zone” of diverse forms of government that combine autocratic and democratic features (p.9). Countries in the grey zone have been given multiple labels in literature, such as “competitive authoritarian” (Levitsky & Way, 2010) or “electoral authoritarian” (Schedler, 2006) or “hybrid” (Diamond, 2002).

Studying authoritarianism cases in Egypt and Tunisia is crucial for various reasons. They represent the two countries that triggered the Arab Spring uprisings in the region. They also have a theoretical interest in the study of adaptive authoritarianism. Both countries were trapped in authoritarian rule. The uprising outcomes brought different paths to each country. Tunisia has been considered the only country in the Middle East where a consolidated democracy is tentatively on its way. Egypt ended up in a fully autocratic military rule (King S. , 2020) and (King S. , 2020, p. 81).

This robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East region has been the concern of scholars for some time. Bellin has analyzed the robustness of the Middle Eastern regimes against democratization following the third wave of democracy. She argued that the presence of an exceptionally muscular coercive apparatus with the will and capacity to repress had been the leading cause of this resilience of authoritarianism (Bellin E. , 2004). Causes of authoritarian resilience in the Arab Spring can be summed up into four broad types of argument: “1 The neo-patrimonial nature of political regimes themselves; 2 Perpetuated patterns of patriarchal societal structures; 3 Economic structures including rentier states of the first and second-order; 4 An international environment hostile to democratization” (Schlumberger, 2020, pp. 55-56).

Egypt turned from what is known as a “liberal autocracy” under Mubarak into an “outright autocracy” under Sisi. This is not to argue that the Mubarak regime was not repressive, but rather the regime's nature was different. At least it went to some lengths to give the appearance of a functioning democratic system, contrary to Sisi’s regime which concentrates more power in the military's hands and the presidency. It is moving from any liberal tendency to become an outright autocracy (Mandour, 2015). Tunisia’s

success can be attributed to the comparative strength of the national unity and state capacities, along with an apolitical military, along with the will of both Islamist and secular political parties to work together to reach a democratic bargain. Later threats to Tunisian democracy are from the resurgence of the pre-Arab Spring political and economic elites' power, coupled with the socio-economic struggles (King S. , 2020, p. 23).

Given the previous discussion, when applying the Hallin and Mancini model in Egypt's case, it is essential to note that Egypt is not a state in transformation. Despite all hopes that were raised during the Arab Spring, the democratic transformation was halted. The military rule put Egypt back from a liberal autocracy under Mubarak to a full autocracy similar to the Nasser era. Examining the case of Tunisia on the same model allows us to highlight the variation in the role of the state dimension in the case of Egypt as an authoritarian regime. Tunisia represents the media system in the only country in the Arab world that had made steps towards consolidating democracy. The robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East region is a significant factor in shaping the role of the state. This factor also shapes other dimensions, such as political elites' roles or civil society in the Middle Eastern countries.

3 Methodology

This study critically assesses the Egyptian and Tunisian media using a comparative perspective through Hallin and Mancini's dimensions in *Comparing Media Systems*. It suggests modifications to the dimensions pertinent to the two countries' local and political context. The study finally proposes a model for the analysis of Arab media systems. The study uses a combination of field research methods complemented by a review of relevant literature by applying methodological approaches triangulation. The study applied a triangulation of methodology in the data collection and answered research questions. It combines analysis of secondary sources, a case study research of Egyptian and Tunisian media systems, in addition to the qualitative method of analysis: 60 semi-structured interviews were conducted with media experts in Egypt and Tunisia. Triangulation was applied to deepen the knowledge obtained from the qualitative methods. It also systematically allowed the researcher to extend and complement possible knowledge by examining the case studies incorporated in the research.

3.1 Triangulation of Methodology

Triangulation refers to combining different groups of data sets on the background of the theoretical perspectives. As far as possible, these perspectives should be treated and applied on an equal footing and in an equally consequent way" (Flick, 2009, p. 444). The triangulation of methodology means that the researcher takes multiple perspectives on the issue under study; furthermore, the researcher may apply various approaches to answer the research questions (Flick, 2009, p. 444). Triangulation may incorporate different datasets or investigators or even combining several methodologies. Methodological triangulation leads to weighting and interpreting several evidence sets from one perspective (Jensen, 2002, p. 272). Triangulation of methods or datasets is meant to produce more in-depth knowledge than what could be produced using one approach.

Scholar Norman Denzin first developed triangulation as a strategy for gaining multiple perspectives on the same phenomenon (Denzin N. , 1970), (Denzin N. , 1989) (Denzin N. , 2009). Triangulation was conceptualized as a strategy for validating results obtained by using a single method. As the triangulation strategy developed, the focus has shifted towards enriching and complementing knowledge and transgressing the (always limited) epistemological potentials of a single method (Flick, 2009, p. 444). Triangulation became a way to add discipline to both qualitative and quantitative research. Its primary use is to

avoid the bias introduced by a single form of collecting and interpreting data. Triangulation allows the researcher to analyze data more critically, identify methodological weaknesses, and employ alternative ways for examining outcomes and interpretations. Triangulation is particularly crucial in qualitative research to promote more accuracy, use cross-referencing, and demonstrate data verification (Morris, 2018, p. 1782).

In this study, triangulation was applied to deepen the knowledge obtained from the qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews through the existing secondary data. It also systematically allowed the researcher to extend and complement possible knowledge by examining the case studies incorporated in the research. The use of multiple data collection methods increases the study's scope and adds depth and consistency in methodological proceedings. The study combines qualitative methods using semi-structured interviews and case study research, while complementing and verifying the results using existing secondary data, both quantitative and qualitative. The study did not depend only on the interview data, even though they can provide vast amounts of information. The work also draws upon existing qualitative and quantitative secondary data. Particularly for the purpose of the comparative study, secondary data is an essential source of information. The following sections discuss in detail each of the applied methodological approaches.

3.2 Secondary Sources of Data

This study begins with an evaluation of existing data. Evaluating secondary sources of data helped provide a rationale for the study, in addition to identifying gaps that it would endeavor to fill (Dunne C. , 2011, p. 116). The review of existing data alerted the researcher about the topic, helped inform the discussion guideline that was later used in the interviews as described in the coming sections, and helped in the “contextualization” of the study (Dunne C. , 2011, p. 121). Using secondary data also allowed the researcher to conduct further in-depth verification of the field data during the analysis step. The different sources of secondary data that the researcher examined follow:

Reports and statistics were reviewed. This study has reviewed other quantitative data and statistics about the Egyptian and Tunisian media markets as well as political and societal indicators. The study examined data from the following sources:

- The official statistical agency in Egypt: Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS)

- Statistiques Tunisie: The National Institute of Statistics in Tunisia is responsible for data gathering, processing, and analyzing, as well as the disseminating statistical information
- Statista: a private provider of market and consumer data
- World Bank: data for GDP growth from 2011 to 2018

Moreover, the study examined reports compiled by international organizations that provide references about the democracy index in addition to the world press freedom index. These sources reviewed include Freedom House, Refworld, Reporters without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontiers RSF), Amnesty International, Afrobarometer, and the Bertelsmann Stiftung country BTI 2016 reports for Egypt and Tunisia.

Industry reports provided during the interviews:

- Arab Media Outlook 2011–2015: Arab Media Exposure and Transition
- Dubai Press Club and the IPSOS-Market Potential for Premium Content and OTT services in MENA
- A study about media consumption in the Middle East developed by Northwestern University in Qatar (Mideastmedia project)

3.3 Qualitative Research

The study applies a qualitative research methodology approach. Qualitative approaches explore the singular occurrence of a particular phenomenon. They focus on context and in-depth analysis, in contrast with quantitative methods that establish the recurrence of multiple events or objects (Jensen, 2002, p. 255). Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2004, p. 4). Qualitative research is an iterative process that improves understanding in the scientific community by making new and significant distinctions derived from getting closer to the phenomenon under study (Aspers & Corte, 2019).

Qualitative research is appropriate when a particular phenomenon requires a research process that moves between multiple analytical levels to articulate and strengthen the results. Both data collection and analysis demonstrate the general procedure of in-depth analysis. In this process, researchers use empirical data to develop a theory rather than matching predefined categories with data elements used in quantitative methods (Jensen, 2002, p. 259).

Analysis of the media system, in this case, mandates the collection of qualitative information from the field (Creswell, 2013), (Yin, 2009), (Scholz & Olaf, 2002), (Todd, Clarke, McKeown, & Nerlich, 2004). Simultaneously, the study uses qualitative research because it allows for the research design's flexibility, provides volume and richness of data, and assigns importance to the stakeholders' frames of reference (Snape & Spencer, 2007, pp. 2-5). This method's use has allowed the development of an in-depth analysis of the Egyptian and Tunisian media systems. The dissertation integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches; however, the qualitative approaches dominated the study.

Qualitative methods dominated the study due to the nature of the analysis of the media system, which mandates the collection of qualitative information from the field (Creswell, 2013), (Yin, 2009), (Scholz & Olaf, 2002), (Todd, Clarke, McKeown, & Nerlich, 2004). Qualitative research is an iterative process in which an improved understanding of the scientific community is achieved through making new significant distinctions resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon study (Aspers & Corte, 2019).

Scholars have noted that "qualitative research locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices turn the world into a series of representations, including field-notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2004, p. 4).

Qualitative research implies that a particular phenomenon requires a research process that moves liberally between multiple analytical levels to articulate and elaborate analytical dimensions. The general procedure of in-depth analysis is evident in both data collection and analysis. In this process, empirical data is used to develop a theory to account for the categories rather than matching predefined categories with data elements (Jensen, 2002, p. 259). The approach was used in this study due to its relevance and ability to provide adequate analysis: since it allows for the research design's flexibility, provides volume and richness of data, and assigns importance to the stakeholders' frames of reference (Snape & Spencer, 2007, pp. 2-5). As discussed in chapters 4 and 5, this method's use has allowed the development of an in-depth analysis of the Egyptian and Tunisian media systems.

3.3.1 Case Study Research

To evaluate Hallin and Mancini's dimensions in a non-Western media systems context, the study assesses the Egyptian and Tunisian media systems as case studies. Case studies help identify areas that require an adjustment and define the case "in relation to theoretical frameworks and other cases" (Vennesson, 2007, p. 226). Case studies also serve as a revelatory tool to address a representative issue or case (Yin, 2009). Case studies aim to access and integrate various data sources in the analysis based on the case and its nature (Scholz & Olaf, 2002). Embedded case design allows for both quantitative and qualitative strategies of synthesis or knowledge integration (Scholz & Olaf, 2002, p. 14). The case-based analysis seeks to avoid the reduction of the complexity of data. Instead, the interaction with respondents carries over into the process of analysis (Jensen, 2002, p. 257). Case study analysis allows the researcher to identify and interactively modify in context. At the same time, the analytical categories remain open to ambiguities in the delimitation and interrelation of the units of meaning underlying the analysis (Tracy, 2019, p. 158). This study compiles various information collected via semi-structured interviews and secondary sources of data in developing the case study analysis.

The study uses Egypt and Tunisia as case studies for multiple reasons pertinent to the analysis of the media systems in the Arab region. These are the first two countries where the Arab Spring began in the region in late 2010 and early 2011. Egypt's media system is more central in the Arab world than in Tunisia. Egyptian media have had a central role in the Arab region beyond their borders. This study applies the approach of the selection of the most different cases. In this case, the researcher has tried to identify cases where independent and dependent variables show different values (Gerring, 2008, p. 31).

Both countries represent an interesting point of study for adaptive authoritarianism in the Middle East. Egypt and Tunisia were under authoritarian rule for decades under Mubarak and Ben Ali. The uprising developments unfolded in contrast between the two countries more than any other countries in the area. Tunisia is the only country in the Middle East where a consolidated democracy is tentatively on its way, while Egypt fell under a fully autocratic military rule (King S. , 2020, p. 81). Richter has argued that Tunisia may be an exceptional case compared to the media systems of the Arab world (Richter, 2017, p. 333).

Both countries went through frequent government reshuffles, including changes of prime ministers. Then both of them saw the introduction of new constitutions, as well as

parliamentary and presidential elections. In Egypt, the military took power following the Muslim Brotherhood's ousting in 2013 (Pioppi, 2013) and (Roll, 2016). Egypt revived its authoritarian regime, and Tunisia continued its transition to democracy (Weipert-Fenner & Wolff, 2019, p. 2).

Egypt has turned from a "liberal autocracy" under Mubarak into an "outright autocracy" under Sisi. Mubarak's regime had a different nature of authoritarianism. Mubarak went to some lengths to give the appearance of a functioning democratic system. In Contrast, Sisi's regime openly concentrates more power in the military and the presidency (Mandour, 2015).

Tunisia, on the other hand, experienced some progress at the beginning in democratizing. It went through a coalition under the National Dialogue Quartet through negotiations between the Ennahda party and civil society organizations. At first, observers considered this consensus a success story. Still, it was not long before the coalition was criticized for not moving forward in any obvious direction, re-establishing old power structures, and suppressing dissent (Boubekeur, 2016) and (Marzouki & Meddeb, 2016). Since 2018, cracks in this consensus have started to show (Dihstehoff, 2018). At the same time, Tunisia has an apolitical military. Both Islamist and secular political parties want to work together to reach a democratic bargain. Threats to Tunisian democracy include the resurgence of the pre-Arab Spring's political and economic elites' power and socio-economic struggles (King S. , 2020, p. 23).

Developing the case studies around the study of Egypt and Tunisia as examples of the Middle East allows exploring the role of authoritarian political context over the media systems. This selection allows for exploring the variation of the types of authoritarianism in the Middle East region as a significant factor in shaping the media sector. This factor shapes the dimensions differently than contexts of established democracies due to the differences in the roles of the political elites and the civil society.

3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

The study engages in a strategy called the "thick description," (Greetz, 1973) to note the necessary approach to understanding a phenomenon within its social and cultural contexts. Greetz describes the thick description as an ethnographic method in which researchers immerse themselves within the context of a particular culture, noting specific, detailed references about participants' social actions and behaviors.

The thick description methodology was applied through the use of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviewing is a widespread form of interviewing in human and social sciences. Textbooks of qualitative research methods give them exclusive attention (Flick, 2009). Some scholars would argue that interviewing is a central resource throughout social sciences, a field in which society engages with the issues that concern it (Rapley, 2001). One of the definitions for a qualitative interview (mainly a semi-structured interview) describes it as an “interview with the purpose of obtaining a description of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena.” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008, p. 3). Semi-structured interviews are sometimes equated with qualitative interviewing (Warren, 2001). Interviewing is also one of the most widely used data collection methods in media and communication studies (Jensen, 2002, p. 240).

Semi-structured interviews provided multiple advantages in conducting this research; this is why they were selected as a key data collection tool. They are more flexible and organic than structured interviews. They allow the interviewer to enter the conversation with flexible questions or even just a list of bullet points. The looser structure, the more it will enable stimulating the discussion rather than dictating it. This approach encourages the researcher to listen, reflect, adapt to the changing circumstances, and control the discussion. Semi-structured interviews allow interviewees’ complex viewpoints to be heard without being limited to predetermined scripted questions (Tracy, 2019, p. 158). Kvale and Brinkman note that the more spontaneous the interview procedure, the more likely to obtain unprompted, lively, and unexpected answers from the interviewees. On the other hand, the more structured the interview, the easier it is to analyze (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). Semi-structured interviews offered the data collection process some flexibility when posing the pre-established set of questions to respondents. It allowed in some cases to vary the order of questions or ask follow-up questions to delve more deeply into specific details of the topic or clarify the responses (Brennen, 2017, p. 29). Semi-structured interviews can better use knowledge-producing potentials of dialogue by allowing much more room than structured interviews for following up issues that may emerge during the interview. The interviewer also has more control over the conversation and whether it addresses the relevant topics to the research questions (Brinkmann, 2014, pp. 286-287).

The researcher adopted the use of the semi-structured interviews after ensuring enough expertise and knowledge about the media systems in both countries, as well as the necessary skill to conduct the interviews. The informed understanding of the research goal and the relevant literature about the Arab media systems enabled the researcher to

conduct the interviews with empathy and relevance to the topic. The fieldwork data was collected using the semi-structured interviews conducted with 60 participants. The interviews were conducted between April to November 2018. The interviews were recorded and transcribed in Arabic and then translated during the analysis phase. The following are the steps applied for conducting the fieldwork of the study:

- **Designing of the interview guide**

In preparation for the semi-structured interviews, the researcher prepared a set of main questions to keep the discussion focused. The discussion guide was developed in line with the aim of the study and the research questions, as well as a relevant literature review and other empirical materials. The interview guide was designed to critically assess the dimensions of *Comparing Media Systems*, explore the applicability of the dimensions in the context of the Arab media systems, and explore the interviewees' opinions in the developments of the media sector.

- **Planning for data collection**

Selection of interviewees

The study ensured the selection of interviewees who are experts in the media industry and the political arena. The study applied the selection of informant interviews, where they are figures who are familiar with the phenomenon (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019, p. 227). The selection of interviewees was made strategically and pragmatically. Priority candidates could provide new information, particularly regarding the most recent developments in terms of the four dimensions; the researcher prioritized interviewees with seasoned and in-depth perceptions regarding the Egyptian and Tunisian political and media system as a whole.

The study developed a plan for choosing the people to be interviewed to represent different media outlets (public and private), as well as social media and members of the regulatory authorities and journalists' unions in both Egypt and Tunisia. The study strategically considered collecting data that would provide insights into all aspects of the media systems. Figures 1 and 2 provide the distribution of interviewees by their field of expertise relevant to the analysis.

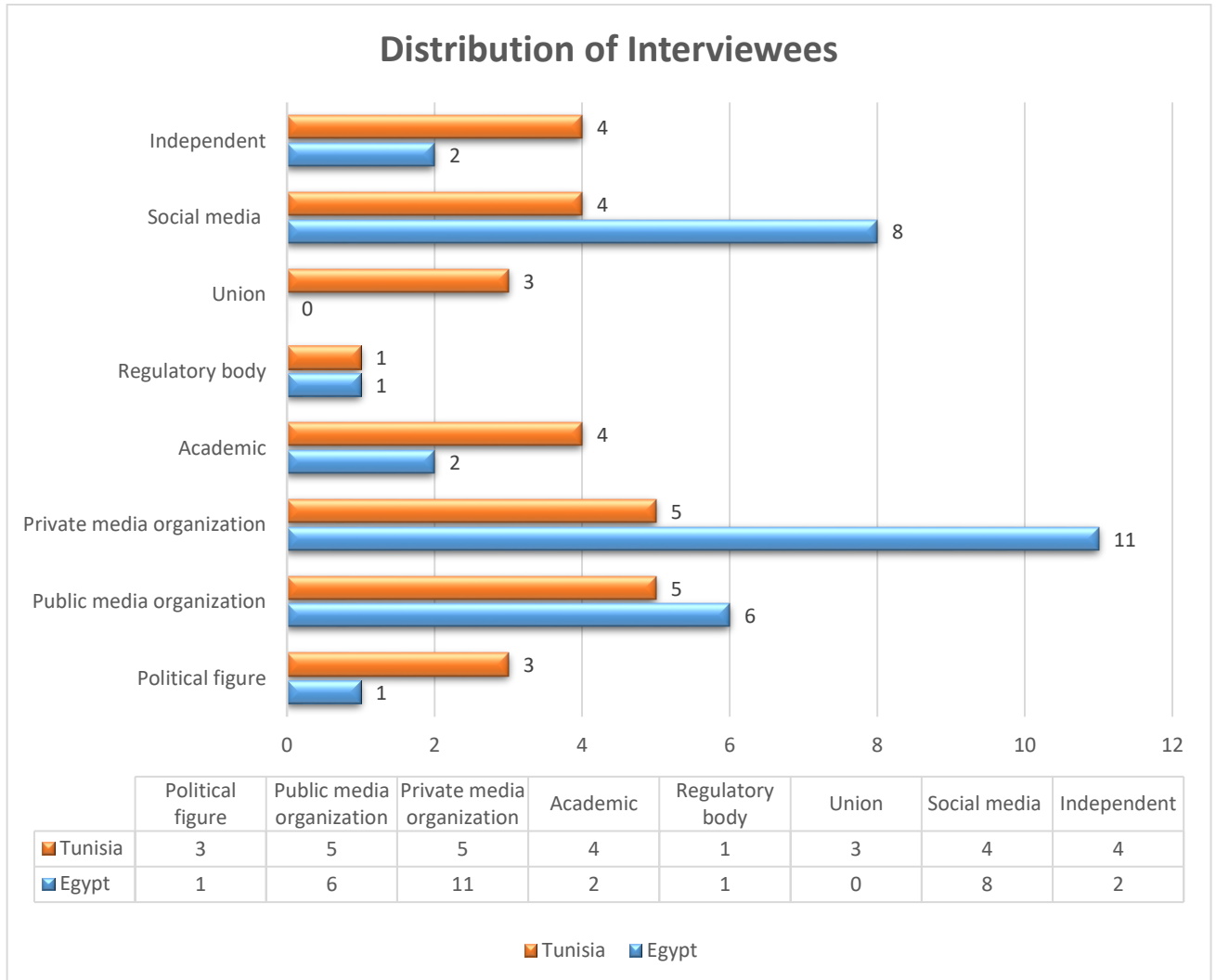


Figure 1 - Distribution of Interviewees by expertise in both Egypt and Tunisia

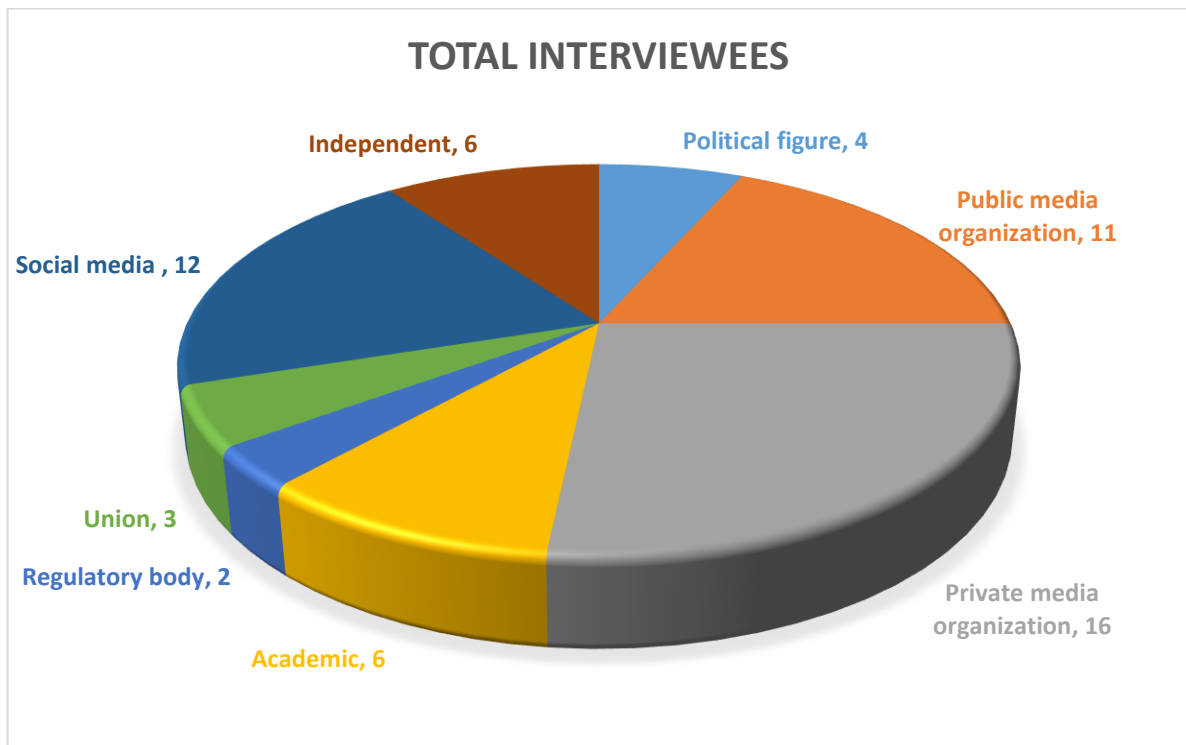


Figure 2 - Total interviewees by field of expertise

The following table highlights the distribution of interviewees by country and field of expertise.

Table 1 - Distribution of interviewees

	Egypt	Tunisia	Total
Political figure	1	3	4
Public media organization	6	5	11
Private media organization	11	5	16
Academic	2	4	6
Regulatory body	1	1	2
Union	0	3	3
Social media	8	4	12
Independent	2	4	6
Total	31	29	60

- **Conducting the interviews**

During the interviews, the researcher ensured participants provided voluntary and informed consent. Participants were not coerced and were informed about the potential risks and benefits of the study. Before conducting the interviews, it was also essential to explain to the interviewees the study's aim and the expected level of depth. The researcher posed the questions to the interviewees. Whenever necessary, follow up questions were used to deepen the qualitative interviewing by elaborating the context of answers and exploring the implications of the discussed themes. (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 151; Lindlof and Taylor, 2002).

Interviews were digitally recorded and lasted between 30-90 minutes. Most of the interviews were conducted at media organizations or the offices of the respondents. Some interviews took place away from the work environment because some respondents preferred to meet at other public places. Most interviewees are journalists, producers, management professionals, or media experts, scholars, and politicians. The process was complicated in many cases because of the limitations of conducting field research, especially in Egypt⁵. All interviews were conducted in Arabic. They were all then transcribed and translated manually by the researcher, then organized in Microsoft Word documents.

- **Analysis and conclusions**

The researcher had to analyze vast amounts of data. She read each translated interview thoroughly and dissected for different themes, each dealing with one aspect of the study. The dissected parts dealing with one topic were then gathered from different interviews and organized into individual documents. Finally, each topical document was synthesized and recomposed into a coherent narrative, considering the dominant options and the variations from one person to another.

⁵ The researcher faced multiple difficulties in conducting the interviews in Egypt due to the environment of aggression against media and journalists, and the difficulty of allowing researchers to conduct field work at the time.

4 Analysis of the Media System in Egypt

4.1 Political context

This section starts by contextualizing the Egyptian media system within its political determinants because the media system directly depends on the political context where it is located. The Egyptian media system is located in a political system that suffers persistent socio-economic problems. Socio-economic problems were exacerbated following the 2011 uprising. The Egyptian political system represents a case of resilient authoritarianism. The regime has controlled Egypt's civil society for the longest time. As a result, only civil society organizations that can co-exist with repression and the application of legal measures continued. The civil society was not capable of supporting a change to a more pluralist scene. Egyptian opposition parties share most of the weaknesses of civil society organizations. The legal framework applied to political parties was even more restrictive than that applied to civil society organizations. Political parties in Egypt are mainly socially baseless and do not really represent a significant portion of society. The most influential power in the Egyptian political scene is the military. It shapes political decision-making on different levels and shapes the business and the elite roles.

4.1.1 Socio-economic context

The Egyptian economy under Mubarak was dominated by a rent-seeking private sector group closely linked to Mubarak's family (his sons Gamal and Alaa) and his close associates (such as businessman Hussein Salem) (Salamey, 2015) and (Springborg R. , 2017). Other business groups that operated included civilian owners of large or medium-sized enterprises and retired officers (Springborg R. , 2017). Former military officers in the private sector are positioned as fixers in the bureaucratic interstices between the private and public sectors (Sayigh, 2019, p. 171). A group of Muslim Brotherhood members ran the "Islamic" business sector, where pious neoliberalism exemplifies in a combination of religion, charity, and business (Gamal, 2019, p. 3).

Economic liberalization and privatization policies that were fast-tracked starting 2005, under the economic reform and structural adjustment program, were mostly a corrupt process that helped set the groundwork for the 2011 revolution (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, p. 16). Despite signs of economic growth, the distribution of wealth remained concentrated in the hands of a few, combined with a high rate of unemployment (13% in 2008) and widespread poverty (50% at poverty level) (Salamey, 2015, p. 117). The Egyptian economy depends mostly on volatile revenue sources: income from the Suez

Canal, tourism, and remittances from Egyptians working within Gulf countries. A significant share of income is from the hydrocarbon sector's rents representing half of the country's exports during the 2008 economic crisis (Springborg R. , 2012). Inequality increased, highlighted by a small number of wealthy individuals with high living standards, while the poorest groups could not satisfy their basic needs. This was compounded by the increase in inflation rates by the end of the 2000s, most notably with the rise in the cost of food (Miller, 2012, pp. 85-87).

Due to the uncertainty and instability of the period following 2011, the Egyptian economy witnessed a sharp decline in multiple economic indicators. In 2013, the Index of Economic Freedom indicated a drawback in Egypt's economic freedom ranking, from rank 96th in 2011 to 100th in 2012, 126th in 2013 to a current ranking of 144th in 2019 (The Heritage Foundation, 2019). The labor market became weaker than in 2006 (Assaad & Krafft, 2013). Tourism declined by one third in 2011, with foreign investors hesitant to invest in the country. The negative economic indicators following 2011 have all intensified the other unemployment problems, inefficient tax collection, and massive government subsidies (Dewan, Hairston, & Bernhardt, 2012). The gap between exports and imports increased, as Egyptian exports declined from \$20 billion to \$18.7 billion during the years 2000 to 2016, and imports dropped from \$60 billion to \$57 billion during the same period. Besides, Egypt's tourism sector suffered during the period of security chaos, and consequently, revenue from tourism declined from \$11.6 billion in 2011 to \$3.8 billion in 2017. Simultaneously, Egypt's high inflation rate reached 35.25% in July 2017, which was the highest level since World War II (Central Bank of Egypt, 2017).

An array of complex problems aggravates Egypt's socio-economic situation. Egypt has the largest population in the Middle East, with inhabitants a little bit over 100 million inhabitants in 2019, with a growth rate of 1.99%. This ever-increasing population causes additional challenges in terms of the need to create opportunities in education, healthcare, housing, the job market, and infrastructure to accommodate the burgeoning numbers year after year (CAPMAS, 2019). About 25.2% of Egyptians live below the moderate poverty line of less than \$2 a day (World Food Program, 2013). According to a more recent report by the CAPMAS in 2019, one in three Egyptians lives in poverty. Poverty rates rose to 32.5% in 2018 from 27.8% in 2015 and 16.7% in 2000. Around 6.2% of Egyptians live on the poverty line at \$1.45 a day and under extreme poverty of less than one dollar a day. These numbers came as a result of the economic reform policies in 2017, which had a staggering impact on most of Egyptian society (CAPMAS, 2019).

Following Morsi's election as President in 2012, economic policies similar to the Mubarak's continued with a bias towards the interests of the business groups, failure to address social injustices, and dependency on Western capital and International financial Institutions' prescriptions (Naser, 2014). Economic fixes relied mainly on additional borrowing from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, given the continuation of even fiercer liberalization reforms (Salamey, 2015, p. 117).

After the overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood by the military, more economic instability and stagnation followed (Burnell, 2013). The government nationalized several businesses that supposedly belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood members or supporters as part of its policy to fight terrorism. Starting at the end of 2016, the Egyptian government under Sisi had to adopt aggressive economic reform measures led by the International Monetary Fund recipe under which it secured a bailout of 12 billion US dollars from the IMF. As part of the reform, the government floated the Egyptian pound, cut subsidies on fuel, services, and utilities in addition to imposing value-added tax (Momani, 2018). The result was an unprecedented wave of price hikes with a heavy toll on poor and middle-class Egyptians. The austerity measures incited discontent among the public. However, the regime was diligent in upholding continuous strict measures against any government criticism to avoid any unauthorized protests (Abisourour, 2018). The economic situation led to a public loss of confidence in the government and protests over the government's inability to control inflation (Abdou & Zaazou, 2018).

Private sector investors also face competition from the military sector. In 2018, the government passed law 182/2018, which allows the military and the military companies to be exempt from oversight and auditing, which has led to a lack of transparency and, consequently, lack of competition from the civilian private sector companies (Khalid, 2020). Military companies benefit as well from various state subsidies and preferential treatments such as free labor, tax-free status, and preferential treatment in government contracting (Springborg R. , 2017). Gradually the military economy developed into a wide-spreading empire. Military companies operate across multiple industrial sectors. The first 2300 projects employed 5 million civilians across agriculture, mining, contracting, fisheries, and infrastructure sectors (Khalid, 2020). The influence of the military extends even beyond its empire. For example, the civilian business sector also seeks to strengthen its ventures by hiring retired officers in their companies (Springborg R. , 2017). The following figure shows the changes in unemployment rates starting 2007 till 2019. The figure (Figure 3 - Egypt Unemployment rates) shows the increase in unemployment rates following the 2011 uprising to its highest rates.

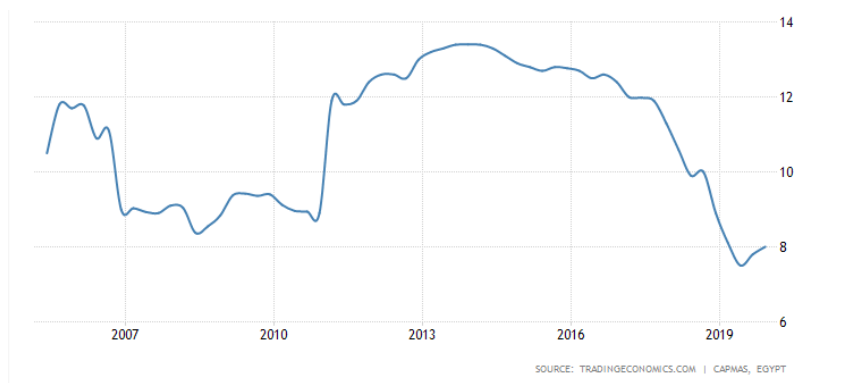


Figure 3 - Egypt Unemployment rates

4.1.2 Civil Society

There are myriad critiques in the literature as to why civil society organizations have ever been useful tools for fostering democratic transition in Egypt. The main argument is how the regime adopted several complex strategies to exert control over civil society. As a result, only civil society organizations that can co-exist with repression and apply legal measures continued.

The first argument is that Egyptian civil society organizations lack the characteristics that would allow them to serve the community. Egyptian civil society can be described as “nothing inherently civil about Egyptian civil society” for several reasons (Al-Sayyid, 1993). Even though Egypt developed one of the earliest civil society experiences in the Middle East, foundations can be traced back to the early modernization project of Muhammed Ali⁶ as a result of the expansion of education, integration into the international economy, and the emergence of a national bourgeoisie. Under the 1923 constitution, the first professional association of Egyptians, the Bar Association, was established, followed by other professional organizations (Al-Sayyid, 1993, p. 230). These early liberal civil society experiences came to a halt under the Nasser era, starting the 1952 revolution. They were replaced with a strong socialist and populist doctrine and were subordinated into the single-party socialist union (Osman, 2010, p. 54). It was not until the 1970s civil society organizations started to re-emerge, especially in the field of human rights which included civil and women rights, as well as social care (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, p. 29).

⁶ Muhammed Ali Pasha was the Ottoman Governor of Egypt and the de facto ruler between 1805 to 1848. He is regarded as the founder of Modern Egypt as he reformed the military, economic and cultural spheres. Under his rule, Egypt extended to include Sudan, parts of Arabia and the entire Levant.

Civil society organizations that emerged starting in the 1970s have been heavily controlled by the state, to the point that they can no longer be described as independent organizations (Miller, 2012, p. 90). NGOs were strongly impacted by the era of the 1990s when the political environment was all about limited freedom and selective repression as well as close government monitoring (Brechenmacher, 2017, p. 38). The regime relied on a mix of divide-and-rule tactics, such as selective enforcement of civil society laws and unofficial security sector oversight to control civil society organizations (Yerkes, 2012). The government enacted the new NGO law in the early 2000s, which eased some of the restrictions but still retained significant barriers to the freedom of association (Brechenmacher, 2017). On the other hand, the regime tolerated more the social development groups, business associations, and state-dominated syndicates and unions versus the regular harassment of civil society organizations that were involved in politically sensitive issues. The regime rejected the registrations of most human rights and pro-democracy organizations, in addition to financial surveillance (Ruffner, 2015). Years of state control strategies have produced a type of civil society organization capable of coexisting with repression and the imposed strict legal framework (Miller, 2012, p. 81).

The other argument is that illiberal organizations have always dominated Egyptian civil society. On the one hand, there are Islamist civil society groups. On the other hand, secular groups are also intolerant of the expression of religious ideas in public life (Rahman, 2002). An integral group has always been the Muslim Brotherhood under Mubarak. The Brotherhood enjoyed a strong appeal across the country since its start as a political movement was involved in the struggle for independence from the British rule. The movement was abolished in 1954 under Nasser. It made a strong return, starting in the 1980s with the provision of services to the poorest groups in the community (Osman, 2010, pp. 91-92). The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) extended its social role, which was able to provide it with legitimacy among the community. It was also dominating the elections of multiple professional unions and parliamentary elections (Rahman, 2002).

As Mubarak was toppled in early 2011, civil society enjoyed an initial short break from state control. The emergency law was lifted, and the Supreme Council for Armed Forces (SCAF)'s first government made some concessions to civil society, such as easing NGO registration requirements (Lesch, 2017). New opportunities opened for local and foreign NGOs to focus on political issues, such as voter registration drives and parliamentary training programs (Elagati, 2013). There was a surge in the number of NGOs registered with the Ministry of Social Solidarity. The number was 37,500 in 2015, and it increased to 43,500 in 2013 and 50,572 in 2019 (Adly H., 2020).

It was not too long until the SCAF feared the increasing popularity of Egyptian democracy and human rights groups. Suddenly, the military fell under the public scrutiny. Activists began condemning the use of military tribunals to try civilians and called for greater civilian oversight of the military (Okail, 2013). Mubarak's regime's essential repression tools are still in place, including the NGOs' legal framework (law 2002). State security went back to operating, exerting pressure on civil society activists to let them know they are still monitored (Yerkes, 2012, pp. 9-10). It was soon that clashes erupted between civil society activists and SCAF. An example of clashes with civil society was when several civil society organizations were raided in December 2011 on suspicion of operating without a license or receiving foreign support. More than 40 Egyptian, American and other nationals were under investigation. This has led to an escalating diplomatic crisis between Cairo and Washington (Miller, 2012, p. 91).

As the Muslim Brotherhood came to power, they did little to reverse the overarching repressive trends (Brechenmacher, 2017). Soon the Freedom and Justice Party abandoned its push for a more progressive legal regime. Instead, prominent Brotherhood leaders echoed the military's narrative that foreign groups sought to undermine Egypt's stability. This has meant that MB would also be resorting to more repression against civil society organizations. (el-Sirgany, 2013). Several NGOs struggled to register with the Ministry of Social Solidarity. This registration extended wait time, even if their operations were not in the political field (Pollock, 2012).

Following Morsi's ousting in 2013, the military's initial crackdown targeted the Muslim Brotherhood, and Morsi's key political constituencies were the immediate political threat. In the first few months, more than 40,000 people were arrested on political grounds (Amnesty International, 2014). In September 2013, the Cairo Court for Urgent Matters banned all activities by the Muslim Brotherhood and froze its assets (Sommerville, 2013). Four months later, the military-backed government has officially declared the Islamist movement as a terrorist organization (Cunningham, 2013). This same decree has since been used as a basis to shut down hundreds of civil society organizations, under the claim they are linked to the Muslim Brotherhood (Brechenmacher, 2017).

After gaining power, Sisi's government moved quickly to reassert state control over civil society. The crackdown on Egyptian civil society has taken on a different character, in both breadth and intensity (Brechenmacher, 2017). The first element the state deployed against civil society was the media campaign, claiming that various NGOs are allying with

terrorists or are working for the interests of foreign powers and labeling them as a national security threat (Ruffner, 2015, p. 13). The Sisi government has ordered all civil society organizations to re-register under the current NGO law within 45 days or risk being shut down and prosecuted. (Ruffner, 2015, p. 15). This also included civil society organizations that worked under Mubarak, who avoided formal registration and registered as law firms or medical clinics instead. This was another step leading to further closure of civil society organizations (Cash, 2014).

The characteristics of the Sisi's regime operates towards the civil society and can be summarized as follows: first, the criminalization of public dissent occurs under the name of protecting national security and counter-terrorism. Second, legal reforms and decrees should be used to institutionalize previously extrajudicial repressive practices and tighten security sector control over civil society. Finally, leading human rights activists and organizations face targeted harassment and defamation (Brechenmacher, 2017).

4.1.3 Party system

Egyptian opposition parties share most of the weaknesses of civil society organizations. The legal framework applied to political parties was even more restrictive than that used to civil society organizations (Miller, 2012, p. 91). Political parties were banned following the 1952 revolution. They came back to political life during the late 1970s, under a restrictive constitutional article regulating their operations. These measures were taken not to democratize the political system but as a substitute for real democracy and to create obstacles to democratization (Hinnebusch, 2006). Under Mubarak, five political parties were legally registered: regime-supporter National Democratic Party (NDP), leftist National Progressive Unionist Party 'Tagammu', the Wafd Party, the Liberal Party, and the Labour Party (Kurun, 2015). Political parties faced several restrictions. New parties needed approval from the "Parties Committee," which had the authority to deny any applications of aspiring political parties deemed to be established on a religious basis. This excuse has been used for a long time as a justification for excluding the Muslim Brotherhood or whichever other platforms were deemed redundant with existing political parties, which was the justification used to eliminate several liberal democratic groups. The only opposition permitted were co-opted parties such as the Wafd and Tagammu, whose participation in politics was typically seen as an unprincipled legitimization of a single-party system in return for recognition and access to state patronage (Miller, 2012, p. 91). It was not until 2002 when lawyer Ayman Nour founded the new liberal party. Ayman Nour ran against Mubarak in the country's first presidential elections but lost due to the election system and the electoral frauds (Kurun, 2015).

All parties, except the NDP, were mainly socially baseless parties whose foundations were allowed by the regime, but they did not represent a significant portion of society (Kurun, 2015). Mubarak's approach towards opening up electoral opportunities for opposition parties was just allowing a margin of media freedom and relaxing some restrictions on professional syndicates, which were tenuous measures designed to contain an agitated country but never intended to extend into substantial political reform and a sophisticated structure of checks and balances. The various players that were increasingly empowered were never supposed to evolve into viable opposition or real agents of change; they were pawns in a game controlled by the regime (Osman, 2010, p. 186).

Following 2011, more than 45 parties were established, half of which had been approved following the removal of Mubarak. Newly established parties included Islamic conservative to liberal and leftist parties. The first elections resulted in a majority of Islamist parties. This reflected the degree to which Islamist parties are rooted in society through the decades of charity work. These parties could easily campaign using symbols drawn from the popular identity (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, pp. 13-14).

Egyptian parties under the Sisi regime can be distinguished through their relationship with the regime, despite their ideology or political mission. Only those who support the regime are able to continue under the current regime. Even political parties that existed before the uprising are facing the challenge of building a real base with the population. Parties themselves are based on self-interest rather than a genuine commitment to democratic practice. While Islamic forces, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, remain banned from political life (Dunne & Hamzawy, 2017), they are keen on collaborating with the regime to be able to embed themselves into the legislative and executive branches of government. They are willing to defend the regime regardless of the growing role of the state's security forces. Some of those parties even endorse the government's policies without opposition. They have been rewarded some parliamentary representation, and some have participated in the constituent assembly in drafting the 2014 constitution (Hamzawy, 2017, p. 4). A group of parties was formed only with the primary objective (declared or undeclared) of supporting the regime, such as the party "Mostaqbal Watan" or Future of Nation. This party won 53 seats in the 2015 parliamentary elections (Dunne & Hamzawy, 2017).

Secular parties in Egypt face multiple challenges. The first challenge is the state pressure. Since many political parties were only formed to support the state, they never developed as actual political competitors or gained independence. Even those secular parties that

supported the military takeover have come under attack if they try to preserve any type of independence, such as not joining the parliament's pro-regime block. The regime has been undermining secular parties for years through campaigns of discredit, co-opt, corruption or internal divisions. The second challenge is pertinent to how Egyptians perceive the secular identity. Egyptians would mistakenly think that secular parties are about atheism and the removal of God (Dunne & Hamzawy, 2017).

Political parties in Egypt continue to suffer from problems related to leadership, organization, platform development, and funding (Morsy, 2015). Serious political opposition is virtually non-existent, as both liberal and Islamist activists face criminal prosecution and imprisonment (Freedom House, 2019).

4.1.4 Elections

Under Mubarak, the regime usually manipulated the results of the elections. For example, during the 2008 municipal elections, the authorities arrested the Muslim Brotherhood's foremost leaders, confiscated the Brotherhood-owned businesses, and froze their assets. Muslim Brothers' candidates in the student union elections at the universities were often targeted. Finally, the 2007 constitutional amendments banned political parties based on any religious reference. In short, the Muslim Brotherhood was not allowed to win a single seat, where all seats were delivered to the NDP (El-Ghobashy, 2010).

During the initial phase of the transition, electoral politics had an unprecedented bearing on the process of institutional development, especially the relationship between the main political actors: the political parties, the military, the judiciary, and the revolutionary movement. The way the voting process was shaped and the results it produced contributed to growing fissures in the Egyptian political environment (Colombo, 2018, p. 96).

Late in 2011 and early 2012, there were three rounds of elections for Parliament's lower house. This was met with unprecedented enthusiasm from Egyptians (Colombo, 2018, p. 96). As the SCAF took over following Mubarak's ousting, both parliamentary chambers were dismissed, and a new interim constitution was introduced (Volkel, 2017). In March 2011, voters in a national referendum overwhelmingly approved the constitutional amendments drafted by a committee appointed by SCAF. However, the multi-round parliamentary elections were consequently delayed until November 2011 to March 2012. As a result of the delay of the parliamentary elections and issuing the new electoral laws,

the presidential elections pushed back to late May 2012 (Miller, 2012, p. 98). The SCAF left the main characteristics of Egypt's electoral system unchanged (Volkel, 2017). Several observers criticized the early conduct of the three rounds of parliamentary elections held between November 28, 2011, and January 10, 2012. Electoral regulations were obscure, for example producing six different election days for each of the two parliamentary houses, instigating differently designed voting districts, and raising questions over NDP members' eligibility (Teti & Gervasio, 2011).

The MB dominated the parliamentary elections since they have been providing social support for poor Egyptians for decades. Despite many of its deputies being in prison or exile during the Mubarak era, its members' overall public reputations as a pious people free of egocentrism gave it an enormous electoral advantage to the Muslim Brotherhood (Joffe, 2011). In the end, the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) won the elections, securing 37.5% of the vote and earning 235 of the 508 total seats (together with the six smaller aligned parties and nine cooperating independent candidates that all made up the Democratic Alliance for Egypt (Volkel, 2017).

Another reason for the Islamist forces' success is that most of the non-Islamist political forces by 2011 became disillusioned with participation in formal politics to the point that they were described as "little more than dried-out husks" (Brown, 2013, p. 52). At the same time, they could not cultivate and enlarge their electorate base by the same informal politics the Muslim Brotherhood had applied over the years (Rubin, 2010).

The elections' results put the mutual trust relationship between the MB and the civic forces in jeopardy. Tensions heightened as the civil forces feared and escalated against the MB's political ambition and finally led to reciprocal alienation (Colombo, 2018, p. 98). Scholars explained the Islamists' inability to deal with the civic forces due to the long history of resilience under authoritarian pressures. It ensured its members keep a tight-knit, inward-looking that can even be paranoid (Brown, 2013, p. 57).

Politics became a new type of media entertainment. People followed the first sessions of the new post-revolution parliament with great enthusiasm. However, the reason for this interest was not merely a desire to observe democracy at work. Instead, many were drawn to scandalous events such as fights or confused debates between the many newcomers to the parliament, most of whom had an Islamist background. These legislators debated questions such as whether teaching the English language should be banned from school curricula or whether the Cairo Ballet troupe should be dissolved, as both were seen as being out of step with Egypt's Islamic culture (Volkel, 2017).

The presidential election in 2012 was the first opportunity for a real competitive election where the people directly elected Egypt's head of state. In this election, candidates represented diverse political platforms, and the outcome was genuinely unknown. The critical question leading up to the election was whether this electoral process would result in a complete transfer of power from the military to a civilian-led government by June 30, 2012, as indicated by the military council (The Carter Center, 2012).

The first presidential elections in 2012 opened another struggle for power between the Islamists and the military. Early on, the MB announced that they would not put a candidate for president. Later in early 2012, they changed their stance and decided to run for election (Roberts, 2013). Consequently, one of the prominent MB members, Abdul Moneim Aboul Fotouh, decided to run for the presidential election as an independent. This was a declaration for internal issues and a lack of coherence among the Brotherhood. The Al-Nour Salafist party endorsed Aboul Fotouh. The MB became conflicted as to whether they should be supporting their ex-member, which is another evidence of the internal issues resulting from years of working under the authoritarian rule (Frag, 2012). The elections deepened the existing divisions between the Islamist and civic forces on one hand, and those opposing them and supporting the former regime on the other side. As a result, some scholars have described the political system as 'bipolar' (Abdul-Majid, 2013, p. 20).

After the ousting of Morsi in 2013, the whole of the election process had to be started all over again. The main difference is that a different group of political actors controlled this phase. A new constitutional declaration was issued, and Adli Mansour was chosen as the interim president. He was the head of the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC), responsible for overseeing the elections. A new draft of the constitution was completed by December 2013 (Colombo, 2018). According to the new constitution, the president was responsible for approving the electoral law. Article 102, pertinent to the voting system, was changed to the individual candidacy system favored by the military and their political allies. The new system would be discouraging for the development of strong political parties and encouraging the election of candidates who have connections with the state, despite the strong opposition for the individual candidacy system on the grounds of opening the field for electoral fraud, irregularities, vote-buying, and acts of coercion (El-Adawy, 2013). The new law opened the door to candidates associated with Mubarak's former party to have the upper hand in the election. Egyptian citizens already recognized them as the most organized and experienced group. They have a higher chance due to their strong connections with state institutions and with prominent tribes and families of Upper Egypt and the Delta (Morsy, 2015).

In 2014, Sisi resigned his post as Minister of Defence to stand as a candidate for the presidential elections. The election ran against one single opponent representing the leftist political forces Hamdeen Sabahi. Sisi won by an overwhelming majority of 97%. However, no independent international monitors were able to verify the results. The vote was also shaped by the surrounding voting environment, such as low voter turnout and the use of state resources (RefWorld, 2018).

In August 2017, Sisi signed a law creating the new National Electoral Commission (NEC) designated in the 2014 constitution. The commission's board would consist of senior judges drawn from some of Egypt's highest courts to serve six-year terms, while the existing system in which judges directly oversee voting and vote counting will be phased out by 2024. Critics of the NEC legislation consider that the lack of direct judicial supervision will damage future elections' integrity and reduce public trust in the results (RefWorld, 2018).

4.1.5 Role of the Military

In Egyptian politics, the military has been influencing the political scene and shaping how the elected representatives are selected, influencing political decision-making on different levels and shaping the business and the elite roles.

The military has been the most dominant player in Egyptian politics since the Free Officers Revolution of 1952. The military always maintained control over the political system by capturing the presidency and close control over its succession. From 1952's revolution and the toppling of Mubarak in February 2011, Egypt was ruled by four presidents, all of whom came from the military (Cook, 2007). The military dominates the local administrative authorities by controlling the state administrative institutions. Usually, the local executive bodies comprise ex-military figures and retired officers. In 2008, when Mubarak conducted his last major round of governor appointments, 20 of the 28 governors (71%) had internal military security or intelligence backgrounds. Former military leaders were also members of parliament and, in particular, on the defense and national security committee that oversaw military budgets (Miller, 2012, p. 82).

Following Mubarak's ousting, the army was hailed as the "savior of the nation" and the guardian of stability. As police withdrew from the streets, people welcomed army soldiers who were deployed in their place. In contrast to the police, who were mainly considered

corrupt retainers of a fallen regime, the army had more respect among the population (Salama, 2018). The military's role forced President Mubarak during the 2011 uprising to hand over power, not to the protesters but to the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (Hassan B. E., 2019). At that time, it did not seem an issue to bring the military under civilian control because already, the army had the full support of the people.

By early 2012, some vocal public discontent with the military's handling of the transition had emerged in demonstrations against the slow pace of political change and the scope of the change negotiated during the transition. It was not long until the major confrontation between the army and civilian forces occurred, Masperassacre, where about 10,000 were peacefully protesting against a church's burning in Upper Egypt on October 10, 2011. The toll from this confrontation was nearly 30 Egyptians, mostly Coptic Christians, with almost another 300 injured (Khalifa, 2014).

The military had promised to hand power over to civilian leadership within six months. The critical milestones for that transfer of power would include the first round of revisions to the constitution that would establish the legal basis of the transition, parliamentary elections, and a presidential election before the end of 2011. However, the parliamentary elections were delayed until November 2011 through March 2012 and scheduled for late May 2012 (Miller, 2012, p. 98).

The military is the most dominant player in Egypt on so many levels. Nothing important is accomplished in Egypt without the involvement of the army and the security services. Former military officers are well entrenched in the government as ministers, heads of public sector companies, and provincial governors (Bradley, 2012). In 2015, nine out of eleven governors re-shuffled were ex-military major generals from the military establishment (Kassab, 2016). Another manifestation of military influence in Egypt was the military's various business enterprises, which were estimated to account for approximately 10% to 20% of the country's economy (Miller, 2012, pp. 82-83).

After the uprising, it was soon enough that the political forces realized that they could not exercise actual political decision making. For example, the first parliament that had the most Islamist forces realized that the 2012 constitutional declaration banned the parliament from exercising significant powers, despite their parliamentary majority (Colombo, 2018, p. 98).

Simultaneously, the 2012 constitutional declaration continued to maintain the legal immunity granted for the military under the 1971 constitution. The March constitutional declaration granted the army, in the form of the SCAF, far-reaching legislative and executive powers. The SCAF also ensured to establish various mechanisms to maintain the armed forces' autonomy from any civilian scrutiny. Thus the "SCAF is granted sole responsibility for all matters concerning the armed forces, and for discussing its budget, which should be incorporated in a single figure in the annual state budget" (International Commission of Jurists, 2012, p. 17).

The relationship between Morsi and the military soon deteriorated as he announced plans to develop the Suez Canal area without consulting the Minister of Defence. As the Suez Canal area carries considerable political influence, the armed forces rejected Morsi's plans (Salama, 2018). At the same time, Morsi failed to succeed in gaining support from other decisive groups in the country, such as the ministry of interior, influential businessmen, or even international and regional forces. All opposition groups joined together against him. From the beginning of 2013, the government was practically paralyzed, having lost its support, and started confronting the Tamarod movement (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, p. 9).

The peak of the military's power is exemplified by the developments of Rabaa and Nahda's events during the crackdown on Morsi's supporters. After enormous protests in the streets calling for Morsi to step down, the military seized power on July 3, 2013, led by the army chief then and current President Sisi. Supporters of the MB organized two massive sit-ins to denounce the military takeover and demand Morsi's reinstatement. Finally, the security forces organized a bloody crackdown on Morsi supports. The security forces justified the attack on the demonstrations saying that they were armed and that there were terrorists among their protestors (Human Rights Watch, 2014).

The army's power extended to an unprecedented dominance after General Sisi rose to power following Morsi's overthrow. The army leadership had no problem reversing all democratic gains after 2011 and re-establishing a military dictatorship under President Sisi, which gained many Egyptians' approval (Volkel, 2017). Subsequent constitutional amendments gave the military more power by stipulating its responsibility "to preserve the constitution and democracy and maintain the state's basic pillars and its civilian nature." They also expanded Sisi's power over the legislative branch by creating an upper house, a third of whose members were to be appointed by the president. The revised charter also gives the president new authority to appoint the judiciary members (Ahmed, 2019)

Under the latest constitutional amendments in 2019, article 200 gives the armed forces the right for the first time to “preserve the constitution and democracy, protect the basic principles of the state and its civil nature and protect the people’s rights and freedoms.” This article allows the military a more dominant role over the rest of the state. It will enable the army the right to apply its interpretation of protecting the state rather than the Supreme Constitutional Court. . Given that the Egyptian constitution lacks any specific definition of the state’s civil nature or personal freedoms, the article allows the army to interfere with a wide range of matters, including electoral results (Hassan B. E., 2019).

In addition to its political role, Sisi has been keen since 2014 to enhance the army both politically and economically. The army maintains the mission to “generate maximum profit for the military and its various networks.” Retired military officers work in many vital sectors, including the military, security, economy, and government administration (Springborg R. , 2019). Military and officer owned companies benefited from various subsidies and preferential treatments, including tax-free status, preferential treatment in government contracting, and immunity from official oversight and regulation, increasingly pushing aside civilian competitors. . The military was sensitive to any attempts to impinge on its economic autonomy and its enterprises' tax-exempt status (Springborg, 2017). The influence of the military exemplified in championing two megaprojects with direct military involvement: the expansion of the Suez Canal and the construction of the New Administrative Capital; at the same time, military-owned enterprises remained active in all economic sectors (Salama, 2018).

4.2 Historical legacies of the media system

Egypt was among the earliest Arab countries to develop a radio service in 1925. It started with an amateur private service with more than 100 stations, characterized by small stations aiming at profit-making (El-Abd, 2002, pp. 13-15). It was not until 1934 when the government, under British occupation, started an official Egyptian radio service run by the Marconi Company of the United Kingdom (Abdulla, 2006, p. 89). . This collaboration continued until 1947 when the government cancelled the Marconi Company's agreement due to the pressures from the nationalist and anti-colonialist groups (Boyd, 1999, p. 16).

Role of the State

The shaping element of the Egyptian media is the influential role of the state. The rise of the Free Officers movement in July 1952 has been the beginning of state dominance over the media sector. The Free Officers movement used radio to air their statement

announcing its seizing power of the Armed Forces' General Command. From that moment onwards, the Free Officers realized the potential of mass media. Media became such a valuable tool for the government to abandon.

The officers were keen on operating their own media outlets. In 1953, they established Dar Al Tahrir, the national publishing house. In 1960, President Nasser nationalized the Egyptian media⁷. Hence all media organizations became legally owned by the government under the exclusive political institution (the Arab Socialist Union). . The ownership of the four large print houses was transferred to the Socialist Union, who would appoint these institutions' managing boards (Amin & Fikry, 2001). In addition to nationalizing the newspapers, censorship was imposed on the press after issuing law 156/1960. Censorship was imposed again after the 1967⁸ war with Israel (Najjar, 2008, p. 225). . Nasser also suspended the journalists' union. The era of Gamal Abdel Nasser, in particular, was characterized by autocratic leadership since he exercised an 'iron fist' policy. He exercised a severe backlash on the margin of freedom enjoyed by various media. Both radio and television were directly owned and operated by the State under the Ministry of Information, established initially under the title of Ministry of Culture and Guidance. The name suggests a hegemonic and top-down ideology in dealing with the media and the masses (Khamis, 2008, p. 260).

At the same time, Nasser was visionary about using radio and television, especially in political mobilization during the 1960s. The central radio station, "Voice of the Arabs," became the mouthpiece of his Pan Arabism project and broadcast the revolutionary project's ideology. During the 1950s and 1960s, the media market expanded enormously at the regional level. The radio service became a platform to proliferate Arab Unity discourse by calling on all Arab population to embrace and take pride in their Arab national identity and their membership in the Arab nation to counter foreign influence and anti-colonialism. The Egyptian Government used Sawt el Arab "Voice of the Arabs" radio to mobilize Arab public opinion in the 1950s and 1960s (Mellor, 2011, pp. 19-20). .

As Sadat ascended to power, he started to loosen his grip on the press, although radio and television remained under the same tight government control (Rugh, 2004, p. 159).

⁷ Rugh (2004) refers to the year 1960 as the watershed in the history of Egyptian media. Law number 156/1960 promulgated that no newspaper will be established without the approval of the Arab Socialist Union. Radio has already been under government control since before 1952. Newspapers enjoyed some relative freedom where they could criticize the government in some issues.

⁸ The June 1967 war resulted not only in military defeat but also economically and psychologically?. The closing of Suez Canal had a strong impact on the source of income. The media was defeated clearly. All the pan-Arabism and orator speeches led to heavy defeat. The media could not gain again the trust of the population. Media could no longer emphasize Egypt's military capabilities.

The main change was in the manner in which television and radio became managed. They transferred into a government bureaucracy starting in the 1970s. Radio and television, starting in 1970, became managed by the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU) under the mandate of the Ministry of Information (Boyd, 1999, p. 41).

Television remained extensively covering the presidential news in the same manner as with Nasser. Up to this era, radio and television specifically have only served as a mouthpiece of the regime. They were emerging from a strong sense of serving the national goals of socio-economic development. The government saw media as a pure state domain to serve government policies. Most broadcasting operations were directly subordinated to the Ministry of Information with limited administrative and financial independence. Pan Arabism and the fight against colonialism were the two defining traits of radio broadcasting systems (Ayish M. , 2001, p. 71).

To conclude, the long history of the authoritarian role has been the most influential aspect of the media system in Egypt. The media system developed for long years with the legacy of the nationalist projects and the duty of serving the regime. It blocked the development of a public service media model and blocked any opposing voices from appearing in public media for years. The role of the state remains influential to how these media ventures operated. The government maintained control over the newly private media outlets using various methods. Egyptian broadcasters were only allowed to run from the specified “media free zone” under the Prime Ministerial decree issued in January 2000. The Ministry of Information setting strict conditions for authorizing private sector stations. These conditions included that they do not air daily news bulletins in addition to using ERTU infrastructure (Sakr, 2010, pp. 113-114).

Political parallelism

Since the Nasserite era following the 1952 coup, political life was banned with the establishment of the Socialist Union. Hence, no other party or diverse media outlets existed to represent different political views. The regime exercised a full monopoly of all media outlets and allowed no criticism of any national leader or government policy. On top of that, the regime used media actively to mobilize the population to support its political program. Under Nasser, the Egyptian media system fitted what William Rugh (2004) described as the “mobilization press” model, where the ruling group strictly controls both the political and media systems without any opposition, competing political groups, or elections. It was not until President Sadat legitimized the organization of political parties once more. He enabled political parties to publish their own newspapers (Rugh, 2004, p. 159).

Mubarak gradually allowed political parties and press newspapers to re-emerge, but he has never fundamentally altered the system. No actual systematic change happened; the political system never became more liberal or democratic. Mubarak applied an approach that allowed the press to publish and political opposition parties to operate, yet this did not stop police assaults on journalists, which was never as violent as under Nasser (Rugh, 2004, pp. 156-161).

In terms of political parallelism, the Egyptian media system remains problematic. Egypt is a typical case of a façade democracy emphasized in the academic literature to describe the Egyptian political scene under Mubarak. Marfleet argues façade democracy is that official political parties existed but remained no more than a façade, which has not brought actual democracy. Nothing changed since the time of the Arab Socialist Union. Egypt's political stage developed into pointless parties due to its long-complicated history (Marfleet, 2009, pp. 16-17). The Minister of Information at that time, Anas Al Fiqi, presented a plan to the people's assembly to introduce state-owned media changes. He also wanted to introduce a regulatory authority to be responsible for the national media under the guidance of the Ministry of Information (Sakr, 2007, pp. 22-23).

On the other hand, a new alternative media scene emerged that allowed criticism to the government, *blogging*. Blogging was closely tied to one local movement for change called Kifaya. This movement has been calling for human and civil rights and political reform since December 2004 (Malky, 2007). Kifaya, among several political voices, used internet websites and blogging heavily to reach different groups (Abdulla, 2006). For young people, this was a captivating opportunity after decades of political stagnation. It was finally a means for self-expression. Blogs were free, easy to use, and could guarantee an audience. Bloggers were able to support several important causes and open cases that would have never been covered on traditional media, such as the 2005 elections, the Second Intifada in the occupied land, and the invasion of Iraq. Later, blogging covered some instances of police violence and torture such as the case of Emad el Kebir or Khaled Said. This resulted in several demonstrations and brought together different groups of young people and human rights activists (Mabrouk, 2010, pp. 17-18). Even traditional media would pick stories from the new media and then publish them.

The blogging sphere also offered opportunities to the voices of the Islamist forces. The group has been banned for many years by the Egyptian government. They also started using the blogging sphere's heavily inactive organization and politicization (Awad, 2016). The Muslim Brotherhood began to experiment with political websites as early as the year

2002 and 2003 with the first websites Egyptwindow.net and Ikhwanonline.net. By the mid-2000s, some Muslim Brotherhood youth began operating political blogs to raise awareness about the brotherhood leaders' struggles (Lynch, 2007). Diverse content emerged, ranging from bloggers to Islamist forces to independent movements, and businessmen competing for the professional success of the newly established media ventures.

Both public and private mainstream media served together to maintain the safety valve with a stagnant political life and without significant political parties. Third, on another end of the spectrum, intense, diverse, and widespread views come from blogs and other social media types. The new media scene ranged from independent individuals to organized movements such as Kifaya or Muslim Brotherhood. So while government control continued without any genuine political participation, resistant voices started creating their own media platforms to express political and opposition voices (Zayani, 2008). Activists were pushing for more civil and political freedoms, i.e., real democratic reform. There was also a clear shift from the highly "monolithic" to a more "pluralistic" media scene. They represented a shift away from the previous patterns of "media localization" and "audience isolation," due to the availability of many choices, which were not possible in the pre-1990 era, such as the exposure to many private satellite television channels and numerous electronic websites and blogs on the Internet. (Khamis, 2008, p. 264).

It is essential for the aspect of political parallelism to explore the ability to express the diverse voices within the society. In terms of political parallelism, Egypt represents a paradox where the media were more political than political life. The emergence of online media platforms allowed for further development of a more pluralist media scene prior to the 2011 uprising.

Media Market

As early as the Free Officers Movement, the media market expanded significantly as radio became an integral part of Egypt's daily life. Radio became the primary source of entertainment and information. The government invested heavily in expanding radio services, both internally and regionally (Mellor, 2011, pp. 19-20).

The continuous expansion of the media market has encouraged Nasser and the government to start television service in 1960. Nasser devoted extensive administrative and economic resources to establish what he intended to make as the most influential

broadcast service in the Arab region. The service started with financing from the Radio Corporation America (RCA) due to the lack of funding for television broadcasting operations. Television started as a multi-channel operation that extended to the country's major population centers (Boyd, 1999, p. 18). The television channels were intended to parallel the spread and success of the three primary radio services (Ayish M., 2011).

Under Mubarak, the Egyptian broadcasting services expanded significantly as the media market expanded. The Egyptian broadcasting sector started several local radio and TV services. The expansion of local media aimed to meet the needs of the local communities. The established services were radio services: Greater Cairo (1981), Mid Delta (1982), Northern Upper Egypt (1983), North Sinai (1984), South Sinai (1985), Canal region (1988), and television stations: Third Channel – Greater Cairo TV station (1985), Fourth Channel – Delta region (1988). More channels followed, targeting all regions in Egypt. Nile TV (1994) and the specialized channels were starting with Nile Drama in 1996. Nile Sat 101 and Nile Sat 102 were launched in 2000.

The media market dimension cannot be described in terms of the mass-circulation press variable only. The history of the Egyptian media market represents the dominance of the state over the market. Major investments in the media market and the expansion of media outlets were conducted solely by the state until the late 1990s. This led the state to become the most dominant actor in the media market and led to more limitations in terms of diversity in the market.

Journalistic Professionalism

Journalistic professional standards were also strongly influenced by the political setting. Institutionally, radio employees became government employees who supported the revolution and helped organize broadcast services to articulate the revolutionary goals. They provided favorable coverage of Nasser's appearances and speeches, contrary to print media, which had a long history of financial and editorial independence (Boyd, 1999, p. 17).

To conclude this section, the Egyptian media scene was profoundly shaped by the Nasserite era. The impact remains clear until today, and media is still vulnerable to state control. It was never possible for the Egyptian public sphere to build strong political foundations. The same administrative and technical staff still exist in the Egyptian media and hold management positions. Several characteristics could historically describe the

Egyptian media system. The Role of the state: the state has been the leading player in the media scene since the Egyptian media emerged. The government allowed private media to operate but still under tight control. The situation with regards political parallelism can be summarized as follows: Egypt suffered a stagnant political life since the 1960s without political parties or with façade political parties that are not able to criticize the government. The media system reflected the same situation. . Thus the media scene never developed into a pluralist media. In terms of the media market, the rise of the satellite channels expanded the market immensely. Broadcast media dominate the media scene as a result of the high illiteracy rates. The online market and internet media grew into a strong competitor as a result of the blogging sphere and critical voices.

4.3 Role of the State

The dimension of the Role of the State is pertinent to how state interventions shape the media environment within one country. Hallin and Mancini consider this dimension influential in shaping the media system by enabling a pluralist environment in one country. The role can be assessed according to how the state functions as a media owner, regulator, and fund provider (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 44). A state may exercise other forms of intervention, such as laws and policies pertaining to access to information, media concentration, ownership and cross-ownership, as well as licensing regulations relating to libel, defamation, privacy, and hate speech.

In this section, the study examines how the sub-dimensions pertinent to the Role of State identified by Hallin and Mancini may take further developments in setting an authoritarian state. The study examines how the authoritarian Egyptian state has managed to limit pluralism in the media through multiple tools originally expected to function otherwise in democratic societies. The authoritarian state manipulated the legal framework governing the media, transferred public media into a state-owned project, limited media freedom, and used financial support for selected media organizations to limit pluralism. The argument is that the sub-dimensions unfold differently in this setting. The case of Egypt is a clear example of an authoritarian regime that has led to blocking the agency of civil society organizations, political parties, and media regulatory bodies to take actions to curb state authority.

Since the 1952 military coup in Egypt, the media fell under strong control by the regime. Under Mubarak, however, there has been a more relaxed state attitude towards the media. The Arab Spring has brought in an increased short-lived margin of freedom for the media sector. . In 2011, media freedom reached an all-time high, but as the interim SCAF government took over in 2011, problems started for the media. The military gradually became hostile against private media and critical journalists. Under the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood, media freedoms continued to decline. Under General Sisi's rule, there has been an unprecedented attack on media freedoms and more state domination over the media.

The analysis of the Role of the State in the Middle East media implies understanding how the authoritarian rule underlies the dimension. It is imperative to consider not the role of the state itself as defined in the dimension but to consider the role of the civil society and political parties as well. The structures and practices existing from the past authoritarian rule are inevitable in unpacking the state's performance in the media system. These

practices share the different actors' re-configuration and, consequently, journalistic practices within the media system.

As discussed in section 4.1 about the political context, gradually after 2011, civil society and political actors became weaker due to state oppression. The weak civil society forces and the fragmentation into multiple segments of secularists, Salafists, and Muslim Brotherhood, had led to the state becoming more aggressive, contrary to the moment where all forces came together to overthrow Mubarak. After 2011, the media sector's legal framework was revised. However, the newly established bodies could not act independently or counter state power. Media freedoms were limited under the calls to "fight terrorism" and to show that any organization willing to support the MB would be labeled a traitor. The state blocked the public broadcaster from developing into a public sector broadcasting despite the margin of freedom following the uprising. . The state-owned media continued operating similarly to how it was operating under Mubarak. It remained what can be labeled as state-controlled media but never developed into a public service media model. Despite that, there have been calls from experts as early as 2011 to abolish the restrictive media laws and licensing systems, but reform to the Egyptian state media never happened.

4.3.1 Legal and Regulatory Framework

The first sub-dimension pertinent to the analysis of the Role of the State in shaping the media system is the media regulatory framework. An important aspect is how policy paradigms and the normative ideas they entail play an essential role in shaping the media policy and its guiding principles (Künzler, 2012). Media policies originate from and reflect the abstract paradigmatic views on the relationship between the state, society, and media (Puppis & Van den Bulck, 2019, p. 4). For example, media policies shaped by the liberal paradigm favor the free market principles and oppose market intervention going beyond safeguarding economic competition, which generally may lead to intensified commercialization of the media system. On the contrary, media policies under the social responsibility paradigm emphasize the state's responsibility, which may lead to media policy that favors public service media and subsidies for the press (Puppis & Van den Bulck, 2019, p. 5) (Puppis, 2009, p. 13). The media policy has an impact on making decisions pertinent to media structures, organizations, and their performance (Puppis & d'Haenens, 2012, pp. 221-222). This section explores how the state exercised multiple forms of intervention to limit media freedoms and block positive media developments. In this case, the state does not intervene positively to curb media concentration and

ensure licensing regulations or protecting citizens against libel, defamation, privacy, or hate speech. The state, in fact, does the opposite of this role.

The media regulatory framework in Egypt guarantees personal and media freedom. The Egyptian 2014 constitution includes provisions that guarantee media freedom. Freedom of thought, freedom of beliefs, and freedom of research are guaranteed in articles 64, 65, and 66.⁹ The Egyptian constitution also guarantees the right to access information and official documents and the freedom of the press (articles 68, 70, and 71). In fact, constitutions drafted after 2011 (2012 constitution and 2014 constitution) did not change significantly from the abolished 1971 constitution, which also guaranteed freedom of the press as well. However, several restrictive clauses exist to justify the repressive laws under calls for protecting national security or cases of public mobilization or insults to religious figures (Hafez, 2015). These repressive laws have been a long legacy of the Egyptian state to manipulate the freedoms guaranteed in the constitution, ensure its tight control over the media¹⁰ and imprison journalists whenever the state deems necessary.

The new anti-terrorism law (law 33/2015) poses additional restrictions to the media. It makes publishing news that counters the official version of events in terrorism-related cases, a crime punishable with prison sentences (Youssef A. M., 2015). The law on anti-terrorism was toughened in 2020 to pose further restrictions over the media sector (UN OHCHR, 2020). The law on terrorism prohibits the press, media, and websites from publishing or broadcasting false news and allowing content censorship. In practice, the law has been used as a tool to restrict media freedoms further. Under the promulgation of this law, even social media accounts with more than 5000 subscribers are considered media outlets subject to the restriction. The law also subjects media outlets to an increased number of licensing and oversight requirements, including, for example, hefty requirements for a permit process, and a prohibition on journalists and media personalities from being able to collect donations for their activities (The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, 2019).

Performance of the Media Regulatory Councils

⁹ The Egyptian 2014 constitution is available in English on the following page: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf

¹⁰ Egyptian media is regulated by law 180/2018.

The Ministry of Information has long regulated the media sector since it was established first under Nasser. The ministry has changed names multiple times over the year but carried the same mandate to support the state in controlling the media sector. In 2011, a decision was taken to dismantle the Ministry of Information, which was interpreted by some scholars as ending government control over state-owned media (Khamis, 2011). In 2011, the Ministry of Information was reinstated (Shaer, 2015, p. 4). Ossama Heikal, a former military correspondent from Al-Wafd Newspaper, was appointed as Minister of Information and was later replaced by General Ahmed Anis (Sakr, 2013, p. 6). The Ministry of Information was abolished in 2014, as the new constitution called for establishing a new regulatory council to oversee the media sector's organization (Abdulla, 2016, p. 4231).

In 2016, the parliament passed the legislation to establish three media regulatory bodies. It was not until 2017 that the three bodies were actually established. . The three bodies are the Supreme Media Regulatory Council (SMRC), the National Press Authority (NPA), and the National Broadcasting Authority (NBA) (Al-abd & Mamdouh, 2018). The media regulation law itself (law No. 180/2018) was not issued until mid-2018. Under the new law, three new bodies were established to regulate the Egyptian media sector. . During that time, the new media regulatory bodies acted as de facto media regulators. Several questions emerged concerning these regulators' fundamental role and the actual power they have been given to govern the media landscape (Mamdouh, 2018).

The state continues to ensure its control over the newly established regulatory councils through multiple tools. According to the prominent journalist and anchor E_Ind_23, "The new law took away the councils' autonomy to self-regulate and consequently to regulate the media sector."¹¹ Competencies of the SMRC do not provide enough guarantees for the protection of media freedom. The law assigns the councils' powers to control media content but does not provide clear definitions of putting these controls into practice. This situation would allow the councils to abuse their authority arbitrarily. The law is based on the underlying principles of restricting and controlling media rather than organizing the sector (Sedhom, 2019).

First, the law regulating the councils' formation is highly problematic. It is questionable if it can guarantee the independence of the councils. The law regulating the three councils failed to establish controls restricting the state's hegemony over the media regulatory

¹¹ Interview, E_Ind_23

councils. For example, the law fails to mandate the parliamentary approval of the selected managing boards (Sedhom, 2019).

Second, the composition of the council boards does not guarantee their independence. The members' selection criteria remained unclear and allowed multiple ways for state control based on open interpretation and government censorship. As promulgated in article 73, the board consists of 9 members, appointed directly by the President of the Republic (from a list of nominees developed by the journalists and media syndicates, the Office of the House of Representatives, and the Supreme Council of Universities). Lack of independence is also related to selecting the head of the SMRC and other members of these councils (Reporters without Borders, 2019). Most of the managing board members are executive authority affiliates instead of media professionals (3 members representing the Supreme Council for Universities, NTRA, and the Apparatus on the Protection of Competition and Prevention of Monopolistic Practices) and not media professionals. An editor-in-chief of an online media platform adds: "In most cases, these councils are awaiting the instructions from the security authorities on how to proceed. The heads of the councils do not make these bodies' decisions, which is worrying about how they can regulate the media sector"¹².

Third, the law assigns these councils powers without clear definitions or controls in place, which allows a chance for arbitrary abuse of its authority (Sedhom, 2019). This renders the performance of the new councils no different than that of the previous Supreme Journalism Council. The mandates of the councils are still not defined or clear. As indicated in the interview with the Vice head of the National Press Authority, "The council is still working on assessing the public newspapers' performance, then it will proceed to plans on how to develop the public media print houses"¹³.

Finally, The councils' managing boards are still only thinking in terms of censoring/overseeing rather than organizing or facilitating media outlets' development. As expressed by one of the editors in chief: "I am not with the idea of censoring the media, but they have to monitor performance. In other words there must be a code of ethics and a body should monitor violations"¹⁴. Law 180/2019 gives extended power to the media councils to block professional and personal websites (Articles 3 and 4. Article 6 para 2 provides the authority to ban websites). This ban includes any webpage, social

¹² Interview, E_Soc_18

¹³ Interview, E_Reg_5

¹⁴ Interview, E_Soc_30

media account, or personal webpage with over 5000 followers. This represents significant ground for restricting freedom-of-expression. Contrary to international standards, this closure can be done without a court order (Article 19, 2019).

The new councils' jurisdictions overlap with the other existing bodies pertinent to the media sector, such as the Press Syndicate¹⁵. In 2017, another entity was established to represent media professionals working in the broadcasting sector, which is the Egyptian Broadcast Syndicate (Allam, 2018). SMRC interferes with issues that should be the jurisdiction of the Egyptian Press Syndicate. As one of the interviewees who works as a prominent journalist, gave an example, "In one incident, Ahmed Mousa, a TV anchor, was challenging the SMRC. In another incident, the head of the SMRC issued a ban on publishing decree, which is not within his jurisdiction for publishing about 57357 hospital corruption case."¹⁶

The performance makes it less likely that the councils would manage the media industry in Egypt independently. As one of the respondents who is a host of a daily talk show and an editor-in-chief noted, "it may have been better to have the Ministry of Information to be re-installed. At least it was one entity that we had to deal with, not multiple entities with each of them with conflicting jurisdictions. So instead of following the orders of one person who was the Minister of Information, there are three heads of three councils giving orders".¹⁷

In conclusion, the state actively exercises multiple tools to control the regulatory framework and ensure blocking media freedom guaranteed in the constitution. It applies different laws such as the emergency law to restrict media freedom. The state maintains direct control over the regulatory bodies responsible for overseeing the media sector. The councils cannot function as independent to manage the media sector on a professional basis. There exists an array of laws and regulations that were issued to specifically target freedom-of-expression. The state also exercises direct intimidation against independent media using these laws and regulations. The media regulatory bodies' block media outlets from publishing or broadcasting content that violates the Egyptian constitution, professional ethics, or public morals.

¹⁵ The Egyptian Press Syndicate is responsible for representing journalists who work in the print sector, established in 1963. The syndicate has about 8951 registered members.

¹⁶ Interview, E_Soc_19

¹⁷ Interview, E_Priv_20

4.3.2 The Public Broadcaster

Hallin and Mancini refer to it as the positive form of state intervention in the media system. Public service broadcasting has a particular role to play in meeting public interest objectives and contributing to media pluralism (Buckley, et al., 2008, p. 190). Hallin and Mancini called for exploring the relationship between the nature of the public service broadcasting governance models and the political system. They proposed four types of public media governances in Europe: professional, civic, parliamentary, and government (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 30-32). Hallin and Mancini had made clear that even though Europe has large public media sectors, most of them are not state-controlled but autonomous and influenced by various civil society forces. This sub-dimension represents one of the domains where the Egyptian media system does not match any of the three models. The Egyptian public broadcaster functions as a government-owned entity used only for the regime's interest. The long years of state control blocked the public broadcaster's development into a pluralistic public service media model (Abdulla, 2016).

The Egyptian Public broadcaster is characterized by a long history of strict state control since it was established under Nasser. The ERTU was established under law 18 / 1979, with the mandate supporting a state media model rather than a public service media model. The mission statement of ERTU is "the audio-visual media and broadcasting services in compliance with the overall public policy and widely acknowledged professional standards and criteria." The governing legislation of ERTU assigns the General Assembly, the Board of Trustees, and the Board of Managing Directors to supervise the operations of ERTU (Shaer, 2015, p. 3). Over the years, the Ministry of Information dictated the ERTU policies on an annual basis, selected management figures and directed censorship. It remained a state project even in operating its satellite channels (Sakr, 2001, p. 30). The public broadcaster performed only as a state media model rather than a public service broadcaster model. On January 25, 2011, an uprising provided a chance for reform of the public broadcaster; however, not much changed (Abdulla, 2016, p. 4219).

ERTU is a vast umbrella that operates a large number of radio and television stations. ERTU Television networks consist of terrestrial stations 1 and 2, in addition to 6 other local stations, 3 satellite stations (Al Masreya, Nile news, and Nile TV International), and 9 other satellite specialized channels (Nile Channels, 2017). The ERTU also runs a vast number of radio stations under the umbrella of 4 networks: a) General stations: General Programme, Voice of the Arabs, Cultural Radio, Middle East Radio, European Programme; b) Specialized stations: 10 stations, a) 4 Local stations, and b) International radio services (ERTU, 2017).

The ERTU suffers from significant problems that led to it losing its independence: first, the massive number of more than 43,000 employees, especially non-media production employees; and second, an enormous government debt amounting to EGP 13.5 billion (The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, 2013). However, due to socio-economic pressures, it is not possible to conduct laying off many media practitioners. No decisions have been taken (El-Issawi, 2014, pp. 30-31). In addition to a legacy of bureaucracy, nepotism, and strict government control are ERTU's most significant problems (Shobaky, 2011).

During the 1990s in response to the growing private channels, the Ministry of Information did not want to give up its influential role in the media market. It decided to enhance some Public Egyptian broadcaster services, allowing the ERTU to compete with the growing private TV services. State television introduced relatively free talk show programs, contributing to the prevalent façade democracy¹⁸. Despite these efforts, the national media was not able to compete for several reasons. It lacked both a genuine project and professional management. E_Pub_29¹⁹ also argues that this reform was a mere external layer for ERTU. She says we were trained mainly to improve the elements of style (performance, style, and clothes), but there was no real professional development or capacity building for journalistic skills. Also missing was a clear goal, mission or specific target audience. The reform's hidden agenda was driven by a political aim, which was never spelled out. It was not done on a professional basis. A new huge studio was built solely to serve the purposes of the reform, which has never been put into operation by the time of this research. There was no timeframe for the upgrading, nor exactly why it is taking place. One of the interviews²⁰, confirms that the Mubarak era was always marked by this lack of a national project. Consequently, the national broadcaster never had a national project to promote. Public media was used to allow some space for discussion of criticisms and injustices. Mubarak used the media as a "safety valve" to vent public anger and frustration against the political, economic, and social injustices. They considered that this would show that people do not exercise real political rights or actual decision-making (Seib, 2007). The underlying assumption was that the public is offered some avenues to vent their anger and frustration to avoid more drastic actions, such as protesting (Khamis, 2011, p. 1162).

¹⁸Programs like "*El Biet Baytak* and *Misr El Nahrdah* with anchors like Tamer Amin and Mahmoud Saad" aired strong criticism for the regime that had never been seen on state TV previously.

¹⁹ Interview, E_Pub_29

²⁰ Interview, E_Pub_17

At the beginning of the 2011 uprising, ERTU supported the Mubarak regime and offered a counter-narrative to the revolutionary discourse aired over social and international media outlets. It demonized the revolutionaries, and it continued to act as state media. It ignored the uprising and aired tranquil pictures of Cairo (Peterson, 2014). As soon as the state media realized that the uprising succeeded, they immediately applauded the new powerful man. They went from totally denying the uprising to the extreme opposite of applauding the revolutionaries (El-Issawi, 2014, p. 34).

State media went into a phase of reshuffling of leadership positions. In March 2011, Dr. Samy el-Sherief, a media professor at Cairo University, was appointed as chairman of ERTU along with Military General Tarek El Mahdy. At the beginning of June 2011, el-Sherief was removed, and General El Mahdy became the only chairman. The structure of the ERTU returned to the status quo. Eighteen figures with military backgrounds were selected as managers (Shaer, 2015, p. 4).

The legal framework governing the ERTU did not change significantly. Several articles in the charter under which ERTU operates still emphasize state media's role over the public service media. Article 1 indicates that ERTU is the sole broadcaster in Egypt. Article 2 promulgates that "ERTU is committed to broadcasting whatever the government officially asks it to broadcast." Hence, the ERTU is legally biased towards the state. It also shows the degree of state control over the media (Abdulla, 2016, p. 4226).

The relationship between the government and the public broadcaster did not change much under Morsi's rule (Abdulla, 2014, p. 18). Morsi appointed a loyal figure to the Brotherhood, Minister Salah Abdel Maksoud, as Minister of Information (El-Issawi, 2014, p. 29). In the same vein, the all-Islamist Shura Council, at that point, also made sure to choose new editors-in-chief for the public newspapers that mostly follow the Islamist ideology. Despite having the managerial positions controlled by the Islamists, tensions still occurred; many of the journalists within these institutions were still loyal to Mubarak's regime. The power struggle became that of loyalty to one regime over another, rather than loyalty to the people and professionalism (Abdulla, 2014, p. 18). Maksoud was removed after the Brotherhood's ouster and replaced by Doreya Sharaf el-Din, as Minister of Information (El-Issawi, 2014, p. 29).

Under the reigns of Presidents Adly Mansour and Abdel Fattah el Sisi, the situation of the ERTU did not change. The state-owned media institutions failed, at the time, in being professional and returned to propagating the accomplishments of the regime and

applauding those in power at every possible chance. The media vilified the opposition; the supporters of Morsi or the Muslim Brotherhood were referred to as “terrorists,” and critics of the regime were accused of espionage and agency to other countries. It appears that the uprising did not influence public media organizations. The lack of change in their relationship and approach to the regime suggests that they continue to operate regime mouthpieces (Abdulla, 2014, p. 27). The workforce at the ERTU is still strongly functioning under the idea that the public sector media works to serve the government. They are committed to the mission of a “public sector,” which means “state” or “government” as opposed to the private sector. The primary public service broadcasting values are absent from the minds of those working at the ERTU. Instead, it is perceived as a synonym to the state media (Abdulla, 2016)

The regime continues to have full control over the finances, procedures, and human resources at the ERTU. The state decides the annual funding of the ERTU and the compensations of the managing board. This has rendered no financial autonomy for the ERTU. Compensations determined for the ERTU are based on the state’s satisfaction with ERTU performance, which has turned the ERTU into a tool to serve the state (Abdulla, 2016, p. 4230).

The Egyptian public broadcaster functions as a government-owned entity used only for the regime's interest. In this analysis, the state broadcaster does not even fit into the government model of public broadcasting that Hallin and Mancini describe. They acknowledge that in most of the European countries, public media developed alternative institutional forms that would insulate public service broadcasting to a substantial degree from the control of the political majority. At least the directors of public broadcasting are appointed by parliament, not directly by the government, even if this gives the majority party effective control (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 30). In Egypt's case, the state directly interferes with managing the ERTU through the Ministry of Information. Employees work under rooted concepts that their role is to serve the public in terms of serving the state.

4.3.3 Media Freedom

Quantitative indexes show the deterioration in the status of media freedom in Egypt. The following section provides a qualitative discussion of the development of media freedoms' status starting in 2011. And it shows how status has deteriorated severely starting in 2011, given the state calls for the backlash of media and war against terrorism. Egypt has been steadily falling behind in the World Press Freedom Index since the

toppling of Mubarak. In 2018 Egypt scored - 161 out of 180 countries (RSF, 2018). Under Mubarak, it ranked 127 out of 173 countries (RSF, 2016). As discussed in Tables 2 and 3 showing Press Freedom index changes as well as the developments on the democracy index (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2 - Development of Egypt’s Ranking on World Press Freedom Index (2007–2018) - Source: RSF

Year	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012/1	2010	2009	2008	2007
Score	56.72	55.8	54.5	50.2	51.9	48.7	97.5	43.3	51.4	50.3	58.0
Rank	161	161	159	158	159	158	166	127	143	146	146

Table 3 - Egypt score on the Democracy Index, Source Economist Intelligence Unit (where countries less than four are considered an authoritarian regime and between 4 and 6 is considered hybrid regime)

Year	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Score	3.36	3.31	3.18	3.16	3.27	4.56	3.95	3.07	3.89	3.90

The media scene, just like the political scene, began with optimism about prospective media transformation and a broad shift in the media landscape, with the expansion of expression platforms for ordinary citizens and a broader scope of freedom. However, this optimism and such transformations faded under the censorship imposed by SCAF (Peterson, 2014).

As early as the 2011 uprising, media freedom reached the highest ever in Egypt (Hafez, 2015). A large number of private satellite stations opened. Talk shows dominated all satellite channels. Naguib Sawiris’ channel ONTV aired two popular talk shows: Yousri Fouda’s show Akher Kalam (Last Words), and Reem Magued’s show Baladna Bilmasry (Our Country in Egyptian). Dream TV ran Mona El-Shazly’s popular talk show on Al-Ashera Masa’an (10:00 pm). Meanwhile, Mehwar TV aired Moataz El-Demerdash’s show 90 Dakeeka (90 minutes), and later in the same year, at least ten new networks were established, creating an even more competitive media landscape (Iskandar, 2012). In terms of content, in one of the interviews, a prominent manager at a leading radio network confirms, “There were no red lights to what topics could be covered. In 2011, the media could criticize any entity even the army on some occasions.”²¹

²¹ Interview, E_Priv_31

As soon as the SCAF interim government took over, they were unwilling to be scrutinized under any circumstances. In May 2011, the military called television journalist Reem Magued and the blogger Hossam al-Hamalawy for questioning after criticizing military trials on television (Fisher, 2011). In early September 2011, after massive popular demonstrations, the SCAF decided to extend the emergency law to include the publication of false news and information. Censorship over-reporting military issues was enforced by laws prevalent under Mubarak. Egyptian media abided by the 1956 Law and its amendment Law 14 of the year 1967, which bans the publication of any information related to the Egyptian Armed Forces without the written consent of the latter²². Newspaper editors have indicated that they had received letters from SCAF “warning that all reporting of topics involving Egypt’s military establishment must first be vetted by the SCAF’s public relations and intelligence directorates.” (Attalah & Rizk, 2011).

The Minister of Information, Osama Heikal, threatened that the government would cease to issue licenses for new satellite stations, with the claim that such channels will be biased because they were created to serve specific electoral purposes (El-Hennawy, 2011). There have been two instances of raiding Al-Jazeera Mubasher Egyptian’s offices, and the local station affiliated with Al-Jazeera, pan-Arab network. The broadcaster's chief engineer was detained, and its transmitter confiscated (Al Jazeera and Agencies, 2011). Private channels had to return to the practice of self-censorship, where the channels terminated journalists who criticized the military rule. TV presenter, Dina Abdel Rahman, was terminated by the owner of Dream Channels, Ahmed Bahgat, after her criticism of the military regime. The basis of termination of her contract complied with the channel’s regulations. Similar practices also continued with other channels such as Al Hayah TV, ONTV, and Capital Broadcasting Center (CBC), limiting their coverage of the labor strikes that followed the January 25th uprising (Halabi, 2015).

The rule of MB President Morsi started with claims that media freedoms will be respected and strengthened. On August 23, 2012, Morsi issued a new law canceling the Mubarak era practice of temporarily detaining journalists on publication offenses, including charges for offending the president. He also outlawed the pre-trial detention of journalists accused of press crimes. However, the media and the Morsi administration's actual situation was more complicated (Gundy, 2012). This honeymoon ended soon, and a new wave of restrictions against media freedoms began. Morsi scored a record in the number of cases filed against journalists for “insulting the President,” which reached 24

²² “Law Banning Publishing News about the Armed Forces without Consent”, United Journalists Center [online] http://ujcenter.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=95:2009-06-04-11-19-02&catid=27:2009-06-01-21-15-08&Itemid=62

legal cases during the first 200 days in office, compared to 23 legal cases during all of the 30 years of Mubarak's reign (Freedom House, 2013).

The attacks against journalists continued to increase, and five journalists were killed, and at least 80 were arrested by the police in the second half of 2013 (Reporters without Borders, 2014). Private satellite television channels also came under attack as Al-Faraeen station was shut down in August 2012 by a governmental decision, as its owner Tawfik Okasha criticized Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. Over 30 different court cases were filed against Okasha, in which he was accused of "defaming Morsi, inciting hatred against the Brotherhood." In addition, other editors-in-chief of state newspapers were attacked for refusing to stop articles that criticized the Brotherhood or Morsi (Fahim & El-Sheikh, 2012). Mahmoud Saad, a talk show host, was interrogated on charges of insulting the president. Furthermore, in January 2013, political satirist Bassem Youssef was accused of insulting the president and undermining his standing, as well as insulting Islam, and was then arrested in March 2013. Youssef's case attracted local and international media attention, notably after Jon Stewart featured it on his show (Abdulla, 2014, p. 18). The charges were eventually dropped, and the show returned briefly in October 2013 (Freedom House, 2014).

Morsi ordered the detention of Islam Afify, editor in chief of Al-Dostour daily newspaper. Afifi had published an anti-Brotherhood coverage accusing their leaders Khairat ElShater and Essam El Arian of preparing a massacre in Egypt if Morsi did not win the Presidential elections (Ahram Online, 2012). Social media activists were also attacked. In December 2012, blogger Albert Saber was sentenced to three years in prison for insulting religion and the president after posting the trailer for the anti-Islam film "The Innocence of Muslims" on his Facebook page (Freedom House, 2013). Al Hussein Abou Deif, a journalist who criticized Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood, was shot in the head with rubber bullets, allegedly by Morsi supporters, during a protest outside the Itihadiya Presidential Palace and died of his injuries (Abdulla, 2014, p. 18). Many journalists were not acknowledged by the Egyptian Journalists' Syndicate, which might have confused their professional identity (Lohner, Banjac, Neverla, & El Hariry, 2016). The detention of journalists under Morsi led to massive resentment within the public and political spheres to the MB rule. 'Press Strikes' began in December 2012 against the constitutional changes, as journalists were concerned that these changes represented a threat to the freedom-of-expression (Mcrobie, 2013).

Crackdown on media outlets continued after Morsi was ousted. The regime targeted both local and foreign journalists. Three major Islamist television channels were shut down

hours after the ousting of Morsi, and the offices of Al-Jazeera network in Cairo were raided and five employees were detained. The same trend continued in the rest of 2013. Ahrar 25 channel, along with two other Islamist channels, Al-Quds, and Al-Yarmuk were all shut down for violating permits (Youssef A. M., 2013). Al-Jazeera Mubasher Masr was shut down after government officials' alleged that it was a threat to the Egyptian national security. Police raided the Turkish broadcaster TRT offices in Cairo and the offices of the Muslim Brotherhood's Party newspaper, Freedom and Justice. Other journalists were arrested, such as Ahmed Abu Deraa, who was sentenced for spreading false news about the army as he reported on the Islamist militants in the region (Freedom House , 2014).

During the Rabaa Al-Adawiya clashes in August 2013, 32 separate violations against local journalists were registered. Five journalists were reported to have been killed. Sky News Cameraman Mick Deane and Habiba Ahmed Abd Elaziz of the Dubai-based Gulf newspaper were shot dead while covering the events. On August 16th and 17th, 12 separate violations against local and foreign journalists were also recorded by the Association of Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE): two people missing, two reporters injured by rubber bullets and live rounds, another two journalists detained by security forces, and six journalists reportedly assaulted and beaten up by civilians (Youssef A. M., 2013).

Both state and private television stations mostly embraced the government crackdown on Morsi supporters and quickly started to practice self-censorship. Most of the media portrayed general Sisi as a "National savior" who succeeded in deposing the Islamist President Morsi, casting out the Muslim Brotherhood from the political scene, and avoiding the eruption of an imminent civil war (Meshad, 2014). A video leaked in October 2013 showed senior army leaders discussing the need for a reassertion of "red lines" on media criticism of the military (Freedom House, 2014). Intimidation against journalists and media platforms became even more systematic than it was under Morsi (Mcrobie, 2013). Al-Faraeen satellite channel was closed suddenly, and its controversial TV presenter and owner, Tawfiq Okasha, was arrested by the authorities. This came two days after Okasha attacked Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the Egyptian Defence Minister and Chief General of the Armed Forces at the time, and criticized the Minister of Information, Doreya Sharaf El-Din. However, the channel was shut down for allegedly violating the media code of honor and offending both January 25 and June 30 revolutions. Through these allegations, authorities tended to convey the message that any platform that publishes political stances or views different from those of the regime or violates the media code of ethics will be silenced (Youssef A. M., 2013). Bassem Youssef's show *Al Bernameg* on CBC was suddenly suspended, under the claims that it "violated an

agreement,” as well as CBC's “editorial policies,” even though Youssef had been far more cynical and critical of the regime during President Morsi's rule (Youssef A. M., 2013).

The regime continued the trend of tightening its grip around the media and different political forces. The media continued to be targeted with harassing and sometimes jailing journalists who reported any kind of opposition (Freedom House, 2015). Military authorities had already shut down almost all pro-Islamist and opposition media outlets and pressured others if they carried any critical coverage of the new government. Moreover, the imprisonment of journalists nationwide reached a record high, mostly for reasons pertinent to their reporting (Youssef, 2015). One hundred seventy-two press freedom violations were reported in the first half of 2015, which included censorship, intimidation, hostility, and physical abuse. The arrests of reporters and journalists increased, and media personnel faced difficulty with accessing or reporting on the situation in Sinai (Freedom House, 2016) . .

President Sisi has been calling for media support since his rise to power. He described how Nasser was fortunate to have had the support from the media geared towards public mobilization and national projects. He addressed direct criticism and an implicit threat to journalists, stating: “Don’t listen to what anyone else says, just listen to me,” and frankly adding, “The media doesn’t understand anything. Whoever wants to know something should come to me.” Sisi also clearly understands that “private” media are the most influential. Private channels and media outlets served Sisi well during the mobilization of the masses against the Muslim Brotherhood. Sisi used his knowledge of the media operations in his election campaign when he chose to address Egyptians publicly for the first time on a private channel, thus insinuating that the state media era was coming to an end (Atef, 2016). Popular TV figures explicitly admitted their support of the state and their support for the authorities. These figures, such as Ahmed Moussa, Wael El-Ebrashy, and Mahmoud Saad made similar comments showing their support to the regime as a result of the war against terrorism, explaining that it is a national duty to be biased in support of the regime during this time (Youssef N. , 2015) and (Youssef A. M., 2015). Some other media figures willingly withdraw from the media scene, such as Reem Magued (Abdulla, 2014, p. 24). Articles by Mostafa Al Naggar, Ahmed Mansour, Reem Saad, Wael Abou Hendi, Tamer Abu Arab, Seif Abdel Fattah, Hossam Moanes, Amr Ezzat, Ahmed El Doreni, and Abdul Rahman Yousef were ignored/shunned? by most newspapers and were only published on individual blogs or Facebook pages (Abdulla, 2014, p. 25).

The fierce attack on the freedom-of-expression continues under Sisi’s second term starting in 2018. Both executive institutions, such as the Supreme Council for Media

Regulation or security bodies, have attacked the media. The editor-in-chief of Al Masry Al Youm was removed as a result of the headline of the newspaper at the end of March 2018, “the State is mobilizing voters in the last days of the elections,” as were seven journalists who contributed to the story (AFTE, 2018, pp. 5-6). The limitations on media freedom escalated dramatically between 2017 and 2018. The number of banned websites reached more than 500 websites. It was never announced the legal basis for the measures of the ban process, even though a number of the blocked websites have filed complaints to the Journalists Syndicate and the Supreme Council for Media Regulation (Mada Misr, 2018).

As the presidential elections took place in March 2018, there have been different practices to prevent potential candidates from submitting their candidature. The elections were conducted in an environment of restricted freedom-of-expression (AFTE, 2018). Several political activists such as Hazem Abdul Azim Amal Fathi, Wael Abbas, and Haytham Mohammaden were detained. Activists Shadi al-Ghazali, Sherif Al-Roubi, and Mohamed Oxygen continue to face charges. Foreign reporters faced deportation, such as the deportation of Times correspondent in Egypt Bel Trew and the French journalist Nina Obini (AFTE, 2018, pp. 6-7).

To conclude this section about the development of media freedom in Egypt, it is clear how the Egyptian state has been gradually and systematically attacking media freedom and limiting the public sphere since 2013. The limitations have extended not only to traditional media but also very firmly and unprecedentedly to social media. The darkest days under Mubarak that were described as repressive are not to be compared with the recent developments. All critical voices seem to have disappeared from the public sphere. Only media who support the regime are allowed. Given the justification of siding with the army in the war against terrorism in Sinai, the result will be less and less access to independent reporting, analysis, or opinion in the Egyptian media. The population will resort to alternative and international outlets.

4.3.4 Press Subsidies

Press subsidies have been one of the tools the government used to control the media. The government under Mubarak used financial measures to control the media using several mechanisms. The government used indirect subsidies, such as the use of

advertising allocation determined by the Supreme Press Council²³, to influence the newspapers' content and limit freedom-of-expression (Rugh, 2004, p. 127). Advertising revenue represents the primary source of funding, with about 50–60 percent of the newspapers' income. Advertising revenue is not genuinely; in this case, the indicator of the popularity of the newspaper. It mostly amounted to tributes to the government and the President through the placement of congratulatory advertisements in public newspapers. The Supreme Press Council also sets the rates for government advertising, and the number of copies newspapers can produce as well as the price they may charge (UNESCO, 2013, p. 57).

The regime fully controls the public radio and television service under law 13/1979, which stipulated that the President nominates the “Minister of Radio and Television Affairs.” (Shaer, 2015, p. 7). The President decrees the ERTU budget upon presentation of the budget by the board. The ERTU is funded by statutory fees, business activities, government budget allocations, grants, and revenue generated by the companies the ERTU owns. However, the most considerable amount of allocated funds is from the state budget. There has been no mechanism in place to protect the ERTU from government control through the provided funding. ERTU's budget deficit amounts to 30.8 billion EGP (about \$1.7 billion) (Mikhail, 2018). ERTU's debt amounts to \$3.2 billion, which leaves no room except to rely on state funding. The use of state funding has been an obstacle to ERTU's independence (Abdulla, 2016, p. 4229). The ERTU faces financial difficulties for many years due to the increasing competition from private stations (UNESCO, 2013, p. 58), and the inefficient financial model that causes extensive organizational problems at the ERTU (Abdulla, 2016, p. 4229). However, it is argued that private stations cannot cover their expenses from advertising revenue due to the high competition over advertising revenue (Allam, 2018). As noted in the interview with an editor-in-chief of a daily morning show on a private TV station, the reduction in advertising expenditure hits print media the most. State newspapers are only continuing because of the regime subsidies. They are considered part of the state media arms despite their financial losses²⁴. It was also noted that preferred media outlets enjoy preferred financial privileges: some deals lead to some media outlets making profits. As noted by an assistant editor-in-chief in the public Al Ahram newspaper: “For example, they can be exempted from taxes or awarded certain advertising contracts. This depends on their network and how close they are with the political arena”²⁵.

²³ The Supreme Press Council was responsible for overseeing the press sector under Mubarak. It was abolished after 2011. It acted as a state controlled body instead of an independent regulatory council.

²⁴ Interview, E_Priv_10

²⁵ Interview, E_Pub_28

To conclude, the regime in Egypt has used both direct and indirect subsidies to control the media. Public media is entirely dependent on state subsidies, which limits its ability to operate independently. Private media also benefited from some preferred deals, which is a form of indirect subsidy to ensure government control over private media.

Conclusion on the dimension of the role of the state in Egypt

The case of the Egyptian media system exemplifies the intertwining between the political system and the media system. It also shows the endurance of structures inherited from the past and how they led to the continuity of state control and manipulation over media institutions, despite relative media freedoms between 2011 and 2013. We can conclude that the media system's structure and functions are strongly embedded in the existing political and societal environment. In Egypt, the authoritarian state managed to re-instate itself following a short-lived period of freedom after the 2011 uprising. The state re-installed the tools used for state control.

The legal framework allowed the limitations on freedom-of-expression again despite the right stated in the new constitutions of 2012 and 2014. The regulatory media bodies that were newly developed are subject to state control, based on their lack of ability to support the development of the independent media sector. The political actors took no further steps to abolish laws that block media freedoms and allow prison sentences for journalists.

Public media continued to act as a state media rather than developing into a public media model. The persistence of the inherited structures and practices such as the continuity of the journalists and press institutions' management that existed under the previous regime and the lack of political support has blocked the transformation in the media sector.

In terms of media freedoms, Egypt is currently under a repressive regime. The status of media freedoms has deteriorated since 2013. There has been a massive attack on independent media, control over foreign reports, waves of imprisoning journalists, the return of self-censorship at the newsrooms, and the lack of independent professional journalism practices. The regime is fearful of any attempt to open up the media system. It is using the justifications of national security concerns and stability to attack media outlets.

The transition from an authoritarian regime requires the emergence of a national public sphere to enable the media to hold the political domain accountable and allow public deliberation on political issues. In Egypt, the state blocked the development of pluralist and free media that started to emerge in the early days following the Arab Spring. New spaces for freedom of expression that opened after the 2011 uprising continue to face fierce attacks by the state in addition to the other structural problems that face the media which exacerbates the situation.

The analysis shows the importance of contextualizing the Egyptian media system within its political determinants, especially in terms of understanding the state of media freedoms, how the state shapes the development of the legal and regulatory framework, and the public broadcaster's performance. Being located in an authoritarian context is a key factor in the Egyptian media system classification.

4.4 Political parallelism

The dimension of political parallelism described by Hallin and Mancini is an adaptation of the concept of “party-press parallelism” proposed by Seymour-Ure to describe the pattern and degree to which the press system mirrors the party system of a given country (as cited in Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 27). Hallin and Mancini defined this dimension as “the extent and links between media outlets and organized social and political groups.” The partisanship of media content and audience, personal connections between media organizations, and social and political groups they represent, are all key features of political parallelism. Political parallelism, in that sense, has taken universal applicability in the context of comparing media systems. Hallin and Mancini considered that a high degree of political parallelism is the hallmark of the Polarized-Pluralist model and the Democratic-Corporatist model.

4.4.1 Media ownership

Private media was introduced in Egypt during the 1990s. The media reform policies were part of the liberal economic policies adopted by the Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program (ERSAP) (Attalah & Rizk, 2011). Mubarak initiated a series of liberalizing actions in response to domestic and international pressures; he commanded the privatization of several state-owned institutions, including the media infrastructure, allowing for the launch of private satellite channels and privately-owned newspapers (Halabi, 2015). Several media outlets quickly emerged but were mainly concentrated in the hands of a few elite businessmen with strong affiliation to the Mubarak regime, whose businesses flourished in that era. Many of them were even politically active and/or members of the NDP). For instance, Ahmad Bahgat, a real estate development businessman and owner of several appliances’ factories established Dream TV in 2001 (Sakr, 2007). The media ventures for these businessmen were utilized as a means to enhance public opinion in favor of their business and political interests rather than a profitable business (Attalah & Rizk, 2011). A report notes that Egypt's media regulation system is geared towards ensuring government control; it actively discourages media diversity. There is a state monopoly over terrestrial broadcasters. There are also no community broadcasters (UNESCO, 2013, p. 46).

During the 1990s, with privatization policies, the relative margins of freedom expanded for Egyptian media, including discussing topics that were unlawful to discuss before. The change in content started the first time Egyptians were exposed to unfiltered content during the Iraq invasion of Kuwait in 1990 when Egyptians could watch CNN without censorship of the Ministry of Information. During the 1990s, Egyptians continued to

watch satellite stations from other countries until the first private-owned satellite station was established (Mabrouk, 2010, p. 8).

The post-1990 era brought about many significant changes to the Egyptian media system including the emergence of privately owned media outlets such as satellite television stations and private newspapers. The influx of emerging television satellite private stations during the decade of 2000s offered new programming content that would have never been possible to be aired on national television and under strong censorship (Mabrouk, 2010, p. 8). Despite this margin of freedom, the content remained heavily commercial and determined by the businessmen's interests. The first private Egyptian station, Dream TV, was established in 2001 and owned by one of the Egyptian mega businessmen, Ahmed Bahgat. His aim was to market his other business ventures (Hamdy, 2002). The second station was Al Mehwar station, also owned by another businessman Hassan Rateb; he mentioned in one interview that he wanted to give legitimacy to Egyptian private sector ventures (Hamdy, 2002). The third private venture was OTV, established later in 2007 by another tycoon businessman Naguib Sawiras to support his business interests (Sakr, 2013, p. 2286).

The first generation of private media in Egypt was set on a base of power relations with the regime and based on an undisclosed agreement of common interests. Private media acted for its owners' benefit and interest, not its readers and viewers (Badr, 2017). Naguib Sawiris, a telecommunications and construction tycoon, also established ONTV. As the founder of al-Masry al Youm newspaper, Salah Diab was another reputable businessman in the oil sector. Al Mehwar satellite channel followed Dream TV, owned by businessman Hassan Rateb. He is the chairman of several other investment projects and a member of the investors' federation and his real estate companies. He was a strong supporter of the Mubarak regime, both when he was in power and after he was deposed (Halabi, 2015, p. 5). Al-Hayah TV Network appeared and was owned by businessman ElSayed ElBadawi. It airs two general entertainment channels and one Drama channel (El-Issawi, 2014, p. 56). Businessman Gamal Marwan established the Melody channel in 2000. The Mazzika channel was established as an affiliate of the Alam Al Fan Media group, a record and music company owned by businessman Mohsen Gaber (Rizk, 2010, p. 103). Good News Group is an entertainment media conglomerate established by the businessman Emad El-Din Adeeb²⁶ (Sakr, 2007, p. 30).

²⁶ Good News Group is a well-connected venture with several media projects and connections to Saudi owned pay TV network "Orbit".

Good News Group owned a share of only 25% at the new venture “Nile Radio Productions” (NRP), while the public ERTU retained the remaining share. NRP was considered to be managing the radio frequencies on behalf of the state (Sakr, 2007, p. 30). Two popular music stations were established: Nogoom FM (popular Arabic songs) and Nile FM (popular English songs). NRP was prohibited from airing any newscasts, and their content was restricted only to entertainment (Allam, 2010). Good News Group maintained close ties with the Mubarak family (Sakr, 2007, p. 30).

Private media outlets under Mubarak did not allow the introduction of diversified voices. The Mubarak regime only allowed the introduction of private media to legitimize the political system. On the other hand, the businessmen used media to have influential voices in business battles when necessary. They also ensured some economic benefits were passed outside the media sector. Egypt is a state where an enormous amount of economic activity was and still is linked to the government in one way or another, which means that the businessmen would not allow highly critical content (UNESCO, 2013, p. 47).

This trust relationship with the government dates back to Mubarak's time. It is no new phenomenon in the media industry. The relationship between Mubarak and business tycoons also varied throughout the years. Financial interests were not enough to stabilize the regime and media owners' interrelationships. Over the years, it became more evident that people in business used their businesses and financial power to attempt to control political power. Nevertheless, the regime maintained its grip over the media and the communication sector, thus creating a bargaining block between the two that merely served the interests of the business moguls and the regime, not the public (El-Issawi, 2014, p. 53). Despite avoiding direct political involvement, businessmen were keen on possessing multiple channels to ensure safeguarding their interests in the political arena. One example is the involvement of businessman Sawiras in relationships with politicians, along with owning shares in the media sector and membership of business organizations (Roll, 2013, p. 9). As noted in the interviews with a prominent journalist at a private newspaper, “Most of those businessmen want to make sure a media arm covers them to support their businesses.” The general public good exemplifies in their sense “communicating the correct information²⁷ to the public.”²⁸ The businessman who invests in the media seeks to be closely connected with the regime. He needs to have some established relationship already and should do some bargaining. Hence making a profit becomes a secondary cause for media investments. Another interviewee, a journalist at

²⁷ Correct means the government's side of the information.

²⁸ Interview, E_Priv_22

Al Ahram newspaper, confirms the same idea that “The businessman has to ensure the regime stays “satisfied.” He has to remain in the middle of not upsetting the regime and developing appealing content with minimal friction with the state.”²⁹

Following the ousting of Mubarak, most of the previous ownership patterns continued to exist after 2011. Businessmen who established their media ventures under Mubarak continued to be significant players such as Mohamed Abu El Einien, the ceramic production business owner. Other businessmen who are also players in the media field are: Salah Diab, Hassan Rateb, Ahmed Bahgat, Ibrahim Al Moelem, Naguib Sawiras, and Tarek Nour (Atef A. , 2015). For example, the two private FM radio licenses were renewed in April 2014 to the same company that had been granted a license since 2003. The license was renewed through direct order and without public consultation. No opportunity was allowed for any other players who wished to present different bids. The new license was granted for LE 40 million/year, with only an LE 2.5 million annual increase from the previous contract (UNESCO, 2013, p. 47).

Other multiple actors took the opportunity to open media outlets as a more relaxed approach towards licensing of private television stations , which led to an ‘explosion’ in the number of TV outlets that entered the market starting in 2011. At least 15 new channels were licensed. CBC network, Al Nahar, 25th Channel, Tahrir Channel, Modern Horeya, Rotana Massreya, Misr 25³⁰ , and Al-Masry³¹ (UNESCO, 2013, p. 13). This surge in growth in independent media outlets came from different elite groups that seized the opportunity presented by the post-revolutionary environment to establish media outlets, fearing that the licensing process may become more difficult in the future. Other reasons for this trend included the surging demand for news and information amid the uncertainties that followed the developments after the revolution (Mekay, 2011).

New businessmen with diverse investments in other sectors were keen on entering the media business. For example, Mohamed Al Amin, the CBC group owner, at that time owned 14 satellite stations, three newspapers, and an advertising agency. He was not a famous figure before that and spent about 16 years working in Kuwait's real estate development (Atef A. , 2015). As indicated in the interview, “Mohamed Al Amin’s aim

²⁹ Interview, E_Pub_28

³⁰ Belongs to the Muslim Brotherhood movement

³¹ Belongs to Al-Wafd Party

from establishing CBC was never financial profit. There was a need for a new type of media that has strong credibility among society”³².

The media field remains dominated by the tycoon businessmen ventures; given the fact that media production is a very costly business also adds another limitation to diversity in the Egyptian media market. As noted in the interviews with a digital media manager, “The trend continued that businessmen seek to own media ventures to ensure an individual social status and being closely connected with the elites and the political arena or in sometimes to be connected to the cultural and artistic public figures.”³³

The Muslim Brotherhood also opened its TV channel Misr 25, which was a general interest channel named after the first day of the uprising (Mekay, 2011). On the other hand, multiple small media ventures opened after 2011. Mostly young people with limited budgets operated these. Most of those ventures could not continue in the market. Larger ventures later acquired them. For example, Tahrir station was acquired by channel TEN³⁴. Most of those ventures could not continue due to financial reasons. Some studies have indicated that private satellite channels do not receive advertising revenue high enough to cover their escalating costs (Allam, 2018).

As General Sisi ascended to power, he decided to undergo a complete restructuring of the Egyptian media scene to support the new regime. The regime adopted a more aggressive approach toward controlling all media platforms through direct acquisition. In May 2016, businessman Naguib Sawiras sold the ONTV channels network to businessman Ahmed Abou Heshima. The Egyptian Media Training and Consulting Company (Eelam elMasrieen) acquired the entire shares of ONTV owned by Sawiras, where Heshima announced the sale would enhance the leadership of the media sector (Nsehe, 2016). The remaining share of Naguib Sawiras in the PromoMedia advertising agency was later sold to another agency D-Media³⁵.

³² Interview, E_Priv_21

³³ Interview, E_Soc_25

³⁴ Interview, E_Pub_3

³⁵ Interview, E_Soc_18

In September 2017, the Tawasol group, a member of Falcon³⁶ Security Services and Sigma Media, announced the signing of a framework agreement under which it acquired Al Hayat satellite Network for a deal worth LE 1.4 billion. The channel has been heavily indebted, and most of the revenue would be channeled to pay debts. Home³⁷ Media Company acquired the Al-Assema satellite channels network and DRN radio station (AFTE, 2018).

In December 2017, Eagle Capital³⁸ for Financial Investments, SAE acquired the share of businessman Ahmed Abou Heshima in Egyptian Media Training and Consulting Company. The company owns several media ventures, including the ONTV channels network and several newspapers and websites³⁹ (AFTE, 2018). In September 2018, Egyptian Media Training and Consulting Company acquired Future Media, the CBC Network owner. After the deal, the daily talk show of Lamis El Hadidy was stopped, then the Abla Fahita show was stopped (Egypt Independent, 2018). Another company owned by the Intelligence, United Printing Publishing, and Information Technology (UPPIT) has also acquired a stake in the Al Nahar television and CBC merger. The merger fell apart later, and Al-Nahar left the group (Bahgat, 2017).

Although the security forces acquired most media outlets, they are also encountering various financial problems. Launching the DMC news channel has faced multiple challenges and was delayed due to a lack of financial resources. DMC channels group has so far not proven successful or seen a return on investment despite its expenditure that exceeded more than one billion EGP in two years. Earlier, security forces have planned to launch DMC news as a news channel to be able to compete with other regional news channels such as Al-Arabiya and Al-Jazeera (Hakeem, 2018).

³⁶ Falcon Group is a company working in the field of security services. It has 14 branches and more than 22 thousand employees over different governorates. Its board of directors is headed by a former military intelligence official.

³⁷ A Subsidiary of Falcon Group

³⁸ Eagle Capital for Financial Investments was established at the end of 2016. It is not listed on the Egyptian Stock Exchange, and is similar to the investment funds in terms of its activity. It acquires some entities and institutions to develop them, sell them again and benefit from investing in them. Its board of directors is headed by Dalia Khurshid, former Minister of Investment and wife of Central Bank Governor Tareq Amer.

³⁹ Eagle Capital through E3lam El Masrieen owns also El Youm El Sabea, Sout El Oma, Dot Masr, Ein, Business Today and Egypt Today (newspapers and websites), and ONTV channel network. Nile Radio Productions operates several services Radio hits, Radio Shaaby, Nagham FM, and DRN. Presentation Sport and 60% of Masrawy. It also owns two film and television production companies, seven marketing and advertising agencies and a security company. Sources their website: <http://egyptian-media.com/>

Finally, the regime established the DMC⁴⁰ network, a major TV network with a range of news, sports, and entertainment channels. It has enormously increased the government's influence over the broadcast media landscape. Some journalists label DMC as "the mouthpiece of the intelligence services" (RSF, 2017). The funds come from Eagle Capital for Financial Investments, a private equity fund owned by the Egyptian General Intelligence. The Fund was established to manage Intelligence civilian investments through intelligence owned companies. It also reveals that Abu Heshima's stake in the company stocks never exceeded restricted shares. His role as a chairperson of the board of directors was to represent the media group and to sign company deals (Bahgat, 2017). In an interview with a prominent journalist at Al Aham newspaper, he adds "some of the remaining players from the old team are Abou El Einen with Sada El Balad channel. However, he has been known to be always pro-government."⁴¹

The changes in media ownership and the state acquisition of most media outlets indicate a new approach to ensuring the media's loyalty in the post-Mubarak era. There is a shift from allowing loyal businessmen to establish media ventures to the state itself owning the media outlets. First, the state started by acquiring shares in the media ventures themselves. Then came a decision to hold more share acquisitions and phase out loyal businessmen for the time being. In an interview with an executive in chief of an online platform, he explains "It seems that the security agencies' intervention in the media sector aims to achieve complete control over the media. It is similar to the days of media nationalization in the 1960s." In most cases, there seems to be no operational plan following the acquisition. It is happening quickly and fiercely with the motto of "let us control all of them first, then we decide what we shall do with them later."⁴²

The state justified its resorting back to control over the media scene by saying it was to save the chaotic media scene. Some of the interviewees echo the state's point of view about controlling the media outlets. As described by one of the interviewees who is an editor-in-chief in an online platform, who indicated, "After 2014, the government wants to take the media back to the correct path. It is what nationalist businessman should take responsibility for"⁴³. President Sisi has mentioned that there were 21 thousand rumors within three months about the Egyptian government and that this leads to hatred and terrorism (Egypt Independent, 2018). Another comment from a program manager at DMC channels indicates, "The president said we want to regulate the media to end the

⁴⁰ DMC owns also Radio 90 90 station and Mobtada website

⁴¹ Interview, E_Pub_28

⁴² Interview, E_Soc_18

⁴³ Interview, E_Soc_30

chaos from 2011.”⁴⁴ Another justification for controlling the media mentioned by another editor-in-chief at DMC channels “Besides, it is essential to counter any mobilization that may occur on social media. The government knows that it is impossible to control social media. So traditional media can be a way to counter that effect. In the end, it is one source and several outlets.”⁴⁵

As the media scene in Egypt became mostly dominated by the government as a key player, the other players that remain are international or transnational media. The Saudi Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) Masr continues to have a substantial share within the media market in Egypt. However, it works within the guidelines of the Egyptian government. As explained from the point of view of the executive-in-chief of a private TV station, “Even in cases of disagreements between governments (for example, the Tiran and Sanafir islands topic between Egypt and Saudi Arabia), they still respect the Egyptian political situation.”⁴⁶

In conclusion, about private media ownership patterns in Egypt, as Hafez argued early on, private media ownership patterns “do not necessarily lead to liberalization in the same way as state ownership is not equivalent to censorship and information control” (Hafez, 2001, p. 9). After 2011, Egyptian businessmen who owned media outlets under Mubarak continued to preserve both economic power and influence in the media sector. Private media organizations have developed a history of tolerating margins of freedoms and being run solely as profit-oriented businesses (Roll, 2013). There has been a trend towards media concentration, with no active control against it. In the case of Egypt, it has led to a decline of pluralism in the media sector. Most of the businessmen who own media outlets remain highly connected to the authoritarian elite (Sakr, 2013). Following the 2011 uprising, the explosion of private media opening did not lead to freeing the media. Private media in Egypt continued to be loyal to the regime. In fact, the regime finally returned to a full control pattern over the media similar to the Nasser era, through the concentration of ownership directly by security forces. This pattern cannot be classified in the same model as Hallin and Mancini’s Polarized Pluralist model, where the media outlets exhibit clear ties with political actors, which is the dominant factor that the media in Egypt exhibits ties with is the state.

⁴⁴ Interview, E_Priv_16

⁴⁵ Interview, E_Priv_10

⁴⁶ Interview, E_Priv_7

4.4.2 Political affiliation of media personnel

Egyptian journalists have frequently emphasized the importance of building strong relations with the government, political actors, state, and police. Being in good contact with officials is a matter of personal connections and depends on this relationship's depth. Journalists need to call their security sources to verify that the news is correct before publishing (Lohner, Banjac, & Neverla, 2016, pp. 17-19). As noted in the interview with a prominent journalist and media trainer, "No one wants to jeopardize their relationship with the government, especially at the time when there is a fight against terrorism."⁴⁷ The relationship with the state is described by an editor-in-chief of an online platform "It is a privilege for journalists to have good connections and access to government sources."⁴⁸

The patterns of ownership and their linkages to the political system have influenced Egyptian media's editorial independence. This has rendered journalists in state media to be affiliated to the regime. For example, the ERTU is managed directly by the Ministry of Information (El-Issawi & Cammaerts, 2016, p. 553). Under this environment, journalists are expected to support the state's discourse, which has traditionally been the most influential role, along with the pervasive government censorship and control over media content (Hamdy, 2012).

Decades of the tradition of serving the regime have developed a strong sense among journalists that they need to defend those in power instead of questioning or challenging them (El-Issawi & Cammaerts, 2016, p. 553). As indicated in the interviews, Egyptian journalists consider being close to the decision-making and political arena an advantage. This allows their television channel to be ahead of the others in reporting news. Interviewees referred to the importance of this secure connection with the state; a journalist at Al Ahram newspaper indicates, "There are cases when the government selected certain media figures to convey certain information to the public. For example, Amr Adeeb⁴⁹ is selected to convey certain 'messages' to the public because the state trusts him. Then he practices the role as a media professional to turn the information into an appealing media content"⁵⁰. One study indicated that journalists, who interviewed for state-owned newspapers, confirmed that they are still used to the practice of presenting

⁴⁷ Interview, E_Priv_12

⁴⁸ Interview, E_Soc_18

⁴⁹ Amr Adeeb was the sole talk show host who interviewed the woman who was allegedly said to have disappeared as per what was reported by a BBC report (Mada Misr, 2018).

⁵⁰ Interview, E_Pub_3

results of journalistic investigations to a managing editor without expecting a publication (Leih, 2015, p. 67).

Journalists gradually practiced a mobilization role. They started giving opinions and acting as opinion leaders in guiding people to make political decisions. This was showing in many controversial TV shows, where the host would remain on air for hours, giving personal political opinions. A most prominent example is the controversial figure Tawfiq Okasha, who operated his TV station Al-Fareen and hosted a daily talk show. He spearheaded several campaigns against the 2011 revolutionary figures. He also allowed anyone willing to share his opinion. He would broadcast every day between one to four hours on air, saying as much as he could against human rights activists Mohamed El Baradei and the Muslim Brotherhood (ElMeshad, 2016). It was noted from the fieldwork that a large number of new journalists who entered the media industries after 2011, that joining the new media ventures were ideologically affiliated to the media outlets they joined. "It was a criterion for selection to join the media outlet."⁵¹ Under the current military rule, the debate on media professionalism is no longer relevant even to journalists. The populist propaganda approach is prevalent instead of the investigative role of journalists (El-Issawi & Cammaerts, 2016, p. 554).

In conclusion, Egyptian journalists perceive the importance of building strong relations with the state, the political actors, and the security apparatus as an asset to doing their journalistic profession. The pattern of loyal, private ownership to the regime and substantial control by the political system has impacted media organizations' editorial policy. Decades of the tradition of serving the regime have developed a strong sense among journalists that they need to defend those in power instead of questioning or challenging them (El-Issawi & Cammaerts, 2016, p. 553).

4.4.3 Media Partisanship

Given the patterns of private media ownership in Egypt, media outlets that existed on the eve of the uprising cannot be labeled as independent. Some authors have noted the role of media owners in influencing reporting in newspapers and broadcast stations. These owners intervene to hold pieces on corruption cases or protect themselves and their businesses against questions. The economic and political interests of media owners lead them to influence editorial policies (Elmasry M. H., 2009, p. 105).

⁵¹ Interview, E_Priv_16

The period immediately following the 2011 uprising was a vibrant time for the Egyptian media. It witnessed some talented and professional journalistic experiences. Even media outlets that existed under Mubarak hired the best reporters and top newspaper editors in an attempt to construct a buffer zone between themselves and the public's oversight of their practices under Mubarak. They were trying to build a shield between their previous practices by involving the best media practitioners they could hire (Mekay, 2011). As indicated in the interview with a journalist at AlMasry AlYom, "there existed talk show programs with a wide margin of criticism and openness, such as Reem Maged and Yousri Fouda."⁵² The surrounding political environment enabled the development of content since it created a strong demand for news content. As indicated in the interview with the former executive director of CBC station, "People only wanted to hear about political developments. This has also invited more investors to enter the business."⁵³ It was not long until the expansion in media outlets turned into a battlefield for partisanship for several reasons.

The polarization and the on-air battles increased as almost all political groups became interested in opening media ventures. All political factions who never practiced freedoms suddenly realized that they had the right to own a media venture. A party like Al-Noor Salafi Party used the media for the first time to practice open politics; the prominent TV anchor journalist explains in the interview, "Islamist political factions were not used to working in public. They worked for 30 years underground; when they appeared, they lost a lot of their credibility among the population."⁵⁴ Only a few businessmen came on good terms with the MB and accepted their claim to political power. Most businessmen supported MB rivals by funding opposition political parties and politicians using private media outlets. Secular-minded business elites could not come to trust the proponents of the Islamist forces. The rift deepened under Morsi's rule due to his government's lack of professionalism exhibited by its economic policy (Roll, 2013).

At the same time, there emerged a new type of journalists willing to appeal to the revolutionaries. Journalists also note that in the years between 2011 and 2013, instead of the ban on criticizing president Mubarak, there were new guidelines to censor negative news about the revolution, what they called "dictatorship of Tahrir" (Leihs, 2015, p. 67).

Media contributed to the increased debates among the population as per the constitutional declaration in 2012. Some media sided with the narrative countering

⁵² Interview, E_Priv_27

⁵³ Interview, E_Priv_21

⁵⁴ Interview, E_Ind_23

Morsi. It started to telling rumors against him. It also had a substantial role in leading people to demonstrate against Morsi. Media outlets would have the leaders of the Tamarod group as hosts on its shows. Simultaneously, pro-Morsi media tried to appeal to the Islamist countries and more pro-Islamist supporters to also go to the streets. This was the height of the politicization of the scene (El-Rashidi, 2018, p. 6). When Morsi was elected, the Muslim Brotherhood's media apparatus took it as its role to provide unlimited support to its faction. Consequently, its role was to keep providing cheering support to the Muslim Brotherhood. It surrounded itself with a supportive group of newspapers, satellite channels, social media activities, and opened about a dozen supportive media outlets. The Muslim Brotherhood media started to be too aggressive towards anyone who did not support Morsi. The Muslim Brotherhood media apparatus was too hostile for public media, claiming a conspiracy against Morsi (Sabry, 2014). The polarization and the on-air battles increased as almost all political groups became interested in opening media ventures. All political factions who never practiced freedoms suddenly realized that they had the right to own a media venture.

The situation turned into on-air battles between the Muslim Brotherhood and the old regime's guards (hailing for the rise of the military rule once more). One example cited in the interview with the executive in chief of AlGhad private TV station of the on-air battles: One example was the confrontation between businessman Abou El Einien the owner of the Sada El Balad channel, and the Muslim Brotherhood government. Abou El Einien used his media outlets to attack the government. He claimed that the government was supporting the workers' strikes at his factory.⁵⁵As clashes escalated between Morsi's supporters and opponents near the presidential palace in December 2012, Khairat El Shater, one of the Brotherhood's strongest men, called for Morsi's followers to attack opposition protesters outside the palace (The Guardian, 2012).

Conversely, the Muslim Brotherhood also shared responsibility for the increased polarization through the use of its TV station "Misr25", newspaper, and online portals that all emphasized the self propaganda and underplayed conciliation. The reaction by Morsi and the MB to media criticism gradually became frenzied with threats of attacks on media and banning of journalists (Richter, 2013). Morsi's TV propaganda shows started attacking any figure who would not strongly support his government. For example, Khaled Abdallah, who presented at a TV show on Islamist Channel Al-Nas, dedicated several episodes to attacking Egyptian actress Elham Shahin (Said, 2012).

⁵⁵ Interview, E_Priv_7

After the ousting of Morsi in 2013, the media strongly reinforced partisan practice. In the coverage of Rabaa's events, the media had been a crucial player in directing and polarizing events when this incident took place. State media and several privately owned Egyptian channels such as CBC, Dream, Nahar, Tahrir, Mehwar, Sada El Balad, Qahera Wal Nas, and ONTV were all agreeing and broadcasting SCAF's version, of what had happened. The same message has still been broadcast in Egypt since June 30th. All of these channels have put some variations of a "Fighting Terrorism" badge permanently on their screens (Ibrahim, 2013).

Youssef El Hussein from ONTV is an example of media persons who support the military regime. He would talk on his daily program for hours about how individuals should support the state's fight against terrorism and that human rights should be set aside until the fight ends. This also means that most of the hosted guests support his political views with the regime (Youssef A. M., 2013). Frequently repeated concepts such as "conspiracy theory" or "conspiracy against Egypt" are used. Such repeated messages are becoming influential on the population, reducing criticism of the regime, and boosting compliance with the military rule (Ibrahim, 2013). Most media outlets would declare their stance in support of the government. In an interview it was noted, "CBC was at the heart of the fight against the Muslim Brotherhood rule in 2012 and 2013, but did it objectively and professionally"⁵⁶. It was also noted by a prominent journalist at Al Ahram newspaper that "Media outlets continue to support the government's stance against countries like Turkey and Qatar, for example, ONTV took that side, regardless of the commercial gains."⁵⁷ Another journalist notes that "The justification is the war in Sinai, and the existence of ISIS in itself is a form of threat to several groups of the society."⁵⁸

Gradually, the media scene ended up with a sturdier division between Islamist satellite stations/websites that support Morsi and are funded by Muslim Brotherhood businessmen on the one hand and the military figures, as well as the Deep Egyptian state, on the other hand. The opposing TV stations to Morsi's government were praising the military for backing the popular movement against Morsi. After the ousting of Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood media became even more opposing. As the prominent TV anchor and media figure points out the consequences of this situation on the Egyptian media leading to declining credibility among audience, "Most of the media outlets that exist today, despite the enormous investments are lacking credibility among the audience. The fact that the government is owning the media outlets is delimiting media rather than

⁵⁶ Interview, E_Priv_21

⁵⁷ Interview, E_Pub_3

⁵⁸ Interview, E_Priv_27

boosting its success.⁵⁹ Another reason for lack of credibility in the media scene was cited by the journalist at Al Masry Al Youm, “What contributes to the one-sided regime story in the media is that there are no opposition figures allowed to participate in media as guests or speakers. There is a void in political life with the absence of Islamist figures. They were the only political opposition groups that operated under Mubarak.”⁶⁰

There is also an increase in the depoliticizing content starting in the middle of 2013, where the entertainment content is dominating most of the airtime in the TV sector (Badr, 2020, p. 75). The managing director of AlGhad private TV station explained the reason from his point of view for this lack of interest in political content from a business point of view, “[the] audience felt saturated with news content, and talk shows over the past few years, following 2011 till 2015. The market witnessed a shift towards light content and entertainment.”⁶¹

The approach of strong state dominance over the media sector has led to a further decline in news consumption. The continuation of one overall narrative in all media leads the audience to abandon watching Egyptian TV stations. As one of the respondents, who is a prominent journalist and TV anchor, sums up the situation, “there is oversaturation with political content, similar programming formats in all media outlets, low-quality production, and a lecturing anchor with no content to present. Not a recipe for success. There were too many TV channels in the Egyptian market beyond the capacity of the market”⁶².

To conclude, media partisanship represents news producers’ and journalists’ bias in selecting news stories and events to be reported. The period 2011 until mid-2012 witnessed a vibrant time for Egyptian media, where there existed some important talents and professional journalistic experiences. There were vibrant debates about ongoing political events, such as the constitutional declaration. As the MB came to power, the on-air battles and polarization increased. This impacted the messages presented by each faction, who suddenly realized they could use the newly acquired media venture. As clashes increased between the military and the MB, media outlets sided either with the narrative pro or against Morsi. After the ousting of Morsi in 2013, the media continued strongly with the partisan practice. In the coverage of Rabaa's events, the media had been a crucial player in directing and polarizing events when this incident took place. State

⁵⁹ Interview, E_Ind_23

⁶⁰ Interview, E_Priv_27

⁶¹ Interview, E_Priv_7

⁶² Interview, E_Ind_23

media and several privately owned Egyptian channels such as CBC, Dream, Nahar, Tahrir, Mehwar, Sada El Balad, Qahera Wal Nas, and ONTV were all agreeing and broadcasting SCAF's version of what had happened. Gradually, the media scene ended up with a sturdier division between Islamist satellite stations and websites that support Morsi and are funded by Muslim Brotherhood businessmen on the one hand and the military figures and the Deep Egyptian state on the other hand.

To conclude about the political parallelism dimension, the Egyptian media system is paramount to the political system. The media system exemplifies a unique phenomenon that the Polarized Pluralist model continues, where the security bodies are directly involved as key players and investors in the media sector. The other primary set of players in the media sector are individual businessmen who show loyalty to the regime. Media shows a pattern of ownership concentration among few actors, which limits diversity and pluralism in the media sector. The media environment is also grounded in a culture of censorship. In general, there is a lack of transparency concerning media ownership structures, where numerous new private media companies have strong ties to state security and intelligence bodies.

From 2011 until mid-2012, there were positive signs of opening the public sphere, like discussing a wide range of previously banned topics and political discussions; however, the opening of the media sector was soon reverted. There continues to be limited diversity in the opinions presented in the media sector; most voices side by the state under the claims of the war against terrorism.

Egypt exemplifies another case that does fit comfortably within Hallin and Mancini's Mediterranean model. Because there are a lack of established political parties, the interaction between political life and media remains limited to the division between regime supporters and Muslim Brotherhood supporters.

4.5 Media Market

Hallin and Mancini focused on the quantitative variable of the high press circulation rates in the analysis of the media market dimension. They argued that it could be linked with the earlier historical development of mass press circulation. Countries that have developed mass press circulation early, such as Northern European countries, are identified by a higher press circulation degree. Southern European countries that developed mass-circulation press later, after the beginning of the 20th century, were never able to develop high circulation rates despite advancements of literacy rates or improving economic conditions. Therefore, in Southern European countries, mass press circulation patterns could be characterized by a small elite – mainly urban – well-educated and politically active (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 22-24). Multiple scholars criticized Hallin and Mancini's approach for limiting the media dimension only to mass press circulation. Scholars questioned the media market dimension's ability as formulated to describe the media systems outside of the western world. According to this formulation, the rest of the world's media systems will consequently fall into the category of low mass press circulation, which distinguishes the Polarized Pluralist model (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 288).

4.5.1 Mass Circulation Press

Egypt represents a paradox when it comes to the analysis of the development of the media market. Egypt is a pioneer in the media industries in the Arab region. The print media industry in Egypt emerged more than 200 years ago. The first Egyptian newspaper was published in 1798 in French. The first Arabic newspaper was published under Mohamed Ali to disseminate official news (Abdel-Rahman, 2002, p. 102). In 2004, the Al-Ahram newspaper had the highest circulation rate among Middle East newspapers with 900,000 copies. Daily newspaper circulation per 1000 inhabitants was 31 copies, the number of radio sets was 339 per 1000 inhabitants, and the number of TV sets was 229 per 1000 inhabitants (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004). Historically, Egyptian newspapers enjoyed a wider readership among elites, and intellectual class, and opinion leaders. At the same time, most of the other social groups relied heavily on broadcast media as a result of the spread of illiteracy and lower education levels (Mohammed & Gunter, 2013).

From 2011 until the end of 2012, newspaper sales surged. According to the Supreme Press Council, in May 2011, 567 new newspapers were registered, compared to 142 in 2010 and 113 in 2009 (UNESCO, 2013, p. 12). The rise in the newspaper readership came

as a result of political interest among Egyptian citizens during the uprising, who were suddenly interested in unusual political competition and diverse political actors. Al-Masry Al-Youm's, for example, sales reached 650,000 copies, but it is now struggling to sell 60,000 copies a day. Even party media newspapers that flourished during the late 1980s and 1990s are facing shrinking readership, managerial problems, and are struggling to survive (Badr, 2020, p. 74).

Mass circulation press rates declined sharply starting in 2013. According to CAPMAS data, the number of newspaper publications in Egypt decreased from 142 in 2010 to 76 in 2016. The number of public newspaper copies circulated per year dropped from 1,007,250 copies in 2010 to 534,650 copies in 2016 (CAPMAS, 2019). One of the interviewees estimated that newspapers lost about 75% of revenues after 2011⁶³. A prominent journalist and media trainer provides his estimate for the circulation figure during the interview, "Although the number of publications increased, the estimated circulation numbers indicate about 400 thousand newspapers per day."⁶⁴ Another study notes that press circulation figures are very scarce in Egypt. According to estimations by experts and insiders, newspaper sales in Egypt are around 500,000 copies per day for each of Al Ahram, Al Akhbar, and Al Masry Al Youm newspapers. Despite the decline in revenue from sales and the accumulation of enormous debts, state-owned newspapers maintain some revenues from multiple other sources such as intuitional advertising and other economic ventures (Leih, 2015, pp. 68-69).

The decline in circulation rates has exacerbated the financial problems facing print media organizations. Most print media institutions, especially public organizations, have already been suffering for several years from hurdling over problems due to the accumulated debts, surplus employees, reduced circulation rates, lack of advertising resources, and absence of adequate training (Gomaa, 2019). According to the Prime Minister's announcements, these institutions owe considerable debts to the taxing authority and the social security authority. In an interview with the prominent journalist, the Prime Minister estimated the total debt amount facing the state-owned newspapers, "The total debt of the national newspapers amounts to EGP 19 billion (about US\$1.1billion)."⁶⁵ Public print organizations depend on government subsidies as the primary source of revenue along with the advertisement revenue. Both sources of revenue decreased over

⁶³ This is despite the fact that the high circulation numbers before 2011, may be exaggerated. For example, Al Ahram newspaper announced its daily circulation of about 750,000 in 2009. This may be a figure combining all its publications including newspapers and magazines (Rizk, 2016, p. 9).

⁶⁴ Interview, E_Priv_12

⁶⁵ Interview, E_Priv_12

the past few years due to political and economic problems. An unsustainable business model inflates the situation (Allam, 2018).

Private newspapers were not immune to the difficult economic circumstances. They also faced significant financial losses, especially after the pound's flotation, which led to a massive increase in the newspaper printing costs due to the substantial rise in the US dollar value (Allam, Egypt-Media Landscape, 2018). According to the information from an interviewee who is an editor-in-chief at DMC channel the print media needs to reinvent the way the business is running to remain on the market, "If print media is looking to continue being in the market, they have to rethink their approach and their content. People no longer seek newspaper for news; they already know the news from social media. They are looking for something different, but it cannot be the same old content."⁶⁶

The print media faces a crisis in Egypt. Sales have declined significantly over the past ten years. In a country of more than 100 million inhabitants, there are low press circulation rates, widespread poverty, and high illiteracy rates. Newspapers had seen a short-lived rise in newspaper popularity during the beginning of the uprising period of 2011 to 2012, and then sales declined again. This can be interpreted as a lack of newspapers' ability to meet the needs of the audience and provide a plurality of voices. Besides, print media is facing hardships in terms of sustainable financial business models; the print media situation is not expected to improve shortly. Many journalists are hoping that Egyptian paper publications will eventually disappear (Fouad, 2016).

Egypt represents a paradox when it comes to the analysis of the development of the media market. Egypt is a pioneer in the media industries in the Arab region. Mass circulation press increased after 2011, then declined starting in 2013. Newspapers are facing a massively reduced readership and, consequently, financial hardships. Other factors that make newspaper distribution low and limited to elitist groups are widespread poverty and high illiteracy rates.

4.5.2 Overall Media Market Size

Hallin and Mancini have argued that the varying statistics on newspaper readership reflect profound differences in media systems' fundamental historical development in

⁶⁶ Interview, E_Priv_10

the Western world. They concluded that the press in Western media developed as part of the mass culture and as part of elite culture and exclusive political discussions (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 288). There have been multiple criticisms of this approach; Voltmer concluded that it will not be very enlightening if we combine all the countries of the world into a low newspaper circulation category. She called for a more comprehensive range of patterns in which media and information are produced and circulated, including several factors such as media access inequality. Multiple factors are prevalent and influence the media market, such as high levels of illiteracy, underdeveloped consumer markets, and inadequate technological infrastructure that can constitute a different economic foundation for the media than captured by the mass press circulation (Voltmer, 2012, p. 228).

The media market's central aspect in the Arab world can be characterized by the dependence on electronic media, contrary to the limited aspect of mass press circulation used in the Western world. Sakr noted the limited press market in Arab countries as a result of the high illiteracy rates and low incomes combined with the market distortions caused by government controls on press and distribution (Sakr, 2008, p. 195). According to a survey conducted in eight Arab countries, 98% of the respondents indicated that they watch television, while only 54% indicated they read newspapers (Dennis, Martin, & Wood, 2013, p. 15).

Egypt is no stranger to the same pattern of prevalence of broadcast media. Television represents the most common news source since nearly 94.1% of Egyptians use TV to get their information at least once a week (Allam, 2018). About 20.3 million Egyptian households indicated that they own a TV set in 2017 (Statista, 2018). Radio listenership patterns have also been stable. The audience listens to the radio while driving. Radio listenership patterns did not face the same decline as newspapers. The average of daily public broadcasting hours by Egyptian public radio stations dropped from 523.4 hours in 2012 to 488.4 hours in 2018. The daily average television transmission hours for ERTU's central and local channels slightly increased from 148.3 hours in 2012 and 150.4 hours in 2018 (CAPMAS, 2019). Scholars have concluded that Egypt's media usage pattern can be summarized as follows: almost all of the population (97%) watches TV, one-third of the population uses radio, while only 16% read newspapers. At the same time, social media is becoming a strong competitor for traditional media (Badr, 2020, p. 73)

The following section explores Egypt's media market's underdevelopment; which has combined with the lack of financial sustainability for most media organizations, to impact the development of a more pluralist media scene. The expansion in the media market in

Egypt following 2011 did not bring a sustainable media market. Media organizations that are not able to continue to operate independently fall vulnerable to control. In addition to restrictions on media freedoms, the media scene faces multiple problems, especially media's economic viability as part of the massive journalism crisis.

An Unsustainable Business model

Following the 2011 uprising, various newspapers were established, and a number of political talk shows mushroomed with popular hosts such as Yosri Fouda or Reem Maged interviewing guests in an unprecedented manner (Sakr, 2013, p. 13). The public sphere's opening allowed multiple young grassroots media collaborations to emerge, such as the RASSD news network, Mosireen or Wikithaura. These new voices provided a new opportunity for alternative media seeking financial independence, sustainability, and professionalism (Leih, 2015).

The expansion of the media market after 2011 did not bring a successful sustainable business model to the media industry in Egypt. In the information collected during the interviews, a prominent journalist and media trainer, "estimates the decline in the television market in advertising revenue by about 7-10% annually"⁶⁷. From a financial point of view, most of the newly founded private media outlets struggled to exist. In many cases, media projects closed shortly after their launch pulled back from printing and publishing their content to an online-only version (Fahmy H. , 2012). Consequently, as discussed in the interviews, privately owned media outlets had to resort to financial support from major investors, who are mostly state allies from the former regime. This was combined with the decline in the news viewership starting in 2014. An editor-in-chief of a private web portal said, "*The market started shrinking.*"⁶⁸

As a result of the economic circumstances after 2011, advertising expenditure declined by 40% in 2011 to \$314M. It was not until 2013 that the advertisers started to increase their spending again. Net advertising expenditure on TV is estimated to be around EGP 2.7B in 2015 (US\$368M) (Oxford Business Group, 2019). One of the interviewees, who is a journalist and a program manager at DMC, estimates that the media sector loses about 3 billion EGP annually⁶⁹.

⁶⁷ Interview, E_Priv_12

⁶⁸ Interview, E_Soc_18

⁶⁹ Interview, E_Priv_16

One of the reasons for the economic viability that were discussed in the interviews is the decline in advertising revenue in traditional media. An editor-in-chief at DMC TV, he mentioned in an interview, “the advertising expenditure pattern itself has changed due to the expansion of the social media market; advertisers are more reluctant to spend on traditional media. It is more cost-effective to advertise over the internet platforms.”⁷⁰ However, some businesses still prefer advertising over the traditional media, as indicated by the journalist and media trainer, “Advertisers will be gradually discarding print media from their advertising expenditure mix. In 2018, the top 10 advertisers' spent more on television and digital media than print media. Marketing managers still prefer to spend on television advertisements versus online media because advertisers are still reluctant about paying for social media platforms such as Facebook”.⁷¹

The problems facing TV channels had led to massive financial losses that affected their operations. One example of the unsustainable business model is excessive spending over some genres of TV content. In 2017, the channels paid exorbitant amounts to buy TV serials for the month of Ramadan. The total amount paid for buying 33 serials and six programs amounted to more than EGP 2B (US\$ 120M). None of the TV stations made a significant profit or even managed to cover their expenses. Estimated advertising spending during Ramadan was about EGP 800M (US\$50M) (Fayek, 2017). The financial losses facing the private media was confirmed in interviews, with a journalist and editor-in-chief at Al Mehwar TV station, Several TV channels, such as AlMehwar station, which are already facing financial problems, consequently in terms of content it becomes worse. They cannot afford to purchase quality content such as popular serials or attract advertisers. Finally, they face more debt and cannot pay salaries.⁷²

Another interviewee who is an editor-in-chief at DMC points to the financial hardships facing media outlets causing other negative impacts, “such as a wave of layoffs among journalists. The most recent is ONTV that is laying off some of its staff.”⁷³ In addition to other negative impacts pointed out by journalist at Al Ahram newspaper, “consequently, the quality of media content declined since TV stations cannot afford high-quality production.”⁷⁴ Another reason for the lack of financial viability is what is noted by media

⁷⁰ Interview, E_Priv_10

⁷¹ Interview, E_Priv_12

⁷² Interview, E_Soc_19

⁷³ Interview, E_Priv_10

⁷⁴ Interview, E_Pub_28

finances expert and managing director of Mubasher Masr, "No one, not in any media outlet, has an accurate strategy on what content people are looking for."⁷⁵

Editorial decisions are based only on foreseen revenues, not professional standards or editorial policies, which finally impacted production quality. As explained by the program manager at DMC, "They will choose the media figures only because they are capable of attracting advertisement revenue. Then choose an anchor that is attractive to a certain group. Ahmed Moussa or Tawfik Okasha knows how to address lower educated and socio-economic groups."⁷⁶ The prominent anchor and media figure explains "The lack of quality production, and depending only on the star anchor without allocating adequate budget for all other aspects of production, has led to the deteriorating quality presented and contributed to people turning away from watching TV."⁷⁷

In conclusion, the media consumption pattern can be summarized by the prevalence of electronic media and the rising competition from social media. As per the literature, almost all the population (97%) watch TV, one-third of the population uses radio, while only 16% read newspapers (Badr, 2020, p. 73). In addition, the multiple manifestations of underdevelopment of the media market has had a negative effect. Multiple media organizations lack financial sustainability, which impacted the development of a more pluralistic media scene. The expansion in Egypt's media market following 2011 did not bring a sustainable media model in terms of financial performance. Media organizations that are not able to continue to operate independently fall vulnerable to control. In addition to restrictions on media freedoms, the media scene faces multiple problems: media's economic viability is part of the massive journalism crisis. The financial problems facing TV channels had led to massive financial losses that had an impact on their operations.

4.5.3 Inclusiveness of the media market

Another aspect that would add to the full picture of the media market's dimension is exploring the inclusiveness of the media market. Expanding the analysis of the media market dimension to focus on the market's inclusiveness means not only the reach of the press to elites but also the wider audience. Considering reach to women versus men or

⁷⁵ Interview, E_Soc_4

⁷⁶ Interview, E_Priv_16

⁷⁷ Interview, E_Ind_23

reach to the working class or different society segments (Brüggemann, Engesse, Büchel, Humprecht, & Castro, 2014, p. 1033).

This section explores the diversity of the media market in Egypt and its ability to respond to the needs of the various social groups. In terms of demographics, Egypt has a young population. Consequently, youth represent the most significant social group (52% of the population are less than 24 years old). The following Table 4 - Population distribution by age groups in Egypt in 2018 - Source: Index Mundi highlights the demographic distribution of the Egyptian society by age groups and gender (Index Mundi, 2020).

Table 4 - Population distribution by age groups in Egypt in 2018 - Source: Index Mundi

0-14 years	33.38% (male 17,177,977 /female 16,007,877)
15-24 years	18.65% (male 9,551,309 /female 8,988,006)
25-54 years	37.71% (male 19,053,300 /female 18,431,808)
55-64 years	5.99% (male 2,956,535 /female 2,995,497)
65 years and over	4.28% (male 2,058,217 /female 2,192,791)

Diversity can be defined as “the inclusiveness of different groups in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, age, income-based discrimination, gender and any other factors that make individuals or groups different from, but equal to, each other” (Abdulla, 2017).

For journalists over many years, supporting community needs was interpreted only as supporting the state or doing charity activities. Traditional Egyptian media developed for a long time under the mobilization model during the Nasserite era. This had directed the programming towards mobilizing the public for social and political change in a post-colonial time (Amin H. , 1998). During the 1990s and 2000s, the trend turned into the media providing charitable activities, under the claim of contributing to solving some social problems. As indicated in the interview with a prominent TV anchor and media figure, “at that time, programming of charitable activities became very popular among the audience and attracted significant advertising revenue. These Programs that provided social support to less privileged groups and solve social problems. The state broadcaster started facing limited financial resources”.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Interview, E_Ind_23

More recent studies indicate that the concept of diversity and inclusion is given little attention in traditional Egyptian media. When Egyptian media witnessed its most diversity, in terms of the plurality of voices, was the two years following the 2011 uprising. The short-lived diversity focus did not stem from systemic efforts to enhance diversity, but rather from the country's power struggle between the old regime, the revolutionary camp, and the Muslim Brotherhood (Abdulla, 2014) (Shams-El-Din, 2015).

ERTU's charter does not guarantee inclusiveness or cultural diversity in its content. It fails to commit to representing the diverse groups in Egyptian society, which renders ERTU's programming lacking representation of a public broadcaster (Abdulla, 2016, p. 4230). ERTU's programming content lacks diversity in representing different social groups. A study about media diversity on the main talk show on the ERTU has indicated the limited representation of women on the National broadcaster. Women guests invited in the talk show were only eight persons featured in 18 episodes featuring 120 guests (6.7%). Religious minorities were severely underrepresented, as well as other minority groups (Abdulla, 2013).

Other reports have also indicated a severe lack of diversity, primarily in terms of demographic representation (Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, 2014). Another analysis conducted by the Media Diversity Institute about inclusive and diverse Egyptian media content in print and broadcast media has indicated a severe under-representation of all minority groups in Egyptian media (The Media Diversity Institute, 2013). Another study has conducted a content analysis of four popular state and private newspapers, the state television news bulletin, and several talk shows. The study has concluded that the coverage ignored essential issues related to inclusiveness and diversity relating to women, children, the elderly, and religious and ethnic minorities. The study concluded that diversity issues are largely ignored in the Egyptian media (Abdulla, 2017). Interviews suggested that there is a lack of media content targeting young age groups. A journalist at Al-Ahram newspaper, mentioned "there are only programs such as the 'Voice' for Young people⁷⁹, there should be similar programs highlighting other kinds of skills or other educational content."⁸⁰ Another interviewee notes that "the remaining society groups such as women, mothers, workers, university students are less targeted by media outlets."⁸¹ Managing director of AlDostour private newspaper and TV host of the program

⁷⁹ The interviewee is referring to the type of entertainment programs.

⁸⁰ Interview, E_Pub_28

⁸¹ Interview, E_Priv_12

'90 Minutes' also points to the lack of geographic representation in the media "there is a lack of content highlighting a geographic region such as Upper Egypt."⁸²

Social media outlets are keener on providing content that is tailored to youth groups. One of the interviewees points out how online media is more interested in providing content that appeals to different social groups more than traditional media. According to an editor-in-chief at Dot Masr web portal, "in Dot Masr, we tried to provide not only news but features and analysis for the news stories. We also were keen on presenting new ideas such as Dot Quizzes, games, and the street anchor."⁸³ Journalist at Al Masry Al Youm points to the success of the business model adopted by social media platforms to develop content targeting specific social groups. "AlYoum AlSabea managed to provide evidence to all investors that social media platforms do make a profit. This was a significant breakthrough in the media market."⁸⁴ With the decline of print media circulation rates, the internet has considerable potential to deliver content to anyone who owns a mobile phone. With social media platforms spreading online, it becomes an essential source of news⁸⁵.

To conclude, traditional Egyptian media suffers a lack of diversity and representation for different society groups and minority groups (Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, 2014) and (The Media Diversity Institute, 2013). In terms of the plurality of voices, the time where there has been most diversity in Egyptian media was the two years following the 2011 uprising. The short-lived diversity did not stem from systemic efforts to enhance diversity, but rather from the country's power struggle between the old regime, the revolutionary camp, and the Muslim Brotherhood (Abdulla, 2014) (Shams-El-Din, 2015). On the other hand, social media provides more content tailored to younger age groups than traditional media.

4.5.4 Online Media Market

Egyptians were introduced to online media in 2006 after the spread of information and communication technologies as a trend grew to use Information and communication technologies (ICT) to debate current events, and to criticize government and officials. They also used it to share personal experiences, propose solutions to current political

⁸² Interview, E_Priv_20

⁸³ Interview, E_Soc_30

⁸⁴ Interview, E_Priv_27

⁸⁵ Interview, E_Soc_4

issues, and construct various visions for the country's future (El-Gody, 2007) (Parks, 2005). The number of internet users has dramatically increased, which implies that the number of social media users has increased. Social media users count for 30.5% of the population (Facebook and Twitter). On average, users spent 26 hours per week online in 2017. The use of smartphones in 2017 was 47% (Allam, 2018).

The impact of the spread of the internet in the Arab world has been highly debated. Some scholars considered the internet as the catalyst that helped facilitate, organize, and expedite the 2011 uprising, to the point that some scholars have called the uprising “an internet-based or internet assisted revolution.” The development of the internet and social media blogging scene was an essential factor in preparing society for political change (Abdulla, 2014, p. 7). Egyptian society has been moving into the electronic age as more people are communicating in cyberspace. More people are using the internet to access information and also to create their information and news. The internet was introduced in Egypt in the early 1990s before many other Arab countries. The introduction of the internet was coupled with the emerging satellite technologies booming in the region. The era of the 1990s brought an unprecedented amount of information to the Egyptians (Abdulla, 2014, pp. 6-7).

Egyptian citizens quickly adopted the new online technologies, creating online news sites, blogs, YouTube posts, podcasts, and mobile phone web publishing, and creating accounts on social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Finally, these developments led to the production and dissemination of citizen-driven journalism and advocacy faster than the regime could control (El-Gody, 2014) (Hamdy, 2009). Citizen journalism and the blogging scene flourished following the Arab Spring as social media complemented the traditional media stream and pushed counter issues as a “trickle-down effect” of dissent into the mainstream media. Since 2005 the blogging scene has focused on political issues in an unprecedented way in the Arab world. A few Egyptian bloggers soon became stars as they discussed topics that no one dared to address before (Badr and Richter 2018 in (Badr, 2020, p. 75). The following Table 5 - Internet penetration overview – Source: CAPMAS- highlights the rates of internet penetration in Egypt as published by CAPMAS (CAPMAS, 2019).

Table 5 - Internet penetration overview – Source: CAPMAS- (CAPMAS, 2019)

Number of internet users	40.90 million persons
Number of mobile subscriptions	93.68 million subscriptions
Number of mobile internet users	36.41 million users
Percentage of households that have access to the internet	51.0%

Growing online business models

Revenues from digital media platforms have increased recently; they represent between 10 and 15% of the total advertising revenue (Allam, 2018). Online media advertising value amounted to about EGP 500M (US\$ 68M) in 2015. The annual growth rate is about 50%; despite this rate, its growth remains below the yearly global growth rate of 120% (Oxford Business Group, 2019). Online versions of private newspapers are more popular than paper versions. AlMasry AlYoum and AlWatan have an average of 60 million views per month on their website in 2017, or about 1.2M unique views. Most newspaper organizations now employ social media specialists (Allam, 2018). A managing director at an advertising agency estimates that in 2017 for the first time, the advertising revenues of online media exceeded TV advertising revenue in Egypt⁸⁶. Another interview with the digital media manager at Nile Radio Productions, “Advertisers are still reluctant to reduce their advertising spending over traditional media towards online media. Businesses are still not convinced that advertising spending is as significant as traditional media, despite all tools that can accurately verify the reach to various audience groups”⁸⁷.

New forms of journalism

The ICT developments in Egypt before 2011 led to some positive developments in the field of the journalism profession. The internet changed the news cycles due to its immediacy, and political blogging facilitated the emergence of low budget reporting (Pole, 2010, p. 128). Egyptian journalists used to be criticized for not being connected with their local audience. They also lacked the capacity to connect with everyday life and politics, failed to encourage the audience to participate in local political debates, and failed to provide readers with the skills needed for participation (Bruns, 2005) (El-Gody, 2012).

After the 2011 uprising, there have been changes in the journalism industry. The industry had no choice but to adopt new technologies. Several newsrooms adopted ICT hoping that the new media would help them develop their content and reconnect with their audiences (El-Gody, 2014). ICT allowed the opportunity to develop content specific to audience groups. Online media newsrooms are different from traditional media. A journalist at AlYoum AlSabea indicates, “there is a screen in the newsroom showing trends. We monitor the most-read story and the story that received the most comments. If there are certain trends, then we would be encouraged to write about this topic. We

⁸⁶ Interview, E_Soc_26

⁸⁷ Interview, E_Soc_25

also have several Whatsapp groups that we use to know the updates in the newsroom. There are also certain keywords that we are trained to use. These keywords help the news story become trendier over google and the search engines”⁸⁸.

Newsrooms are also keen on using ICT tools to measure readership/viewership and increase reach, such as Google Reports and Google Analytics. As explained by journalist and media trainer, “Google analytics highlights the trends and which stories and keywords are used the most. What audience is following at the moment? So, we know the trends from real-time data”⁸⁹.

Most of the newspapers have developed a digital version of the newspaper. Private media have more presence on digital platforms than public media. Private media had developed the necessary infrastructure that helps attract a higher number of visitors and audience engagement (Allam, 2018). According to the editor-in-chief at DMC channels, “In many cases, journalists think online media is just adding a picture to the same text used in traditional media. This makes content production techniques quite shallow. Owners and investors in online media platforms are not paying attention to developing content, especially for the new media rather than using traditional media content”.⁹⁰ According to the editor-in-chief of a private web portal, “most of the time, public newspapers upload the same content of the paper version through the online version”⁹¹. Another editor-in-chief at Dot Masr web portal notes that “Online media outlets from TV channels upload short clips (extracts) from their daily talk shows or serials.”⁹²

Most Egyptian newspapers have free online digital versions. The degree of reach and interactivity varies between public and private media. It is estimated that 85% of website visitors are smartphone users. Private newspapers such as AlMasry AlYoum and AlWatan have an average of 60 million views per month. AlMary AlYoum views increased from 900,000 in 2013 to 1.2M views in 2017. Simultaneously, Al-Ahram website views dropped from 850,000 in 2005 to 71,000 in 2017 (Allam, 2018). Editor-in-chief at Dot Masr web portal adds that “Online media has an opportunity to change the old formats, and introduce new journalistic styles. Existing editorial policies still need to adapt to social

⁸⁸ Interview, E_Soc_8

⁸⁹ Interview, E_Priv_12

⁹⁰ Interview, E_Priv_10

⁹¹ Interview, E_Soc_18

⁹² Interview, E_Soc_30

media production and blended formats.”⁹³ There is still a lack of professionally trained persons in developing online media content. Universities teaching media studies are still training students for working traditional media and not online media⁹⁴.

The business model still has to develop to catch up with industry developments worldwide. According to the managing director at AlDostour newspaper, “There are only a few early experiments of producing content solely for YouTube. Audiences find watching serials over YouTube more convenient without advertising breaks.”⁹⁵

Growing polarization on social media

Social media has changed the dynamics of online interaction. It offered users a space to claim as their own to express their ideas and interact with others. Facebook and Twitter became quite popular among Egyptians. Facebook encouraged young Egyptians who were never politically engaged before to be more interested in politics. They were affected by social media activism and were drawn into politics, mainly because of Facebook (Abdulla, 2014, p. 9). Independent online media developed as an alternative to the lack of freedoms in traditional mainstream media. News websites became the playground for political parties, activists, and various ideological groups, creating online spaces of ideas to cater to the new readers (El-Gody, 2020). The uprising was a breakthrough in developing Arabic online content. Before 2011, almost all online content was developed in other languages – mainly in English. “It was the first-time content developed specifically for the Arab Viewers, programs such as Bassem Youssef, which initially started as a YouTube amateur program. The new content was specifically appealing to young people, less privileged and non-English speakers, who could finally see themselves in the media. Media production no longer needed to be big or expensive, to be *entertaining*.”⁹⁶

Gradually after the rise of the MB to power and later their ousting, polarization grew among social media outlets. Journalist at AlMasry AlYoum mentions, “In many cases, the audience, due to the pressure from social media and influencers, journalists would be under intense pressure to take the side the audience wants. They would be criticized if they discussed the opposing view. Otherwise, we lose the audience.”⁹⁷ She

⁹³ Interview, E_Soc_30

⁹⁴ Interview, E_Pub_28

⁹⁵ Interview, E_Priv_20

⁹⁶ Interview, E_Soc_25

⁹⁷ Interview, E_Soc_6

further explains, "Social media sets the agenda; then, the media discusses those topics. Journalists are following hot topics on social media in reporting. This is also harming the media industry. We are not following the proper journalistic investigative professional standards that we used to have before."⁹⁸

The Egyptian Internet gradually became intensely politicized. However, as the censorship was re-established under military rule, the internet was the most important platform for any remaining opposition (Hafez, 2015). Since the 2018 elections, there is zero-tolerance for criticism. There has been increased police control, imprisonment of journalists, overthrow of all semi-independent media outlets, and surveillance technologies. Finally, 500 websites and media outlets were blocked under the cyberterrorism law of 2018, incriminating Facebook group administrators (Mada Masr, 2019).

To conclude, the spread of the internet has increased the debate in the scholarly field of media studies. The discussion included the analysis of the role played by social media during the Arab Spring in 2011, and has heated this debate about the ability of the internet to mobilize citizens against the regime. This makes online media a critical factor in understanding the media market dimension as the social media ventures spread following the Arab Spring.

Online media led to the growth of new online business models that are attracting a substantial quota of advertising revenue in Egypt. The social media market's growth introduced new forms of journalism, and the traditional media industries had to adopt these technologies. Finally, online media is an essential aspect of opening the public sphere to multiple new voices to express their ideas and interact with others, especially younger age groups underrepresented in traditional media. Hence online media market is essential in the analysis of the media market dimension.

To conclude about the media market dimension, Egypt represents a paradox when it comes to the analysis of the development of the media market. Mass circulation press rates have declined sharply despite Egypt's pioneer introduction of newspapers in comparison to other countries in the Arab region. Mass circulation press rates increased after 2011, then declined starting in 2013. Newspapers are facing a massively reduced readership and, consequently, financial hardships. Other factors that reduce newspaper distribution is due to its limitation to elitist groups because of widespread poverty and high illiteracy rates. The situation implies the need to expand the media market dimension analysis to include electronic and social media.

⁹⁸ Interview, E_Soc_6

Expanding the analysis of dimension to include multiple manifestations of underdevelopment of the media market is essential to reveal how these developments may block the development of a more pluralistic media scene. The expansion in Egypt's media market following 2011 did not bring a sustainable media model in terms of financial performance. Media organizations that are not able to continue to operate independently fall vulnerable to control. In addition to restrictions on media freedoms, the media scene faces multiple problems: media's economic viability as part of the massive journalism crisis. The financial problems facing TV channels had led to massive financial losses that had an impact on their operations. These developments limited the development of a more pluralistic media scene.

Finally, online media's role has become necessary to the analysis of the diversity of voices in the media market in one country. In Egypt, the spread of the internet has increased the debate in the media studies' scholarly field. The discussion included the analysis of the role played by social media during the Arab Spring in 2011, and the ability of the internet to mobilize citizens against the regime. Online media led to the growth of new online business models that are attracting a substantial quota of advertising revenue in Egypt. The social media market's growth introduced new forms of journalism, and the traditional media industries had to adopt these technologies. As online platforms spread, multiple new voices express their ideas and interact with others, especially younger age groups underrepresented in traditional media.

4.6 Journalistic Professionalism

Hallin and Mancini proposed four sub-dimensions for analyzing the dimension of journalistic professionalism: 1. The autonomy of the profession, 2. Consensus on professional norms, 3. devotion to serving the public good, and 4. The degree of instrumentalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 33-37). The journalistic professionalism dimension tends to be an essential structural factor in determining how the media system functions. It also sheds light on the state of professional media development and training including their relationship with the management structures of the media organizations.

Journalism scholars regard professionalism as a group of combined attributes that includes education, training, license, salary, ideology, and ethics. Many journalists report not having a degree in journalism as well as earning low wages, which makes them forced to work second jobs. Results also suggest that Egyptian journalists are often subject to self-censorship as well as having to side with the government in more recent times. They also maintain the role of an activist rather than watchdogs.

4.6.1 Professional Autonomy

Internal autonomy is affected by multiple structural problems facing Egyptian journalists in their work environment. Previous literature points out that Egyptian journalists earn meagre salaries. Consequently, they make relatively modest livings. An earlier survey of journalists confirmed that 78.3% of the surveyed journalists earn less than EGP1500⁹⁹/month. Results suggest that lower salaries are a significant problem facing journalists, particularly for those who support families (Elmasry, Basiony, & Elkamel, 2014, p. 1624) (Berger, 2013, p. 247). The financial crisis facing media organizations has made problems more persistent concerning salaries. As indicated in the interview with a prominent journalist and TV anchor, “We are not even sure if we will be paid next month. Sometimes we may get half a salary, or it is postponed to the following month. This ends up impacting the quality of the work delivered”¹⁰⁰. The editor-in-chief of Dot Masr web portal notes that “journalists finally find themselves obliged to work in multiple jobs to ensure they make an appropriate income, which impacts their work quality. In many cases, journalists do not receive regular salaries, just a freelance payment per submitted article”¹⁰¹.

⁹⁹ Equivalent to US\$190 according to the exchange rate at the time of the survey in 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Interview, E_Ind_23

¹⁰¹ Interview, E_Soc_30

In a survey of journalists in Egypt, journalists indicated that they face a severe financial threat in terms of job contracts. They may take more than five years to sign a contract; they face pressures from media owners during this time. Journalists also complained about salary delays and not having financial security. They confirmed being under economic risks as a result of low income and job insecurity. Journalists at private and partisan media complained about being more susceptible to financial hardships due to their organizations' unstable financial situations (Alazrak, 2020). Another study noted that the Egyptian newspaper system can be conceptualized using a classification scheme of five conceptual categories: state intervention, corporatization, professionalism, ownership, and culturalogical orientation. Hence, Egyptian newspapers operate in a moderate degree of state intervention, mixed ownership, low corporatization levels, and professionalism. Thus it is a pseudo-Islamic cultural climate (Elmasry M. H., 2009).

The structural problems facing journalists are more pressing when a journalist is not a member of the Egyptian Press Syndicate. The Egyptian Press Syndicate is the official body governing journalists in the print media sector. At the time the research was done, the syndicate had 8951 members. Journalists note that the syndicate lacks convenient services for members and that its support is in decline. The syndicate can only intervene to protect journalists, but only if they are members; otherwise, they will not be given full support. There was no syndicate for broadcast professionals up until 2017 (Allam, 2018). The press syndicate is criticized for being dominated by state-owned journalists, despite the large number of journalists working in private and online media outlets. The syndicate failed to protect journalists many times after the 2011 uprising (Berger, 2013).

Journalists in private media organizations face additional challenges such as arbitrary dismissals. As noted in the interview with the editor-in-chief of Dot Masr web portal, "There has been a massive wave of layoffs since 2018. As journalists lost their income, structural problems were aggravated. It was easy to dismiss journalists at private media since most of them are hired on a temporary basis."¹⁰² Working conditions at private media tend to be arbitrary and precarious. Journalists earn more but also work significantly more in high-risk private entities with more flat hierarchies (Badr, 2020, p. 74).

Journalists in public media do not face dismissals but face other problems such as lower salaries, which make sustaining their livelihood also more problematic. There is also a lack of resources necessary for professional media production with good quality. A journalist

¹⁰² Interview, E_Soc_30

at Al Ahram newspaper commented “Public media organizations are not making any profit. They are continuing in the market only because of government subsidies.”¹⁰³ At the same time, since the public media organizations are also facing massive financial burdens, hiring is stopped, and investments in those organizations are halted. These pressures make it more difficult for journalists to maintain their professional independence (Badr, 2020, p. 73).

The other form of external autonomy that the journalists lack is a result of the firm control over the media sector. Egyptian media had a long legacy of direct censorship following 1952 revolution until 1971; then, it was placed under a more ambivalent form of self-censorship. Under this system, private media were allowed to operate, but they practiced self-censorship. The economic interests of the private media owners with the state in terms of mutual business ensured a degree of content control. The restrictive regulatory framework also acted as a way to ensure self-censorship among journalists (Mubarak & Hughes, 2014). Self-censorship was re-instated in 2013. As a result, the state’s narrative is currently more or less the only narrative that the media broadcasts (Sabbagh, 2015). Finally, there is a decline in professionalism and the reproduction of loyalist and propaganda practices within the journalism sector (Badr, 2019). News coverage is also affected, wherein some incidents or security-related topics, provide altered coverage, and the wording suggests some dictated scripts and narrow agendas (Badr, 2020, p. 72).

Despite the structural conditions and the problems facing Egyptian journalists, the notion of “perceived” autonomy remains problematic. In a survey of how journalists perceive their level of autonomy, 43% of the respondents indicated that they have complete or high autonomy in selecting stories, the rest indicated that they have little or no freedom in decisions related to news stories (Hamada, 2017, p. 3).

To conclude, in Egypt, internal autonomy is affected by multiple structural problems facing Egyptian journalists in their work environment. Egyptian Journalists earn meagre salaries and work under harsh working conditions. They also work with institutions that lack agency to support the professional standards, such as the limitations on the journalists' syndicate performance. Consequently, they make relatively modest livings. Even journalists in private media receive minimal pay. They also have to take multiple jobs simultaneously or try to land better-paid jobs in the state media. . The financial crisis facing media organizations has made problems more persistent concerning their livelihoods. Journalists find themselves easily lacking autonomy and subject to control by their managers or by external factors.

¹⁰³ Interview, E_Pub_3

4.6.2 Development of Professional Norms

The formal professional development of Egyptian journalists also has multiple drawbacks. In a survey from 2013, many Egyptian journalists indicate that they do not hold journalism-related degrees nor have they completed any formal training in journalism. Journalists also noted that formal university journalism education was mainly theoretical and did not offer training on story ideation, information gathering, interviewing, or article construction (ELMASRY, BASIONY, & ELKAMEL, 2014, p. 1632). Egypt has more than 30 academic journalism and mass communication programs in public and private universities, four Ministry of Education academic programs, and newspaper training centers. There are also government training centers for the Supreme Press Council, Press Syndicate, and Middle East News Agency. The ERTU also has its training center. The quality of the offered training programs from these institutions is subject to a lot of debate and pertinent to graduating qualified journalists (Allam & Amin, 2017, pp. 96-97). The situation of media education in Egypt has been labeled as “politically hazed and socially confused.” They lack objectivity and critical thinking, and support the state’s propaganda (Saleh, 2010, p. 116). Training programs that existed before 2011 failed to provide journalists with an understanding of the media's role in democracy (UNESCO, 2013, p. 74). A 2006 survey by Ramaprasad and Hamdy suggests that Egyptian journalists are limited in their ability to perform democratic news functions, such as gathering and verifying information (Ramaprasad & Hamdy, 2006).

On-the-job training of journalists is limited. Only about 10-15% of media organizations in Egypt offer training to their staff. Editor-in-chief of Dot Masr web portal notes, “Most of the time, media organizations’ approach to training for young people who join the organization, is just “go sit in the newsroom, and you will learn everything from others. Do what they are doing.”¹⁰⁴ Media managers consider training as a tool for making new journalists conform to the norms of the organization. The former managing director of CBC further explains, “In CBC, we choose young people, 95% of our team are still young. Then we train them. We do have annual training plans as well”¹⁰⁵.

Available training programs are limited due to limited resources available for training and development. A journalist at Al Ahram newspaper indicates that the training is based on individual initiatives according to available resources or managers “If there is a chance for training, I offer it to my team. I just had to come up with training models that do not cost

¹⁰⁴ Interview, E_Soc_30

¹⁰⁵ Interview, E_Priv_21

the management any money”¹⁰⁶.

There has also been some independent training projects that emerged following 2011, but later could not continue for multiple reasons. One example is discussed by an editor-in-chief of one of DMC shows “A case is the ONA academy, which was owned by ONTV; they closed, although it was a very reputable institution to train journalists. They have managed to train a lot of prominent figures in the market until Sawiras decided to close the academy.”¹⁰⁷

Other doubts arise about the outcomes of the training programs funded by international organizations. As noted by the prominent journalist at Al Ahram newspaper, “Although journalists would learn from international experiences, however, these experiences are not used to benefit their work at media organizations. Not the best are selected to participate in these events, but whom the management would like to give a kind of reward.”¹⁰⁸

Egyptian journalists' training and professional development face multiple criticisms: the outdated training programs and long history of depoliticization. The legacies of these deformities in the professional training programs have been persistent. The opening up of the media sector following 2011 did not lead to a fundamental change in the journalists' education and professional development programs. Some training initiatives that emerged at that time lacked sustainability and faded quickly. Education and training are critical elements in journalistic professionalism because they shape the journalistic culture.

4.6.3 Journalists Serving Public Interest

According to the literature, there is a lack of consensus on the standards and values that govern journalism practice (Sakr, 2013, p. 21). According to a more recent study, Arab journalists share some of the profession's values and principles as journalists from other countries such as the need for accurate and timely reporting. Arab journalists differ from their international counterparts because of their general perception of the role of journalists in society. They consider that their role is about infusing a positive change,

¹⁰⁶ Interview, E_Pub_3

¹⁰⁷ Interview, E_Priv_10

¹⁰⁸ Interview, E_Pub_28

which refers to the media's mobilizing role. They differ from journalists in other countries who engage in uninvolved objective coverage of events in their countries (Hamdy, 2016). Journalists share a prevailing common understanding that journalism can never be impartial (El-Issawi, 2014, p. 77). Literature suggests that state media journalists, in particular, consider that their role is to support the political sphere and that they are not entirely independent (Powers, 2012, p. 76), (El-Issawi, 2014, p. 12).

In one study, the central values cited by Egyptian journalists are 1) the support for the Arab community and loyalty to readers –2) promotion of democracy - 3) loyalty to governments (Ramaprasad & Hamdy, 2006). Egyptian journalists do not perceive themselves as autonomous but instead ruled by the government, with little consensus on journalistic standards and insufficient professional self-regulation (Powers, 2012). Harb explored the values prevalent among Egyptian journalists. She notes that although journalists have identified with what they called universal values of objectivity, impartiality, neutrality, fairness, and balances in their beliefs, they indicated that they could not practice these values in everyday work (Harb, 2019, p. 8). Another study conducted by El Issawi and Cammarets explored Egyptian journalists' perceived role during democratic transitions. The study concluded that most of the journalists expressed “difficulty in drawing a line between their personal political position and their professional role.” (El-Issawi & Cammaerts, 2016, p. 559). The study also concludes that journalists consider their role was to be opposing the MB government rather than choosing a normative role. After the military took over in Egypt, journalists returned to their traditional role to be in service of the regime (p. 562).

Another study notes that Egyptian journalists indicated that they consider their most important role is to be a detached observer and report things as they are. They also said that they are responsible for providing people with the needed information to make their political decisions, motivate people, and provide political analysis of current affairs. They also consider that it is crucial to influence public opinion, advocate for social change, monitor and scrutinize political leaders, and support national development (Hamada, 2017). Another role that media practitioners expressed in the interviews were seeing themselves doing the social worker's role. This role started under Mubarak during the 2000s with the trend of programs providing social support through collecting donations and providing financial assistance or medical assistance to the lowest groups.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Interview, E_Ind_23

Among the roles identified for constructive journalism by Egyptian and Tunisian journalists, after the 2011 uprising, are regaining audience trust and engagement, fighting terrorism, serving the public interest, and reviving the economy of mainstream media (Allam, 2019). Private media journalists share the same understanding of what they describe as a “patriotic duty” for their role in society (El-Issawi, 2014, p. 77). Siding by the government’s stance on most of the topics has even increased following the 2014 military take over. The justification is the war on terrorism; the media has to side with the government against the war on terrorism and there is no room for opposing opinions. Indeed, there is significant confusion about the role of professional journalism standards. Journalists in Egypt are conducting similar practices and goals to information activists. This has made the lines between reporting and activism, most of the time, blurry (Mollerup, 2017) (Schleifer, 2013). This activism in the name of the revolution is seen as hindering the development of independent, critical reporting and contributing to the media's instrumentalism (El-Issawi, 2014, p. 12).

The increase in talk show programs has led to an increased desire to present political programs. The news became an essential and desirable content. It also created the star anchors' culture, who work using low professional standards. As expressed by the prominent journalist and TV anchor, “I have seen talk show hosts who are proud that they work without a script!! They think they are the only star of the show. He doesn’t even realize the importance of the team. Someone who goes on air to talk for several hours. Without even a time limit for the program. And we grew a unique phenomenon of the “Star Anchor.” Those who earn millions versus a group of underpaid other team members in the same program. For those stars to maintain the amount of advertising revenue, they resort for more sensational news, more screaming and very controversial content similar to tabloids”¹¹⁰.

In conclusion, the loyalist culture seems to be more commonly adopted and dominant among journalists in Egypt. Journalists identify themselves with the particular role of serving the public as equivalent to serving the state. This is seen from their point of view as a national duty to support the country. The end of the MB rule represented the critical point of return for journalists' long traditional culture to serve the military regime inherited from the past. As political power is mainly assigned solely to the state and the military regime, the loyal journalist role is strongly correlated with the country's military and security roles. . While Egyptian journalists identify with the universal values of advocating for the truth and factual reporting, they are still tending to detach themselves from the role of holding those in power accountable to the public.

¹¹⁰ Interview, E_Ind_23

4.6.4 Instrumentalism

The role of journalism and how journalistic practices are defined seems to be heavily shaped by the political situation. Initially, after 2011, the media scene witnessed the flourishing of new private media. However, these new channels immediately shut down after the MB's ousting, confirming the profound link between media and politics in Egypt (El-Issawi, 2014). Right after the uprising, journalists started tackling topics that used to be strictly forbidden. Talk show hosts presented a more bold style and shifted to a more monitorial style. However, this period was short, and the political revolution did not lead to a newsroom revolution. After the MB ousting, the debate on professional journalism is no longer relevant even for journalists. Professional journalism is replaced by a populist propaganda approach to journalists' role in line with a reverential collaborative role. As a result, all media platforms praise the military institution and call for repressive measures against their political opponents, who are systematically labeled as terrorists (El-Issawi & Cammaerts, 2016, pp. 5-6).

“Ideological hiring” grew in Egyptian media outlets after 2011. Journalists were selected based on their political ideology. Political stances shaped the content they developed. Eventually, this led to a decline in professional journalistic standards. As explained by an interviewee who is an expert and media trainer, “As journalists take political sides, they tend to classify events as either a negative or a positive based on their political beliefs.”¹¹¹ Another interview with a journalist and program manager at DMC, sheds more light on how the outcome affects the quality of media content “Many of the journalists who started working after 2011 only know how to have guests scream at each other; however, they cannot develop news stories in different political situations.”¹¹²

The ideological role of journalists also became an imperative expectation. People expect to open the TV, and the anchor should tell them what they should do or what their opinion should be. A clear example was during the ousting of the MB. Journalists were expected at that time to lead the people against the MB. However, it is beyond the media's role to motivate people to do a particular action and go on the street against a specific political group. “We were expected as journalists to be leading the public opinion against the MB.” Egyptian journalists working in private media organizations took the role of demonizing their political opponents. The Islamist groups were considered the “other” ultimate enemy. On the contrary, the military regime was being hailed and celebrated as saving the nation. (El-Issawi & Cammaerts, 2016, p. 3). As noted in the interviews, the

¹¹¹ Interview, E_Priv_12

¹¹² Interview, E_Priv_16

ability to comply with the media outlet's ideology may be seen as a desirable skill; journalists argue that they can write and provide content even when they hold different beliefs on a personal level: "leave your personal beliefs outside work. Otherwise, you can find a place where you are more comfortable working"¹¹³.

To conclude, Hallin and Mancini argue that the freedom of North American and European media industries is partly the result of journalistic professionalism, which serves as a prerequisite for media autonomy. They argue that professionalism is exemplified in the press councils' autonomy and advanced state of journalistic ethics and self-regulation, in addition to a long tradition of journalistic training and education (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 174). Hafez has noted that professionalism is a distinctive feature of Western journalism, which is intrinsically related to the ideas of ethical self-control and freedom from external influences. He notes that this is a valid aspect of all Western countries and not only the US or Northern Europe (Hafez, 2010). As pointed out from the discussion above, multiple constraints are facing Egyptian journalists, such as the pressures exacted by the ownership and affiliation, along with the obstacles with information gathering and the limitations on investigative reporting. There is also the security apparatus and the dominant Egyptian cultural beliefs of supporting the regime.

¹¹³ Interview, E_Soc_30

5 Analysis of the Media System in Tunisia

5.1 Political context

This section starts by contextualizing the Tunisian media system within its political determinants because the media system directly depends on the political context where it is located. The Tunisian media system is located in an environment of persistent socioeconomic problems that inflated following the 2011 uprising. Tunisia has been under the authoritarian rule of Ben Ali, which influences the political developments following the Arab Spring. The role of civil society in Tunisia was heralded during the early time of the political transformation period. The development of a free and independent civil society is still hampered by the persistence of patriarchal and authoritarian social structures and norms. Civil society is polarized between modern and conservative visions of society. Tunisian political parties were weak under Ben Ali, with no significant legislative and representative roles. Tunisian political parties never developed following the Arab Spring as effective political platforms. They are highly personalized and lack organizational foundations. Tunisia, contrary to Egypt, is not under the strong influence of the army.

5.1.1 Socio-economic context

Tunisian economy witnessed economic reform policies before 2011, which have been relatively more successful than Egypt. This is true when one is looking from a perspective of its adherence to the "Washington Consensus" economic development policies. Tunisia enjoyed a higher GDP per capita and a higher annual GDP growth rate than its neighboring countries. Contrary to other Arab countries, including Egypt, Tunisia had a large middle class that enjoyed a level of wellbeing, in contrast to Egypt as small elite group of the upper class (Miller, 2012, pp. 62-64). Tunisia managed the liberalization and reform period successfully during the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s. It did not suffer the fiscal deficits that are often faced when reducing or eliminating trade restrictions (Baliamoune-Lutz, 2009).

Tunisia also enjoyed a relatively competitive export sector and a robust private sector. Unlike other gas and oil exporting countries in the region, Tunisia's economic growth was aided by foreign remittances from a diverse community in Western countries and a strong tourism sector (Miller, 2012, p. 64). Tunisia also implemented a diversification of its economic sector, starting mid-1980s, during its structural adjustments period (Baliamoune-Lutz, 2009). As per the Ministry of Investment and International

Cooperation, services dominate about 45% of Tunisia's GDP in 2010 (OECD, 2012, p. 29). Tunisia also had the highest per capita GDP in Africa, with almost US\$ 9000 per capita in 2011 (International Monetary Fund, 2011).

However, despite these positive indicators, Tunisia faced multiple, pressing socio-economic problems over a long time. Tunisia faced complex problems, specifically unemployment, regional disparities, significant differences in poverty rates, and social inequality. There have never been serious reform measures addressing these issues (OECD, 2012, p. 30). The agrarian and land policies have led to undermining family farmers and farming. Post-colonial governments have accelerated rural social differentiation patterns, leading to extreme inequality in landholding and access to farming inputs and markets (Ayeb & Bush, 2019, p. 119). Interior regions have suffered for decades from neglect and from being treated as "mere sites for the extraction of raw materials." (Kherigi, 2016). Finally, the 1990s pro-market policies contributed, on paper at least, to cut down public expenditures but also reinforced the Ben Ali networks of privilege (Heydemann, 2004).

The Tunisian economy suffered following 2011. Economic growth declined from 3.6 percent in 2012 to 2.9 percent in 2013. Most sectors experienced a slowdown, except for industry, which received state subsidies to revamp domestic demand (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2014). The unemployment rate remained at 15.3% in 2019, with an average rate of 15.4% since 2011. The highest was 18.9% in December 2011, and the lowest was 14.8% in June 2014, as per the data from the National Statistics Institute (CEIC, 2019). The share of unemployed persons younger than 35 years old is 85%, with 40% of these being among university graduates, where three-quarters of them are women (Boughzala, 2019).

With the war in Libya, the Tunisian national economy declined further. The recession of the Tunisian dinar caused several problems at both national and international levels. Citizens' fear of saving more and spending less caused more instability and uncertainty (Chiraz & Frioui, 2014). In 2016, tourism suffered as a result of the two terrorist attacks a year earlier. Following the attack, the dinar lost about 15% of its value against the US dollar. Inflation reached 7.6% during March 2018. The reforms also led to wage freezes and subsidy cuts that tied in with the structural reform program. This had a substantial impact on Tunisians' day-to-day life; the IMF was blamed for the hardship and increased living costs (Aliriza, 2018). Regional inequality between the country's coastal strip and interior was apparent. Unemployment away from the coast was double the national rate at nearly 35%, according to official statistics (Joyce, 2013). With less cash flow, inflation

hit residents here harder, making it even more challenging to provide for their basic needs. Poverty remained high in the interior, despite that it has been successfully reduced in Tunisia as a whole (Joyce, 2013). Growth accelerated to 2.8% in the second quarter of 2018, supported by agriculture, tourism, and export-oriented manufacturing. Albeit, the poverty rate remained as high as 15.2% in 2015. Regional disparities remain evident with the North West and Centre West, showing much higher poverty rates than the national rate: 28.4% and 30.8%, respectively (World Bank, 2018).

While in Tunisia, actors in the economic sector under Ben Ali were obliged to respond to the demands of the presidential party and accept the nepotism of the Ben Ali family (Oubenal & Ben Hamouda, 2018). Similarly, successive Tunisian governments remain committed to maintaining similar liberalization market economy policies identical to previous ones. However, the economic regulatory framework was inefficient and inhibited competition, as did insidious corruption (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, p. 18). Following 2011 many of the Ben Ali family assets were seized by some business elite's fractions (Poulina, Ben Yedder, Bouchamaoui, Chabchoub, and Loukil). Immediately, some of those families adopted a strategy of direct intervention in the political sphere to find new opportunities (Oubenal & Ben Hamouda, 2018).

The lack of reform of social and economic conditions during the transition period was the main reason for continuing protests. Despite the different successive governments following 2011, socio-economic grievances represented almost half of the demonstrations (Chaabane, 2016). The economic and historical legacies of excluding the southern and interior regions continue to weigh heavily on the existing regional inequalities. The center-west regions continue to be the poorest, areas such as Sidi Bouzaid, Kairouan, Kasserine. Poverty rates are double the national average reaching 32.3% in 2014 (Ayari & Reiffers, 2015). Different kinds of poverty persist in Tunisia, which varies between rural and urban areas. In rural areas, poverty is linked to the lack of basic facilities. In urban regions, poverty is linked to a lack of employment opportunities (Santini, 2018).

The following figures (Figure 4 and Figure 5) show the change in unemployment rates in Tunisia between 2006 and 2020. It shows that the peak of unemployment rates was in 2011 – 2012 as a result of the political instability. The next figure highlights the drop in GDP rates in Egypt and Tunisia following the Arab Spring as a result of the turmoil.

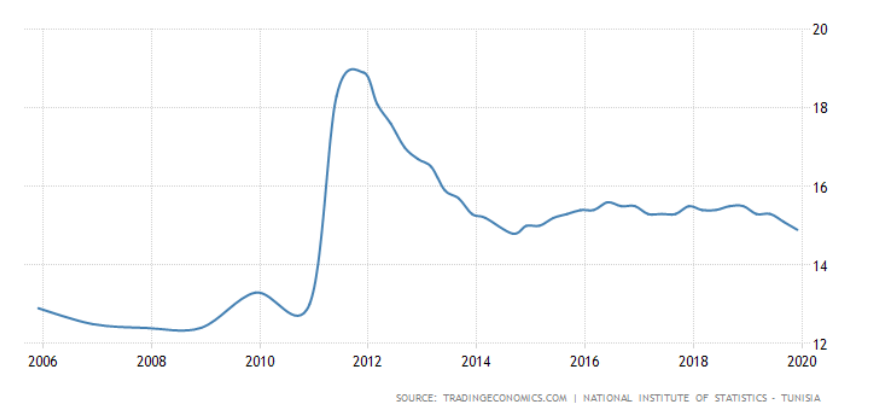


Figure 4 - Tunisia unemployment rates

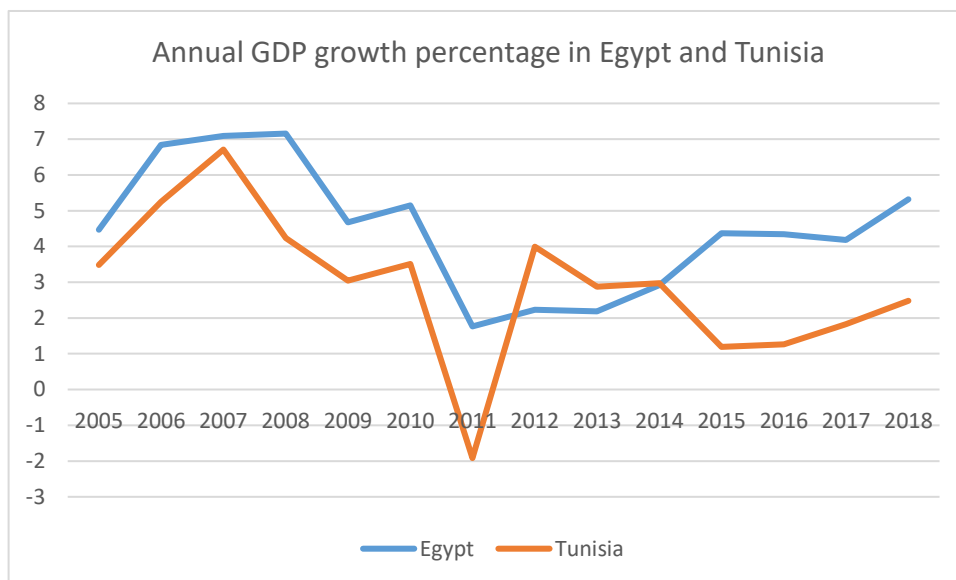


Figure 5 - GDP growth annual percentage - source World Bank data

Table 6 - Exchange rate against US\$

Year	Egyptian pound	Tunisia dinar
2009	5.4	1.46
2017	18.628	2.41
2020	15.678	2.89

5.1.2 Civil Society

During the 1960s, Tunisia was heralded as the Middle Eastern country with the best hope for a democratic transition. It enjoyed western-oriented elites and progressive social policies. According to historian Mohamed Hedi Cherif, the state and society in Tunisia developed the relation of “self-regulation,” which means that Tunisians accept the

dominant state that intervenes during the time of political or economic crisis and restores order and prosperity. Simultaneously, the state generated countervailing social forces that kept it in check when it became too powerful. Therefore, despite the Tunisian civil society's vibrancy during the 1970s and early 1980s, it did not reflect a deep-rooted political culture. It was a product of mere pragmatic political performance (Alexander, 1997).

As Ben Ali became president in 1987, he started his presidency by declaring political reforms and promising to establish the rule of law and respect human rights. The outcome of this aspired transformation was never realized. Tunisia, in reality, moved in the opposite direction. Ben Ali made sure that civil society would remain under control, so it could not be used against him (Alexander, 1997). In the early 1990s, Ben Ali shut down civil society to neutralize its role (Coupe & Redisse, 2013) & (Hochman Rand, 2013). The legal framework pertinent to the freedom of association was also a restrictive one (particularly the association law of 1959), which posed multiple obstacles to establishing civil society organizations through authorizations issued by the Ministry of Interior. Besides, members and leaders of civil society organizations could be sued or imprisoned for violations of these legal provisions under the claims of operating an unlicensed organization. Civil society organizations were not allowed to work in some specific controversial areas; only one percent of NGOs in 2010 were registered in the field of human rights advocacy. At the same time, most of them operated in the fields of public interest, culture, or charity (Foundation for the Future, 2013, pp. 15-16). In addition, selective use of intimidation and physical coercion or administrative mechanisms posed financial control over the civil society sector. Under this repressive environment, civil society developed into a depoliticized experience (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

While political parties' roles were limited, labor unions were the leading platform for political organizations in Tunisia. Unions joined together under the umbrella of the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT). The body's importance was reflected in its sheer size of 600,000 members (Miller, 2012, p. 68). UGTT was considered an entity that played a decisive role in mobilization before and during the revolution (Lee & Weinthal, 2011). The UGTT managed to survive authoritarianism, then later show as a credible player in the process of transition (Netterstrøm, 2016).

Following 2011, there has been an expansion in the number of civil society organizations and the areas in which they were not allowed to function earlier, such as human rights and democracy. As numbers of civil society organizations increased, this led to adopting

a new legal framework and new legislation concerning associations (Foundation for the Future, 2013).

The role of civil society and community empowerment was heralded as one of the main reasons for the Tunisian political transformation (Deane, 2013). Newly established organizations have contributed to observing the national elections in 2013 and influencing legislation in several areas (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, p. 30). Tunisian civil society activists were invited to redress the previous regime's social injustices and address issues such as unemployment and regional inequality. Tunisian civil society were composed of all factions from various Islamist groups to left-wing trade unionists and social liberals, along with secularists with French culture all engaged in politics (Bellaigue, 2012). NGOs were also involved in the National Constituent Assembly's dialogue while drafting the new constitution (Foundation for the Future, 2013).

Civil society played a role in ensuring the political transition was moving forward including one incident at the end of 2013 when drafting the constitution was seen as a priority (Dalmasso & Cavatorta, 2013). The transition was halted as extremist Salafist groups assassinated two leftist opposition politicians; the mistrust between secular groups and the Ennahda party was aggravated. Large-scale protests demanded the resignation of the coalition government. Some members of the National coalition left the parliament to join the protests (Gall, 2013). During that time, UGTT played a significant role as a mediator along with the Tunisian Association for Defending Human Rights, the Tunisian Lawyers Association, and the Union of Industry and Commerce. This intervention has led to launching the national dialogue, which succeeded in developing a road map that included a plan for the approval of a final draft of the constitution, the Ennahda party's resignation, and the formation of a technocratic government (Fontana, 2017, p. 168). At this specific time, civil society served as the voice of public opinion and managed to counterbalance the political elites' power. It pushed for accountability, transparency, and compromise through the media, non-governmental organizations, unions, and informal associations (Baker, 2015). In Tunisia, the UGTT was able to stand up to Ennahda when the country's other political parties were too fragmented and disorganized to do so effectively (Ghafar & Hess, 2018).

By early 2018, the 9,000 social and cultural NGOs had grown into a collection of 21,400 political, economic, religious, social, cultural, and good governance organizations. While 20% is based in Tounis, the remaining 80% of the civic associations are community-based organizations with widely divergent mandates and missions (Klaas & Dirsus, 2018).

As the transitional period extended further, there was a return to the sense of nostalgia for the order and stability under Ben Ali's regimes. The development of a free and independent civil society is still hampered by the persistence of patriarchal and authoritarian social structures and norms. Tunisia has witnessed an increase in violent incidents, as the tensions between the secular and Islamist political actors escalated during 2013. Divisions between the two actors persist, and social unrest continues (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, p. 30). A high proportion of NGO's, is still concentrated in the urban centers, and older civil society organizations dominate to some degree (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, p. 30).

Another issue facing civil society is the reciprocal lack of confidence among the different factions. Civil society actors do not trust the state and strive to get more independence. On the other hand, the state doubts the capacities and the credibility of civil society. There is a need for civil society organizations to start building their expertise in multiple issues (Fontana, 2017, p. 169). Since 2011, the Tunisian economy has seen large-scale strikes across all sectors. Protestors demand labor reform, better wages, and improved workplace conditions. According to the unions, some employers have taken action to discourage union activities, including firing union activists (Freedom House, 2018). The latest legal framework (law 30/2018) is back to added limitations to civil society organizations. They are now required to register at the new National Registry for Institutions. This law also mandates that civil society organizations report their activities to the state, including information about their staff, assets, and mergers with other associations (Youssef M. , 2018).

There is also the polarization of the civil society itself between modern and conservative visions of society, based on the gap between religious and secular positions over religion, state, and identity issues. Islamists consider that Islam should be the guide of social and political issues as well as personal life for societies across the Arab world (Berman, 2003). The Ennahda party has claimed that it is conforming with the Tunisian vision of democracy. Still, on the other hand, Salafist organizations discuss the role and application of Islamic law (sharia) in post-revolutionary Tunisia. This phenomenon is described as Tunisia's "Twin Tolerations." The first toleration is that of religious citizens toward the state. It requires that they accord democratically elected officials the freedom to govern without confronting their authority's denials based on religious claims. The second toleration requires that laws and officials must permit religious citizens to freely express their views and values within civil society (Stepan, 2012).

5.1.3 Party System

Tunisia's political system before the 2011 uprising could be labeled as strongly authoritarian. Ever since its independence from colonialism, the country had only two presidents with no real competitive political parties' system (Miller, 2012, p. 58). Under Ben Ali, Tunisia was known as a presidential monarchy (Zartman, 1990, p. 240). The President dominates the political system without any stringent institutional constraints, accompanied by a directed party system that cannot be distinguished from the state bodies (Alexander, 2010, p. 36). Ben Ali merged the existing Parti Socialist Destourien (PSD) into the new party Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique (RCD) when he came to power. RCD became the sole ruling party controlling political life with virtually no opposition (Murphy, 2011, p. 299). The party emerged as a partisan player who made it impossible for other opposition parties to replace the RCD's dominant role (Alexander, 2010, p. 36). Since its establishment, RCD would always win the majority in any election. RCD managed to ensure winning by harassment of oppositional forces, repression, and censorship. Many political parties were banned, and prospective presidential candidates were diverted from candidature by controlled procedures (Fontana, 2017, p. 83). The President and the RCD completely monopolized the policymaking process (Murphy, 1999, p. 223). Ben Ali sets the political reform agenda alone in a top-down approach under which only marginal resistance was tolerated (Murphy, 2013, p. 37). The authoritarian presidential role was further reinforced by a centralized decision-making process where it exercised control over the executive and legislative institutions. RCD managed to maintain the majority in every parliamentary election held until 2011, which reduced the Parliament's role to debating national policy and passing bills presented by the executive bodies (Fontana, 2017, p. 82). The consultative bodies included civil society representatives in their composition; for example, the Economic and Social Council, saw their actual adequate power over policymaking substantially limited (Penner Angrist, 1999).

Consequently, Tunisian political parties became weaker. They were not able to exercise significant legislative and representative roles. The political system became dominated by only one party with no room for competitive elections. On the eve of the uprising, only two opposition parties were allowed to operate: the Progressive Democratic Party and Ettakatol party. Other parties, such as the Islamist Ennahda and the leftist Congress Party for the Republic, were banned and operated from abroad (Bollier, 2011). Ben Ali refused to legalize the Ennahda party, the largest Islamist organization, even though the party pledged to accept competitive democracy rules. The regime exercised repression against Ennahda and the Tunisian Communist Workers' Party, such as raids, torture, and house searches (Alexander, 1997). The result was a weak party identification and limited

experience with the democratic process (e.g. voting). The system also lacked supporting institutions such as a free press to inform the electorate and civil society groups.

Tunisians' withdrawal from political life can be considered a rational response to the political reality before the uprising of where election outcomes were predetermined. The result was the depoliticization of the Tunisian society (Miller, 2012, p. 59). For example, following Ben Ali's ousting, 81 political parties, as well as hundreds of independent candidates, competed in the first election held in October 2011 (Bollier, 2011). Simultaneously, a major poll showed that only half of the survey respondents could identify any political party by name, including the ruling party. In another poll, only a quarter of the respondents indicated they had sufficient knowledge about the political parties (Miller, 2012, p. 60).

Shortly after the uprising, opposition movements in exile came back to the political scene. Two prominent opposition figures returned to Tunisia. Moncef Marzouki: closely associated with the liberal democratic trend; and Rashid Ghannouchi, the leader of the moderate Islamist trend that self identifies with the experience of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey (Miller, 2012, p. 60).

As the transition period moved forward, the constitution draft phase from 2012 to 2013 was marked by intense political polarization between Islamist and Secularist groups. The Ennahda party emerged victorious from the first elections. However, the polarization reached its climax when two secular political figures were assassinated, which put the transition into jeopardy. The implications of the escalating political tensions were clear for political powers who realized that they had to compromise to avoid chaos (Yerkes & Yahmed, 2019).

In 2014 after the legislative elections, both Nidaa Tounis and Ennahda parties won 85 and 69 seats respectively, and they had to share power. The coalition represented a new phase during the transition. The coalition aimed to decrease ongoing polarization and dismiss ideological differences while focusing on urgent socio-economic needs (Yerkes & Yahmed, 2019).

In 2015, President Essebsi and his party Nidaa Tounis created the Carthage Agreement that established and formalized a National Unity Government (NUG). Later, under the NUG, the ruling coalition expanded to include five other opposition parties (Machrou Tounis, al-Moubadara, al-Joumhour, al-Massar, and Harakat el-Chaab). There existed

also three other unions (the Tunisian General Labor Union, the Tunisian Union for Industry, Trade and Handicrafts, and the Tunisian Union of Agriculture and Fishery) (Kubinec & Grewal, 2018, pp. 7-8).

Although the consensus model was crucial for protecting the political transition during the early years (2012/2013), the NUG was not successful in moving the country forward in terms of legislative reform. NUG was not successful since it could not end the ideological polarization (Kubinec & Grewal, 2018). The coalition government's result with competing political views was never policy coherence or unity but rather stagnation on most fundamental policy matters. Policies that emanated from the coalition have led to blocking, postponing, or reversing the uprising's core demands. The coalition government in Tunisia ended up avoiding passing any necessary reforms deemed politically costly, or reviewing any sensitive topics (Boubekeur, 2016). Polarization has led the parliament to fail in establishing constitutionally mandated bodies such as the constitutional court and has also delayed the appointment of its members. The politicization of these actions has left the parliament in a state of deadlock. The coalition also avoided addressing necessary structural economic reforms such as reducing the public sector's size and fighting corruption (Kubinec & Grewal, 2018).

Following the developments over the last ten years, the Tunisian political parties never developed clear or refined platforms. Political parties are highly personalized and lack strong organizational foundations (Yardımcı-Geyikçi & Tür, 2018). Nidaa Tounis remains a weak party. It has become merely an electoral machine and added more figures from the Ben Ali regime. This has led to further criticism from both the public and the other parties (Yerkes & Yahmed, 2019). The party base comprises awkward alliances with ideologically incompatible factions, which were only gathered to counter the Ennahda party but which lacks coherent political vision (Wolf, 2014).

Political parties in Tunisia suffer from multiple problems. Ennahda was the only political party that succeeded in building strong party institutions and developing competing political and economic agendas ahead of the 2019 elections. Multiple political parties developed similar versions of the same three-point platform: strengthen state capacity, improve the economy, and reduce regional inequalities. However, none seem to have a concrete plan for doing these things (Yerkes & Yahmed, 2019). The significant problem is that political parties in Tunisia are often closely identified with the party founder or current leader. The political process is built on personalities rather than political platforms, discouraging people from voting and being involved (Wolf, 2014). Strong leadership in itself does not ensure the party will maintain cohesion, especially if the party

suffers poor internal management and a lack of democratic decision making (Boukhars, 2017). Party tourism is another problem, where parliament members frequently change parties or split off from their original party to form new and smaller parties (Mahroug, 2019). The number of officially registered political parties is about 215. During the 2018 municipal elections, 2074 electoral lists were generated, including political parties, independent lists, and coalitions (Yerkes & Yahmed, 2019).

5.1.4 Elections

Before 2011, despite presidential elections being theoretically open to other candidates, Ben Ali won by huge margins. In the 2009 presidential elections, Ben Ali won by almost 90% of the vote through the tight media restrictions and restrictions on candidates who would have liked to run for the elections (RefWorld, 2012). Parliamentary elections were conducted under the same pattern where pre-determined opposition parties were granted a fixed quota of seats in the elections. Otherwise, they would not be allowed to compete with the ruling party that dominated the legislature and municipal councils. The rigged nature of the elections provided an essential mechanism for maintaining discipline within the ruling party (RCD), and for buying off opposition members with access to patronage. The RCD shaped the electoral system as a tool to strengthen its party unity (Miller, 2012, pp. 66-67).

Between 2011 and 2016, Tunisia held three elections for the constitutional assembly, the presidential election, and the parliamentary elections. In the first elections following 2011, the 217 members of the Constituent Assembly were directly elected through party-list voting in 33 multi-member constituencies, and voters were able to choose from political parties representing a wide range of ideologies and political philosophies, including Islamist and secularist groups. Many of the parties that competed in 2011 were excluded from political participation under Ben Ali's reign (RefWorld, 2012). The new elections were widely seen as free and fair elections characterized by high voter turnout. The voters ended up supporting parties that were genuinely oppositional under Ben Ali's rule rather than a reconstituted RCD or the loyal opposition that was effectively co-opted by the previous regime (Miller, 2012).

In 2011, the Instance Supérieure Indépendante pour les Élections (Independent High Authority for Elections) (ISIE) relaxed the requirements for voter registration, which was problematic under Ben Ali. For example, it facilitated the registration procedures, automatically enrolled any electors who had not done so voluntarily, and eventually

decided that anyone is entitled to vote even if not registered on the electoral roll, providing that he or she had a Tunisian ID or passport (Jaulin, 2016).

The Supreme Organization to Realise the Goals of the Revolution, Political Reform, and Democratic Transition – better known as the Higher Commission for Political Reform, was established first. The commission, composed of 159 members from different political parties, professional associations, and civil society organizations, was to oversee the transition period overall, including drafting the new constitution (Colombo, 2018, p. 105). Early enough at that time, the Higher Commission for Political Reform was praised as a competent consensus-building body in the history of “crafted” democratic transitions (Stepan A. C., 2012).

The Tunisian elections for a National Constituent Assembly (NCA) were held in October 2011. The Ennahda party won most of the seats in the assembly. Shortly afterward the election turned in the Islamist – secularist divide (Boubekeur, 2016). The NCA was seized by the conflict over identity issues, which stalled the legislation. Furthermore, as the economy deteriorated, protests increased. This led to escalating the polarization between the Islamist and Secularist identities. Finally, thanks to moderate Tunisian elites' pressures, the Ennahda government agreed to hand power to a caretaker government to draft the constitution (Henneberg, 2019, p. 312).

The Higher Commission for Political Reform adopted a pure proportional representation, which had a crucial anti-majoritarian implication. The results were distorted in favor of small parties as well as scarcely populated areas. This method awarded Ennahda 41 percent of the seats in the assembly, including its 4 percent bonus. Nevertheless, the bonuses of smaller parties were as large or even more extensive than Ennahda's. The result was that Ennahda fell well short of the majority seats in the Constituent Assembly (Carey, 2013). ISIE was established to be another tool to ensure the electoral process became independent, which replaced the Ministry of Interior in overseeing the elections. Eventually, ISIE weakened and fell under the control of the government. The government then became the intermediary between ISIE and the administration (Colombo, 2018, p. 105).

In 2014, Tunisia held three national elections: parliamentary, presidential, and presidential run-off. ISIE organized all polls. According to international and national observers, the process was free and fair, with minor irregularities that had no impact on the vote's outcome. ISIE was, in all three rounds, impartial and transparent. Multiple parties and candidates were able to run freely in the elections. Voter turnout was 69% at

the parliamentary elections and decreased with each following election. Turnout was remarkably low among younger Tunisians (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, pp. 7-8).

During the 2018 municipal elections, the political systems seem to be less supported by the population from the previous parliamentary elections in 2014. Nidaa Tounis lost two-thirds of its support while Ennahda lost about half of its supporters, which led to the Islamist party leading the polls (Yerkes & Yahmed, 2019). This outcome changed the balance of power in the governing and parliamentary coalition. Other doubts may arise about the coalition and the agreement between the Islamist and non-Islamist powers in place since 2014. The situation led to a crisis regarding the dispute between the political forces over whether Prime Minister, Youssef Chahed, resigned as a result of the struggle over power between the two main governing parties (Crisis Group, 2018).

The latest presidential elections in Tunisia in 2019 have also shown that voters are not satisfied with how the democratic transition has been developing over the past nine years. Voters rejected candidates from the current government coalition and rejected the way elites have been conducting politics so far. Two candidates from outside the political scene emerged to the top of the votes: Kais Saied, a constitutional lawyer who is independent, and Nabil Karoui, the owner of a TV station, who is in jail over suspicion of tax evasion (McCarthy, 2019).

Polls suggest a growing disenchantment with political parties' performances and democracy itself (Yerkes & Yahmed, 2019). According to the 2018 AfroBarometer survey, 81% of Tunisians do not have a close affinity with any political party, and 79% would either not vote or would not know who to vote for if the elections were held tomorrow (AfroBarometer, 2018). Voter turnout for the 2018 municipal elections was only 36%, and independent candidates gained 33% of the vote compared to 29% for Ennahda and 22% for Nidaa Tounis. This outcome can be due to a general rejection of the entire political class (Walles & Yerkes, 2018). Therefore, it is not surprising that overall support for democracy dropped from 70% in 2013 to 46% in 2018 (AfroBarometer, 2018). Meanwhile, the support for democracy's alternatives, such as a military or one-party rule, reached 47% and 41%, respectively (AfroBarometer, September 3, 2018).

5.1.5 Role of the Other Powerful Groups

Tunisia is distinct from the other surrounding neighboring countries due to its military's apolitical nature in contrast to the Egyptian army. During the 2011 uprising, the army

refused to take control after Ben Ali fled away and left civilians to negotiate a solution (Henneberg, 2019, p. 308). In this case, Tunisia can be considered almost the only country among the Arab Spring countries where democratically elected political representatives have the power to actually govern (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, p. 8).

Historically, the Tunisian army is relatively small and professional, and has less of an overtly political role than neighboring countries, thus minimizing their power on a national level. More recently, there started to be an ostensible authoritarian role of the Tunisian military on the side of politics. For instance, the army has pressed charges against individuals who criticize the armed forces, as in the case of Yassine Ayari, a Tunisian blogger who criticized the army (Bonhomme, 2018). Tunisia's military funding has increased dramatically over the past years, despite the current economic crisis (Bonhomme, 2018).

The increasing role of the military in Tunisia in the latest years cannot be separated from the ongoing security issues in the Middle East, such as the war against terrorism, especially in Libya. Arab governments use violence in the region as an excuse to impose security measures and not to liberalize the political system, which causes a severe risk to the democratization process (Kurun, 2015).

The Tunisian government also uses another form of threat, which they labeled “war with the Islamists.” This other form of threat is the basis for the military to interfere with the political scene resulting in an increase in protests. For example, former president Essebsi has asked the Tunisian military forces to defend industrial sites against demonstrations. The justification is that the army would be protecting “national resources.” Nearly 800 Tunisian citizens were arrested in January 2018 when they exercised their right to collectively gather and challenge austerity measures, demonstrating that the Tunisian military actively undermines democracy (Bonhomme, 2018).

In the case of Tunisia, there are other figures exerting influence over Tunisian politics. One example is Rachid Ghannouchi, the President of the Ennahda party. He has significant sway over his party's elected politicians, although he has no elected political role. For example, the Carthage Agreement of July 2016, which resulted in the “national unity” government of Youssef Chahed, was the outcome of a highly personalized process involving President Essebsi and the Ennahda leader, Ghannouchi, outside established constitutional institutions and processes (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, p. 8). Despite years of Islamist forces being banned out of political life, Ben Ali reduced their role as he feared their increased influence in the elections. Along with other religious parties that he called

a threat to stability (King, 2012, p. 6). The Ennahda party was, surprisingly, strong enough to win the 2011 elections. Following the 2014 elections, the Ennahda party gradually started to distance itself from its identity as an Islamist movement. As a result of the intense polarization along Islamist/non-Islamist lines following the 2011 elections, Ennahda became a target for increased opposition. Thus Ennahda members started to present themselves as shaved technocrats. Ennahda campaigned hard to alienate themselves from the Islamist identity and campaigned on economic issues instead. Ennahda continues to focus on political activities, attempting to distance itself from the term Islamist (Ghafar & Hess, 2018, pp. 15-16).

Ennahda participated in the dialogue in 2013 to avoid a similar Egyptian case scenario. Also, ministries in Tunisia found it challenging to embrace Ennahda members' influx or their leadership while in the cabinet. Ennahda has to exhibit some pragmatism and flexibility to be integrated into the political system versus Egypt's case where the Freedom and Justice Party came into conflict with several other political actors, which eventually led to its downfall (Ghafar & Hess, 2018, p. 20).

Finally, the transformation politics in Tunisia has been dominated by the mutual fear between the Islamist and old elite regimes. This fear has led to prolonged and intense competition in the political arena. At the same time, both parties avoided politically costly and potentially explosive issues and consequently had no genuine interest in building state institutions or sensible structural economic reform. Thus, the bargained competition prevented the institutionalization of rules that would have made it possible to process and resolve conflicts in a transparent way (Boubekeur, 2016).

5.2 Historical legacies of the media system

Role of the State

The first newspaper appeared in Tunisia in 1861 and was called *Al Raid Al Tunisi*. Several other newspapers followed starting in 1884, such as *Journal Tunis*, *L'indépendant Tunisien*, *Le Kara Kouz*, and *Reveil Tunisien* (Azzi, 1999). The French rule in Tunisia (1881–1956) had a cultural and intellectual influence over the Tunisian press. The French media model is highly editorialized and represents the government's official position with limited independent views. During this era, the Tunisian press mostly targeted middle-class readers.

In 1956 after Tunisia gained its independence, it maintained almost the same press structure under President Bourguiba's authoritarian leadership. The Tunisian press supported the regime, given the prevailing post-colonialist narratives. Consequently, government policies and political activities were promoted without any criticism. The Tunisian media did not provide a platform for diversity or multiple voices, which can also be linked to the absence of a multi-party system in Tunisia (Lahlali, 2011, p. 22).

Starting in the mid-1980s, the Tunisian government led a more relaxed approach in dealing with the press. This allowed several new newspapers to emerge in addition to the extensive presence of foreign press owned by both European and Arab countries (Lahlali, 2011, p. 22). However, the political environment generally remained restricted. The press system consisted of two government newspapers *Al-Amal* and *L'Action*, in addition to three private newspapers *Assabah* and *Le Temps*, owned by Tunisian businessman Habib Cheikh Rouhou. Ennahda, the Islamic opposition movement, owned the newspaper *Tounis Al Chahida*. A group of magazines and periodicals existed in the Tunisian landscape (Azzi, 1999).

Radio was introduced in Tunisia by a French company in 1939. Soon after independence in 1956, the government seized control of the radio service. The radio station was given a relative degree of autonomy. The Tunisian government did not exercise similar firm control over the radio, as did other countries in the region. Television was established in 1962. Radio and television remained government-owned with less politically motivating programs and more entertainment and popular culture (Azzi, 1999). In Tunisia, the government exercised subtle and diffuse means of control, such as allowing private ownership of media newspapers by people in business who have contacts with the regime but they did not impose direct control or censorship. The central government assumed the more dominant role in planning and implementing particular policies without visible public participation (Azzi, 1999).

Between 1977 and 1988, the Tunisian media witnessed some relative ease of media freedoms known as "Tunisian Press Spring." This came as a political desire to open up the industry to ease economic tensions and convey an image of being a reformist to the regime. This led to the outbreak of several pioneering independent publications (El-Issawi, 2012). Ben Ali started his era with another short spring with the media between the years of 1988 and 1990. He quickly turned to oppression against the media. He applied, for the first time, a system of prior censorship for the press. Under this policy, print publications had to present copies to the Ministry of Information for content control before distribution. Later this drastic measure was abolished and replaced with a system of explicit directives to editors of these publications (El-Issawi, 2012).

The broadcasting sector, under Ben Ali, exhibited a similar pattern of the Egyptian media. It was operated with the one aim of being the voice of the regime. There existed two large state television stations and two public radio stations.

Political parallelism

Under Ben Ali, newspapers were directly owned by the state such as *La Presse* and *Essahafa* or owned by the ruling party (RCD) such as *Al Hurriya* and *Le Renouveau* (UNESCO, 2013, p. 16). Other privately owned media existed that were dominated by companies with strong ties with the regime, such as *Assabah*, *Al Chourouk*, *Le Temps*, *le Quotidien*, and *Assarih*. Finally, the opposition press existed, although it was suffering from political and economic pressures from the regime such as *Al-Mouatinoun*, *Al-Fajr*, and *Al-Tariq al-Jadid* (El-Issawi, 2012). These pressures included a lack of advertising revenue and limited distribution networks (UNESCO, 2013, p. 16).

Two private television stations existed, *Hannibal TV* and *Nesma TV*. Although both stations were purely commercial in content, they still were connected with the Ben Ali family. According to the license agreement for private television stations, they could not provide political information (Barata Mir, 2011, pp. 2-3). Both stations were mainly reporting on the activities of Ben Ali and his family. During the 2000s, the central theme of the channels was also the broader Clan, not just the President (El-Issawi, 2012).

Consequently, most Tunisians formed a lack of trust in their local media and had to turn to satellite stations such as *Al Jazeera* or *Al Arabiya* to be informed about what was happening in their country. The internet was also heavily censored (UNESCO, 2013, p. 16). The state television's political reporting was a daily recital of the news bulletin from the President's family.

Media market

Tunisian print media has periodically faced financial difficulties, which led them to fall subject to government control. In one example, in 1993, A Tunisian magazine published an article showing some negative aspects; the government withdrew its advertising as punishment (Rugh, 2004, p. 127).

Print media also had low distribution rates, about 45,000 copies of *Al-Shuruq*, and 30,000 copies for *La Presse*. In 2004, there were only 19 daily newspapers per 1,000 inhabitants, one of the lowest circulation rates in the Middle East region (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004). The development of electronic media during the 2000s led to the emergence of new print media outlets. At the same time, the spread of electronic media cut the circulation of newspapers that could not maintain their readers (Dajani, 2011, p. 63). In 2002 total daily newspaper circulation in Tunisia was 375,000 copies. The number of daily newspapers was 22 publications (Press Reference, 2020).

Radio and television in Tunisia were funded until the 1980s by a small annual license fee paid by the users. This led to an absence of a strong financial base in terms of yearly operation costs and lack of equipment, which impacted the broadcast's ability to provide adequate programming over the years (Browne, 1993, p. 270).

Journalistic Professionalism

Professional training of journalists in Tunisia was limited to two institutions, the Institute of Press and Information Sciences (IPSI) at the University of Manouba and the African Center for Training of Journalists and Communicators (CAPJC). CAPJC was established in 1982, but it was also subject to state control to ensure the training was purely technical. As a result of Decree 2002/632, CAPJC was deprived of the needed flexibility to contribute to Tunisian journalists' professional development (UNESCO, 2013, p. 89). The favored types of training were themes related to technical issues such as ICT (p. 90).

The Tunisian government under Ben Ali was keen on imposing controls over journalists, such as banning journalists from attending conferences or other events (Rugh, 2004, p. 124). The public broadcaster under ben Ali was managed by an administrative council that comprised various cabinet ministers, which ensured that radio and television fulfilled government expectations, at the same time without any citizen advisory councils or boards (Browne, 1993, p. 270).

At the same time, journalists also enjoyed the presence of a large number of active professional organizations. Examples of these organizations included The Tunisian Journalists Syndicate (SNJT), the General Union of Culture and Information within the UGTT, and the Tunisian Union of Independent Press, which has 1200 members (UNESCO, 2013, p. 97).

To conclude, the media system in Tunisia was also influenced by a long history of authoritarianism. The state exercised substantial control over the media scene for the longest time before 2011. It blocked the development of the pluralism of diverse voices in the Tunisian media scene. Media performed for decades with the essence of serving the regime. Even the internet scene in Tunisia was more blocked than the Egyptian blogging sphere.

5.3 Role of the State

This section examines how the sub-dimensions pertinent to the Role of State identified by Hallin and Mancini may take further developments in setting a fragile democracy such as Tunisia. The study examines how the Tunisian state responded to the media's growing polarization through multiple tools originally expected to function otherwise in democratic societies. In the case of Tunisia, the democracy setting is still new and fragile, which has led to growing polarization, as discussed in section 5.1. The polarization between political actors had led to limiting pluralism. The argument is that the sub-dimensions unfold differently in this setting. The case of Tunisia provides insights from a fragile democracy with a growing polarization of its political setting. Early after 2011, civil society organizations, political parties, and media regulatory bodies were able to function independently to diversify the media system. Further political developments have shown an increase in state control over the media system, combined with growing polarization.

5.3.1 Legal and Regulatory Framework

The analysis of the Role of the State starts with understanding the legal framework governing the media sector and its implications on the performance of journalists and media organizations. After years of operating under authoritarian state oppression, Tunisia's media system started to practice a relative degree of independence from the Egyptian media. The aspects of the Tunisian state, that does not have a dominant power similar to the military in Egypt, allowed a degree of development in the media sector. This section explores how the Role of the State can impact these developments in the media sector. The authoritarian state in Egypt has gradually blocked any possible agency for other media actors, such as the regulatory bodies. The Role of State in Tunisia developed into a similar role to that of the Mediterranean model with the high level of state control, with the political parties coming into power.

Under Ben Ali, the state used the legal framework to limit media criticism against the president and punish citizens who expressed critical views against the government. It was also forbidden to address subjects deemed improper for public debate, address legal provisions criminalizing public officials' insults or defamation, or harm state interests or public morals. The laws also limited Tunisian's ability to express and access opposing points of views (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

The 1959 Constitution provided weak guarantees for ensuring media freedoms. The abolished constitution placed no restrictions on adopting laws that contained conditions restricting freedom-of-expression. In fact, it stated that freedoms of opinion, expression, press, publication, assembly, and association are guaranteed. But they can only be exercised under the conditions defined by the law (UNESCO, 2013, p. 27). The Press Code of 1975 (Law 32/1975) functioned to protect the ruling regime against journalists instead of protecting journalists and ensuring freedom-of-expression. The code mandated hefty fines and prison sentences for press offenses such as attempting to jeopardize state security, public order, and insulting the state's head, foreign diplomatic officers, and public figures (Chouikha, 2015). The Press Code also established multiple restrictions and requirements to publish a newspaper or any publication (Barata Mir, 2011, p. 4). In addition to the Press Code, the Penal Code imposed further restrictions on the media sector. Under the Penal code, it was possible to pursue legal cases against the media and journalists (UNESCO, 2013, p. 27). There has been no unified law regulating the broadcast media's outlets, either public or private. The only relevant legal framework was the law for the establishment of public institutions, such as law 49, for the year 1990 that governed the establishment of the Tunisian Public Radio and Television Corporation. The National Frequencies Agency (Law 2001-1) also existed, which made the broadcast industry subject to the regime's financial and political control through the Ministry of Communications (El-Issawi, 2012, p. 8).

The new Tunisian Constitution, adopted in 2014, provides various guarantees for freedom-of-expression and opinion (Ghazali, 2015). Article 31 guarantees the right to freedom of opinion, thought, expression, information, and publication. The articles also promulgate that the media shall not be subject to censorship. In practice, a number of pre-uprising criminal laws and the new anti-terrorism law continues to undermine the practice of freedom-of-expression (CIVICUS, 2016). A legacy from the authoritarian system continues to be present in the form of financial, political, and security constraints (Lynch, 2015).

After the uprising, the review of the media regulatory framework was necessary. The new 2014 Tunisian constitution contains provisions that ensure the protection of human rights and freedoms. The whole of section two is dedicated to guaranteeing human freedoms and rights; article 31 guarantees freedom of thought, opinion, expression, information, and publication¹¹⁴. The 1975 press code was abolished in 2011, and two new media laws were introduced: The Decree-law 115 (aims to regulate press, printing, and publishing), while the Decree-law 116 (aims to regulate the Freedom of Audio-visual Communication and the Creation of a Supreme Independent Body of Audio-visual Communication). Both laws came into effect in October 2012 following the Tunisian journalists' general strike (Yacoub, 2017, p. 110).

Despite the progress in the new legal framework, several criticisms have been posed to the new laws, one of which is that they still carry the historical background of the Tunisian authoritarian regime. Decree-law 115/2011, for example, regulates the different kinds of printed media. Despite that, modern democracies do not impose such an extensive regulation in terms of "press law." Instead of entirely eliminating the previous law, it has been modified and softened. Its structural elements remain the same; it just introduced more moderate and less intrusive legislation (Barata Mir, 2011, p. 4). These improvements are favorable compared to the previous excessively oppressive media regulatory framework but are not sufficient to ensure the transition to a more liberal set of regulations.

Other criticisms are pertinent to the scope of the decree-laws because they cover a wide range of publications in both print and digital formats at the same time. There are also criticisms raised towards the laws' role in regulating defamation, electronic media, and public advertising. Decree-law 115 is concerned with print media as well as electronic media. It includes a definition in article 2 for digitalized work, although the term electronic media is not mentioned. Article 5 promulgates that people are considered to be journalists they work for an electronic media outlet (Yacoub, 2017, p. 111).

Decree laws 115 and 116 had some other positive impacts. They mandated the number of licenses and shares in media companies that one entity can own, limiting monopoly in the media sector. In addition to limiting horizontal concentration, it is forbidden to own a TV station and an advertising agency or polling institute at the same time. Article 7 of law no 36 for the year 2015 on the reorganization of competition and prices regulates the economic concentration of ownership (Reporters without Borders, 2019). Articles 15

¹¹⁴ A translated copy of the Tunisian Constitution can be found at: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Tunisia_2014.pdf

to 22 guarantee that a periodical shall be published freely and without prior authorization, which represents an important step towards abolishing censorship and transitioning towards more democratization in the press.

As noted by one member of the SNJT executive council, there are more criticisms related to putting decree-laws 115 and 116 into practice. Whereas the laws represent a step towards a more pluralist, liberal, and democratic media, yet there are still some shortfalls in the implementation. "It is not clear who are the agencies responsible for the implementation of these decrees. Who has the authority to practice power? For example, contrary to decree 115, some journalists were referred to court based on their blogs, tweets, or what they publish on social media and not their journalistic writings"¹¹⁵. The new legislation no longer punishes defamation by imprisonment, yet journalists may still face charges in defamation cases as would ordinary citizens. The provisions for defamation punishment still exist in the penal code (Le Code Penal, 2012, pp. 245-247).

A media researcher and former head of journalists training center notes that the development of the regulatory framework does not indicate the change in the journalistic practices: "In Tunisia, we have developed an excellent regulatory framework, which is in line with international standards. The question remains if these regulations have led to the development of the quality of journalistic practices. I don't think so. Journalism is not only about regulations. Regulations are important for protecting journalists; however, there is still a long way to go in developing newsrooms and preventing polarization"¹¹⁶.

In short, although the reform of the regulatory framework represents a step towards more democratization of Tunisian media, there is still a legacy of authoritarian mentality and beliefs that are underlying the new laws and legislations. Freedom-of-expression is established in the constitution; the fact that there is still a need for a press code or law indicates that there is a possibility of returning to the old practices. Most established Western democracies do not require this kind of media authorization process; it is sufficient to establish media freedom in the constitution and allow the sector's organization for independent professional bodies instead of a media law. The way the new Tunisian Press Code is drafted represents a system that could potentially lead to the return of state control over the media outlets. It would be sufficient to guarantee the right to freedom-of-expression in the constitution and ensure the regulatory bodies' independence.

¹¹⁵ Interview, T_Uni_29

¹¹⁶ Interview, T_Ind_4

Performance of the regulatory bodies

In Tunisia before 2011, the media sector was regulated mainly by state agencies. The National Broadcasting Office and the National Agency for Frequencies had firm control over the broadcasting sector. Licensing private broadcasters was purely a government decision. The Prime Minister was responsible for granting licensing approval (UNESCO, 2013, p. 36). The role performed by these agencies was to impose censorship and work as a tool for state control. The Tunisian Internet Agency was responsible for monitoring and censoring the content over the internet. It would block pages that contained unacceptable content, mainly political content. The National Broadcasting Corporation or Office National de la Télédiffusion (ONT) was responsible for overseeing the distribution of radio and television signals in addition to the National Agency for Frequencies (ANF). This authority imposed state control by restricting access to the frequencies that enabled content transmission (Office National de la Télédiffusion , 2018) and (National Frequences Agency, 2015).

After abolishing the old constitution, the National Authority to Reform Information and Communication (INRIC) was established in February 2011. The new body was established to develop proposals for the new legislation about the media sector's reform. In collaboration with other agencies, it led to drafting laws 115 and 116. (Yacoub, 2017, p. 110). After the new laws were introduced, INRIC was canceled and replaced by the Independent High Authority for Audiovisual Communications (Tunisia) (HAICA) as mandated in the new legislation. HAICA was established in May 2013 as an independent, self-regulatory body after the dissolution of INRIC to organize the media sector (Freedom House, 2015).

HAICA is mandated to ensure compliance with the media sector regulations, while the Minister of Trade and the Competition Council are responsible for ensuring compliance with the competition law. They have the right to act on any issue under their respective areas and may impose penalties. HAICA and the Competition Council are relatively independent bodies. Members of the HAICA are appointed by the President of the Republic, the Parliament's Speaker, and representative bodies of judges, journalists, and heads of media corporations. Both bodies enjoy relative financial autonomy, despite having limited resources in terms of human and technical resources (Reporters without Borders, 2019). The HAICA is responsible for granting licenses to private broadcasters and ensuring they respect regulatory requirements. The HAICA is also responsible for monitoring election coverage to ensure media complies with transparency regulations. HAICA has been actively trying to regulate the sector and came into a struggle with the

government several times. In January 2014, HAICA succeeded in appointing a new General Director for the National Broadcaster, Mustapha Ben Letaief (Buccianti & el-Richani, 2015, pp. 27-28).

Originally, many existing media outlets opposed the creation of HAICA as an organizing body. One reason was the fear of losing the substantial privileges most of these outlets had under the previous regime. These reforms could have been a threat to their benefits (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 57). In practice, HAICA has been active in countering some of the political polarization in some media outlets, because it is responsible for ensuring compliance with the licensing requirements: after private media have received a license, then problems start. As one of the interviewees mentioned, a member of the executive council of HAICA noted, “Media organizations are acting like a backyard for political parties. Thus, HAICA has reason to be strict and impose penalties for violations of media regulations”¹¹⁷. Contrary to Egypt's regulatory bodies' performance, HAICA has made efforts to organize the media sector and consolidate the democratic role and promote their independence (El-Issawi, 2016, pp. 55-56).

However, the performance of HAICA was also subject to multiple criticisms including criticisms of the representation in HAICA's council and how it can influence its independence. As Barata Mir has concluded, the composition of the regulatory bodies and their representation of the different political facts and media industries make it hard to ensure they act for the public interest rather than acting to defend their own interests (Barata Mir, 2011, p. 11). This observation was verified in practice later, as noted by a member of the executive council of HAICA, who noted that “the lack of cooperation among the multiple actors has delayed the path related to establishing journalism boards. The political parties in power are a threat to the revolution's gains—for example, the right to access information. There are several ways that parties are trying to avoid implementing this right under the claims that this harms the country. The country is too weak at the moment for this kind of practice. Eventually, freedom- of-expression will be damaged in the long run”¹¹⁸. One of the interviewees, a member of the SNJT, notes that the “performance of the HAICA is not the only entity that shapes the developments of the media scene, but other entities should also be considered, such as advertising agencies and other lobbyists. All of these entities should be included in the process of the reform of the media scene”¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁷ Interview, T_Reg_8

¹¹⁸ Interview, T_Reg_8

¹¹⁹ Interview, T_Uni_21

There are other criticisms raised against the process of issuing a license, leading to a less pluralist media scene. Licenses for operating media ventures are awarded to entities who already have sufficient investment capital to use a media venture; on the contrary, they are not offered to civil society organizations and smaller ventures. As noted by a member of the executive council of HAICA, “This hinders civil society from playing a role in terms of the media industry and only opens the door to selected people in the business sector.”¹²⁰ HAICA tried to counter the Role of the State on multiple occasions, but as noted in the interviews, journalists themselves became critical of HAICA since some no longer enjoy the same privileges they enjoyed under the previous regime. “Given the discussions about regulating the role of the media during elections, media outlets were critical of the HAICA and consequently boycotted the media coverage of elections under claims that HAICA is obstructing media freedoms. Honestly, it is also very challenging to leave the spectrum to media organizations without limitations on how they can support political candidates.”¹²¹

In conclusion, establishing a new regulatory framework and installing national regulatory entities does not necessarily lead to a significant change in the media scene. A fragile democratic setting is shaped by the new political forces' performance, which can influence the newly established entities. The change in the media scene is not an automatic formal process of changing the existing entities, but it is a day-to-day process pertinent to how pluralistic the political environment is. The new bodies lack a tradition of established independence, making them easily vulnerable to political and other forces. The establishment of new entities should not be considered sufficient in this context to describe the sub-dimension; it is necessary to understand these entities' performance with regards to the political developments and the influence of other political forces such as political parties.

5.3.2 The Public Broadcaster

Hallin and Mancini refer to the sub-dimension of public media organizations as the positive form of state intervention in the media system. Public service broadcasting has a particular role to play in meeting public interest objectives and contributing to media pluralism (Buckley, et al., 2008, p. 190). Hallin and Mancini called for exploring the relationship between the nature of the public service broadcasting governance models and the political system. They proposed four types of public media governance in Europe:

¹²⁰ Interview, T_Reg_8

¹²¹ Interview, T_Pub_18

professional, civic, parliamentary, and government (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 30-32). Hallin and Mancini had made clear that even though Europe has large public media sectors, most of them are not state-controlled but autonomous and influenced by various civil society forces. This section explores the role of the state in relevance to organizing the public broadcasting sector in Tunisia. Although the public media reform process after 2011 managed to liberate the media industry from the most oppressive features under Ben Ali, public media still did not witness a complete rift from the previous regime practices.

Public television in Tunisia started in 1966 with a single channel called L'Établissement de la Télévision Tunisienne (ETT), after several years of allocating the necessary funds for the project. The opening came after a phase of two, pilot experimental broadcastings in October 1965. In the beginning, the broadcast service was live. The programming ran for three hours daily from 7-10 pm, with two hours broadcast in Arabic and French. The programming mix offered both information and entertainment (Boyd, 1999, p. 265). By the end of 1976, TV started producing programming in color and increasing the number of broadcasting hours. In 1983, the second channel started broadcasting. At that time, ETT was renamed ETT1 and was broadcasting programming in Arabic, while the second channel started airing in French and was called ETT2. In 2006, Ben Ali announced the splitting up of the radio and television organizations into two separate entities: Tunisian Television Broadcasting and Tunisian Radio Broadcasting. In 2010, Tunisian ETT moved to a newly established and fully equipped headquarters at Hilton Plateau. Currently, ETT operates two public stations (Watannya 1 and Watannya 2). (Watannya 1, 2019). The other entity that manages the radio sector is the Établissement de la Radio Tunisienne (RTT), which operates four national public radio stations: (Radio Tounis, Radio Tunisie Culture, Radio Jeunes, and RTCI). It also manages five regional stations: Sfax, Monastir, Gafsa, Tataouine, and Le Kef (Watannya 1, 2019). Public broadcasting under Ben Ali operated as a model of state-controlled media rather than public service media. The two public TV state channels' primary role was to report on the President and his family's activities. During the decade of 2000, the channels expanded their coverage to the broader Clan¹²², not only the President himself. This resulted in state-controlled, media-dominated political reporting, while private stations were banned from presenting news. Political reporting for the public services meant presenting a news bulletin about Ben Ali (El-Issawi, 2012).

¹²² The Clan represents the elites personally connected to Ben Ali and his three children, seven siblings and his second wife's ten brothers and sisters. The network is known in Tunisia as the Family or the Clan (Anderson 2011: 3)

In the early years following the uprising, the public broadcaster demonstrated more editorial freedom. Journalists at public media organizations reported enjoying for the first time a significant amount of freedom-of-expression for the first time. They experienced a wholly new and exciting opportunity for reporting. One of the interviewees, who heads the news department at the Tunisian Radio, describes the changes at the public media organizations in the years following 2011, “We were airing a live program from one of the governorates and a young protestor that I was interviewing said: I hope you did not use the scissors. He could not believe that the public broadcaster is going to air his words without censorship anymore.”¹²³

Other liberalizing institutional changes initially supported the changes at the public broadcaster into a public service instead of a government tool. The Ministry of Communications was abolished, which has removed the state's direct control and daily interference with the content (UNESCO, 2013). State-run media were restructured before the elections of the new Constituent Assembly in 2011. The interim government made changes to the management of public media outlets. Press outlets formerly owned by the ruling party Al- Hurriya and Le Renouveau were shut down. The staff was merged with state-run media (El-Issawi, 2012). At the public television, internal elections were held, and a committee was elected to oversee the editorial content. The committee attempted to re-strategize the channels as public service. These changes increased the viewership for public television (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 667).

However, this independence did not last long, and the state returned to meddling with public media. The government still appointed the heads of public radio and television organizations without any reference with INRIC or any public consultation (UNESCO, 2013). Decree-law 116/2011 has mandated that HAICA would have only a consultative role in appointing audio-visual public service media chief executives. Before the decree was passed, the government took the opportunity of the legal void in the media sector and intentionally appointed several top-level executives at public media organizations. At that time, the Islamist party was accused of taking advantage of the legal situation to appoint its supporters in public media newsrooms and administrations (Yacoub, 2017, p. 114). Government interference in public media continued under the successive governments at the time. Both the old Troika and the new technocratic administration continued to consider the media as a handmaiden (Joffé, 2014, p. 633). The Troika government appointed a new director in 2012; under the guidance of this director, it was said that editorial committees were scattered, and editorial responsibility suffered. Many of the corrupt practices conducted under Ben Ali were reinstated; for example, channel

¹²³ Interview, T_Priv_7

directors did not hire producers but produced the shows on their own to collect double payment (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 667).

The public broadcaster faces additional challenges in maintaining its independence against the multiple political pressures from the different political forces, not only pressures from the government, but also pressures from political parties across the spectrum. These parties already complain about the coverage in which they appear (Buccianti & el-Richani, 2015, p. 29). Under the Ennahda government, the public broadcaster was noted as failing to give equal representation to multiple views, especially on controversial topics among the government and opposition. It was noted that the public broadcaster failed to invite guests that represent diverse points of view on specific topics (Nawaat, 2012). Tensions between the public media and political powers escalated; one example was the sit-in protest in 2012 that took place for 50 days in front of the public television channel Wataniya. The confrontation led to more mistrust and threats against journalists, in addition to physical and verbal violations (Yacoub, 2017, p. 114).

In one of the interviews with a member of the executive council of HAICA, Yacoub was skeptical about the efforts for shifting the public broadcaster towards a public service model instead of a state-run model: "I am worried about the project submitted in collaboration with ten ministries for restructuring the public broadcaster. This project cannot lead to transform the national broadcaster into a public service. The old practices, like presenting the news about the president, these old practices are returning. As well as the return to censorship"¹²⁴.

Another member of the Tunisian journalists' union was also skeptical about the reform initiative presented by Mehdi Ben Gharbia (Ennahda politician) concerning the audiovisual law. "This law is to serve the public sector and specific agendas or some political figures. We never understood the aim of his suggestion. If we do not follow the democratic path, then we can go back to having the Ministry of Communication"¹²⁵.

After Ennahda stepped down, the pressure on the journalists and aggression against them relatively decreased. However, there has been a significant increase in the intervention in private media. Scholars are pointed to a dangerous level of correlation between the media and political powers. Private media are clearly supporting one

¹²⁴ Interview, T_Reg_8

¹²⁵ Interview, T_Uni_29

political side to serve their own interests. In some cases, media owners are themselves members of political parties and thus aim to convey political ideas (Yacoub, 2017, p. 115). In this same vein, the public broadcaster tends to be less polarized than private media. As one of the interviewees, who is an anchor at the Tunisian public radio, notes, public media is relatively less polarized than private media. "In Tunisia, I think that politics and politicians were able to control private media."¹²⁶

At the same time, the public broadcaster faces a set of other structural problems, such as overstaffing. More than 75% of the public broadcaster employees are not media practitioners or journalists; they are administrative staff. The national broadcaster employs about 1200 persons. The public stations face substantial deficits of 28 million Tunisian dinars (around \$US 14M) in salary deficits (Buccianti & el-Richani, 2015, p. 29). As indicated by the head of the news department in Tunisian Public Radio, "There are about 250 journalists, while the rest are not media specialists but support workers. Those journalists have the burden to develop all media content to meet the needs of all Tunisian citizens, in addition to some unqualified journalists that were hired since Ben Ali's rule."¹²⁷ The public broadcaster employs more than 1300 staff members. It also suffers financial problems because it is funded by a small mandatory tariff paid by the population on its electricity bill (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 666).

Other forms of the persistence of the old practices in reporting are still in practice. One study that analyzed the media coverage of the terrorist Bardo¹²⁸ attack concluded that journalists commenting on the causes and consequences of the Bardo attack did not forcefully counter the regime's authoritarian drift in the wake of the terrorist attack. In fact, they provided similar media coverage to what was done under Ben Ali, such as praising the strongman leadership of the president and undermining the respect of civil liberties. Journalists fell back into old habits acquired under Ben Ali's security pact (Høigilt & Selvik, 2020).

In a survey conducted during the first two years of the revolution, the state channel Watannya 1 ranked as the highest channel watched by 44% of the population, in comparison to all other private television stations (International Republican Institute, 2014). This popularity of the public broadcaster did not last long. Another survey about the sources of political news among Tunisians shows that they prefer private national

¹²⁶ Interview, T_Pub_5

¹²⁷ Interview, T_Priv_7

¹²⁸ In March 2015, Tunisia was rocked by a terrorist attack at the Bardo Museum in downtown Tunis in which 21 people were killed.

channels and international channels over state television (Sarnelli & Lomazzi, 2019, pp. 8-9). The authors also note that despite the post-uprising media reforms allowed, and the introduction of a variety of new voices in the domain of traditional media, the media system is quite unstable, and that some of these features are only temporary (Sarnelli & Lomazzi, 2019, p. 17). Richter has pointed that one of the main challenges to the reform of state media was the persistent political polarization and its de-legitimization as propaganda channels (Richter, 2017, pp. 333-334).

To conclude, the Tunisian public broadcaster did not develop into a public service broadcaster model. It operated for many years as a state-owned media model under Ben Ali. Following the uprising, there was a breakthrough for a short while. The public broadcaster gained some popularity among the population. Then the resilience of the old authoritarian practices started to make their way back. Different governments started controlling the public broadcaster. Contrary to the significant state dominance over public media in Egypt, the Tunisian public broadcaster can be classified closer to Hallin and Mancini's Polarized Pluralist model, showing how different political parties attempt to control public media. What is also important for assessing the media system is the independence of the regulatory bodies. HAICA is not only a consultative body, but it has legal powers, although in many cases it does not have sufficient power to counter the government's control over the public media appointments.

5.3.3 Media Freedom

Freedom-of-expression and media freedoms are closely linked to the performance of the democratic setting in one country. Most established democracies tend to benefit from a functioning environment that allows an equal space for sharing opinions and free deliberation of ideas. In countries where democracy is not yet established or is in a fragile state like Tunisia, it is crucial to map the role of the state in fostering or hindering the freedom-of-expression and media freedom. As Voltmer argues, the state is the main adversary for freedom-of-expression and media freedom. From this point of view, press freedom is understood as freedom from and against the state (Voltmer, 2013, p. 26). Media freedom is a prerequisite for enabling public discourse. Therefore, the core elements of any democracy are free elections, the free gathering of people, human rights standards, and freedom of opinion, and the media (Hafez, 2015).

The state strongly oppressed media in Tunisia under Ben Ali. There have been sharp crackdowns on opposition and criticism of the government. The regime also had a tight grip over traditional media. NGO's that are concerned with the analysis of the media field,

such as Reporters without Borders, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch, repeatedly condemned multiple human rights violations committed by the former Tunisian regime (Yacoub, 2017, pp. 109-110). Starting the year 2002, Tunisia kept dropping on the RSF Press Freedom Index until it reached its lowest in 2010 ranked at 164th. Tunisia was labeled “enemy of the internet.” Following 2011, there has been significant progress in the status of media freedom. Tunisia jumped by almost 30 places in 2011 in the RSF World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2019). Ben Ali's overthrow allowed for an introduction of a flow of freedoms across Tunisia and permitted journalists to gain press freedom.

This section explores the challenges that face freedom of the press in Tunisia to support establishing a pluralist media scene. Table 7 shows the development of Tunisia's ranking on World Press Freedom index. Given these changes, media in Tunisia is still not entirely free, and there have been backlashes and boundaries in terms of bringing back old practices but in more disguised forms. Table 8 shows the development of Tunisia's ranking on the democracy index.

Table 7 - Development of Tunisia's Ranking on World Press Freedom Index (2007-2018) - Source: RSF

Year	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012/1	2010	2009	2008	2007
Score	30.91	32.22	31.60	38.68	38,15	39,93	60,25	72,5	61,5	48,1	57,0
Rank	97	97	96	126	138	138	134	164	154	143	145

Table 8 - Tunisia score on the Democracy Index, Source Economist Intelligence Unit (where countries less than 4 is considered an authoritarian regime and between 4 and 6 is considered hybrid regime)

Year	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Score	6.32	6.40	6.72	6.31	5.76	5.67	5.53	2.79	2.96	3.06

Censorship

The Ben Ali regime had created an extensive online censorship and filtering system called Ammar 404¹²⁹. After the toppling of Ben Ali, this system was canceled. There has been a return to the internet red lines, but after 2011 they took a different form. The Military Court in 2011 ordered censorship over five Facebook pages. The Tunisian Internet Agency has published the list of the five concerned sites under claims of transparency (RefWorld, 2012).

¹²⁹ The Ben Ali regime practiced heavy censorship, one of the tools was the internet filtration. Ammar 404 is the nickname Tunisian internet surfers used to censor the internet.

Early on after the uprising, journalists gradually started to note in many cases that they no longer faced direct censorship but more complex new forms of indirect censorship. In many cases, indirect censorship is more difficult for the journalists themselves to identify. Journalists note that there is a problem of access to information despite a law that guarantees access to information sources. They also indicate that they cannot freely discuss editorial decisions in the newsroom. The red lines have only changed; they became more difficult to identify (RSF, 2012). This sense of tightening the grip over the media continued to grow, as one of the interviewees, who is a prominent writer and journalist, notes “Now, we feel that there is more tightening of these rights and limiting journalistic practices despite some kind of manipulation and the return of old practices by political powers.”¹³⁰

A report for the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) warned against multiple media freedom threats in Tunisia. Numerous journalists found themselves trapped between extremists' threats and the hypersensitivity to criticism by the security services resulting from fear of extremist attacks. Consequently, the government introduced more restrictive measures against journalists. Multiple media organizations found it easier to return to self-censorship, given these circumstances (CPJ, 2015). The journalist and presenter at Nessma TV explained that “editorial policies change according to the political situation. Every three months to a year, there is a new political situation in Tunisia; thus, our editorial policy changes. In private media where I have worked, external actors may control the editorial policies. I was once preparing for an interview with a guest from a certain political figure, then the person was changed, and the news story was changed. At that point, you realize that it is not the media professionals who are running the station..”¹³¹

Violations against journalists

After the removal of Ben Ali, Tunisia was seen as a successful case of advancing press freedom among the Arab Spring countries. Nevertheless, violations against journalists in Tunisia rose as authorities reverted back to controlling the media. This tendency poses a threat to media freedoms and the country's young democracy (Amara, 2017). Early on after the uprising, aggression against journalists returned. By the end of 2012, under the Troika-led government, 84 incidents of aggression against journalists were reported. In addition, 115 cases were reported of journalists being verbally and physically abused. Tunisia declined several places on the RSF ranking in 2013 (RSF, 2013).

¹³⁰ Interview, T_Ind_13

¹³¹ Interview, T_Priv_6

A report for the Tunis Centre for Press Freedom (CTLP) documents 65 cases of violence against journalists and media workers during only one month (May 2013). The report pinpoints other problems such as extending censorship, the political selection of media, and the arbitrary arrests of media professionals (Marzouk, 2013). By the end of 2013, the turmoil behind the press freedom regression lasted for over two years and ended partially as the Islamist party Ennahda stepped down. Under the next technocratic government, pressure on journalists and physical aggression against them lessened to a certain degree (Yacoub, 2017, p. 114).

Years 2015 and 2016 have witnessed some assaults on journalists and interference on security forces. Authorities have repeatedly blocked reporters from covering news events during the year (Freedom House, 2017). In March 2015, artist and television producer Wassim Hrisi received a six-month suspended prison sentence for charges of defamation of the President and violating some articles of the penal code about the President's personification (Freedom House, 2016).

Blogger Yassine Ayari was charged in 2017 for "undermining the army's morale" based on the post he published on Facebook in February 2017. He published a post against the appointment of a senior military commander. He faced trial in front of a military court against international human rights law and a fair trial violation. Ayari had previously faced trial and imprisonment for publishing critical posts online in November 2014 and spent six months in jail (Amnesty International, 2018).

In January 2018, the Tunisian Journalists' Union reported 18 cases of violations against journalists. The violations ranged between assaults, detentions, and equipment confiscation. The assaults were mostly about security forces attempting to control the free flow of information by hindering the media. The Tunisian police investigated two French journalists. The police also detained another Tunisian reporter Nadim Abou Amoud and deleted all his devices' content about the day's protests. Some journalists also complained about police surveillance (Abrougui, 2018).

Use of a restrictive legal framework

The adoption of decree-laws 115 and 116 was an essential step towards a more pluralist and democratic media; nevertheless, there have been legal shortcomings hindering media freedoms pertaining to the laws regulating defamation, electronic media, and public advertising (Yacoub, 2017, p. 111).

Multiple legal tools have reverted over time to signal the return of some of the old authoritarian practices that raise concerns about the status of media freedoms. In July 2015, the government withdrew the draft of "Basic Law on the Right to Access to Information," which was drafted and supported by civil society groups and failed to convene parliament. This law was intended to facilitate constitutional guarantees "of the right to information and the right of access to information and communication networks." The government has given no reason for the sudden withdrawal. In April of the same year, the government introduced a bill, titled "Suppression of Attacks on Armed Forces," which criminalizes "denigration" of the police or other security forces. This law carries a 10-year prison sentence and a fine of approximately \$25,000 for those convicted of exposing "national security secrets" (CPJ, 2015).

Islamists' attacks on the army raised the debate about media and censorship under the claims of protecting national security. The two prominent Islamic attacks on foreign tourists in 2015 have justified this argument. Tunisia has been under a state of security since the attacks, which allows officials to restrain some rights under claims of protecting national security (Amara, 2017). Counter-terrorism law number 2003 is another tool used to restrict freedom of speech. In July 2015, Nouredine Mbarki, editor of the news website Akher Khabar online, was charged with conspiring with terrorists and facilitating their escape. Mbarki refused to disclose the source of a photo he published on his website of a gunman who shot 38 persons at the tourist resort (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Investigative reporter Walid Mejri received a summons from the Anticrime Division of the National Gendarmerie in connection with an article he wrote in 2013. In his article, he criticized the security practices at Tounis airport. Press advocates named this as an attempt to limit investigative journalism. In November, Sahbi Jouini, a police union leader, was convicted of defaming the army after he accused the military of failing to use information adequately to combat terrorism. In 2013, blogger Hakim Ghanmi was tried before the military court for undermining the reputation of the army after he criticized the director of an army hospital (Amnesty International, 2013).

Another legal tool is the use of defamation against journalists as regular citizens. The legislative framework no longer punishes journalists with imprisonment, but despite this, journalists can still face defamation charges as citizens. In an analysis of 30 CTLP reports, almost three-quarters of the lawsuits monitored by the center involved a journalist who was accused of defamation and sued in court under the penal code instead of the press law (decree-law 115). It is a gap in the law decree that allows the court to refer exclusively to the penal code in press-related offenses. This gap has been used for intimidating journalists with heavy legal actions and selective use of the law (Yacoub, 2017, p. 112)

Anti-blasphemy emerged as an excuse to curb freedom- of-expression and freedom of speech. As the issuing of the media law was delayed, heated debates emerged as these articles were discussed. It became worrisome that these articles could be used to limit media freedoms with loose wording and vague formulations (Marks, 2012). The Ennahda party was keen on introducing article 3, under the claims of protecting the public order and security. In August 2012, the Ennahda Islamist party filed an anti-blasphemy bill. The bill criminalizes any curses, mockery, insults, or desecration of religious figures. The bill also banned the representation of God or the Prophet Mohammed. The bill did not turn into legislation because of a lack of support. The first case of detention for freedom-of-expression in Tunisia after Ben Ali is Jabeur Mejri. He was convicted in March 2012 for seven and half years in prison for “publishing liable to cause harm to public order and morality,” “insulting others through public communication networks” and “assaulting public morals” over the publication of cartoons of Prophet Mohammed on Facebook (Abrougui, 2014).

The calls for protecting religious figures and morals posed the most significant threats against freedom- of-expression. Attacks on the media started early on with the attack on Nessma TV headquarters and its head and staff threats. The violence erupted after the station aired a Franco-Iranian animation film called *Persepolis*. Around 300 people attacked the station on October 9, 2011 (IFEX, 2011). The security forces intervened to disperse the protesters and detained about 100 people. Several people faced charges. This film's screening led to an extensive debate on religious fundamentalism just before the elections that were scheduled for October 23 (RSF, 2011).

Nabil Karoui, the owner of Nessma TV, was also convicted on May 3, 2012, for disrupting the public order and violating moral values. The conviction is based on the airing of the animated film *Persepolis* mentioned earlier. He was ordered to pay a fine of 2400 dinar. In another case, Sofiene Chourabi, the democracy activist and journalist, called for a protest against the blasphemy law proposed by the Ennahda party. He was arrested the following day for drinking alcohol during Ramadan (The Guardian, 2012). The general director of the Arabic newspaper *Attounissia*, Naserddine Ben Saida, was arrested along with two of the newspaper's journalists for publishing a photo of football player Sami Khedira and his nude girlfriend. (Abrougui, 2014).

Lawyer Mabrouk Korchide filed three cases against a blogger and two other citizens for their publications and reactions mobilizing against his appointment as governor's advisor. Blogger Riadh Sahli was prosecuted for defamation on the internet for publishing news about protests on his Facebook page *Medenine* (RSF, 2012, p. 69).

Six years after the uprising, concerns emerged around the return of the authoritarian tendencies. One of the forms of the return of authoritarian tendencies is the authoritarian discourse emphasizing stability, and law and order gained credibility once more, in addition to the return of the repressive habits of policy and security services (Boukhars, 2017). As one of the interviewees who is a journalist at Al Hiwar newspaper indicates, "We face pressures, I have been through lots of pressures. Sometimes it is external pressures, why did you do this report, or this person is on our side. Sometimes you stop and call the journalists union. I am not talking about normal daily work pressures at the newsroom, but pressures that pose threats to content."¹³²

In his speech in January 2016, President Essebsi blamed journalists and media outlets for amplifying social turmoil as they report protests against unemployment. This hostile rhetoric from such a senior official has directly led to encouraging arrests and mistreatment of reporters. In 2016 several journalists were arrested and charged by military prosecutors for insulting the armed forces between September and November, such as Jamel Arfaoui, Mohamed Naem Haj Mansour, and Rahced Khairi (Freedom House, 2017).

There have been attempts to filter adult content as well as calls to filter content that leads to incitement. The security attacks by Al-Qaeda group members on the armed forces in July 2014 have led to the drafting of a new cybercrime law and the establishment of the Tunisian Technical Agency for Telecommunications (ATT). However, the head of ATT, Jamek Zenkri, has mentioned that the agency does not seek to practice internet filtering or censorship (Abrougui, 2014).

In conclusion, despite the developments in the status of media freedoms in Tunisia since 2011, there are some lacking foundations to the continuation of the current developments. There are concerns about legislation and codes used to limit media freedoms under the calls for protecting religious values, public morals, or national security. The Tunisian media still has a way to go to turn into free, independent, and professional entities. The situation for media and journalists has also worsened since the last presidential elections in October 2019. There is a gradual return of self-censorship and use of penal code to limit media freedoms and the lack of the quality of infrastructure that supports news production.

¹³² Interview, T_Priv_15

5.3.4 Press Subsidies

Press subsidies are among the sub-dimensions of the dimension of the Role of the State identified by Hallin and Mancini. The press subsidies are a form of available government support to media organizations in some countries, either through direct support in terms of money, or indirect in terms of lowered or eliminated sales tax. The justification for the press support is to maintain some level of diversity in the media market.

In Tunisia, print media under Ben Ali have periodically faced financial difficulties that made them vulnerable to government pressures. The government used direct and indirect subsidies to control the media. For example, in several situations, the government withdrew its advertising funding to media organizations as a punishment if the press published something negative about the country (Rugh, 2004, p. 127). The regime also utilized another form of control through the Central Agency for Public Communications (CAPA). CAPA was created in 1990 to enhance the image of the Tunisian regime in international media. The Agency was responsible for distributing advertising revenue from public administrations to the various media outlets, hence determining their funding (El-Issawi, 2012).

The Tunisian radio and television emerged as a government-operated service since it was established. It depended mainly on direct state subsidies for funding. Up until the 1980s, radio set owners paid an annual license fee of 2 dinars and television set owners paid a fee of 5 dinars, in addition to a small fee paid over the electricity bill. The broadcaster faced negative consequences due to the lack of a robust financial base, operating budget, and equipment (Browne, 1993, p. 270).

Most Tunisian newspapers continue to rely on government subsidies to continue surviving in the market. The Tunisian government also pays for publishing official announcements and for purchasing equipment. Subsidies are distributed to both pro-government and opposition newspapers. The presidential decree (April 10, 1999) stipulated the amount of the subsidies allocated for opposition parties' newspapers annually. This represented a subtle and effective way to control opposition newspapers. This tool was used to erode alternate viewpoints or the ability to raise criticism of government policies (Press Reference, 2020).

Another form of indirect subsidies that existed under Ben Ali was when the regime did not enforce certain, favoured, private audio-visual channels to pay license, equipment fees, and taxes stipulated by the law. In one example, Hannibal TV received a three-year

exemption from the tax owed to the state and a two-year exemption from fees for transmitters paid to the office of national transmission. The AVIP production company was exempt from all customs duties and VAT on imported equipment. After 2011, most of the channels owned by members close to the Ben Ali family continued to operate, including Mosaique FM, Jawhara FM, and Nessma TV. These channels would no longer be able to have the same financial market strength since they lost most of the special subsidies that allowed them to operate under Ben Ali. Their financial positions were significantly reduced. (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 671).

In conclusion, the Tunisian media continues to operate using support from the government. There still exist some forms of subsidies and funding for public media.

Conclusion on the dimension of the Role of the State in Tunisian media system

Tunisia has witnessed media regulations reform, as a new press code was adopted (law 115/2011), which guarantees journalists' fundamental rights. Later HAICA was established to regulate the broadcast sector (Webb, 2014, p. 101). The installation of HAICA in itself did not necessarily lead to a significant change in the media scene. A fragile democratic setting is shaped by the new political forces' performance, which can influence the newly established entities. The change in the media scene is not an automatic formal process of changing the existing entities, but it is a day-to-day process pertinent to how pluralistic the political environment is. The new bodies lack a tradition of established independence, making them easily vulnerable to the political will and other forces. In Tunisia, the situation between HAICA and the multiple governments transferred into a situation closer to the interaction in the countries Hallin and Mancini classified in the Mediterranean model.

Contrary to the significant state dominance over public media in Egypt, the Tunisian public broadcaster can be classified closer to Hallin and Mancini's Polarized Pluralist model, showing how different political parties attempt to control public media. Although the Polarized Pluralist model implies the state has substantial control over the public broadcaster, directors of the public broadcasting stations are hired by the Prime Ministers in Spain and Italy. The state control over the broadcaster, especially in the case of Egypt, is different. Under President Sisi, there is a return to the Nasser style nationalist media. Egypt does not fit precisely into a pattern similar to Mediterranean European Countries with government influence over public broadcasters' boards, where at least the intervening governments themselves are democratically elected, and their interference is guided by-laws, rules, and regulations. The government interference in

Egypt is because both politicians and journalists still perceive the state media as a platform for voicing the regime's propaganda.

Tunisia, despite the achievements of the developments in the status of media freedoms in Tunisia since 2011, is still lacking foundations to continue current developments. There are concerns about legislation and codes used to limit media freedoms under the calls for protecting religious values, public morals, or national security. The Tunisian media still has a way to go to turn into free, independent, and professional entities. The situation for media and journalists has also worsened since the last presidential elections in October 2019. There is a gradual return of self-censorship and use of penal code to limit media freedoms, in addition to the lack of the quality of infrastructure that supports news production.

5.4 Political parallelism

Hallin and Mancini note that one of the essential contributions in the book *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World* is the authors' criticisms for how the dimension of political parallelism is conceptualized. The concept is tied to the particular way political history in Europe has developed. They note that the concept needs to be reconceptualized when applied to other parts of the world (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 292)

As discussed in section 5.1 about the political context, the analysis of the dimension of political parallelism is pertinent to understanding civil society's development and political parties in the Tunisian political context. This part explores how Tunisia has developed from a controlled public sphere by the state to a more pluralistic public sphere. Different new actors could access the communicative spaces by opening new media outlets either on traditional media or social media platforms. However, the analysis shows that practices and power centers from the past continue to exist. The elite networks remaining from the old regime represent political parties and media ventures in most cases. The situation became a threat to a liberal public sphere and led to an extremely polarized media scene. The development of a pluralist public sphere determines how effective the status of democracy is and its ability to integrate democratic rule in the long run.

Scholars have argued that Ben Ali and the Trabelsi family's departure has left a power vacuum in Tunisia. This power vacuum turned into a bitter battle for control over the media, which poses a threat to the whole process of democratic transformation (Farmanfarmaian, 2014).

5.4.1 Media ownership

This section explores the development of the patterns of media ownership following the uprising. The experience from the ownership developments in Tunisia shows that struggle over power control of the media led to a severe polarization in the public sphere. Media became a place for political battles. The media landscape under Ben Ali was dominated by a handful of either state-owned media outlets or private ventures owned by figures closely tied to the family of former President Ben Ali and the ruling party (Freedom House, 2017). The power centers carried over from the Ben Ali and Trabelsi family, through the elite networks privilege, have captured the media sphere (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 657). The first network in the Tunisian elite sector is the older elites' network of privileges

under the previous regime. They have been fighting to retain the system upon which their interests depend and which has in the past serviced to provide them stability, financial security, and international support. The system has neither been transparent nor inclusive. This elite group struggles to retain its embedded power network, even if this leads to a semi-authoritarian, regime-controlled media scene (Rijkers, Freund, & Nucifora, 2014). As noted by a member of the executive council of HAICA, “It is a very elitist group that controlled the media. Control over media also implies control over political life and unions. All parties use the media outlets. All of them benefited from the freedom-of-expression. When those parties get in power, they are fighting against regulations that ensure freedom-of-expression”¹³³.

Patterns of private media ownership under Ben Ali included Belhassen Traboulsi, the brother of the wife of former President Ben Ali; this brother was a shareholder of the first private radio station Mosaique FM 115. Cyrine Mabrouk, Ben Ali’s daughter, owned Shems FM, launched in 2010. Sakhr Materi, the son-in-law of Ben Ali, established the religious radio “Zitouna for the Holy Quran” in 2007. Zitouna is an example of the relationship between business and politics in Tunisia (Haugbølle & Cavatorta, 2012, p. 104). Mourad Gueddiche, the son of Ben Ali’s physician, owned radio station Express FM (2010). Jawhara FM(2005) is also owned by a group of businessmen close to the former regime (UNESCO, 2013, p. 53). Other Tunisian people in the business sector owned direct or indirect shares in several radio stations, such as Lotfi Abdennadher, a shareholder in Mosaique FM and Diwan FM. Another businessman Aziz Miled, died in November 2012, leaving shares in Radio Jawhara FM and other indirect shares in Radio Sabra FM (RSF, 2018). The first Tunisian private TV station is Hannibal TV, established in 2005 by businessman Larbi Nasra. He is connected to the son of Belhassen Traboulsi by marriage. The second Tunisian private television station is Nessma TV, which was established in 2007, under a co-ownership between Ghazi brothers and Nabil Karoui (50 percent), film producer Tarek Ben Ammar (25 percent), and former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (25 percent) (UNESCO, 2013, p. 53).

Following 2011, the number of private media outlets has also increased significantly. According to HAICA, currently, there are ten private TV stations, 19 private radio stations, and 9 community radio services operating in Tunisia (HAICA, 2018). Most of those media outlets that managed to continue in the market following 2011, are the strong ones still held by wealthy private owners. The increase in the number of outlets has led to strengthening the connections between media owners and politicians (Freedom House, 2017).

¹³³ Interview, T_Reg_8

Individuals from the political arena hold multiple TV stations. Nabil Karoui, the founder of Nessma TV, is an active member and a principal founder of the Nidaa Tounis party, which was co-founded by President Beji Caid Essebsi (RSF, 2018). Under the venture with Nessma TV, foreign investments entered the Tunisian media market for the first time. The station is partly owned by the Italian media mogul Prime Minister Berlusconi. One of the shareholders is Tarek Ben Ammar, who is also an extremely wealthy businessman and movie producer based in France and closely connected to the Saudi Royal family and the Tunisian political and cultural elites (Haugbølle & Cavatorta, 2012, p. 104). Nessma TV is a perfect example of the correlation between media and power; it has already faced multiple sanctions imposed by HAICA as a result of political advertising as a result of its support for the Nidaa Tounis party during elections (Yacoub, 2017, p. 115). Karoui had unfolded his story about the influential role he played in the election of Essebsi in 2014 when he served as a member in the political office of Nidaa Tounis and managing director of Nessma TV until 2016 (Al-Obaidi, 2018). Although Nabil Karoui resigned as CEO of Nessma TV in 2016, many believe that he has played a leading role against HAICA. He also played a role in delaying media reforms and the implementation of the new media legislation. He launched slander campaigns against HAICA. Karoui gained the support of Islamist, liberal and leftist leaders (Labidi, 2017, p. 130). In November 2015, HAICA criticized the presidency for granting Nessma TV exclusive rights for broadcasting the celebration of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Tunisian organizations (Freedom House, 2017).

Hannibal TV is another major player in the TV sector. In 2013, Larbi Nasra sold most of his share in Hannibal TV; 90% of the company's capital, to two major Tunisian groups (over 70%) and a Tunisian offshore company (more than 10%). Larbi Nasra remains a minority shareholder for 10% of the shares. The two groups are Nouredine Hachicha (Soroubat) and the Makni group (real estate, textile, etc.) (Business News, 2013). Another channel is Ettounissiya, which is owned by Sami el Fehri, a former associate of the Ben Ali family. Before 2011, he owned a media production company in partnership with the brother in law of Ben Ali. It went off-air in 2012 because of a disagreement with the production company. It aired a group of political programs and was trying to invite guests from different political affiliations to avoid being labeled as an ally to the old regime. (Ayoub, 2013). After Sami Fehri was imprisoned for illegal use of state television resources under Ben Ali, Ettounisiya ownership was transferred to a foreign investor. The law bans direct foreign ownership of local media. However, the ownership rule was circumvented by local associations or other proxies. It became owned by a US-based holding and was later been announced that it was taken over by a Qatari investment group (Kausch, 2013, p. 6).

New political powers that entered the political arena after 2011 soon got involved in establishing media ventures. Ossama Ben Salem, the founder of Zitouna TV, and Zitouna Hidaya is a leading member of the Ennahda party. He is the son of the previous Ennahda Minister of Higher Education and Technology, Moncef Ben Salem. The channel does not seem to have other funding sources except for the funding provided by "friends" (RSF, 2018). Another TV channel is Al Hiwar, owned by journalist Tahar bin Hussain; he is an activist and a journalist. The channel is affiliated with the Nidaa Tounis party, which strongly opposes the Ennahda party (Ayoub, 2013).

The involvement of the old elite network in the media sector has led to a "counter-revolution." The situation within the media sector in Tunisia has been described as the "Berlusconi model," referring to the merging between politics and media control to create a common discourse backed by business stakeholders. On the one hand, the government considers these companies as headed by trusted elites who can disseminate information and do good to the party in power. On the other hand, the media channels are keen on maintaining a strong link with the government, because they see their companies as private platforms for political gains and a mechanism to strengthen their connection and economic benefits from the government (Farmanfarmanian, 2014, p. 670).

The liberation of the media from government control in Tunisia should be considered with caution because media fell to the potential capture by self-serving business leaders (Labidi, 2017). Media ventures that were established under Ben Ali are mostly owned by businessmen and members of the Ben Ali family entourage. The same pattern continued after 2011, where media ventures' ownership contributes to strengthening the relations between the media and the political arena. As all political factions became involved in politics, almost all of them were keen on engaging in media ventures. Political factions consider the media a tool for communicating in the public sphere. At the same time, media is used as an instrument to promote political agendas.

5.4.2 Political affiliation of media personnel

Following the 2011 uprising, it looked like the media in Tunisia would have a dramatic transformation into a more pluralistic and democratic media. New regulation and licensing rules were introduced, and the newspapers and media outlets enjoyed greater freedom-of-expression. The more recent developments show a deeper problem in the Tunisian media system, which is the increased polarization among journalists.

Although the early days of the Arab Spring witnessed an expansion in different new national media outlets, coupled with legal and institutional reforms, the rising polarization soon eliminated the transitions. The new media initiatives were rapidly captured by wealthy interests, political movements, or the state (Lynch, 2015, pp. 93-94).

At the beginning of his reign, Ben Ali was keen on ensuring the loyalty of journalists. He used to choose some journalists and then offer them an opportunity to work in the External Communications Agency. According to a member of the executive council of SNJT, the agency operated to highlight the image of Ben Ali's regime externally. At the same time, the agency has played a role in spreading favoritism among journalists¹³⁴. The Agency was initially established to embellish the regime's image in international media and was responsible for distributing advertising revenue from public administration to the various media outlets, hence determining their funding and viability (El-Issawi, 2012). As explained by a prominent journalist at the Tunisian public radio, "Ben Ali gradually got rid of opposing media figures at the same time when he was terminating opposition. From that point onwards, the media was only operating to support Ben Ali's regime; no other voices were allowed"¹³⁵.

Following the 2011 uprising, journalists have indicated that they experienced a liberating effect. They were able to operate beyond publishing the regime's unified message that they used to practice. This time represented a possibility finally to allow them to feel they could operate as journalists who could express their views freely and avenge long years of reverential reporting (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 63). As noted by an independent media researcher in the interviews, the expansion in the freedom-of-expression did not last long. There was a return to the practices of pleasing the regime, "The same pattern of affiliation of journalists with the political system continued after Ben Ali, for several reasons. Most of the journalists who work today used to work under Ben Ali, most of the organizations also existed under Ben Ali. There was no complete rupture from the previous legacy and old practices in media organizations."¹³⁶

Multiple factors limit the practice of the newfound freedom- of-expression, especially in the state media, such as the lack of clear editorial guidelines, the lack of professional journalistic training, and the temptation to mix advocacy and information. The acquired new practices did not lead to sustainable journalistic practices in the newsrooms (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 65). A journalist and anchor at Tunisian radio noted that the situation is different at private media, "It is the owner who has control over the type of content.

¹³⁴ Interview, T_Uni_29

¹³⁵ Interview, T_Pub_18

¹³⁶ Interview, T_Ind_4

Private media is only willing to develop content that parallels with the political stance of whoever is willing to buy airtime. An obvious case of this situation was the municipal elections in 2018. Since several media organizations were opposing the law, they boycotted reporting about the elections.”¹³⁷

Under Ennahda's rule, the political struggles between the Ennahda party and the state-owned media escalated. Polarization increased to the point it was labeled ‘fierce political and ideological battles between opposing groups’ (the Islamist forces versus the secular forces). At that point, staff who worked in state media under Ben Ali were viewed as belonging to society's “secular side” (El-Issawi, 2012). Another factor that inflated the debate about journalists' affiliation is the mixing roles between journalists and activists. Journalists adopted a tabloid press format rather than an investigative reporting practice. The dominant feature shaping the media landscape gradually became a platform to voice a message instead of performing a watchdog role in the political sphere (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 69)

The different governments tried to ensure some of Ben Ali's privileges concerning control over the media. One of the struggles that emerged about the independence of the media sector was the Ennahda government's attempt to appoint leading figures in the state media in 2012. Ennahda attempted to nominate leaders for the prominent newspapers La Presse and Esahafa as well as the new directors of the public TV stations Watannya 1 and Watannya 2 (Joffé, 2014, p. 628). On several other occasions throughout the Troika rule, the government attempted to implement government appointments, despite the countering response from the civil society (Joffé, 2014, p. 628).

To conclude, the uprising had a liberating effect on journalists in Tunisia. They could express their opinions more freely after many years of working to serve the regime. Soon, this recently found freedom started to fade, and journalists found themselves subject to the media outlets' polarization effect. Journalists frequently have to follow the political ideology of the station where they are working. Because the stations were subject to more growing polarization, the journalists were facing ideological hiring and providing content that is appealing to the funding parties.

5.4.3 Media Partisanship

After the 2011 uprising, the Tunisian media went through drastic changes. Media went out from under the strict control of Ben Ali's regime to suddenly being able to present

¹³⁷ Interview, T_Pub_18

multiple political points of view. Media outlets suddenly found themselves able to criticize both government and opposition figures, which was never possible under Ben Ali. Tunisia's experience regarding the public sphere points to increasing control over the media, which is becoming more acute over time. Control over the media in both public and private institutions is a regime mechanism for political maneuver and social pressure over the media landscape (Farmanfarmaian, 2014).

The growing political polarization led mainstream media to become a central place of the political battles between the secular and Islamist factions. The opening of new media platforms led to the rise of partisan media looking for profit, hence amplifying specific political parties' voices to achieve high reach. Instead of providing people with a space for civic debate, the media went into manipulating the audience's perceptions. TV channels transformed into a powerful instrument for delivering political messages (Ayoub, 2013). The Islamist forces used media outlets to attack other political powers (they labeled them as the leftist lobbyists) and used the media as a weapon against government policies (El-Issawi, 2012, p. 15). The two parties exchanged foul language: Nidaa Tounis supporters called the Islamists rats, and those supporting the Islamist side called their opponents snakes. Each of these factions was thinking of eliminating the other (Zelin, 2013). The public sphere developed what was labeled "a discourse of shame" (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 663).

Consequently, most media fell victim to the growing polarization. Early on, after the uprising, media outlets were criticized for their bias towards certain political parties. Some publications rapidly switched from glorification of the Ben Ali regime to scornful criticism of it. There were also notes to the emergency of sensationalism, exaggeration, excess, and tension. The lack of professional experience among journalists also hampered the delivery of high-quality, impartial, and professional reporting on many occasions, such as the elections (El-Issawi, 2012, p. 17). A journalist and TV presenter at Nessma TV mentioned, "There is no long-term editorial policy. It changes with the variations in the names in the political arena. Since 2012, our editorial policy sometimes changes between three months up to one and a half years. We focus on the achievements of a particular government"¹³⁸.

Another executive at a private media venture added "Media organizations sometimes change from supporting one political party to another. The media are not even keen on holding a particular political stance. If they stick with one political stance, they may not

¹³⁸ Interview, T_Priv_6

find income. So it goes following its benefit. During the elections, every politician ensures support from a TV station. Carthage is affiliated with the Ennahda party".¹³⁹

The hostile discourse between Ennahda and Nidaa Tounis escalated over time. The discourse focused mainly on eliminating the other from the political arena, which they also described as the "opponent" and the "different." The audience finds these partisan narratives more attractive than civic debates and calls for unity and compromise. Each of these factions was thinking of eliminating the other (Zelin, 2013). Supporters of the Islamist side claimed that other channels were "calling for a coup." Supporters of the leftist camp claimed that pro-Islamist government channels such as Al Mutawasset and Zitouna were heavily engaged in defending government policies and discrediting their opponents (Ayoub, 2013). A media researcher noted that media owners, on many occasions, control the media outlet content, especially broadcasting channels, based on their political stances. "Content is aligned to the businessmen's political stance sponsoring the station to ensure securing advertising revenue. Media organizations get quickly involved in political or ideological battles since most of these new channels are financially vulnerable."¹⁴⁰ Another interviewee who works as an anchor at the public radio notes that these media outlets are labeled "the contractor media." "It is also worth noting that even independent media are involved in content created according to political stances"¹⁴¹.

In one survey, audience data shows that channels that existed before 2011 still dominate the Tunisian TV scene. Islamist and religious stations do not have a similar number of audiences. This can indicate that the polarization between the Islamic and secular poles is not reflected in the media context. It somewhat resembles a battlefield with different factors and competing interests (Meringolo, 2015). A member of the executive council of SNJT points out that "Freedom of expression seems to be only endorsed when we are on the opposition side and becomes resented when we are on the government side." For example, when Mohsen Marzouk¹⁴² was working for the presidency, he became responsible for editing the current president's interviews. When he was on the side of the opposition, he used to speak about freedom of expression"¹⁴³. Gradually TV channels are labeled by their affiliation. TV channels that existed before the uprising are labeled as leftist and elitist. Islamist parties also launched their channels before the uprising (Ayoub,

¹³⁹ Interview, T_Ind_20

¹⁴⁰ Interview, T_Ind_4

¹⁴¹ Interview, T_Pub_22

¹⁴² A Tunisian politician, the leader of Machroui Tounes political party, who ran for presidency in 2019

¹⁴³ Interview, T_Uni_29

2013).

Television debate programs developed into lively forums for debates between diverse political groups. However, polarization continued to escalate in the media landscape. New media organizations are divided by political affiliation, economic interest, and ideology. Some media owners have openly supported certain political parties, in an apparent violation of the 2011 press code (Freedom House, 2017). A member of the executive council of SNJT indicated that in many cases media figures are involved in counter slanders and accusations, along with very low-quality content and lack of professional standards¹⁴⁴. An interview with a parliament member points to the increasing tension between Nidaa Tounis and Ennahda during the elections. Voters were angry about parties' agendas and control over the media. All other political parties were crushed in the middle. "All parties play this game, to use the emotions of the population to attract voters."¹⁴⁵

The partisanship eventually increased due to the lack of experience among journalists and their long history of serving the regime's propaganda. The situation worsened by the lack of a code of ethics for media practices. The pursuit of investigative reporting soon changed into a wave of sensational media reporting with editorial practices similar to tabloid-like publications (El-Issawi, 2012, p. 6). The media researcher notes that a reason for journalists falling subject to polarization is the lack of resources and skills in some cases "Most journalists lack the technical capacity and the resources to go to the field and investigate news. They can be called 'computer journalists.' They only sit at their desk and produce content"¹⁴⁶. One of the interviewees, who is a journalist and anchor at the Tunisian public radio, points to the negative consequences journalists face when not complying with management content requirements, "Suppose a journalist does not deliver the appealing content expected by the owner. In that case, he will risk getting out of business and not being paid"¹⁴⁷.

Private channels have started to focus on entertainment, in addition to sports, which became increasingly popular. In one example, TV private station Hannibal, which depends on advertisers that became attracted to the popularity of programs such as Belmakchouf. Private media compete for advertisers' revenues, and the channels are forced to innovate

¹⁴⁴ Interview, T_Uni_29

¹⁴⁵ Interview, T_Pol_23

¹⁴⁶ Interview, T_Ind_4

¹⁴⁷ Interview, T_Pub_18

to attract viewers. These commercial imperatives have repercussions on the topics tackled and the ways in which they are discussed (Haugbølle & Cavatorta, 2012, pp. 107-108). The focus on political content is causing the audience to be skeptical about the Tunisian media. Audiences are accusing the media of neglecting the essence of the uprising and being involved in partisanship. The media is accused of political and ideological divides by ignoring social justice calls and focusing on citizens' daily concerns (Abrougui, 2014). As explained by an interviewee who is an anchor at the Public broadcaster, journalists turn to use sensational content as political content becomes less appealing to the audience, "Media outlets are looking to present sensational journalism. However, not all journalists are working in that way. Many journalists in private media follow that trend. They are looking for more readership, viewership, or likes"¹⁴⁸. This is also noted to have been leading journalists to provide light content to the audience as noted in an interview, "Journalists justify light programming as it is what the audience wants."¹⁴⁹

To conclude, despite Tunisia's sturdy progress in the status of freedom- of-expression and media freedoms following the 2011 uprising, Tunisian media is still a venue for manipulation, intimidation, and bias. Tunisian media suffer financial hardships due to lack of advertising and thus remain subject to political influence. The media is affected by political partisanship and the different political parties' agendas. Tunisia's media system can be classified in this sub-dimension as closer to Hallin and Mancini's Mediterranean model, which is characterized by the strong involvement of political parties, lobbies, and syndicates in controlling the media.

In conclusion, about the political parallelism dimension In Tunisia, private media emerged in connection with the Ben Ali family and developed the best ways to survive and coexist with the repressive regime. (Barata Mir, 2011, p. 2). The liberalization of the media sector led to a superficial liberalized structure that can be described as a "mafia-family-type structure" (Barata, 2013, p. 118). Networks of private ownership continued to dominate the media sector after the 2011 uprising. The outcome was different than in Egypt in terms of increased polarization as media outlets fell victim to political powers. The media became a stage for the fierce battle between opposing political groups, on the one hand, the Islamists (Ennahda Party) and, on the other hand, the secularists. The media landscape became a venue for manipulation, intimidation, and bias as "the main stage for the fierce political and ideological battle between the country's opposing camps: conservative Islamists and secular elitists" (El-Issawi, 2012). The media in Tunisia fell into

¹⁴⁸ Interview, T_Pub_22

¹⁴⁹ Interview, T_Uni_29

a different type of control. It fell hostage to politics and were used as platforms for serving political agendas. Media platforms became battlegrounds for opposing forces, with government officials openly calling for the purge of opposing voices (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 57). In the case of Tunisia, the pattern of media privatization did not contribute to a more pluralistic media scene. Media ventures that were established under Ben Ali were mostly owned by businessmen and members of the Ben Ali family entourage. After 2011, when media ventures' ownership contributed to strengthening the relations between the media and the political arena, this led to a phenomenon of "savage deregulation." All political powers engaged in media ventures and on-air battles. Political factions considered the media a tool for communicating in the public sphere. At the same time, media is used as an instrument to promote political agendas. In this sense, the media scene in Tunisia can be located closer to Hallin and Mancini's Polarized Pluralist model.

5.5 Media Market

Hallin and Mancini focused on the quantitative variable of the high press circulation rates in the analysis of the media market dimension. They argued that it could be linked with the earlier historical development of mass press circulation. Countries that have developed mass press circulation early, such as Northern European countries, are identified by a higher press circulation degree. Southern European countries that developed mass-circulation press later, after the beginning of the 20th century, were never able to develop high circulation rates despite advancements of literacy rates or improving economic conditions. Therefore, in Southern European countries, mass press circulation patterns could be characterized by a small, elite – mainly urban – well-educated and politically active readership (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 22-24). Multiple scholars criticized Hallin and Mancini's approach for limiting the media dimension only to mass press circulation. Scholars questioned the media market dimension's ability as formulated to describe the media systems outside of the Western world. According to this formulation, the rest of the world's media systems will consequently fall into the category of low mass press circulation, which distinguishes the Polarized Pluralist model (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 288).

5.5.1 Mass Circulation Press

Historically the Tunisian Press followed the French traditional press model, in which newspapers were highly editorialized. The press in Tunisia also had a high concentration in the capital Tounis, and were mainly directed to the cultural elite (Dajani, 2011, p. 57). Tunisia's press dates back to 1889 with the establishment of the French Colonial Press of the newspaper *Le Petit Parisian*, which followed the traditional French model with highly editorialized content and representing the government's official position. Independent views were discouraged, and the nationalistic sentiment was suppressed. This suppression made the Tunisian press target mainly the colonial residents and the Tunisian Cultural elites (Press Reference, 2020).

Most of Arabic language, daily newspapers published in Tunisia were translated versions of French Language newspapers and were owned by them (Dajani, 2011, p. 57). Four out of eight daily papers in Tunisia were in French, and the other four were published in Arabic, in addition to several weekly bilingual publications (Rugh, 2004, p. 124). Tunisian press had also been, for extended periods, under direct government control or strongly subject to its influence (Browne, 1993, p. 262). After Tunisia gained its independence in 1956, the press maintained the same existing structure. In the next 20 years, the press

changed from colonial to autonomous statehood under the Bourguiba authoritarian leadership (Press Reference, 2020).

Ben Ali allowed loyalist newspapers to operate. Ownership of newspapers varied between political parties, individuals, and the government. Two newspapers were published by the ruling party Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD), *Al-Hurriyya* and *Le Renouveau*. RCD members occupied critical positions in the editorial staff and on the boards of directors as well as for two other regime-controlled newspapers *La Presse* and *Al-Sahafa*. Finally, there were four independent daily newspapers (Rugh, 2004, p. 124). Besides, there were privately owned papers that retained firm ties to the regime through friendship, family, or the industry's de facto nepotism (*Assabah*, *Al-Chourouk*, *Le Temps*, *Le Quotidien*, *Assarih*). The opposition press struggled to continue with the political and financial pressures (*Al-Mouatinoun*, *Al-Fajr*, *Al-Tariq al-Jadid*) (El-Issawi, 2012, p. 3). Print media periodically faced financial difficulties, making them vulnerable to government pressures (Rugh, 2004, p. 127). Print media also had low distribution rates, about 45,000 copies of *Al-Shuruq*, and 30,000 copies for *La Presse*. In 2004, there were only 19 daily newspapers per 1,000 inhabitants, one of the lowest circulation rates in the Middle East region (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004). The development of electronic media during the 2000s has led to the emergence of new print media outlets. Simultaneously, the spread of electronic media has cut the circulation of newspapers that could not maintain their readers (Dajani, 2011, p. 63). In 2002 total daily newspaper circulation in Tunisia was 375,000 copies. The number of daily newspapers was 22 publications (Press Reference, 2020).

In a study of media consumption patterns in the Arab world, Tunisia has seen a 24% increase in internet penetration between 2014 and 2017. At the same time, the percentage of people who read newspapers and magazines and listened to the radio decreased suddenly (newspapers: 47% in 2013 against 25% in 2017; magazines: 26% in 2013 against 19% in 2017; radio: 59% in 2013 against 49% in 2017) (Belaid, 2018).

After 2011, newspaper circulation rates declined sharply. The number of newspapers decreased from 265 to 50 newspapers. The number of websites increased from 20 to 50 websites. Print can be considered the least popular media sector. The existing 50 newspapers publish around 100,000 copies per day (RSF, 2018).

In conclusion, the Tunisian newspaper industry dates back to colonial times, back to the end of the 19th century. Historically the Tunisian Press followed the French traditional press model, in which newspapers were highly editorialized. The press in Tunisia also had

a high readership in the capital Tunis, and are mainly directed to the cultural elite (Dajani, 2011, p. 57). Newspaper readership declined sharply starting in 2013. Given all these factors, the media market dimension would be better understood by expanding the dimension beyond the mass circulation press to add other factors.

5.5.2 Overall Media Market Size

In this section, it is essential to explore the media market beyond the mass press circulation. It looks at how the overall market size developed and how these developments led to impacts on the pluralistic media scene including, the possibility of citizens freely sharing ideas and debates. The new media market includes additional media outlets (new television stations, radio stations, and online media). However, the media market's economic aspects pose a risk to the development of more pluralistic media.

The Tunisian broadcasting sector has a long history; following independence, the Tunisian government invested in developing broadcasting services. The Arabic service, however, surged during the late 1950s and 1960s. (Browne, 1993, p. 264). TV service started in May 1966, in the following 20 years, there was phenomenal growth. The number of receivers increased from 5500 in 1966 to 230,000 in 1976, to 500,000 in 1986, and to 650,000 in 1991. There were also about 1.7 million radio sets in 1991 (Browne, 1993, p. 265 & 269).

Today, television remains the most popular medium among Tunisians. The number of Tunisian households with TV is 2.3 million in 2017 (98% of the households) (Statista, 2018). The most important traditional media uses are that 83% of Tunisians use the media to follow the news; 61% consider that the information broadcasted is trustworthy. Radio is the second most popular medium after TV. Of these households 67% own and use a radio, and 27% of Tunisians listen to the radio via the internet (RSF, 2018). A survey of media use patterns in the Middle East, including Tunisia, found out that television is the highest among all different media, although it declined from 98% to 93% in 2017. At the same time, internet usage has increased from 63% to 84% in 2017 (mideastmedia.org, 2018). The Tunisian audio-visual sector (radio and television) changed dramatically after 2011. It emerged as a medium capable of providing Tunisians with commentary on the developments of events. Television viewership for the national broadcaster increased immensely. It rose from 9.5% to 80% in 2012. By the end of 2013, 89% of Tunisians indicated that they watch the news from the national broadcaster (International Republican Institute, 2014). Watannya 1 – the Tunisian Radio and Television enterprise's

main channel – managed to get the largest share of the viewership in the first two years after the uprising (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 666).

Right after the uprising, the broadcasting market boomed as a result of easing restrictions on media. The number of TV stations increased from 5 stations to 14 stations, and the number of radio stations increased from 14 stations to 41 stations (RSF, 2018). A similar pattern occurred in the post-communist states for a short period right after the revolution, where journalists felt they were “free” (Gross & Jakubowicz, 2012, p. 4). But this expansion in the media market following 2011, was short-lived. Several of the newly established media outlets closed later, and almost all of them faced financial hardships.

Unsustainable business model

Similar to Egypt's situation, the quick expansion of the media market did not last long. The business model adopted by new broadcasting ventures was not sustainable due to various reasons. A main obstacle was the high cost to sustain operations for media ventures. Most new ventures lacked sufficient financial resources and had to seek funding from political parties. As noted by the editor-in-chief of web-portal Inkifada, “Most of those new players in the market were very vulnerable to market dynamics. Media outlets, especially small ones, are in financial hardships. Consequently, they easily fall under the control of political lobbies.”¹⁶⁹ One of the interviewees, an anchor at the Tunisian public broadcaster, notes that most of the broadcasting stations, even large stations, suffer financial problems. “for example, even Nesma TV, its expenses exceed 200K dinars per month; however, it does not make any profit as far as I know. Other than AlHiwar AlTonsy, almost no other TV channel is generating revenues”.¹⁷⁰ Even though HAICA tried to support several of the small, young community radio stations to continue their business, problems persisted (Freedom House, 2017). One of the interviewees who works as a journalist at AlHiwar AlTounsi newspaper highlights that the lack of financial independence leads stations to seek political parties' sponsorship. “You cannot blame a media outlet today and say it is oriented to profit. It is a private organization and aims to make a profit”¹⁵⁰.

Media owners consider media outlets valuable, not because they make a decent income to their owners, but because they provide their proprietors with political benefits (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2012, p. 36). An online journalist noted that “Media outlets that are not affiliated with political parties or certain political activities suffered financially”¹⁵¹. Similar

¹⁵⁰ Interview, T_Priv_15

¹⁵¹ Interview, T_Soc_25

concerns were raised by the editor-in-chief at Jawhra FM radio station, “Financial problems have led several media organizations to impose self-censorship or impose specific codes, and sometimes editor-in-chief imposes precise controls. We have problems, but we are facing significantly deteriorated ethical issues as a result of political polarization.”¹⁵²

The hardships facing the media outlets is exacerbated by the decline in advertising revenue caused by the economic situation. The Figure 6 - Advertising spending in Tunisia from 2014-2018 (in B Tunisian dinars) shows the advertising spending in Tunisia from 2014–2018 (in billion Tunisian dinars). Advertising revenue has decreased following 2011, then increased again starting in 2014. The overall advertising spending in the Tunisian media market remains around 202.8 B Tunisian dinars¹⁵³ (75 B US\$).

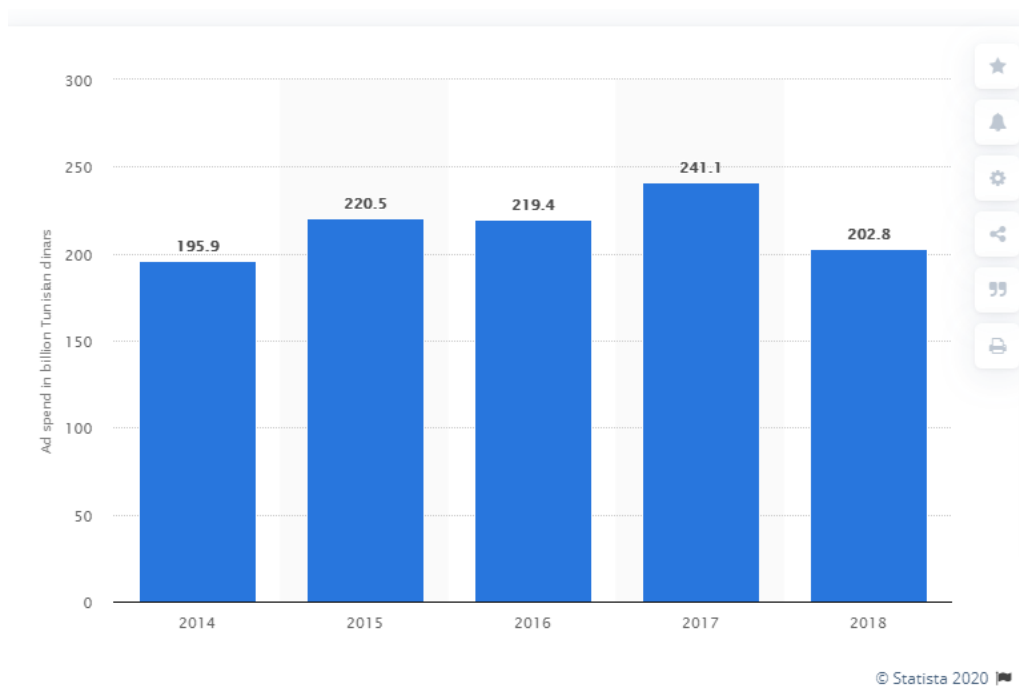


Figure 6 - Advertising spending in Tunisia from 2014-2018 (in B Tunisian dinars)

The unsustainable business model has led to the deterioration of the quality of content. An online journalist highlighted the consequences, “Since most of the channels cannot cover their production cost, they either resort to low-quality and low budget production or air content from French stations.”¹⁵⁴ The editor-in-chief of a private radio station

¹⁵² Interview, T_Priv_16

¹⁵³ Source: Statista - <https://www.statista.com/statistics/888080/ad-spend-tunisia/>

¹⁵⁴ Interview, T_Soc_25

pointed to another issue, “Media seems to seek to increase the rates of viewership to face intense competition. However, only in terms of format but not in terms of content or quality”.¹⁵⁵

The other trend the business model had imposed is the significant trend towards infotainment over the news (Petkanas, 2014). According to journalist and anchor at Nessma TV, “Sometimes, editors justify the use of entertainment to bring some positive vibes and show positive aspects of the government. Increasingly, you don’t report on problems or negative news anymore”¹⁵⁶. A journalist at AlHiwar AlTounsi newspaper mentions, “Entertainment content is more profitable than news content in most cases.”¹⁵⁷ One phenomenon, known as “media fatigue” occurs when the audience tires of following the outcomes of democracy by watching political fighting and violence translated onto the television screen (Gross & Jakubowicz, 2012). There are also fears about the rise of hate speech in the media, which is shaping the new editorial culture (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 660). Another study notes the unethical practices resulting from the fierce competition in the broadcast sector as a result of their interest in high ratings and attracting advertisers. The stations very often challenge sanctions imposed by HAICA. When HAICA imposes sanctions, channels start anti-regulation campaigns against the regulatory body; its sanction is censored on live TV broadcasts, and sometimes there are verbal abuses against its members (Yacoub, 2017, p. 113)

In conclusion, the media viewership pattern in Tunisia can be summarized by the high television viewership. The number of Tunisian households with TV is 2.3 million in 2017 (98% of the households) (Statista, 2018). Social media use has increased as internet usage has increased from 63% to 84% in 2017 (mideastmedia.org, 2018). Similar to Egypt's situation, the quick expansion of the media market did not last long. The business model adopted by new broadcasting ventures was not sustainable due to various reasons. A primary obstacle is the high cost to sustain operations for media ventures. Most new ventures lacked sufficient financial resources and had to seek funding from political parties. The other trend the business model had imposed is the significant trend towards infotainment over the news (Petkanas, 2014).

¹⁵⁵ Interview, T_Priv_16

¹⁵⁶ Interview, T_Priv_6

¹⁵⁷ Interview, T_Priv_15

5.5.3 Inclusiveness of the media market

Historically Tunisian media emerged within the vision for performing its developmental role after independence from colonialism. During the 1990s, the public broadcaster RTT aired multiple programs to fulfill its developmental role. Information broadcasts made up to 25% of the scheduled time. The time was devoted to educational material was 15–20% (Browne, 1993, p. 271). This tendency towards presenting society issues has been declining with the increase in entertainment content. A journalist and anchor at Nessma TV pointed to the lack of interest of media organizations in controversial issues. “It depends on the topic. Sometimes they present social problems or community concerns. Social topics require pre-approval from the management contrary to political topics, or party meetings or ministries¹⁵⁸”.

In terms of demographics, Tunisia has a young population. Consequently, youth represent the most significant social group (38.7% of the population are less than 24 years old) as shown in **Table 9** – showing the distribution of Tunisian population by age groups and gender (Index Mundi, 2020).

Table 9 - Tunisia population distribution by age groups and gender - 2018. Source: Index Mundi

0–14 years	25.25% (male 1,502,655 /female 1,405,310)
15–24 years	13.53% (male 787,178 /female 770,929)
25–54 years	43.25% (male 2,426,011 /female 2,554,253)
55–64 years	9.75% (male 560,233 /female 562,436)
65 years and over	8.22% (male 448,784 /female 498,400)

In a study tracking youth perceptions of the political, social, and economic changes in Tunisia following the uprising, they noted that mainstream media excludes youth voices. Youth feel frustrated because the media is affiliated with political parties and does not provide transparent and neutral news (El Taraboulsi, Mezghanni, Hassasi, Yassein, & Swehli, 2013). One interviewee critic traditional media for hosting political figures more than it shows ordinary Tunisian citizens, journalist and anchor at the Tunisian Radio noted, “There are political figures who appear so often on media outlets as if they have

¹⁵⁸ Interview, T_Priv_6

monopolized media organizations. But the average Tunisian citizen cannot see himself represented on TV. He only sees political figures that he mistrusts in the first place.”¹⁵⁹

One of the interviewees, a journalist at Jawhra FM radio station, confirms that youth do not see themselves represented in the mainstream media in general “I will give one example, the accident of the young man who died last week. The news story of this young man was aired at minute 25 of the news bulletin. Who is going to wait 25 minutes until they listen to what happened to ordinary citizens? Although we are a public media outlet and should be representing the people”¹⁶⁰.

Another study has noted that television and talk shows have emerged as a place for producing conflict, debate, and tension over Tunisian womanhood's definition and renegotiation. The study also recognizes that the presentation of these contested and critical topics challenge television's capabilities as a medium (Petkanas, 2014).

One limitation raised, concerning the inclusiveness of the media market in Tunisia, is media organizations' concentration in the Capital. Most of the publishing houses and TV companies are registered in Tounis and Ariana. The radio market is more regionalized, although there are several private and public radio stations that operate at different geographic locations (RSF, 2018). Another interviewee noted that small media ventures face multiple limitations, which consequently hinders the pluralism of voices in the media market. an executive on HAICA 's council of explains how the current system supports large organizations and does not provide similar support for small media ventures, “In terms of ownership, the system gives businessmen privileges, while it does not guarantee the same privileges for community media. The private TV station gets a license for 20 years, while community media have to renew the license every five years. Consequently, we can notice that the private media that wants to play a political role instead of its role as a media organization. These organizations reflect party stances rather than reflect professional media work. In the last elections, some media outlets refused to report on the elections. This is such a shame. They are depriving the citizen of his right to be informed.”¹⁶¹

Although according to the discussion, the legal framework governing the media sector allows the emergence of more diverse media. However, “I think the same content is

¹⁵⁹ Interview, T_Pub_18

¹⁶⁰ Interview, T_Priv_16

¹⁶¹ Interview, T_Reg_8

repeated in all outlets. I believe that the problem is not in the laws, but how to create inclusive content, different from just entertainment, but professional content.”¹⁶²

Media in Tunisia witnessed some unique positive pluralist experiments of associative media. Associative media are non-profit radio stations and television channels. They are created under the media legislation (Decree-law 116/2011). Their licenses under which they were established and operated were granted by HAICA (Ghazali, 2015, p. 11). Following 2011, tens of small-scale associative media organizations emerged in different regions in Tunisia. Scholars have argued that the proliferation of these community media outlets allowed for new voices to emerge on both the local and the national levels. These associative media have become a third sector in the Tunisian public sphere besides traditional private and public media (Badran, Loisen, & Smets, 2021). The associative media represent one of the experiments where media and civil society managed to engage youth in Tunisia and provide youth opportunities in provincial and urban areas. Community-based radios boomed after the uprising of a citizen-run experience supported by both media and civil society organizations. Usually, they are hosted on the web and use social media to promote their programs. Young volunteers also operate them to ensure low-cost production and presentation of their programs. They usually depend on NGOs funded by international agencies to allocate their resources. The reach of community radio stations remains limited (Mezghanni, 2014, p. 685). One study notes that Tunisian radio stations, particularly those that managed to be popular, are those who were intelligent in selecting specific geographic regions. Associative radios came closer to addressing audience issues and could always benefit from listeners’ feedback, thanks to the regional social networks (Amamou, 2016).

Finally, similar to the trend in Egypt, youth were more inclined to use online media than traditional media. Another study concluded that the preference for news sources in Tunisian main information sources is for internet-based media; it was high among youth and also relatively high among other age groups in Tunisia (Sarnelli & Lomazzi, 2019, pp. 8-9)

To conclude, multiple studies have noted that media in Tunisia faces limitations in terms of diversity. For example, youth consider that mainstream media excludes their voices. Youth do not see themselves reflected in the media. Other limitations to diversity and pluralism emerge from the concentration of media ventures in the capital and political connections with political factions. That connection makes media represent the voices of

¹⁶² Interview, T_Ind_4

political actors rather than ordinary citizens. Media in Tunisia witnessed some unique positive pluralist experiments of associative media. Scholars have considered that the proliferation of these community media outlets has allowed for new voices to emerge on both the local and the national levels. These associative media have become a third sector in the Tunisian public sphere besides traditional private and public media (Badran, Loisen, & Smets, 2021).

5.5.4 Online Media Market

Before the Arab Spring uprising, Tunisia built the reputation of being a well-educated and internet-savvy country. Tunisia was the first African and Arab country that introduced the internet in 1991 (Kallander, 2013, p. 6) and it became widely used until 1996. Internet usage increased between the years 2000 and 2010, about 3500% (Rinnawi, 2011, p. 126). In 2009, about 34% of the Tunisian population were connected to the internet (Safranek, 2012, p. 5). By 2011 about 20% of Tunisians were using Facebook (Zimmerman, 2012).

Under Ben Ali, Tunisia also exemplified one of the cases of the “schizophrenic” internet situation in the Arab world. The regime imposed massive censorship on social media platforms such as websites, blogs, or social media pages that were criticizing the government. Tunisia was listed as one of the most censored internet countries in the world with sophisticated censorship techniques similar to Iran and China (Poell & Darmoni, 2012). Thus this advancement in internet usage did not lead to a spread in media freedom. In fact, the government extended its tools for intimidating journalists on the internet. One example was the blog Nawaat launched in 2004. The blog was blocked in Tunisia, later the blogger who founded Nawaat was imprisoned and died shortly after his detention in jail. Later in 2008, more censorship was imposed on sites like Youtube or Dailymotion used to broadcast videos against the regime (RSF, 2018). The censorship was applied to email under the law regulating regular post mail, allowing authorities to intercept messages that were seen as threatening to national security (Kallander, 2013).

While the internet infrastructure was upgraded and adequate, the content over the internet was under strict state control. The Tunisian Internet Agency (ATI) was the central government body responsible for managing the internet sector, founded in 1996. The internet service acted as partners with the state in policing online traffic. The regime also imposed an aggressive internet filtering system to block websites, filter emails and hack social media and opposition groups' websites (Artaud de la Ferrière & Vallina-Rodriguez, 2014, p. 646).

The Arab Spring was described as the first “Twitter” or internet revolutions in which internet technologies played a significant role. Some scholars challenge the Western view of the role social media played in causing the uprisings and pushing people to the streets (Lowrance, 2016) (Kallander, 2013) (Morozov, 2011). After 2011, the online media market expanded. There has been a surge in the number of media outlets, because there were no regulations pertaining to opening social media projects. Besides, only limited investment was necessary for establishing a new media project. The percentage of households connected to the internet was 44.5% in 2016 (Statistiques Tunisie, 2019). Tunisians spend an average of 29 hours per week surfing the net, versus 26 hours per week watching television, 15 hours per week listening to music, and 3 hours per week reading the newspapers (RSF, 2018). The mobile penetration rate was 127% in 2018 (Statista, 2019). The number of Facebook users is 6,400,000 subscribers in 2017, which is about a 54.9% penetration rate (Internet World Stats, 2019). The mobile data penetration rate was 63.7% in 2016 (RSF, 2018). Tunisians depend mainly on Facebook and Instagram as the most used social media applications. According to Alexa statistics, 30% of Tunisians use Facebook to access news. One of the interviewees, who is a media researcher, points to the reason that makes both platforms popular, “the lack of locally developed platforms in the Tunisian dedicated to news content production. Some of the traditional media organizations started developing online platforms, and these are still underdeveloped.”¹⁶³ Another journalist at the Tunisian public radio station indicates that “There are some examples of popular websites such as Bousla, which also provides a follow up for the parliament sessions.”¹⁶⁴ In a survey of trust in national media in Morocco, Tunisian and Jordan, Internet-based media and telecommunications and social media were by far the essential sources for political news in Tunisia (Sarnelli & Lomazzi, 2019, p. 8).

As the internet emerged early on, journalistic websites mostly reflected the existing media scene; they focused on economy and technology with no emphasis on politics (Ferjani, 2011). In the early introduction of online media, the public broadcaster started its online service even earlier than 2010. One of the interviews noted that the online service of the public broadcaster faces multiple obstacles. “The main obstacle to our performance is funding. We face, at the same time, fierce competition locally and internationally. At least as a public web portal, we try to provide accurate and unbiased information. We cannot participate in the trend of tabloid-like journalism. The market is also chaotic in the sense of vulgarity of the content, similar to tabloid newspaper”¹⁶⁵.

¹⁶³ Interview, T_Ind_4

¹⁶⁴ Interview, T_Soc_25

¹⁶⁵ Interview, T_Soc_10

Online platforms face obstacles similar to traditional media in terms of polarization. Online media outlets became legally recognized as media organizations under the decree-law 115 of November 2011. Political actors consequently invested in online media platforms to support their parties. An online journalist expresses fears about the polarization of online platforms, "For example, the conflict between the parties Carthage and Kassba. Each political party uses the media and Facebook pages to support their side".¹⁶⁶ Another example provided by an interviewee who works as a journalist cites the case of the online newspaper AlGarida, "I remembered in 2014, we were editing the speech of Nasef elMarzouky, the owner of the station. I could see that this is the use of social media for political purposes. The news presented was politicized and opposing to specific groups."¹⁶⁷

Despite the expansion of citizen journalism and online social media, there was no substantial increase in internet accessibility or a widespread consensus of the internet as a source of information (Kallander, 2013). An online journalist noted that following 2011 when a large number of websites emerged, most of them closed. "The number increased again around the 2014 elections. They operate 6 or 7 months before the elections; afterward, they close and lay off the journalists."¹⁶⁸ A media researcher pointed to the growing lack of trust in social media among Tunisians. "Despite the discussions that social media will replace traditional media, I believe people still rely on traditional media because they are looking for credible news. They know there are lots of fake news shared on social media"¹⁶⁹.

Inkyfada is one example of online media platforms that managed to be independent and continue to operate despite all the hardships. According to the interview findings, the reason for its popularity is its independence and unique business model, "One of the things that made us able to continue is our business model. We decided to be independent that we have to find our ways of self-financing. We have a lot of other services that provide revenue to help us not be dependent on advertisers. Hence no one can control our content. We do face other challenges from the local culture that is conservative and is resenting change"¹⁷⁰.

¹⁶⁶ Interview, T_Soc_25

¹⁶⁷ Interview, T_Priv_15

¹⁶⁸ Interview, T_Soc_25

¹⁶⁹ Interview, T_Ind_4

¹⁷⁰ Interview, T_Soc_27

In conclusion, the importance of including the discussion on online media in the dimension of the media market stems from multiple reasons. First, the discussion about the role of social media and ICT's role in mobilizing citizens during the Arab Spring in 2011 has widened the debate about the critical role of ICT and the internet as tools for promoting democracy. The debate includes how social media can contribute to pluralism and establish a more pluralist media scene. Second, it is essential to consider the polarization that has extended to the online media platforms when analyzing the media system. In Tunisia, political actors invested in online media platforms, which led to the outlets being part of the polarizing environment. Third, online media outlets allowed the introduction of new business models into the media sector which is worthy of consideration as part of the media system.

Conclusion about the media market dimension

The media market dimension extends beyond the mass-circulation press, which has declined strongly since 2013 despite the long tradition of the newspaper industry in Tunisia. The media market dimension is an important factor in the analysis of the media system. It is crucial to understand and assess the financial viability of the media structures in society, the financing model, and how it leads to the dependence of the media outlets on political parties. Consequently, financing issues lead to limiting the pluralist voices within the media system. This seems to be the case in many Arab countries, where the media are not commercially sustainable, and owners hold their media investments as part of other investment ventures to support their political influence.

The inclusiveness of the media market is another important aspect to consider in the analysis of the media market dimension. Tunisian youth believe that mainstream media excludes their voices. They also reflect that they do not see themselves in the media. On the other hand, it is key to consider other positive pluralist ventures opening in the media system and allowing for more plurality of voices. Media in Tunisia witnessed some unique positive pluralist experiments of associative media. Scholars have considered that the proliferation of these community media outlets has allowed for new voices to emerge on both the local and the national levels. These associative media have become a third sector in the Tunisian public sphere besides traditional private and public media (Badran, Loisen, & Smets, 2021).

5.6 Journalistic Professionalism

Hallin and Mancini consider the dimension a highly debated one, especially when the concept of instrumentalism is considered. They argued that this dimension is specifically controversial since journalism has “ambiguous” boundaries and no “systematic body of knowledge” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 33). Journalistic norms are interpreted and socially constructed through the actions and cognitive filters of those who are engaged in journalistic work (Voltmer, 2013, p. 198). Hallin and Mancini proposed four sub-dimensions for analyzing the dimension of journalistic professionalism: 1. The autonomy of the profession, 2. Consensus on professional norms, 3. devotion to serving the public good, and 4. Degree of instrumentalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 33-37). The journalistic professionalism dimension tends to be an essential structural factor in determining how the media system functions. It also sheds light on the state of professional media development and training along with their relationship with the management structures of the media organizations. Journalists' professional development is an essential aspect of democratic media and for the development of a pluralistic public sphere. The lack of professional and ethical training, quality enhancement, and adequate moderation will not lead to facilitating public debates (Hafez, 2015).

5.6.1 Professional Autonomy

Internal autonomy in Tunisian media is affected by multiple, structural problems facing Tunisian journalists in their work environment. Journalists in Tunisia face pressures due to structural problems and financial hardships. Literature about the professional status of Tunisian journalists shows that salaries of Tunisian journalists are considerably low. Journalists are underpaid, underequipped, and media organizations, in many cases, are understaffed (Solheim, 2017, p. 86). Most of the journalists face difficult living situations due to the low salaries in the media field. An anchor at the Tunisian public television mentioned “Journalists are close to the poverty level with the current wage range, which is close to minimum wage.”¹⁷¹ Some journalists do not even receive salaries regularly or sometimes receive no salaries at all (about 300 cases of journalists and media workers) in addition to another 65 cases of abusive dismissal, in the phenomenon known as “arbitrary dismissal.” Among cases of layoffs in the audio-visual sector are journalists working for two major private television stations, Hannibal TV and ElHiwar ElTounsi, radio station Kelma FM and Shems FM (Yacoub, 2017, pp. 115-116).

¹⁷¹ Interview, T_Pub_22

The structural problems facing journalists have an impact on the quality of news content journalists develop. A media researcher explained these problems: “Having to work under all these pressures, especially the need to ensure adequate financial income, may lead journalists to easy and quick content. I know several journalists who possess excellent technical skills but have no time for quality news production. No time to verify sources, collect information in depth, develop references, and write then edit”¹⁷². The situation is worsened since many journalists are hired under temporary contracts. In a study, most Tunisian journalists reported to work under temporary “training contracts” for years before being hired as permanent staff. These contracts provide lower wages per piece and threaten imminent firing (El-Issawi, 2012).

External autonomy was also limited as a result of the return of a degree of censorship in a new form. Research showed that journalists were aware of self-censorship, acknowledging that independent journalism was under attack by the government and private media owners (Solheim, 2017, p. 88). In many cases, journalists report that censorship and pressures returned to a significant degree. These pressures existed mainly in private media. The editor-in-chief of a private radio station noted that “there is direct interference from some political factions. Some members of certain political groups contact the station and directly pressure the management.”¹⁷³ The Al Takwein media center manager noted that “The law bans censorship; however, they find ways. The owner determines which the editorial line the station will follow”¹⁷⁴

The private sector has increased its grip over the use of media for partisan gain, in addition to the growing disaffection between journalists and media directorates, which suggests a power play between multiple parts of the society. The situation is becoming destructive and may lead to reversing the direction of reform (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 661). Notes from the interviews point to the intense pressures on journalists at the private media organizations to support specific parties. The editor-in-chief of Jawhra FM private stations described the situation as follows “you may face threats of losing your job. At the end of the day, the journalist has a family to support. If he cannot be secure, then he will be afraid to say what he should say or write.”¹⁷⁵ A journalist at Nesma TV pointed to the journalists who were forced to make a “smart choice” to “balance between his own beliefs and the editorial policy where he works.” It is a trial and error stage, where

¹⁷² Interview, T_Ind_4

¹⁷³ Interview, T_Priv_16

¹⁷⁴ Interview, T_Ind_20

¹⁷⁵ Interview, T_Priv_16

you get to test their standards and how to make a compensation to what limits they will accept. There is no clear line, but every day you get instructions from the management about the content”.¹⁷⁶ A member of the executive council of SNJT confirms the same observations that “Freedom of expression is not possible if the journalists are marginalized or face difficult living situations. If also, managers of media organizations are not respecting their legal obligations.”¹⁷⁷

In addition to the structural problems facing journalists, the opening of the public and political spheres has led to a state of chaotic expression of views and libel as a result of journalists' lack of professional standards (El-Issawi, 2015) (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 663). A Tunisian writer and journalist noted “These structural conditions limit the practices of journalists. In contrast, some journalistic styles require time to produce quality content. Such as investigative journalism. This very commercial vision to the journalists as a tool has made the organizations eventually lose their credibility as they are not presenting a quality product.”¹⁷⁸.

Another interview points to the continuation of the structural problems hindering journalists from performing their role according to the discussion “In terms of journalistic practices, I think we are trying to be closer to the citizen than before. The challenge is how to keep continuing with this kind of performance. There are no guarantees. There are administrative problems that all organizations face”¹⁷⁹.

Another entity essential for ensuring the autonomy of journalists is SNJT. The SNJT has over 600 journalists working all over the country. It became influential in the professional and political landscape after 2011 (Yahmed, 2019). Barata Mir noted shortly after 2011 that the Tunisian journalists' syndicate lacked enough resources to efficiently carry out its task as a trade union that supports the journalists, due to a lack of professional norms, ethics and staff training, despite the SNJT being fully committed to change and freedom of speech (Barata Mir, 2011, p. 8). The SNJT is a critical advocate for journalists for better contractual security, remuneration, and protection. It has organized multiple journalist protests, including two national strikes in 2012 and 2013. It also engaged in bargaining for more contractual rights for its members, especially those who work as freelancers without any job security (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 665). Journalists are also

¹⁷⁶ Interview, T_Priv_6

¹⁷⁷ Interview, T_Uni_29

¹⁷⁸ Interview, T_Ind_13

¹⁷⁹ Interview, T_Priv_7

inexperienced in investigative reporting; there are no limitations from editorial boards or ethical standards imposed by editorial boards or ethical standards. There is also a pattern of shady business and management practices inherited from Ben Ali's regime; all these factors limited journalists from considering themselves as independent professionals (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 663).

In conclusion, journalists in Tunisia face multiple difficult professional working conditions. They suffer from an unstable social and economic situation. Journalists face hurdling structural conditions in terms of low payments, arbitrary dismissals, and poor working conditions. Although the SNJT and HAICA have played a role in supporting the media sector, yet they have been subject to fierce battles with media outlets. Journalists fell subject to control by media outlets and political parties. These conditions pose serious threats to pluralism and freedom-of-expression in Tunisia.

5.6.2 Development of Professional Norms

Two institutions provide professional training for journalists in Tunisia: IPSI at the University of Manouba, and the CAPJC. Following 2011, training courses began that were oriented towards professionals' themes, such as directing debates and media coverage of elections. CAPJC also conducted training courses that focus on the proper use of the internet and social media in addition to managing digital archives and access to information sources. Some of the courses were provided by multiple international organizations such as BBC, RFI, and Deutsche Welle (UNESCO, 2013, pp. 89-90).

The opening up of the Tunisian media industry following 2011 has attracted vast interest from different international parties in providing Tunisian media professionals training. These training programs were crucial in introducing some of the basic journalistic ethics and practices such as cross-checking of sources and distinguishing between news and opinion (El-Issawi, 2012). Tunisia has been one of the favorite countries receiving Western funding in terms of supports for its requirements of neo-liberal structural adjustments programs by the IMF and the World Bank (Rijkers, Freund, & Nucifora, 2014, p. 3). It is also equally important to look into the outcomes of these programs. According a member of the executive council of the SNJT, "There have been hundreds of training programs, but most of it was haphazard, not well designed based on the recipients' actual needs. What both the journalist and the organization are in real need of the training"¹⁸⁰. An independent media researcher, suggests that "Training is not a solution in itself;

¹⁸⁰ Interview, T_Uni_29

training is part of the solution. Journalism is about teamwork. It is a product of an institution, not a single person. If the organization is not able to provide the right context and necessary environment for good journalistic practices, then it won't be successful."¹⁸¹

A member of the executive council of SNJT, notes that the training did not target specific essential skills for journalists' professional development, "It is also essential to train journalists on quality journalistic practices such as investigative journalism."¹⁸² The foreign support for Tunisia has been criticized on multiple occasions. Despite a large amount of foreign funding for Tunisia¹⁸³, it did not lead to necessary structural changes pertinent to embedding democracy (Kubinec, 2016).

The literature suggests that Tunisian journalists, journalism students, and teachers consider objectivity as debated, disputed, and defended. While students consider that it is possible to obtain objectivity, journalists argue that it is challenging to be objective in the Tunisian media context with the political interventions in media coverage. They gave an example to the media coverage of the 2014 elections where media took sides. However, they agreed that "objectivity is the heart of the journalism profession" (Frey, 2017, pp. 45-47). Another survey of journalism students indicated that they do not keep a critical stance when it comes to news coverage of the different powers in the country. They suggested that the media's role is as a watchdog instead of being neutral (El-Bour, 2017, p. 63). The study also pointed out the rise of subjectivity due to the increasing influences on journalism p.60.

Other scholars noted that it even seems that the acquired media freedom came more as a burden rather than a gift to the journalists. They were still wondering how media freedom would be interpreted as editorial decisions (El-Issawi, 2012). An anchor at the public broadcaster pointed out that journalists do not still have a clear understanding of their shifting role in Tunisian media "We are still far away from professional and quality content. In most cases, we are just doing random journalism. There is a lack of professional journalists—those who were trained in professional institutions. To be able to present quality work"¹⁸⁴. A professor at IPSI noted that there is a change in professional culture among journalists, but there is still time until the change is sustainable and

¹⁸¹ Interview, T_Ind_4

¹⁸² Interview, T_Uni_21

¹⁸³ According to USAID In 2018, Tunisia received US\$ 245 million in total foreign aid from all donors. <https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/TUN>

¹⁸⁴ Interview, T_Pub_5

permanent at the media organizations. “Today, there is a new culture; we don’t want to go back to how things were before 2011. There is a change in the regulatory bodies, but there is also a change in culture.”¹⁸⁵ Another journalist noted, “As a journalist, we are still not used to working in this environment of freedom. We are still getting used to it. We are learning from our mistakes and still experimenting with things. But this is an option for real journalists who are keen on learning and developing.”¹⁸⁶.

In conclusion, despite the influx of training programs offered to journalists since 2011, journalists' professional development faces multiple challenges. The training programs are dispersed, poorly designed, and do not lead to structural changes in reforming the sector. The training programs did not significantly upgrade journalists' skills in covering sensitive topics or investigative reporting. This makes the Tunisian media environment not supportive of pluralism due to a lack of quality journalism and journalism training, which is theory-based with limited practical and hands-on programs.

5.6.3 Journalists Serving Public Interest

Arab journalists share some of the profession's values and principles as journalists from other countries, such as the need for accurate and timely reporting. Arab journalists differ from their international counterparts in their general perception of the role of journalists in society. Arab journalists consider part of their journalistic role is to infuse a positive change, which refers to the media's mobilizing role. They differ from their journalists in other countries that engage in uninvolved objective coverage of events in their countries (Hamdy, 2016). Previous literature suggests that Tunisian journalists similarly believe their mission is to “increase public awareness” and inform the public about what is happening in society. They also think the media's watchdog role is an integral mission to fulfill for society (El-Bour, 2017, pp. 56-58).

Another study suggests that journalists in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya are mixing their identities as journalists and activists, which is obstructing the development of investigative reporting, where media can play the role of the watchdog. Besides, the spread of the tabloid press is another threat to the media’s playing the watchdog role (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 67). A professor at IPSI confirms that “Furthermore, journalists practiced

¹⁸⁵ Interview, T_Aca_1

¹⁸⁶ Interview, T_Pub_22

a mobilization role, which made the media act as an affiliate of political parties”¹⁸⁷. Another interview reflects on the developments in the perception of journalists of their role in serving the public. The role still seems relevant to the activist role “journalists have the sense they are serving the public, in terms of presenting and discussing negative topics and accidents is a chance to review the democratic path.”¹⁸⁸

An early study after 2011 has captured developments in the perceived role of Tunisian journalists. The study pointed that journalists are finding concepts such as professionalism, objectivity, rigor, and adherence to professional norms completely new and not even fully understood or adopted by journalists (Barata Mir, 2011). Some journalists would still express similar views as noted in the interviews, “A new generation of journalists came out with more civic-oriented practices and new ideas, versus the old guards and journalists who have been working under previous times. We don’t want to go back to the journalism of ready prepared reports. At least eight years after the 2011 revolution, journalists in Tunisia are discussing media freedom more professionally¹⁸⁹.”

In conclusion, the journalistic culture in Tunisia is shaped by the activist role. Journalists consider that they should serve the public by participating in political discussions and expressing positive or negative opinions. The problem stems from the increasing political polarization discussed earlier. Journalists express these opinions as part of the political views related to the media outlet where they are located.

5.6.4 Instrumentalism

As noted in the discussion on political parallelism, the Tunisian media became subject to growing polarization at that time. Consequently, the media outlets had transformed into the main stage of fierce ideological battles between political parties: on the one hand, the Islamist forces and, on the other hand, the secular parties (El-Issawi, 2012, p. 14) (Ayoub, 2013). The situation caused an uproar in the media sector since it represents the return of the state media instead of operating as public media. The escalation led to a struggle between HAICA and the government due to the nomination of the heads of the public broadcaster (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 67).

¹⁸⁷ Interview, T_Aca_1

¹⁸⁸ Interview, T_Aca_1

¹⁸⁹ Interview, T_Aca_1

A journalist at Al Hiwar Al Tounsi newspaper described how journalists at media outlets have to serve the political ideology of the media outlets where they work, "At private stations, journalists have to take a political stance to serve specific political parties. Regardless of their primary role should be reaching out to the public, not perform political agendas. The topics they discuss could, at many times, not be the main interest of the viewers".¹⁹⁰. An independent media expert notes that journalists face pressure to support the government "journalists in public media outlets still have the sense that they are regarded as working to serve the government."¹⁹¹.

Political parties tried on several occasions to control media by ensuring the appointment of loyal managers. For example, in 2012, Ennahda appointed managers in all state media who were loyalists to the state. The Troika government as well attempted on several occasions to impose government appointments but was faced with civil society backlash (Joffé, 2014, p. 628). According to an anchor at the Tunisian public broadcaster "political parties are trying to control the media. The government, on the one hand, is trying to establish proponents within the media sphere. They offer benefits to some journalists. Journalists are considered supportive of certain factions."¹⁹² According to a member of the executive council of SNJT "the media practiced the ideological hiring of journalists. We feel there is bringing back of the old system, through slow penetration of media organizations and forming lobbies."¹⁹³.

The instrumentalism of journalists is amplified as a result of multiple other structural factors: the lack of experience among journalists in investigative reporting, the absence of editorial boards, ethical standards, and the shady businesses and management practices from the past regime that still shape media organizations (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 663). The Tunisian media community's fragile working conditions are among the major obstacles to journalistic professionalism (El-Issawi, 2012). One reason cited by a professor at IPSI is "the lack of financial resources and financing hardships facing the media"¹⁹⁴. Another reason noted by an anchor at the public broadcaster is the lack of written codes that enables journalists to submit complaints against the media organization's performance"¹⁹⁵. The professor at IPSI concluded that there is room for improvement in the experience of Tunisian media, "We are trying, in Tunisia, we are still

¹⁹⁰ Interview, T_Priv_15

¹⁹¹ Interview, T_Uni_14

¹⁹² Interview, T_Pub_22

¹⁹³ Interview, T_Uni_21

¹⁹⁴ Interview, T_Aca_17

¹⁹⁵ Interview, T_Pub_5

experiencing the freedom-of-expression. This is why things are getting chaotic in some cases. It is turning into the freedom that is pulled by narrow interests”¹⁹⁶. As one of the studies concluded, that political revolutions did not lead to media revolutions inside the newsrooms (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 63).

To conclude the journalistic professionalism dimension, the fall of the regime following the 2011 uprising provided journalists with the dream of working under the aspired freedom-of-expression. After years of working under a strict authoritarian regime that controlled and manipulated media, journalists started by practicing working under the newfound freedom. Unfortunately, media in Tunisia fell under the polarization among multiple political actors and turned into a battlefield for personal and political agendas. One reason for journalists to easily fall under these pressures is that journalists lack professional skills. The risks to the newly acquired freedom came from the journalists who aspired to become activists instead of reporters or maintain balance while reporting. In addition to the lack of embeddedness of professional requirements such as investigative reporting or objectivity, is adherence to professional ethics in the newsroom. These skills are still not fully understood by journalists, and journalists do not have access to adequate training systems that would help them to adapt to the new working environment. Journalists work under precarious conditions such as low salaries and structural problems, which makes them vulnerable to political control. Media fell under control by political actors and became subservient to the political stances.

¹⁹⁶ Interview, T_Aca_1

6 Results from Egypt and Tunisia

Hallin and Mancini were mainly concerned with studying the media systems in a specific regional cluster of Western countries. They never claimed the universal applicability of their models in other contexts. Contributors to the book *Comparing Media Systems beyond the Western World*, critics raised concerns about the Polarized Pluralist model becoming a catch-all residual model that might lump together diverse media systems under a category that comprises everything but North American and European countries. Hallin and Mancini suggested that media systems' conceptualizations need to be rooted in a detailed empirical analysis of particular historical and structural contexts (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 279). Media systems are embedded in their nationally- and culturally-shaped social environments. It is better to understand media systems in the frame of their territorial borders. Simply put, "media systems of different states differ" (Thomass & Kleinsteuber, 2011, p. 25). So instead of trying to fit the media systems in the world into one of the models, it is more important to refine the dimensions to better fit the description of media systems beyond the Western world. Voltmer has called for revisiting the intellectual toolkit underlying the three models, meaning rethinking the conceptualization of the four dimensions rather than applying the three models. State interventions in new democracies are different from established democracies. Media markets are often weaker and fragmented, and a different set of professional standards with specific norms may be relevant to each culture (Voltmer, 2012, pp. 244-245). The strength the dimensions provide is that they are holding up to the comparison since they describe most of the elements pertinent to the media system in one country, such as the media organizations and professionals, political institutions, parties, civil society, the audience recipient of media content, and the surrounding socio-political environment (Blumler & Gurevitch, 2000, p. 157).

This study's point of departure is to better understand Egypt and Tunisia's media systems within their national political and cultural contexts. The study argues that refinement of the dimensions is more relevant than classifying the media systems into a specific model. The dimensions seem to need particular amendments when applied for specific contexts. Section 6.1 provides comparative results of the findings of dimensions in the context of Egyptian and Tunisian media systems using Hallin and Mancini's dimensions as an analytical lens. In section 6.2, the study tries to locate Egypt and Tunisia on the models and argues that both countries cannot fit easily into any of the models. In section 6.3, the study suggests the Statist-Commercialized model for classifying media in authoritarian systems.

6.1 Assessment of Egypt and Tunisia's Media Systems on Hallin and Mancini's Dimensions

This section discusses the similarities and differences in the features pertinent to describing the Egyptian and Tunisian media systems based on Hallin and Mancini's dimensions as discussed in detail in the previous chapters 4 and 5 in the political context sections.

The Authoritarian Context The context of the Egyptian media system is pertinent to the authoritarian political context. The political environment can be characterized by weak political parties and civil society that has been under state control for a long time. The civil society organizations that exist have a long legacy of co-existing with repression. The civil society organizations were not capable of supporting a change to a more pluralist scene. Egyptian opposition parties share most of the weaknesses of civil society organizations. The legal framework applied to political parties was even more restrictive than that used for civil societies. Political parties in Egypt are mainly socially baseless and do not really represent a significant portion of society. The most influential power in the Egyptian political scene is the military. It shapes political decision-making on different levels and shapes business and elite roles.

The Transitional Context The context of the Tunisian media is relevant to the polarizing environment. The role of civil society in Tunisia was heralded during the early time of the political transformation period. The development of a free and independent civil society is still hampered by the persistence of patriarchal and authoritarian social structures and norms. Civil society is polarized between modern versus conservative visions. Tunisian political parties were weak under Ben Ali, with no significant legislative and representative roles. Tunisian political parties never developed following the Arab Spring as effective political platforms. They are highly personalized and lack organizational foundations. Tunisia, contrary to Egypt, is not under the strong influence of the army.

In both countries, the media systems were under strict government controls for a long time, which impacted their performance. It is essential to understand how an authoritarian regime's political setting suppresses the agency of civil societies, political parties, and media regulatory bodies to take actions to curb state authority.

6.1.1 Dimension 1: Role of the State

This study adopted a sensitive approach to the authoritarian state mechanisms of control over the media. The dimension of state intervention hinges on the nature of the state in which the media system is situated. According to the analysis, this dimension represents the main discrepancy between Egypt and Tunisia in the development of each media system. In Egypt, the state in the form of the military regime plays the most detrimental role, wherein in the case of Tunisia, the state intervention is different in its structure. However, other actors, such as political parties or private owners, influence the media system. Tunisia may be closer to the Mediterranean model when it comes to the Role of the State, where Egypt does not sit comfortably in the same model.

The Arab media has been manipulated for such a long time to serve the regimes. William Rugh argues that the most pivotal influencing factor in analyzing the Arab media is the role of the state, “the structure and functioning of the media in the political process is the actual political reality that prevails in each country at a given time” (Rugh, 2007). The 1990s and early 2000s brought lots of changes for the Arab media scene, with the introduction of satellite television and Al Jazeera channel's flourishing. However, some analysts were skeptical of the effect of these changes on the Arab media scene. Ayish argued that changes in the Arab media scene never led to enhancing political pluralism and diversity due to authoritarian political systems' domination. Despite how professional and independent the television is, it cannot replace real political transformation (Ayish M. , 2002). The focus here is on the interplay between the political structures and the single nation-state's media systems. Media systems are not shaped only by the national regulatory regimes but by a complex collaborative of social relations within national contexts (Amin & Napoli, 2000).

In Egypt, media has developed for the longest time under authoritarian government control. Since the 1952 revolution, with a long, clear history of control over media freedoms with the role of mobilization, ever since the Egyptian government used Sawt Al-Arab (Voice of Arabs) to mobilize public opinion during the 1950s and 1960s (Mellor, 2011, pp. 19-20). The late years of Mubarak can be described as a “liberal autocracy.” in which it was possible to criticize the government, but also being aware of the many red lines that media should not cross. Hafez argues that following 2011 until the military takeover in 2014, Egypt was comparable to Hallin and Mancini's Mediterranean model of democratic media with a strong government sector and a very polarized media sector. Starting in 2015, Egypt could no longer be considered a democratic system; it is an authoritarian system (Hafez, 2015). The regime controlled the Tunisian media system

under Ben Ali. Independent media were connected to the regime with a network of monopolies (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 56). The following section compares the differences between Egypt and Tunisia in terms of developing the dimension of the Role of the State. It also concludes that the dimension is the most critical factor in distinguishing the media systems in the Arab World.

The first sub-dimension is the Media regulations

In Egypt and Tunisia, the media were subject to the restrictive regulatory frameworks long set under the former regimes. Despite the constitutions' guaranteed media freedoms, the regimes used the penal code to impose limitations on journalists. In Egypt, despite media freedom being guaranteed in the constitution, it has been limited by myriad laws, including the emergency law 162/1958 (Cook, 2007, p. 71). A similar pattern continued after the uprising. The 2014 constitution guarantees media freedom. The state uses calls for protecting national security and public mobilization and insults religious figures or public figures as limitations to freedom-of-expression (Art 47 and 48). New sets of laws were formulated to limit freedom-of-expression for blogs and social media such as the law of Cybercrime (Badr, 2020, p. 72). The political actors took no further steps to abolish laws that blocked media freedoms and allowed prison sentences for journalists. In addition to the laws, it is essential to consider the performance of the regulatory councils to be able to assess the development of the media sector. The newly developed media regulatory bodies fell quickly, subject to state control, and consequently could not support the independent media sector's development.

The Tunisian case shows the newly established regulatory structures can, to some degree, counterbalance state control. Early on, after the uprising, INRIC was established to oversee media reform. INRIC managed to support the reform focused on abolishing the repressive features of the laws governing the media sector and the penal code. A new press code was adopted (law 115/2011), which guaranteed journalists' fundamental rights (Webb, 2014, p. 101). Afterward, the new regulatory framework and national regulatory entities were installed. The installation of HAICA in itself did not necessarily lead to a significant change in the media scene. A fragile democratic setting was shaped by the new political forces' performance, which could influence the newly established entities. HAICA challenged the governments on multiple occasions. However, the new bodies lack a tradition of established independence, making them easily vulnerable to the political and other forces. In Tunisia, the situation between HAICA and the multiple governments transferred into a situation closer to the interaction in the countries Hallin and Mancini classified in the Polarized Pluralist model. The change in the media scene is not an automatic formal process of changing the existing entities, but it is a day-to-day process pertinent to how pluralistic the political environment is.

Analyzing the legal framework governing the media sector and establishing new entities should not be considered sufficient to describe the sub-dimension. It is necessary to understand these entities' performances, their role in the political developments, and the influence of other political forces such as political parties.

The second sub-dimension is the Public Media Organizations

Democracy requires empowering the state broadcaster to become autonomous or independent public services and to prepare the legal groundwork for fair competition and diversity in privately-owned media outlets. The Egyptian state-owned broadcaster not only has been under the direct control of the government for decades but is has developed as a cumbersome and inefficient body that employs 43,000 staff and operates 33 television stations and 58 radio stations (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 53). The Tunisian state broadcaster employs a smaller number of about 1300 staff but also suffers from similar structural problems (Richter, 2017, p. 330).

In Egypt, public media fell easily under state control after short-lived freedom following 2011. Today it continues to act as state media rather than developing into a public media model. The persistence of the inherited structures and practices such as the continuity of the journalists and press institutions' management that existed under the previous regime, and the lack of political support, have blocked the transformation of the national broadcaster into a public service media model.

The Tunisian public broadcaster managed to represent a model where state-owned media could continue to operate after the uprising; however, it managed to make changes to the editorial teams. The stability granted to the pre-uprisings media contributed to continuity in the media structure even as it opened up for competition and adjusted to the post-regime phase (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 57). Gradually, the resilience of the old authoritarian practices started to make a way back. Different governments started controlling the public broadcaster. It fell subject to political polarization by the various governments.

Contrary to the significant state dominance over public media in Egypt, the Tunisian public broadcaster can be classified closer to Hallin and Mancini's Polarized Pluralist mode, showing how different political parties attempt to control public media. Although the Polarized Pluralist model implies that the state has substantial control over the public broadcaster, directors of the public broadcasting stations are hired by the Prime

Ministers in Spain and Italy. The state control over the broadcaster, especially in the case of Egypt, is different. Under President Sisi, there is a return to the Nasser style nationalist media. Egypt does not fit precisely into a similar pattern as the Mediterranean European countries with government influence over public broadcasters' boards. At least the intervening governments themselves are democratically elected, and their interference is guided by-laws, rules, and regulations. The government interference in Egypt remains because both politicians and journalists still perceive the state media is a platform for voicing the regime's propaganda.

The third sub-dimension is the status of Media Freedoms

In terms of media freedoms, Egypt is currently under a purely repressive regime. The status of media freedoms has deteriorated since 2013. There has been a massive attack on independent media, control over foreign reports, and a continuous wave of imprisoning journalists. The return of self-censorship and direct state orders on reporting at the newsrooms, and the lack of independent professional journalism practices remain. The regime has resorted to using the justifications of national security concerns and its stability to attack media outlets.

Tunisia, despite the achievements of the developments in the status of media freedoms in Tunisia since 2011, there are some threats to the continuation of the current developments. There are concerns about legislations and codes used to limit media freedoms under the calls for protecting religious values, public morals, or national security. The Tunisian media still has a way to go to turn into free, independent, and professional entities. The situation for media and journalists has also worsened since the last presidential election in October 2019. There is a gradual return of self-censorship and use of the penal code to limit media freedoms, in addition to the lack of the quality of infrastructure that supports news production.

Finally, to conclude about the dimension of the Role of the State, the political culture is able to reproduce itself and return to the old forms of control over the media, which makes it essential to contextualize the political culture when analyzing the dimension. The assessment of the dimension is directly dependent on the type of state that exists within one country. The sub-dimensions of media regulations, the public broadcaster, and the media freedoms better inform the Arab media systems' classification. The dimension as formulated is able to reveal the variances between the developments in Egypt and Tunisia's media systems resulting from the different nature of the state.

The Role of the State remains the most critical factor in the analysis of Arab media systems. The variation in the analyzed cases between Egypt and Tunisia confirms that the authoritarian state's heavy hand is detrimental in shaping the media system. It shows that Egypt and Tunisia exhibit differences in this dimension and cannot both be classified in the same Mediterranean model.

6.1.2 Dimension 2: Political Parallelism

The essence of the political parallelism dimension is the co-evolution of the media and the political parties within a particular political ideology. Hallin and Mancini formulated the dimension based on the Western democratic model, where the US liberal model is the normative model. Hallin and Mancini refer to political parallelism as a particular feature of southern European countries such as Italy, France, and Spain. According to this feature, in particular, the model is labeled as a "Polarized Pluralist model." Comparative research exploring media systems beyond the Western world has identified political parallelism as a dimension of the media system that unfolds differently based on the variation of political contexts (Mancini, 2012). One reason that makes Political Parallelism problematic in other contexts outside the Western world is, as Hallin and Mancini note, that the political party's ties can be relatively shallow and transient in many countries. Political parties do not have social roots or clear ideological identities with limited links to voters and political leaders (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 293). Voltmer suggests that media systems in transitional democracies are highly politicized, with individual media attaching themselves to particular groups or causes. She proposes that there is no new media system where internal diversity is a dominant pattern of representing the plurality of voices in the public sphere. News media in emerging democracies will be dominated by partisanship. She considers that this is an expected consequence of freedom after many years of suppression. A phenomenon exemplifies in the explosion of voices eager to express themselves in public (Voltmer, 2013, pp. 180-181). Hafez has argued that in young democracies, media often show close affiliation with political parties and other forces of civil society. Then, the question becomes if the media is able to cover all relevant opinions in society or just a small elite (Hafez, 2015). Voltmer concludes that political parallelism may also lead to fostering instrumentalization and media polarization, which can ultimately inflate the political instability. In this case, political opponents may use the language of disrespect against each other, insisting that one's position is taken as absolute (Voltmer, 2013, p. 184). Consequently, pluralism falls into the trap of turning into polarization (Voltmer, 2013). Deane emphasizes the importance of the integrative types of media that serve as platforms for dialogue and exchange among different factions of society that are confident that their own identity is secure and valued (Deane J., 2013, p. 20).

It is challenging to apply the dimension as formulated by Hallin and Mancini, within the Arab media, given the Middle East region's political context. Studies that explored how political parallelism unfolds in the Arab media have noted that the developments following the uprisings did not lead to pluralism but led to a state of "savage deregulation." In Libya's case, the uprising produced a highly politicized media system with political actors systematically co-opting the media. Most private new media outlets are financed or operated by the many parties involved in political conflicts. Political parallelism, in the context of political fragmentation, would most likely deepen existing rifts in society (Wollenberg & Richter, 2020, p. 1189). In Lebanon, Richani has argued, a deeply polarised and politicized small state, audiences and revenues are limited, and the media depends on political money for funding. The situation rendered the media a platform for respective sects and patrons (Richani, 2014, pp. 237-238).

The first sub-dimension is private media ownership patterns

Private media ownership patterns are tied with loyal businesses rather than political actors. The analysis about the private media ownership patterns in Egypt concludes that it did not lead to the pluralism of independent media voices entering the market. At the same time, following the Arab Spring, there was an opportunity for new voices to enter the media scene, which led to a more pluralist scene in both Egypt and Tunisia initially. This led to an angry and radical public sphere labelled as "radical polarisation" (Hafez, 2015). Contrary to Egypt, the radicalized public sphere continued in Tunisia while this pluralism was halted as the military took over.

Following 2011, similar types of businessmen continued to own media outlets as under Mubarak; later there was a return to a Nasserite form of full state control over private media under President Sisi. Since Egyptian private media emerged in the early 2000s, it exemplified a pattern of self-censorship and serving the regime. As Hafez argued early on that private media ownership patterns "do not necessarily lead to liberalization in the same way as state ownership is not equivalent to censorship and information control" (Hafez, 2001, p. 9). After 2011, Egyptian businessmen who owned media outlets under Mubarak continued to preserve both economic power and influence in the media sector. Private media also had a history of tolerating margins of freedoms and being run only as profit-oriented projects (Roll, 2013). In addition, weak political parties also owned active media outlets. There existed a phenomenon in Egypt, where the Press party was more successful than the political parties themselves (Richter, 2010). There has been a trend towards media concentration, with no active control against it. In the case of Egypt, it has led to a downswing of pluralism in the media sector. Most of the businessmen who own media outlets remain highly connected to the authoritarian elite (Sakr, 2013).

Following the 2011 uprising, the explosion in the opening of private media had an initial impact on opening the public sphere leading to more pluralism. The rift between the military and the MB following the ousting of Morsi led to sharp political antagonism that can be labeled as “radical polarization,” where Egyptian media were “pluralist” because they represented clear-cut political views. At the same time, these views were radical and denied legitimacy to the other camp (Hafez, 2015). It can be concluded that between 2011 until mid-2012, political parallelism exemplified a closer pattern to Hallin and Mancini’s Mediterranean model. Following the ousting of Morsi and the military took over, there has been a revert to the public sphere's closing as the state maintained its strong grip over the media sector. The media system also has a limited representation of party media that existed under Mubarak.

In Tunisia, private media emerged in connection to the Ben Ali family and developed the best ways to survive and coexist with the repressive regime (Barata Mir, 2011, p. 2). Networks of private ownership continued to dominate the media sector after the 2011 uprising. The outcome was different than in Egypt in terms of increased polarization because media outlets fell victim to political powers. The media became a stage for the fierce battle between the opposing political groups, on the one hand, the Islamists (Ennahda Party) and, on the other hand, the secularists. The media landscape became a venue for manipulation, intimidation, and bias as “the main stage for the fierce political and ideological battle between the country’s opposing camps: conservative Islamists and secular elitists” (El-Issawi, 2012). Media fell hostage to politics and was used as platforms for serving political agendas. Media platforms became battlegrounds for opposing forces, with government officials openly calling for the purge of opposing voices (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 57). Media ventures that were established under Ben Ali are mostly owned by businessmen and members of the Ben Ali family entourage. After 2011, media ownership patterns contributed to strengthening the relations between the media and the political arena, leading to “savage deregulation”. All political powers engaged in media ventures and on-air battles. Political factions considered the media a tool for communicating in the public sphere. At the same time, media was used as an instrument to promote political agendas. In this sense, the media scene in Tunisia can be located closer to Hallin and Mancini’s Polarized Pluralist model.

Second sub-dimension Political affiliation of media personnel

Egyptian journalists perceive the importance of building strong relations with the state, the political actors, and the security apparatus as an asset to doing their journalistic profession. The pattern of loyal, private ownership to the regime and substantial control

by the political system has impacted media organizations' editorial policy. Decades of the tradition of serving the regime has developed a strong sense among journalists that they need to defend those in power instead of questioning or challenging them (El-Issawi & Cammaerts, 2016, p. 553).

Initially, the uprising had a liberating effect on journalists, especially in the two years right after the uprising. Journalists could express their opinions in a freer manner after many years of working to serve the regime. Soon, this recently found freedom started to fade, and journalists found themselves subject to the media outlets' polarization effect. Journalists frequently have to follow the political ideology of the station where they are working. As the stations were subject to more growing polarization, the journalists faced ideological hiring and had to provide appealing content to the funding parties.

Third sub-dimension Media Partisanship

Media partisanship represents news producers and journalists' bias in selecting news stories and events to be reported. The period between 2011 and mid-2012 witnessed a vibrant time for Egyptian media, important talents, and professional journalistic experiences existed. Vigorous debates about ongoing political events took place, such as the constitutional declaration. As the MB came to power, on-air battles and polarization increased. This impacted the messages presented by each faction. As clashes increased between the military and the MB, media outlets sided either with the narrative pro or against Morsi. After the ousting of Morsi in 2013, the media continued strongly with the partisan practice. In the coverage of Rabaa's events, the media was a crucial player in directing and polarizing events when this incident took place. State media and several privately owned Egyptian channels such as CBC, Dream, Nahar, Tahrir, Mehwar, Sada El Balad, Qahera Wal Nas, and ONTV were all agreeing on and broadcasting SCAF's version of what had happened. Gradually, the media scene ended up with a sturdier division between Islamist satellite stations/websites that had supported Morsi and were funded by the MB businessmen on the one hand and the military figures and the Deep Egyptian state on the other hand.

Despite Tunisia's sturdy progress in freedom-of-expression and media freedoms following the 2011 uprising, Tunisian media was still a venue for manipulation, intimidation, and bias. Tunisian media suffered financial hardships due to lack of advertising and thus remained subject to political influence. The media was affected by political partisanship and the different political parties' agendas. Tunisia's media system could be classified in this sub-dimension as closer to Hallin and Mancini's Mediterranean

model, which is characterized by the strong involvement of political parties, lobbies, and syndicates in controlling the media.

About the unfolding of the political parallelism dimension in this setting

The relationship between the media and the political scene in the setting of democratic transformation is based on how this setting leads to a more pluralistic media scene. This pluralistic media scene can be a liberal one where all opinions co-exist, or it can lead to close affiliation with political parties and other political actors, leading to savage polarization and divisions in the society. In Egypt and Tunisia, the second case appeared (until the military took over in Egypt).

In terms of industry and market factors, privatization of the Arab region's media started in the 1990s. Governments encouraged private ownership as part of the liberalizing and privatizing of media markets, but at the same time, under strict government guidance (Mellor, 2011, p. 27). However, the state remained the dominant player in the media sector, at least in the broadcasting domain (Hafez, 2010). Hafez argued early on that private media ownership patterns “do not necessarily lead to liberalization in the same way as state ownership is not equivalent to censorship and information control” (Hafez, 2001, p. 9). The liberalization or “freeing” of the media in transitional democracies, which is often seen as one of the pre-conditions for democratization, tends to go with (further) commercialization or privatization of the media. This invokes issues of media ownership and media concentration (El-Issawi & Cammaerts, 2016, p. 552). Following the 2011 uprising, there has been a trend towards media concentration, with no active control against it. In the case of Egypt, a downswing of pluralism in the media sector has occurred. Most of the businessmen who own media outlets remain highly connected to the authoritarian elite (Sakr, 2013).

The question is whether or not privatization is a guarantee for pluralism since the investments in Arab media are “loyal” to the state. Discussions to whether the democratization of the media systems in the Arab world would lead to transforming them into public corporations instead of state media investment, or would lead to more radical privatization into a model similar to the US liberal model (Hafez, 2010, p. 6). Rugh argues that private capital investments do not necessarily support media pluralism, media freedom, or democracy, but in fact may support the authoritarian state. This happens because the regime allows only a certain degree of commercial freedom (Rugh, 2004). Another example in Latin America shows that the media remains vulnerable to both market and state control despite political democratization. Hence, the democratic rule in

Latin America has not significantly altered the historical, structural relations among media, state, and market (Waisbord, 2010, p. 311).

Political parallelism in the analyzed two cases can be described as follows: on the one hand, it faces structural problems of radical polarization, or conversely, media is falling subject to state control. Media is not affiliated with other social actors, such as civil society but focused only on the political actor it is affiliated with. It does not lead to constructive debates about society but instead leads to extremist ideas and leaves no room for contributing to democratic deliberation on societal issues, such as discussing the democratization of political institutions. Media, in this case, leads to antagonism and hatred against the other political factions. Furthermore, there are few established political parties, which increases the interactivity between the media and politics. Existing political parties are weak, and are hardly able to be relevant or representative.

6.1.3 Dimension 3: Media Market

Hallin and Mancini chose to limit the media market's dimension to the historical development of the mass press circulation within one country and its impact on current circulation rates. The varying statistics on newspaper readership reflect profound differences in the fundamental historical development of media systems in the Western media systems, in which the press developed as part of the mass culture, and those systems in which the press developed were part of elite culture and elite political discussion (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 288). Equally important were the social implications of the emergence of mass media. The rise of mass press circulation significantly contributed to nation-building and nationalism. The media helped strengthen the centralization of power and social cohesion between the diverse segments of the population (Voltmer, 2013, pp. 161-162).

Multiple scholars criticized Hallin and Mancini's approach for limiting the media dimension only to mass press circulation. In many countries, the mass press circulation never developed, and circulation rates were inherently low due to various socio-economic factors. Instead, there is a prominence of electronic media and, more recently, internet media, in many cases. Hence, there is a need to re-think the formulation of the dimension as put forward by Hallin and Mancini. Scholars questioned the media market dimension's ability to describe the media systems outside of the Western world. According to this formulation, the rest of the world's media systems will consequently fall into the category of low mass press circulation, which distinguishes the Polarized Pluralist

model (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 288). Scholars have argued that other factors describe the media market beyond just the circulation rates in developing countries. McCargo sites one example of the problematic dependence on the mass press circulation in different contexts. He argues that the importance of tabloids in East Asian countries, despite the low aggregate newspaper circulation rates, is a phenomenon that cannot be observed in European markets but spread in other areas of the world such as Latin America (McCargo, 2012). Zhao argues that media are not distributed as commodities to individual consumers in China but have a broader distribution concept. Usually, newspapers are distributed through work units and village committees and are read collectively in China (Zhao, 2012). Another reason is that mass press circulation never developed due to cultural or economic reasons. Instead, a culture of broadcasting media is more prevalent. In the context of Arab media systems, Sakr has pointed to the limited press market due to the low literacy levels and low incomes combined with the market distortions caused by government controls on press and distribution (Sakr, 2008, p. 195). Media markets in the Liberal and Democratic Corporatist models address the mass public, and they are not engaged in the political world. Hence, they function as mediating factors between political elites and citizens. While in other countries of the Polarized Pluralist model, the mass-circulation press only engages with the elites who are actively involved in politics (Hadland, 2007, p. 178).

The media market dimension should be approached in a different way when exploring the Arab media systems. It also shows that it is crucial to consider the different types of media usage, audience patterns, market diversity, as well as the role of the technological developments in the internal media markets. The media market dimension needs to be expanded to consider the context of the Arab media industries, including the proposed elements of overall market size, internet-based media, and the media market's inclusiveness. Most importantly, one needs to consider how these factors can be linked to pluralism and democratic transformation. Furthermore, the impact of technological developments in circumventing limited "local" markets is a factor that can shed more light on media systems. The discussion in the previous chapters about the media market in both Egypt and Tunisia points to the following results:

First sub-dimension – Mass circulation press

Egypt represents a paradox when it comes to analyzing the development of the media market. Egypt was a pioneer in the media industries in the Arab region. Mass circulation press increased after 2011, then declined starting in 2013. Newspapers face a massively reduced readership and, consequently, financial hardships. Other factors that make newspaper distribution low and limited to elitist groups are widespread poverty and high illiteracy rates. Tunisia has a similar pattern; the Tunisian newspaper industry can be

dated back to colonial times, back to the end of the 19th century. Historically the Tunisian Press followed the French traditional press model, in which newspapers were highly editorialized. The press in Tunisia also had a high concentration in the capital Tounis, and is mainly directed to the cultural elite (Dajani, 2011, p. 57). Newspaper readership declined sharply starting in 2013. This decline suggests that the media market's dimension cannot be accurately described using the mass-circulation press only. The dimension needs to be expanded to include the discussion on the media market developments and how they can contribute to introducing a more pluralistic culture. The media systems in Egypt and Tunisia do not sit comfortably in the Mediterranean model of Hallin and Mancini. They do share the low mass-circulation press rates, but on the other hand, they also have a long tradition of journalistic history.

Second sub-dimension – overall media market size

Scholars have suggested examining a set of other variables within the media market's dimension, such as the overall market size. The overall market size has a significant impact on media and media policy (Humphreys, 2009, p. 123). Puppis and d'Haenens pointed to the importance of the market size and its influence on shaping media legislations and policies (Puppis & d'Haenens, 2012). Hallin noted the impact of the market size as a complex factor that may not be directly consistent with the state's size (Hallin D. , 2009, p. 101). Richani suggested revisiting the media market dimension to explore the overall market size instead of the mass-circulation press variable (Richani, 2014).

In Egypt, the media consumption pattern can be summarized by the prevalence of electronic media and the rising competition from social media. As per the literature, almost all the population (97%) watch TV, one-third of the population uses radio, while only 16% read newspapers (Badr, 2020, p. 73). These statistics show multiple manifestations of the underdevelopment of the media market. Various media organizations lack financial sustainability, which impacted the development of a more pluralistic media scene. The expansion in Egypt's media market following 2011 did not bring a sustainable media model in terms of financial performance. Media organizations that were not able to continue to operate independently fell vulnerable to control. In addition to restrictions on media freedoms, the media scene faces multiple problems, specifically media's economic viability as part of the massive journalism crisis. The financial problems facing private TV channels led to massive financial losses that had an impact on their operations.

In Tunisia, similar developments occurred in the media market; the media viewership pattern in Tunisia can be summarized by the high television viewership. The number of

Tunisian households with TV is 2.3 million in 2017 (98% of the households) (Statista, 2018), and social media use/ internet use increased from 63% to 84% in 2017 (mideastmedia.org, 2018). Similar to Egypt's situation, the quick expansion of the media market did not last long. The business model adopted by new broadcasting ventures was not sustainable due to various reasons. A primary obstacle is a high cost pertinent to sustaining operations for media ventures. Most new ventures lacked sufficient financial resources and had to seek funding from political parties. The other trend the business model had imposed is the significant trend towards infotainment over the news (Petkanas, 2014). The business model for media organizations in Tunisia is commercially non-sustainable. In Tunisia, owners uphold their media organizations as a cross-market investment to support lobbying measures (Richter, 2017, p. 334)

The results suggest the importance of analyzing the media organizations' business model and how this can foster their development into independent and pluralist ventures, rather than falling subject to other influences. The business model, financial independence, and sustainability are essential factors in guaranteeing independent media development in one country. The media market can be better described if we spread the concept to include electronic and online media. In this sense, the market is not limited to the elite groups. In fact, mass media reaches directly to the masses rather than reflect political actors. In this case, the market is closer to the US Liberal model.

Third sub-dimension – inclusiveness of the media market

The third aspect to discuss is the inclusiveness of the media market. Hallin and Mancini discuss the press market's inclusiveness, which indicates how far the press reaches out to the broader audience segments. This is significant for examining the media reach among women or different social segments (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 22-26). There is a lack of identifying patterns of media, and information production and circulation patterns. These patterns should consider the inequality of media access and the variation in developing electronic media (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 288). Brüggemann et al. suggested expanding the analysis of the media market dimension to focus on the market's inclusiveness, which means not only the reach of the press to elites but also the wider audience. The media' reach would consider its reach to women versus men or its reach to the working class or different society segments (Brüggemann, Engesse, Büchel, Humprecht, & Castro, 2014, p. 1033).

This analysis shows that traditional Egyptian media suffers from a lack of diversity and representation for different society groups and minatory groups (Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, 2014) and (The Media Diversity Institute, 2013). In terms of the

plurality of voices, the time where there has been most diversity in Egyptian media was the two years following the 2011 uprising. The short-lived diversity did not stem from systemic efforts to enhance diversity, but rather from the country's power struggle between the old regime, the revolutionary camp, and the MB (Abdulla, 2014) (Shams-El-Din, 2015). Conversely, social media provides more content tailored to younger age groups than traditional media.

Tunisia also shows a similar pattern of limitations in terms of diversity in traditional media. For example, youth consider that mainstream media excludes their voices. Youth do not see themselves reflected in the media. Other limitations to diversity and pluralism emerge from the concentration of media ventures in the capital or political connections with political factions which indicates media represents the voices of political actors rather than ordinary citizens.

Media in Tunisia witnessed some unique positive pluralist experiments of associative media. Scholars have considered that the proliferation of these community media outlets has allowed new voices to emerge on both the local and the national levels. These associative media have become a third sector in the Tunisian public sphere besides traditional private and public media (Badran, Loisen, & Smets, 2021). The inclusiveness of the media sub-dimension enables one to examine the media reach among different social segments. It reveals the diversity and pluralism in the voices reflected in the media system. It could also lead to understanding how independent voices can be identified and supported in one country.

Fourth sub-dimension – online media market

The massive recent technological transformation in the field of the media is another reason to expand the dimension. New technologies, platforms, and on-demand media have led to implications such as the expansion of commercial content, new means of media production, and content distribution. These new aspects have altered the established relationships and interactions in the media sector. This suggests the need for more knowledge in comprehending these developments and the challenges arising from them (Picard R. , 2018). New technological changes have introduced new companies that are industry leaders, platforms, innovative technologies, new entrepreneurs across the media industries, and the difference in the environment in which the media industry itself takes place (Albarran, 2018, p. 4). Social media became mainstream as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Pinterest emerged as popular platforms for sharing information, opinions, photographs, and hobbies. These platforms' popularity has been quickly recognized by advertisers, leading to a further shift of advertising dollars from traditional

media to digital media. Netflix, Youtube, and Google, and their ability to dominate the markets where they are engaged, are known by financial investors (p. 5).

In Egypt, the spread of the internet has increased the debate in the scholarly field of media studies on social media platforms' impact. The discussion included the analysis of the role played by social media during the Arab Spring in 2011 has heated this debate about the ability of the internet to mobilize citizens against the regime. Thus online media becomes a critical factor in understanding the media market dimension as the social media ventures spread following the Arab Spring. Online media led to the growth of new online business models that are recently attracting a substantial quota of advertising revenue in Egypt. The social media market's growth introduced new forms of journalism, and the traditional media industries had to adopt these technologies. Finally, online media is a crucial aspect of opening the public sphere to multiple new voices to express ideas and interact with others, especially younger age groups underrepresented in traditional media. It is essential to include the online media market in the analysis of the media market dimension.

In Tunisia, the importance of including the discussion on online media in the dimension of the media market stems from multiple reasons. First, discussion about the role of social media and ICT's role in mobilizing citizens during the Arab Spring in 2011 has widened the debate about the critical role of ICT and the internet as tools for promoting democracy. Second, it is essential to consider the polarization that has extended to the online media platforms when analyzing the media system, especially in Tunisia, where political actors invested in online media platforms, which led to the outlets being part of the polarizing environment. Third, online media outlets introduced new business models into the media sector that are worthy of consideration as part of the media system.

To conclude this section, limiting the media market dimension to the mass press circulation fails to capture the media market's full patterns. It becomes an important reason to expand the study of the media market beyond the mass press circulation. The dimension of the media market can be expanded, considering the influences of multiple factors on the markets. Political economy actions shape, direct, promote, or constrain markets. Media markets are inherently subject to political and systematic influences. These influences and constraints represent a root cause for defining markets (Picard & Russi, 2012, p. 237). It is not easy to attempt to classify Egypt and Tunisia in terms of the media market dimension. If we expand the dimension beyond the mass-circulation press aspect, Egypt exhibits closer features to the US commercialized model. Where media is

not of an elite nature and is not linked to political actors, it represents a commercialized model.

6.1.4 Dimension 4: Journalistic Professionalism

For Hallin and Mancini, the dimension of journalistic professionalism comprises four sub-dimensions: autonomy, instrumentalization, “devotion to the public good,” and the existence of distinctive professional norms (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 35-36). This specific dimension emerges as normative and problematic to empirically gauge in comparison to the other three dimensions. The notion of journalistic professionalism is a somewhat contested term in the field of journalism studies (Waisbord, 2013). The emergence of new journalistic practices, such as citizen or grassroots journalism, have challenged professionalism and threatened “the jurisdictional claims of professionals” (Lewis, 2012, p. 850). Hanitzsch and Mellado, in their study of “what shapes news around the world,” have confirmed that political and economic factors are the “most important denominators of cross-national differences in the journalists’ perceptions of influences” (Hanitzsch & Mellado, 2011, p. 404). They confirmed that the way journalists perceive political and economic influences is highly dependent on the national context (p. 416). Hanitzsch et al. have also argued that journalism culture is an analytical concept and object of inquiry. This conceptual approach provides “a more intuitive way of looking at the diversity of journalistic practices and orientations” (Hanitzsch, et al., 2011, p. 273). The cultural approach produces “a particular set of ideas and practices by which journalists legitimate their role in society and render their work meaningful” (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 369).

Journalistic professionalism is an essential dimension in terms of supporting pluralism in one country. Hallin and Mancini argued that the political parallelism between media organizations and political organizations generates a low level of journalistic professionalism. They consider that a high degree of professionalism means that journalism is differentiated as an institution and form of practice from other forms of professions, including politics (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 38). Journalistic professionalism is relevant to the ability to protect journalists against external influences. Scholars of Arab media systems have noted that journalists' professional development is an essential aspect of democratic media and support development of a pluralistic public sphere. Hafez has noted that professionalism is a distinctive feature of Western journalism, which is intrinsically related to the ideas of ethical self-control and freedom from external influences. He notes that this is a valid aspect of all Western countries, not only of the US or Northern Europe (Hafez, 2010). The lack of professional and ethical training, quality enhancement, and adequate moderation will not facilitate public debates (Hafez, 2015).

Given the lack of job security and structural problems facing journalists, no improvement in journalism quality should be expected (Hafez, 2015).

El-Issawi has argued that the political developments following the Arab Spring did not lead Arab journalists to challenge their "stereotyped perceptions of their role as messengers of the regime." She also argued that the intense political struggle and the decades of deterioration of professional skills due to regime manipulation had blocked the development of professional standards. The changes did not lead to independent reporting; on the contrary, media platforms fell under the influence of politics and were used as powerful tools. The situation worsened as a result of the legal protection for journalists and the weak support from the unions (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 46). Issawi suggested there are two models of journalistic practices that could develop during political transformation. The obedient journalism model, which is often found in state media, is characterized by a workforce driven by the fear of losing their jobs and, consequently, are willing to follow orders, such as in Egypt's case. The second is the advocate model, often characterized by attack-dog style journalism, where opinions, rumors, and information are blurred. Advocate journalists perceive their mission as defending a cause to support a specific political camp. Neither of the two models describes the complexity of the transitional media landscape (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 70).

The analysis of the dimension of journalistic professionalism in Egypt and Tunisia explores the persistence of the existing journalistic practices and professional environment from previous authoritarian regimes. The inherited structures, persistent practices, and precarious economic situations facing journalists have turned journalists to follow similar practices in place before 2011. They blocked the development of investigative reporting in addition to the weak support provided by the unions to journalists.

The first sub-dimension is professional autonomy

By examining the professional autonomy empirically in Egypt and Tunisia, we conclude it is more complex, situational, and based on the surrounding local culture. Journalists in both counties face physical threats, precarious structural conditions, clientelism, and intense polarization. Journalists did not develop more autonomy following 2011; neither could they gain a more stable working environment or create new organizational structures to provide more autonomy and independence. In fact, they fell more vulnerable to the economic problems facing media organizations and political battles. At the beginning of the uprising, journalists hoped to gain more autonomy and change their practices; however, the situation eventually worsened. The problematic aspect of the analysis of professional autonomy is the difficulty of gauging the concept empirically,

which depends on how journalists themselves perceive their ability to have control over the work environment. This perception depends on the values that the journalist describes as good or bad in the work context. In the end, news professionalism is a guarantee of the media's ethics.

In Egypt, internal autonomy is affected by multiple structural problems facing Egyptian journalists in their work environment. Egyptian journalists earn meagre salaries. Consequently, they make relatively modest livings. Even journalists in private media receive minimal pay. They also have to take multiple jobs simultaneously or try to land better-paid jobs in the state media. The financial crisis facing media organizations has made problems more persistent concerning their survival. Journalists in the field pointed to the overwhelming financial threats they face in terms of job contracts. Given the lack of job security and structural problems facing journalists, no improvement in journalism quality should be expected (Hafez, 2015). Harb has concluded that Egyptian journalists lack autonomy, and they are tied to the political actor they support. She identified the phenomenon as instrumentalism using the term coined by Hallin and Mancini. She also argued that broadcast journalists mainly identify themselves with a particular point of view, which means they do not serve the public as they claimed (Harb, 2019). A similar situation exists in Tunisia, where journalists face multiple structural problems in the work environment. They suffer precarious financial hardships as a result of small salaries. Sometimes, they do not receive salaries at all or face arbitrary dismissals.

Egyptian journalists operate under firm state control over the media sector, which makes media organizations lack external autonomy. There has been a decline in professionalism and the reproduction of loyalist and propaganda practices within the journalism sector (Badr, 2019). News coverage is also affected, wherein some incidents or security-related topics, the coverage, and wording suggest some dictated scripts and narrow agenda (Badr, 2020, p. 72). In Tunisia, a return of a degree of censorship in multiple new forms, impacting media organizations' external autonomy, is also suggested. Research shows that journalists are aware of self-censorship, acknowledging that independent journalism is under attack by the government as well as private media owners (Solheim, 2017, p. 88).

The second sub-dimension is the development of professional norms

In Egypt, journalists, in many cases, do not hold degrees related to journalism or may not have completed formal training in a relevant field. Formal education is also theoretical and outdated and does not train journalists on investigative journalism or critical skills. The main problem with media education in Egypt is its lack of political content, which

shows it lacks objectivity and critical thinking. It leads to supporting the state's propaganda.

In Tunisia, two institutions provide professional training for journalists. The opening up of the Tunisian media industry following 2011 has attracted vast interest from different international parties in providing Tunisian media professionals training, which did not lead to a fundamental change in journalistic practices, such as the introduction of investigative journalism. The journalistic culture is shaped not only by education but also by the entrenched understanding of the role of the press, which considers the media as being a "handmaiden" for those who own them (Joffé, 2014, p. 616).

The third sub-dimension is Journalists Serving Public.

The analysis of Egypt's findings confirms this notion. Journalists consider themselves political advocates, mostly talk show moderators who think it is their role to be the arbiters of political opinion and find neutrality as treason (El-Issawi, 2014). They do not perceive themselves as autonomous but instead ruled by the government, with little consensus on journalistic standards and insufficient professional self-regulation (Powers, 2012). Journalists side with the government on most topics. This increased following 2014; the given justification was the war on terrorism and that there was no need for any opposing opinion. Private media journalists share the same understanding of what they describe as a "patriotic duty" for their role in society (El-Issawi, 2014, p. 77).

Previous literature suggests that Tunisian journalists consider their mission is to "increase public awareness" and inform the public about what is happening in society. They also think the media's watchdog roles are an integral mission to fulfil for society (El-Bour, 2017, pp. 56-58). Another study suggests that journalists in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya are mixing their identities as journalists and activists, which is obstructing the development of investigative reporting, where media can play the role of the watchdog. The spread of the tabloid press is another threat to the media's playing the watchdog role (El-Issawi, 2016, p. 67)

The fourth sub-dimension is Instrumentalism. In Egypt, following 2011, a phenomenon of "ideological hiring" in media outlets began. Political stances shaped the content the media developed. The same situation exists in Tunisia, because journalists confirm that they feel they have to serve the media outlets' political ideology. Political parties tried, on several occasions, to control media by ensuring the appointment of loyalist managers.

On the journalistic professionalism dimension

The opening up of the public sphere following the 2011 uprising was an opportunity for journalists in Egypt and Tunisia to re-invent themselves as professionals and independent from the political authorities about what their roles in society should be. Unfortunately, the political development outcomes have left journalists subject to further manipulation by political and economic forces more than ever before.

The journalism crisis is inflated by the lack of financial resources leaving media organizations and journalists more vulnerable to political power. Thus the media system did not support fostering democracy and citizenship. The financial crisis led to trying to maximize viewership at the expense of ethical considerations, thorough investigations, and commitment to the public interest. There has also been the growth of tabloid form media, light content, and lack of interest in political content, which also has an impact on limiting the role of the media as a political change agent. Hence the situation gradually diminishes the watchdog role of the media in the public sphere.

An important consideration is that journalists are still captive in their self-perception that they should be serving the government or the political parties, which reduces their role to hold the political regime accountable. In addition, mixing their role as reporters and political activists, also obstructs their ability to conduct investigative reporting and perform their role as watchdogs questioning the political powers. The media is acting as a political actor on its own, where journalists are preaching to the audience. In Tunisia, media fell victim to the clashes between the political parties, while in Egypt, it fell under the control of the regime. In both countries, journalists are captive to political activists' role and consider their role in preaching to the audience. The lack of professional standards makes journalists more vulnerable to control by the political actors.

From a comparative perspective, despite the differences in the political developments between Egypt and Tunisia (military or civilian regimes), neither regime encouraged the development of professional journalistic practices or upgrading media practitioners' skills. Media organizations suffered due to socio-economic hardships that impacted the newsrooms due to unstable working conditions. Gradually journalists continue to lack the ability to play an active role in monitoring the political sphere. Both media systems are classified as having low professional standards.

6.2 Locating Egypt and Tunisia's media systems on Hallin and Mancini's models

Multiple studies have explored locating Arab media systems on the Hallin and Mancini models, as discussed in section 1.3 regarding the classification of Arab media systems. Some of these studies suggested that Arab media may fit into the Polarized Pluralist model with some variation. One of the studies that assessed the Egyptian media against the Polarized Pluralist model indicated that the Egyptian media systems share some features but do not fit precisely in the Mediterranean model (Khamis, 2008, p. 274). Another study by Sarah Richani concluded that the Lebanese media is a variation on the Polarised Pluralist or Mediterranean model, but not does fit precisely into any model. That study suggested what researchers named the Crisis-prone, small, Polarised Pluralist model (CriSPP model). The CriSPP model considers the salient factors of the crisis and the small state's size; both significantly influence the Lebanese media system (Richani, 2014). Kraidy has classified the Arab transnational Arab media systems (Lebanon and Saudi Arabia) as hybrids of the Polarized Pluralist model with some features from the Liberal model: one in which the Role of the State, Political Parallelism, Commercialisation, and Journalistic Professionalism appear "in different guises and give rise to different definitions." The same study also suggested that the Arab media systems are only quasi-liberal because they exhibit strong parallelism and a strongly dominant state (Kraidy, 2012, p. 199). Another study identified that Arab media industries exemplify a model of media systems controlled by totalitarian governments that exercise great powers over media organizations. Simultaneously these totalitarian regimes support commercial media in an unusual commercialization case. The liberalization occurred with continuous state intervention and increased self-censorship (Mellor, 2011, p. 12). Some Arab countries were described as in a transition status—for example, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Yemen, and Morocco— and shared many features with the Polarized Pluralist model, but with more substantial state intervention in the media sector than European countries, except for Lebanon. As the study notes, these countries do not function as effective democracies, so they cannot fit precisely into the Mediterranean model (Hafez, 2010, p. 9). None of these studies has confirmed that any of the studied Arab media systems can fit easily into any of Hallin and Mancini's models. On the contrary, they note the importance of considering the cultural and traditional values distinct to the Arab world when applying media theories and media typologies (Mellor, 2005). Fundamental historical, political, and structural variations among countries in the non-Western context create the need to re-adapt and fine-tune Hallin and Mancini's models and dimensions against the "temptation for overgeneralizing in other countries and regions around the world" (Khamis, 2008, p. 271).

Rather than attempting to classify Egyptian and Tunisian media systems in one of Hallin and Mancini's three models, it is more useful to avoid the "temptation of overgeneralizing" (Khamis, 2008, p. 271). Applying the categories used by Hallin and Mancini to the Arab media should be considered as the first step in a longer process of theorizing Arab media studies (Hafez, 2008). This leads to rethinking the essence of the concepts' underlying assumptions when applied to other contexts beyond where they were initially developed. Unpacking and complicating common notions used by Hallin and Mancini in their ideas of ownership, partisanship, journalists serving the public interest, etc, suggests it is necessary to explore a more comprehensive set of salient political and economic factors in the political and social systems where different media systems are embedded (Humphreys, 2009, p. 119).

Conclusion

In this study, I conceptualized Egypt and Tunisia's media systems that embrace both countries media systems' complex and confusing realities. Attempting to fit Egypt and Tunisia on Hallin and Mancini's models is a precarious endeavor. Egyptian and Tunisian media do not fit precisely into any of the three models, as multiple scholars have noted in the literature.

I also conclude that the media systems in both countries are not similar. Tunisia, since the 2011 Uprising, is closer to the Polarized Pluralist model. Egypt does not easily sit in the same model. Egypt's media system is an example of an authoritarian regime's media system, which can be characterized by 1 - high state control (beyond the polarized model type of state control), 2 - high media market in terms of commercialization, lack of diversity and alternative media outlets (beyond the mass-circulation press), 3 - loyalist private media (that does not lead to a plurality of voices in the market) and 4 - low professional standards.

The following tables (Table 10 and Table 11) sum up the Egyptian and Tunisian media systems' analysis compared to Hallin and Mancini models.

Table 10 - Egypt and Tunisia's location on Hallin and Mancini models after 2011 – early uprising

	Polarized Pluralist	Democratic Corporatist	Liberal	Egypt	Tunisia
Role of the state	High	High	Low	Low	Low
Political Parallelism	High	High	Low	High	High
Media Market	Low	High	High	High	High
Journalistic Professionalism	Low	High	High	Low	Low

Table 11 - Egypt and Tunisia's location on Hallin and Mancini models - starting 2014 and onwards

	Polarized Pluralist	Democratic Corporatist	Liberal	Egypt	Tunisia
Role of the state	High	High	Low	High	High
Political Parallelism	High	High	Low	Low	High
Media Market	Low	High	High	High	High
Journalistic Professionalism	Low	High	High	Low	Low

6.3 Proposed Factors for classifying Authoritarian Media systems

This section discusses a series of factors that have emerged as salient and can be beneficial when added to Hallin and Mancini's analysis of media systems in authoritarian regimes. It concludes with a description of a media model pertinent to countries with similar authoritarian political contexts. The Hallin and Mancini typology offered a way to describe media systems in democratic countries. However, additional criteria are necessary to supplement these dimensions when examining the media systems in authoritarian or transitional states (Hafez, 2010, p. 10).

6.3.1 Commercialization

The concept of media commercialization has to do with transforming media structures, characters, and content to act as profit-seeking media industries. The underlying assumption implies that economic and market considerations govern media products. Scholars have noted that commercialization is “subordinating of part or all of the media systems’ aim to revenue-raising, whether through subsidy, sponsorship, circulation or advertising.” This subordination of media to commercial imperatives may occur in any system and is independent of ownership or market” (Jakubowicz, 2008, p. 51). Hence, media organizations need to remain afloat in a competitive market force where there are demand and supply interactions. They have to operate by generating enough revenue to cover costs or at least break even; they also need to consider generating profits on investment. Hallin and Mancini identified a trend of deregulation in broadcasting that occurred during the 1980s and the 1990s. The deregulation trend has led to the rise of commercial media. Public service monopolies were displaced by dual systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 251). Deregulation involves a shift in the role of the state with regards to communication, from a state that plans the process into a state that manages the parameters of an “open ecology of communication” (Mulgan, 1991, p. 142). Scholars have identified a global trend towards deregulation in media industries (Curran & Park, 2000).

Commercialization is combined with the decline in party press competition with the commercial press and commercial television's accelerated introduction. Mass press parties are in decline while “individualized, media-centered political forms of mobilization” are gaining favour. These changes represent some evidence of the transformation of the European media system towards individualized forms of communication that characterize the liberal model (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 284). Hadland and Zhang define the process of commercialization as

the shift, over time, from a range of political, social and journalistic motivations for producing and distributing media, to the dissemination of journalistic or news content oriented toward the generation of profit, usually through increasingly concentrated, often conglomerated media organizations (Hadland & Zhang, 2012, p. 319).

Scholars consider commercialization as a positive aspect from a Western media perspective because it produces a shift from media being managed with the primary goal of serving the public, towards media being managed primarily with the aim of generating

profit. Media shifts from being funded by state subsidies towards being funded by advertising. Hence media becomes dependent on the audience because advertisers care about the media audience's size and characteristics. Finally, commercialization leads to more substantial media responsiveness to audience demands since the media depends on advertising as a primary source of profit (Stockmann, 2013, p. 8). Most scholars would agree that commercialization has had a powerful influence over the media and will continue to have a growing impact. There are different stances to how the outcomes of this process are perceived among scholars. Some would confirm the negative impacts related to the political and social consequences (Bagdikian, 2000) (Zhao, 2010). In this sense, scholars consider that commercialization has a positive aspect through weakening the ties between the media and the political actors. This shift would consequently lead to more liberalization as well as deepen democracy and encourage the development of a globalized media culture (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 282) (Wu, 2000).

Hallin and Mancini argue that this hypothesis should not be seen as a complete convergence towards the liberal model. They pinpoint that it is a more sophisticated hypothesis about media systems change (Hallin & Mancini, 2017, p. 164). For instance, in China, commercialized media found new ways to enhance the regime. Contrary to the previous communist regimes, marketized Chinese media provide more convincing and sophisticated messages according to the state censorship demands while satisfying readers' interests. Media serve as an additional factor in authoritarian resilience (Stockmann & Gallagher, 2011). Without significant political changes in one society, commercialization will not be able to improve the level of media autonomy (Kuang, 2012).

Hadland and Zhang have argued that commercialization in countries outside the Western world will deepen state intervention in the media sector and strengthen the state's impact over the media and content. The analysis they conducted from China and South Africa has confirmed this phenomenon. Despite the variation between these countries, commercialization has produced similar heightened state intervention patterns in both countries; they named this phenomenon the "paradox of commercialization" (Hadland & Zhang, 2012). Besides, the situation is heightened in many cases by the displacement of public media combined with the rise of entertainment media (Kraidy, 2012), and the merger of public media organizations with the market-based model and an era of political ignorance (Curran, 2007). In her analysis of the Chinese media, Daniela Stockmann argues that the consequences of media marketization depend on the state's institutional design. In one-party regimes such as China, market-based media promote regime stability rather than destabilizing authoritarianism or bringing about democracy (Stockmann, 2013). Authors who explored media's role in sustained authoritarianism often tie the media's

rising corporate and global nature of the political and economic elites (White, Oates, & McAllister, 2005) and (Zhao, 2008). The scholarly work argues against the assumption that global and corporate media would liberalize media in authoritarian regimes and reject the hypothesis that when media are no longer under tight state control, they will shift towards the liberal model. There is little scholarly work on the patterns of commercialization in authoritarian regimes. There is evidence that commercialization leads to different patterns of private media ownership. The pattern of media reform in authoritarian regimes is characterized by deregulation, commercialization, and partial privatization of the local media market while maintaining the restrictions on the press (Stockmann, 2013, p. 8). . Voltmer argues that political ownership challenges the view that commercial media are the best guarantor for political independence. The situation in many new democracies shows that the joint interests of political and economic elites frequently hijack the media to pursue their interests by controlling the range of issues that can be covered by the media (Voltmer, 2013, p. 164).

The results of commercialization in Egypt and Tunisia's case study confirm that media did not depart from the political interests of the state towards commercial and profit-oriented agendas. It did not liberalize media from the state control or lead to a shift towards the audience. Private media ownership patterns “do not necessarily lead to liberalization in the same way as because state ownership is not equivalent to censorship and information control” (Hafez, 2001, p. 9). In terms of industry and market factors, privatization of the media in the Arab region started in the 1990s. Governments encouraged private ownership as part of the liberalizing and privatizing of media markets; at the same time, this was done under strict government control (Mellor, 2011, p. 27). However, the state remained the dominant player in the media sector, at least in the broadcasting domain (Hafez, 2010). In 2010, there were only 17 private actors in the broadcasting field (Rizk, 2016, p. 30). Hailing this expansion in the media scene was done with enthusiasm because it was expected to carry a chance for increasing diversity and pluralism. However, what was unclear were how to find sources of funding, how those channels were able to make profits, how the media would be sustainable, or how to present an enriching environment to the media freedoms in Egypt without being driven by the interests of their businessmen owners (Attalah & Rizk, 2011). During the first few months of the uprising, UNESCO described Egyptian private media as rather diverse in terms of ownership (UNESCO, 2013). The commercialization did not lead to political liberalization or democratization of the media; rather, the state re-invented a range of instruments, technologies, and processes to extend its influence over the media. Commercialization did not lead to opening the media to a more pluralist scene. The regime in Egypt took advantage of market mechanisms to enforce a loyal media system. Media practitioners produced news favoring the political goals and policies of the regime.

The market mechanisms were subordinated to deliver synchronized political messages in support of the regime.

In Tunisia, the commercialization process did not lead to media becoming more pluralist. It eventually led to political actors extending their power over the private media. The power centers carried over from the Ben Ali and Trabelsi family through the elite networks privilege and captured the media sphere after the early opening in 2011 (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 657). The first network in the Tunisian elite sector is the older elites' network of privileges under the previous regime. Tunisian elites have been fighting to retain the system upon which their interests depend and which had, in the past, worked to provide them with stability, financial security, and international support. The system has neither been transparent nor inclusive. This elite group struggles to retain its embedded power network, even if this leads to a semi-authoritarian regime-controlled media scene (Rijkers, Freund, & Nucifora, 2014). The involvement of the old elite network in the media sector has led to a "counter-revolution." The situation within the media sector in Tunisia has been described as the "Berlusconi model," referring to the merging between politics and media control to create a common discourse backed by business stakeholders. On the one hand, the government considers these companies as headed by trusted elites who can disseminate information and do good to the party in power. On the other hand, the media channels are keen on maintaining a strong link with the government, because they see their companies as private platforms for political gains and a mechanism to strengthen their connection and economic benefits from the government (Farmanfarmaian, 2014, p. 670). The liberation of the media from government control in Tunisia should be considered with caution because media fell to the potential capture by self-serving business leaders (Labidi, 2017).

The results confirm that commercialization is not a simple process. It is more complex and is often changing from one country to another according to the political and economic contexts. However, the outcomes are not always predictable. It is worth further investigation in the literature on comparing media systems. In authoritarian states, commercialization is the symptom of the power relations between the media, the state, and the business sector. Commercialization is possible without a parallel process of political liberalization. Analysis of media developments in Egypt and Tunisia indicate that commercialization does not lead to liberalization or plurality in the media sector; in fact, the opposite is most likely correct.

6.3.2 Internet-Based Media

Multiple criticisms were posed to Hallin and Mancini's model for not accommodating the new technologies and entertainment formats in their analysis, while new media became imperative to understanding transformations and functions of media (Hardy, 2008) (Norris, 2009). Hallin and Mancini themselves later recognized the importance of studying online media's growing market, which does not necessarily follow a similar pattern to the traditional media market (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 289). In a more recent article, they posed several patterns of variation in media systems based on the increasing role of internet-based media. They suggest that internet-based media will eventually introduce new business logic with a globalized reach and introduce new cultural practices that will undermine existing national differences. On the other hand, there may be continuity of the media systems. That means that internet-based media will vary according to each system and according to the existing procedures and practices. A third possibility they posed may be that new media would develop differently from the media systems in a way that may be discontinuous of previous patterns (Hallin & Mancini, 2017, p. 164). Norris and Hardy criticized Hallin and Mancini's model for not considering new technologies and entertainment formats in their analysis. In contrast, new media became necessary for understanding the transformations and functions of media (Hardy, 2008) (Norris, 2009).

Some of the discussions raised about social media's role in transitional societies make the analysis of this growing market imperative to the study of the media market dimension, specifically, studies that analyze the link between journalism, civil society, and democracy (Balcytiene, 2012). The terms of political discourse need to be broadened, and social protests mobilized (Zhao, 2012). Social media represents the safest and most popular venues for more open discussion (McCargo, 2012); it can provide the variation of usage patterns of online media and how it has impacted traditional media circulation rates. Balcytiene argued that internet use in Central and Eastern European countries is above the norm, more so than in Europe, even though traditional media circulation is lower (Balcytiene, 2012).

Online media has brought a new business model to the media industry. Online platforms now acquire a substantial share of the overall media market. In Egypt, revenues from digital media platforms have increased recently; they represent between 10 and 15% of the total advertising revenue (Allam, 2018). After the 2011 uprising, there were changes in the journalism industry. The industry had no choice but to adopt new technologies. Several newsrooms adopted ICT hoping that the new media would help them develop

their content and reconnect with their audiences (El-Gody, 2014). ICT developments in Egypt before 2011 led to some positive developments in the field of the journalism profession. The internet changed the news cycles due to its immediacy, and political blogging facilitated the emergence of low-budget reporting (Pole, 2010, p. 128). In Tunisia, the Arab Spring uprising was described as the first “Twitter” or internet revolution in which internet technologies played a significant role. Some scholars challenged the Western view of the role social media played in causing the uprisings and pushing people to the streets (Lowrance, 2016) (Kallander, 2013) (Morozov, 2011). After 2011, the online media market expanded. There has been a surge in the number of media outlets because there were no regulations pertaining to opening social media projects. Besides, only limited investment is necessary for establishing a new media project. The percentage of households connected to the internet was 44.5% in 2016 (Statistiques Tunisie, 2019).

The other aspect is that online media are opening new realms for pluralism in the closed authoritarian public sphere. Social media has changed the dynamics of online interaction. It offered users a space to claim as their own to express their ideas and interact with others. Facebook and Twitter became quite popular among Egyptians. Facebook encouraged young Egyptians who were never politically engaged before to be more interested in politics. They were affected by social media activism and were drawn into politics, mainly because of Facebook (Abdulla, 2014, p. 9). Independent online media developed as an alternative to the lack of freedoms in traditional mainstream media. News websites became the playground for political parties, activists, and various ideological groups, creating online spaces of flows to cater to the new readers (El-Gody, 2020).

It is important to expand Hallin and Mancini’s dimensions to add the aspect of online media, especially in the context when mass-circulation press rates are low, and other factors can be more informative in describing the media market.

6.4 The Statist-Commercialized Model

In this section, the study proposes the Statist-Commercialized model to describe media in authoritarian regimes. Research suggests that some of the world’s media systems beyond the West fall between the Mediterranean/Polarised Pluralist and the Liberal model. There has been myriad scholarly research on analyzing the media systems in Central and Eastern Europe. Splichal first coined the term “Italianization of the media” to

describe the process of media change in the post-communist world (Splichal, 1994). Wyka also used the term “Italianization” of the media in several countries of the region (Wyka, 2008). Media systems in Central and Eastern Europe have been described with having common features from both the Liberal model and the Polarized Pluralist model (Skolkay, 2008, pp. 37-38). Jakubowicz argues that former communist countries share some features with the Mediterranean media system countries: recent democratization, lagging economic development, weak national-legal authority combined with direct state control (Jakubowicz, 2008, p. 47). Another classification confirmed that media in Poland could be categorized under the Polarized Pluralist model, but also their model has some common features with the Liberal model (Dobek-Ostrowska B. , 2012, pp. 26-50). The study also notes that the Polish, during the 1990s, had many typical features with the Polarized Pluralist model, whereas the 2000s brought an intense process of privatization competition, commercialization, and tabloidization. These factors are pushing the Polish media system closer to the Liberal model (Dobek-Ostrowska B. , 2012, p. 49). This study also disagreed that the Brazilian media system fits into the Polarized Pluralist model and has pointed to multiple differences such as the systems of government (Albuquerque, 2012, pp. 93-94).

Another example, Russia has a neo-authoritarian media system that has more in common with similar non-democratic systems around the world (Becker, 2012, p. 191). Vartanova described the Russian media system with what she named the Statist-Commercialized model, which combines several characteristics from both the Polarized Pluralist model with some features of the Liberal model (Vartanova, 2012, pp. 141-142). She identified that two key features were the centrality of the state and the growing commercialization. She even argues that the Russian media model should be viewed as a synergy of different features that may be found in various national contexts (Vartanova, 2012, p. 140). *“The existence of a state-market is complex and has significant influence on media. Formal and informal links between political or integrated political/economic elites and journalists exist. A specific culture of media audiences and elite-journalist relationships that support tolerance on the part of audiences to the instrumental use of media by the state and political clans, and a paternalistic culture of media management”* (Vartanova, 2012, p. 141)

The critical difference she identifies between the Russian model and the Mediterranean model is the state-media relationship, “strong relationship between media, journalists and the state, legitimized by a shared belief – consciously or unconsciously – in the regulatory/decisive role of the state (or state agencies)” (Vartanova, 2012, p. 141). This makes the “statist mentality” a vital feature of the authoritarian media model. The media

“plays the role of the innocent and obedient child.” Paternalism and neo-authoritarianism were the defining features of the Russian media system (Vartanova, 2012, p. 142).

This model can be characterized by the following: high role of the state, high polarization, commercialized media market, and low professional standards. The model applies to the resilient authoritarian political setting where the state merges with the business/commercial media. In no way do these media outlets support more pluralism or diversity in the media system.

7 Conclusions

This dissertation has analyzed the Egyptian and Tunisian media systems using the lens of Hallin and Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* (2004) framework to critically assess to what extent the dimensions can be refined to better fit the analysis of Arab media systems. This study examined Egyptian and Tunisian media systems using Hallin and Mancini's dimensions rather than submitting both media systems into one of the ideal three types identified in the original framework. The dimensions themselves have proven to be more useful for comparing media systems outside of the established democracies of Europe and North America than the ideal models put forth by the two scholars. This dissertation responds to the call for examining media systems in non-Western countries and refines the comparative variables and dimensions.

The study suggests particular amendments to the formulation of Hallin and Mancini's analytical dimensions and sub-dimensions. This study confirms that the Role of the State has the most influential role in analyzing the media system in the Arab region. It also calls for the expansion of the media market dimension to better understand the relationship between the state and the market in authoritarian settings, such as the role of loyal businessmen. A resilient authoritarian political setting, where the strong state merges with the business/commercial media, leads to further deepening of the authoritarian rule with reinventing new control methods over the media. It is also critical to expand the dimension to accommodate for all the growing roles of online media. It also argues that the political parallelism dimension needs a different lens to explore the dynamics between the state and other actors beyond the political parties. Despite multiple voices in the media system, the media does not provide a sense of pluralism or diversity of voices.

This study proposes that a Statist-Commercialized media model can better describe media systems in the Arab region, especially in countries with a similar political context to the Egyptian case. Authoritarian media systems models can be characterized by 1- extreme state control (beyond the polarized model type of state control), 2- high media market in terms of commercialization, lack of diversity, alternative media outlets (beyond the mass-circulation press), and growing market for online media, 3- loyalist private media (that does not lead to a plurality of voices in the market), and 4- low professional standards. Tunisia remains closer to the Polarized Pluralist model as an exceptional case of the Arab region.

This section highlights the major suggested amendments to Hallin and Mancini's sub-dimensions detected from the analysis of Egypt and Tunisia media systems. The suggested amendments would be insightful for future research on media systems in the region. These amendments may also lead to more discussion about the nature of the authoritarian state and the notion of loyalist media and businessmen in Arab countries.

The first suggested amendment to the Role of the State dimension is *the nature of the state or the type of government* and its implications on the media system. The media reflects the political and social structures in a certain country. The nature of the state leads to different types of interventions in the media system where they are located. There are also many different ways how these structures affect actual media practices. It is not sufficient to analyze the written legal rules or regulations to assess the media system accurately. It is more important to analyze the typical control and state influence practices beyond the formal rules and regulations. Rather than limiting the analysis to the legal framework, it is essential to consider a set of different other practices that the state uses to influence the media organizations. Among these practices are the following: the ways red lines are shaped, the types of installed self-censorship mechanisms, or the unwritten rules that award loyalist journalists while excluding others considered less loyal to the state.

In addition to the analysis of the regulations that guarantee media freedoms and freedom of expression, it is important to understand other tools that the state uses to curb these freedoms. For example, the laws that are used to limit media freedoms, such as the penal code and laws to protect "state security" or "public morals." Thus it becomes important to understand how the state uses different tools and practices to perform its control over the media system despite the written regulations in one country. In addition to the degree to which the state enforces the written laws and regulations. Despite the fact that constitutions guarantee media freedoms in Egypt and Tunisia, the practices in each country are different as a result of the nature of the state. In Egypt, the state exercises strict control over the media with the claims for protecting the national state security. At the same time, the media system in Tunisia has managed to develop into a more independent case to a certain degree with no similar repressive state.

The second amendment to the dimension of Political Parallelism is the role of *loyalist private media* outlets. The dimension needs to be expanded to capture the type of private media ownership existing in this setting, where the ownership patterns do not lead to pluralism. In fact, the rise of private media in many cases does not lead to independent voices entering the market; it recreated the existing loyalist business patterns. Media in Arab states remained in the hands of government until the mid-2000s. Opening up the

media scene for private media ownership led to the rise of a pattern of loyal businessmen supportive of the regimes instead of establishing independent and professional media ventures. In Egypt, for example, the state and the military regime play a huge role in controlling private media ventures.

The analysis of the dimension should then not be limited to identifying the type of media ownership patterns. Still, it should be expanded to consider to how this leads to further developments in the media scene. In terms of how the developments in the media scene lead to the plurality of voices and their contribution to opening up the public sphere for diverse voices. It is also essential to consider how the state is involved in shaping the situation by providing financial support or certain privileges to some actors rather than others. The opening up of the public sphere for new players may lead to another pattern as happened in Tunisia, which is the rise of a fragmented and polarized media scene. Political actors and businessmen are using the media to support their political stances rather than create a more pluralistic media scene.

For the media market dimension, it is important to consider multiple other aspects. First, *the sustainability of the business model*, the results point to the importance of considering the business model adopted by the media organization. The business model, financial independence, and sustainability are essential factors in guaranteeing independent media development in one country. This is an integral aspect of how media organizations can develop into independent and pluralist ventures, rather than falling subject to political influence or other actors. This leads to instrumental ownership of media ventures by privileged actors.

Second, *Commercialization*, the process of commercialization in the context of the Arab media systems, is important to consider in the analysis of the media market. The rise of private media ownership in the context of Egypt and Tunisia did not lead to more pluralism or liberalization of the media sector; in fact, it is a project supported or coordinated by the state. The media did not depart from serving the political interests of the state towards more commercial and profit-oriented agendas. Which makes the aspect work further exploration as commercialization is not a simple process. It is more complex and is often changing from one country to another according to the political and economic contexts. However, the outcomes are not always predictable. Commercialization is the symptom of the power relations between the media, the state, and the business sector. Commercialization is possible without a parallel process of political liberalization.

Third *inclusiveness of the media market*, The inclusiveness of the media sub-dimension enables one to examine the media reach among different social segments. It reveals the diversity and pluralism in the voices reflected in the media system. It could also lead to understanding how independent voices can be identified and supported in one country.

And finally, the *online media market*, online and social media, have opened new realms for pluralism in the closed authoritarian public sphere. Social media has changed the dynamics of online interaction. It offered users a space to claim as their own to express their ideas and interact with others. Online media has brought a new business model to the media industry. Online platforms now acquire a substantial share of the overall media market.

7.1 Recommendations for further research

The study proposes the Statist-Commercialized model can be used to describe media systems in authoritarian regime settings. The model was developed based on the conclusions from the empirical work conducted. It is also meant to be a guide for future research. The political systems that may be classified under this model are the countries that are under authoritarian regimes. These countries are not in a transitional state and are not on their way to democratic transformation. They are shaped mainly by a strong authoritarian regime, weak political parties, and civil society actors. These are all key features that need to be considered relevant when analyzing other media systems around the world.

The study proposes that this model fits other countries in the Arab region, based on the most similar model approach. Scholars have argued that the Arab media system and the theory under which it operates tend to grow out of such political, economic, and other realities that prevail in the region (Rugh, 2004, pp. 22-23). The most pivotal influencing factor in analyzing the Arab media is the Role of the State, “the structure and functioning of the media in the political process is the actual political reality that prevails in each country at a given time” (Rugh, 2007). In combination with the state's dominant role and how it shapes the media system, Arab media scholars have also pointed to the rise of commercial television in the region since the start of the 2000s. They have also concluded early on that the restructuring of government-operated systems did not lead to political pluralism and diversity in Arab societies dominated by authoritarian political systems. Professional and independent television, in itself, cannot replace actual political transformations to ensure participatory governance (Ayish M. , 2002, p. 151). Ayish has

proposed three patterns for political communication in the region, where media is attached to the type of government where they operate and do not lead to pluralism in society. The models are “the traditional government-controlled television pattern” versus “the reformist government-controlled television pattern” and the “liberal commercial television pattern” (Ayish M. , 2002, pp. 139-142). Another scholar concluded that Arab media systems are a specific case where the Role of the State is still dominant, and the liberation of the media did not lead to a commercially vibrant media system. Media in the Arab region represents an unusual case of commercialization and liberalization of media industries leading to continuous state intervention and an increase in self-censorship (Mellor, 2011). Kraidy has also identified that the Arab transnational media systems in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia are hybrids of the Polarized Pluralist model combined with the Liberal model's features and that the four dimensions appear “in different guises and give rise to different definitions.” The study suggested that the Arab media systems are only quasi-liberal because they exhibit strong parallelism and a strongly dominant state (Kraidy, 2012, p. 199). Previous studies have suggested that Arab media systems share the features of the proposed model of the Statist-Commercialized model. The state is the most dominant force, and the emerging commercial channels do not lead to more liberalization or the emergence of a more pluralist media scene.

The Statist-Commercialized model is also potentially applicable to other media systems in Central and Eastern European countries. Media systems in Central and Eastern Europe have been described as having common features of both the Liberal model and the Polarized Pluralist model (Skolkay, 2008, pp. 37-38). Jakubowicz argues that former communist countries share some features with the Mediterranean media system countries: recent democratization, lagging economic development, and weak rational-legal authority combined with direct state control (Jakubowicz, 2008, p. 47). Another classification confirmed that media in Poland could be categorized under the Polarized Pluralist model, but Poland also has some common features with the Liberal model (Dobek-Ostrowska B. , 2012, pp. 26-50). The study also notes that the Polish media during the 1990s had many typical features with the Polarized Pluralist model. In contrast, the 2000s brought an intense process of privatization competition, commercialization, and sensationalism. It concludes that the Polish media system is closer to the Liberal model (Dobek-Ostrowska B. , 2012, p. 49).

The model can be further explored in the context of Russian and Chinese media systems. Vartanova proposed that the Russian media model is a Commercialized-Statist model in which there is a strong relationship between the media, journalists, and the state. The journalists practice their role within a shared belief in the state or state agencies (Vartanova, 2012). Another study that compared Chinese and Russian media systems has

concluded that it is of utmost importance to analyze the interdependence of the market and the state in this context. Therefore marketization is a state-orchestrated project that was designed to reinforce rather than undermine the legitimacy of the party-state in China. The study acknowledges that the market was set up only within the state's parameters and the mechanisms of state control evolved as media marketization developed (Meng & Rantanen, 2015, pp. 10-11). A point of difference is that media in China and Russia developed a global outlook and the ambition to go beyond national boundaries (Meng & Rantanen, 2015, p. 16). The Chinese media is a case of commercial instrumentalism. State-controlled media continue to commercialize, capitalize and expand domestically and globally (Zhao, 2012, pp. 172-173).

This discussion suggests that other media systems may fit into the Statist-Commercialized model. This thesis is only a start for more studies about analyzing media systems in a specific country setting of authoritarian regimes and further refining the dimensions according to this setting. The Statist-Commercialized model presented results from the analysis of the Egyptian media system compared to its differences with the Tunisian media system.

There are multiple important points for further exploration in future studies about media systems in other areas of the world: 1- further investigation of the relationship between the state and the market in these contexts and how commercialization does not lead to liberalization, 2- the dynamics between the media and other political actors beyond political parties shaping the developments in political parallelism, and 3- the role of online media in shaping the media system; especially when media systems are under strict control, online media allows space for further freedom of expression or pluralism. Future studies would support the re-conceptualization of these concepts in different contexts and shed more light on the media systems in non-Western countries. Eventually, more studies will reveal the points where the dominant frameworks fall short in explaining diverse media systems.

This study calls for more research in comparing different media systems in the world. This is in contrast to the normative assumptions of comparing other countries against an "ideal" Western model; in other words, comparing media systems in the "East" with the "East" instead of comparing the "West" with the "Rest." There is a need to establish a field in communication studies for comparisons among non-Western countries themselves. This implies conducting more comparisons between countries like Egypt, Brazil, or Russia, for example, which would have a place in the comparative communication studies. The world is changing, and comparative research needs to

become more cosmopolitan before it again fails to see the changes taking place in the world.

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9 Interview guideline

1. استقرار المؤسسات الديمقراطية وعملية التحول الديمقراطي

Theme #1: Consolidation of democracy and democratic transformation

النظام الانتخابي – الانتخابات الاخيرة – المنافسة الانتخابية

The performance of the electoral system – the latest elections in terms of participation and competition

سيادة القانون – تطبيق القانون على المواطنين – المسائلة والشفافية

Rule of law – how law is applied equally to all citizens – transparency and accountability

استقرار المؤسسات الديمقراطية واستقرار دورها مثل هيئة الانتخابات – المجالس النيابية

Role of democratic institutions such as elections bodies and other performing councils

احترام حقوق المواطنين – المساواة

Respect for human rights – equality

قدرة المواطن على مسائلة – قدرة الصحافة علي المسائلة

Is press and media able to perform its role as watch do in accountability for executive bodies

التحولات الديمقراطية منذ 2011 – التغيير في المؤسسات – التغيير في القوانين – التغيرات في الاطراف السياسية

Democratic transformation following 2011, what changes have occurred in institutions, laws and players in the political scene.

2. تبعية المسار والتحول الديمقراطي

Theme #2: Path dependency

كيف تتحكم العناصر التاريخية في تحديد شكل التحول الديمقراطي الحالي

How do the historic factors shape the democratic transformation?

النشأة التاريخية للمؤسسات الاعلامية

The historic development of the media organization? When it was established and major milestones in its transformation

الاستقطاب السياسي للمؤسسات الاعلامية من المنظور التاريخي واساليب الهيمنة من الانظمة السابقة

Historically how has the political power controlled the media? And what tools they used for this control during different historic times?

استقرار الانماط المهنية واساليب العمل الصحفي واليات اختيار العاملين

How has the professional standards developed over time, and the journalistic practices. What changes occurred over the years in those practices? How the selection criteria of employees have developed and changed over the years?

ظهور الاعلام الخاص ودخوله الي ساحة العمل الاعلامي مقابل المؤسسات الحكومية المستقرة

What changes have occurred as private media emerged and what impacts they had on the public media and professional standards?

3. الجدول المجتمعي والاعلامي حول دور الاعلام في التحول الديمقراطي

Theme #3: Media system as a social construction

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ما طبيعة الجدول والمناقشات حول التحول الاعلامي مثل مدى الحرية التي يجب ان تتاح للاعلام – دور الاعلام في دعم اجندة وقضايا الدولة

What kind of debates have emerged in the past 7 years about the role of the media in the democratic transformation.

What kind of discussions emerged about the limitations of media freedom and the role of media in supporting the government decisions or criticizing them?

4. هيكلية السوق الاعلامي

Theme # 4: Structure of Media Market and economics

البنية الاساسية المتاحة للمؤسسات الاعلامية في الدولة

Available communication infrastructure for media organizations

المنافسة – عدد القنوات الاعلامية – معدلات المشاهدة – التعددية مقابل الاحتكار

Competition – number of available broadcast stations (especially emerging since 2011) – viewership numbers – ownership and concentration

العائدات – حجم المؤسسات الاعلامية من حيث قوتها الاقتصادية

Revenues – financial strength of the organizations

المزيج البرمجي

Programming mix

المساحة المتاحة للبرامج السياسية والمجتمعية

Change in political and community affairs content (increased/decreased)

5. الاستقطاب السياسي لوسائل الاعلام

Theme #5: Political parallelism

العلاقة بين المؤسسات الاعلامية والنخبة السياسية

Relationship between the media organizations and the political elites

مدي استقلالية المؤسسات الاعلامية عن السيطرة السياسية وعن السيطرة من اصحاب رؤوس الاموال ورجال الاعمال

How independent is the media organization from political influence and the influence of businessmen?

اساليب سيطرة النظام السياسي على وسائل الاعلام

What are the methods by which the political power controls the media organizations?

سيادة القانون في المجال الاعلامي بمعنى وجود هيئات منظمة قادرة على تطبيق معايير واضحة وان تكون الهيئات المنظمة مستقلة عن النظام السياسي او سيطرة راس المال – مدي وجود وتطبيق القوانين المنظمة للعمل الاعلامي

The role of organizing bodies in applying clear criteria to manage the programming content? Are the organizing agencies independent from the political power? Are relevant regulations applied to all organizations similarly?

هل يقوم المجتمع المدني بدور في دعم استقلالية المؤسسات الاعلامية

What role does the civil society perform to support media independence?

حجم الحرية المتاحة لوسائل الاعلام

The amount of media independence allowed in the community

المحتوي الاعلامي – هل هو مستقل ام هل يحمل رسائل سياسية

How independent is the political content?

6. القيم المهنية للعاملين في المؤسسات الاعلامية

Theme #6: Journalistic Professional standards

بيئة العمل الصحفي الي اي مدي تسمح بالاستقلالية في العمل – الشعور بالرضا الوظيفي –

The work environment, how much does it allow autonomy in covering the news – job satisfaction among journalists?

مدي وجود سياسة تحريرية واضحة قائمة على المهنية

Is there a clear editorial policy based on professional standards?

المهنية في العمل الصحفي – ما المقبول وغير المقبول في المؤسسات الاعلامية

What are the prevalent ethical standards for news coverage?

البرامج التدريبية واعداد الصحفيين

Training and career development programs for journalists

مواثيق الشرف

Existing codes of ethics governing journalistic practice

المؤسسات المهنية التي تقوم بحماية الصحفيين ودورها في الدفاع عنهم

Role of trade unions in supporting journalists

مدي رؤية الصحفيين لدورهم في المجتمع وايمانهم باهمية العمل الصحفي والاستقلالية والمهنية

How do journalists see their role in the society, and to what extent do they believe in the role of journalism in preventing the community based on independence and professionalism in covering news?

مدي انتماء الصحفيين للمجال السياسي

To what degree are journalists members of political organizations?

مدي انتماء اصحاب المؤسسات الاعلامية – مجالس الادارات للعمل السياسي

To what degree are media owners or managing boards' members of political organizations?

7. الانترنت التحولات في العمل الصحفي

Theme #7: role of online media

كيف يمكن للمواقع الالكترونية ان تسهم في التحول الديمقراطي

How do online media support democratic transformation?

ما الاختلافات بين دور المواقع الالكترونية والمؤسسات الاعلامية التقليدية

What is the difference in the role of online media and traditional media in democratic transformation?

هل العلاقة بين الاعلام التقليدي والاعلام الجديد هي علاقة تكملية ام تنافسية

Do online media and traditional media complement each other or compete with each other?

دراسات حالة من مواقع الكترونية اسهمت في الثورة

Case studies of online media during the uprisings..

9.1 List of the interviewees

The list was coded to protect the privacy of the interviewees.