Comparative Readings of the Lebanese Media System

Dissertation

zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades
einer Doktorin der Philosophie (Dr. Phil.)

der
Philosophischen Fakultät
der Universität Erfurt

vorgelegt von
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Erfurt, 2014

urn:nbn:de:gbv:547-201600105

Summary

The focus of this dissertation is on the Lebanese media system and the extent this system can be subsumed under one of the three ideal types put forth by Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini in their seminal work *Comparing Media Systems*. This endeavour uses the Hallin and Mancini framework as a scholarly springboard in an effort to take their sets of variables and models beyond the established democracies of Europe and North America.

This research responds to a recurring call for comparative work and particularly for the application of the Hallin and Mancini framework on other non-Western media systems. By critically applying their framework to the Lebanese media system, this thesis assesses the complex dimensions developed by the two scholars. These include: the development of media markets, political parallelism, the degree of development of journalistic professionalism and the degree and nature of state intervention. Hallin and Mancini acknowledge that restricting themselves to the western world was a limitation. They also suggest that their work should serve as an inspiration for a process of re-modelling by adapting and reconfiguring their framework and their three ideal types to a given context. This study does just that by amending the sub-indicators, identifying salient factors and suggesting a new model that better suits the Lebanese media system and potentially similar systems.

Following an introduction outlining the research aims and surveying the available literature, Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework of the study ranging from the Hallin and Mancini framework and relevant communication as well as political and state theories. In order to present the social, political and historical context of this analysis the

precarious political system of Lebanon and its recent history are also discussed in this chapter. This is followed by the methodological outline of the study discussing the collection of empirical data from the 63 research interviews conducted for this thesis. Furthermore, it surveys the available quantitative and qualitative data gleaned and analysed in this work. The assessment of the Lebanese media system follows in Chapter 4, where Hallin and Mancini's theoretical framework is critically applied. Chapter 5 discusses the amended and adapted sub-dimensions and presents a series of salient factors that have emerged as vital. Finally, Chapter 5 culminates in the suggestion of the CriSPP Model (Crisis-prone, small, Polarised Pluralist Model) – a variation on the Polarised Pluralist or Mediterranean Model, one of Hallin and Mancini's three ideal types. The CriSPP Model emphasises the salient factors of crisis as well as the small state, which significantly influence the Lebanese media system. The final Chapter 6 concludes with suggestions for further research including the proposal of similar media systems that may fit the CriSPP model.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

1. Introduction

1.1 Research aims

Comparative studies in the field of media and communications have in recent years become "fashionable" (Gurevitch & Blumler, 2004, p. 327), with recurring calls for "communication theorising to develop itself comparatively" (Park & Curran, 2000, p. 3). Undoubtedly, the power of comparative research to shed light on otherwise overlooked phenomena, establish typologies and allow for the formation of theories (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 4) has led to the increase in comparative research in the field. The impacts of globalisation – both real and mythical[1] – have also propelled comparative media research.

Of the numerous contributions, the typology and framework developed by Daniel C Hallin and Paolo Mancini "Comparing Media Systems" have come to be regarded as seminal and has initiated a riveting debate on media typologies, systems, forces of globalisation and convergence (Strömbäck & Luengo, 2008, p. 548). A series of studies attempting to apply the typologies beyond the western world followed including an edited work by the two authors emphasising the need to critically assess the dimensions and cautioning against "fitting" media systems from the rest of the world under their ideal types. The volume also included contributions by other researchers who have critically examined a variety of national media systems vis-à-vis the Hallin and Mancini framework.

Yet, despite the calls to de-westernize or even the "moral imperative to internationalise" media studies (Thussu, 2009, p. 27), most of these works have thus far focused on the western world.

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[1] Allusion to Kai Hafez's *The Myth of Media Globalisation* (2007), which argues that despite a growing exchange between media systems, media globalisation has been overstated. Instead, the nation-state remains very pertinent to the nature of the media system.

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The following endeavour proposes to assess the "disoriented and fragmented" Lebanese media system (Dajani, 1992) using the prism of the Hallin and Mancini framework and assess to what extent this system "fits", if at all, under any of their three suggested "ideal types"; the Mediterranean or Polarised Pluralist, the Democratic Corporatist or North European model, and the Liberal or North Atlantic Model. In attempting to apply the framework to the Lebanese media system, this research therefore also critically assesses the complex dimensions developed by the two scholars and suggests others pertinent to the local cultural and political context. Whilst responding to the recurring call for comparative work in the field, the study is careful not to universalize the Western democratic experience as Downing (1996), Park and Curran (2000), amongst others have cautioned. Indeed, the Hallin and Mancini framework is used in this study as a scholarly springboard in an effort to take their framework and models beyond the established democracies of the western world; Europe and North America. Therefore, in addition to critically assessing the Lebanese media system by using the variables put forth by Hallin and Mancini – with necessary contextual amendments and additions – the work culminates in the suggestion of new variables and an amended model-CriSPP (Crisis-prone, small, Polarized Pluralist). The amended model, a variation on the Polarised Pluralist Model, emphasises the salient features of crisis and the impact of state size, in addition to the general characteristics of the Polarised Pluralist Model. This heeds Hallin and Mancini's caveat that their framework and models are "limited" to the West and should rather 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).

1.2 Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is introduced by a chapter describing the research aims, the structure of the dissertation as well as available research in the field. This introductory chapter is followed by the theoretical framework, Chapter 2, which offers an in-depth evaluation of pertinent sources on comparative media research, endeavours in the field and the benefits of such studies. In particular, the Hallin and Mancini framework, its relevance, and the debate this work has triggered regarding convergence and globalisation will be assessed critically. Chapter 2 will also survey political patterns and characteristics including the nature of the state; its size, strength, and its system of governance; power-sharing. These emerge as central dimensions characterising the Lebanese political and – by extension – media systems. The history and political system of Lebanon as well as the literature used in this study will also be evaluated in this chapter.

Chapter 2 will be followed by a methodological outline of the study, which takes stock of the qualitative and quantitative studies used for the research including statistics, polls and studies vital for this research. Furthermore, the interviews conducted and the manner in which these were carried out will also be featured in this third chapter.

Chapter 4 offers a thorough assessment of the Lebanese media system vis-à-vis the Hallin and Mancini dimensions including the development of media markets, the variable of 'political pluralism', the degree of development of journalistic professionalism, and degree and nature of state intervention. This useful set of indicators as well as amended or other suggested variables will be used in analysing the Lebanese media system.

The dissertation culminates in Chapter 5 which describes the necessary amendments required for the set of indicators suggested by Hallin and Mancini. It also explicates the

salient features identified as influencing the Lebanese case and potentially other similar national media systems. Based on the Lebanese media system, the amended media model, the CriSPP Model, which refers to crisis-prone, small systems, which also share the characteristics of the Polarised Pluralist Model, will also be presented in this chapter. Finally, the dissertation concludes with a chapter recapping the main findings of the work as well as with suggestions for further research; namely media systems that may potentially fit the model suggested in the penultimate chapter.

1.3 Literature review

This dissertation has a dual but interlinked purpose; one is to thoroughly analyse the Lebanese media system; the second is to contribute to the field of comparative media studies with a special focus on the Hallin and Mancini approach, culminating in the suggestion of new dimensions and media model which better suits the Lebanese case as well as similar media systems. This research project therefore makes use of two different bodies of literature. The first relates to comparative research in the field of media and communication whereas the second interacts with the Lebanese case and its political and media system.

The first branch of the research thus takes stock of available approaches to comparative studies in the field of political communication, which is now seen to have progressed from "its infancy"[2] (Hallin &Mancini 2004, p. 1) to "late adolescence" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 3). There have been a number of attempts at comparative research in the field of media and communication studies with Frederick S. Siebert, Wilbur Schramm and Theodore Peterson's normative *Four Theories of the Press* (1956) being amongst the first of these

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[2] Some important statements of this ambition in communication include Blumler, McLeod, and Rosengren (1992), Blumler and Gurevitch (1995), and Curran and Park (2000).

endeavours. Although the authors sought to explicate differences in the world media by comparing the libertarian, authoritarian, social responsibility and Soviet communist concepts, their "ethnocentric perspectives, inconsistent structure, questionable typology and problematic assumptions" (Merrill, 2002, p. 133, see Nerone, 1995; Nordenstreng, 1997; Curran & Park, 2000; Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng & White, 2009; Hardy, 2012, p. 186) have meant that "this theory with four examples" as Nerone put it (1995, p. 18), has long been shelved. *Four Theories of the Press* were expanded by several researchers such as Denis McQuail (1987) who proposed two new theories; the democratic participant and the development theories, referring to countries in transition from colonialism to independence. Raymond Williams meanwhile suggested four systems based on organisational form rather than ideologies, including the commercial, paternalistic-"authoritarian system with a conscience", the authoritarian and the democratic (as cited in Mellor, 2005, pp. 49-51). Hachten (1981) put-forth the "revolutionary concept of the press" whereas Sparks and Splichal (1988) suggested the commercial and paternalist media system typologies (as cited in Jakubowicz, 2010, p. 2).

However, the fundamental question posed by Siebert et al. of why the press is as it is and the fact that the media often takes the "coloration" of the social and political structures in which it operates (Siebert et al., 1956, p. 1) continue to resonate. Indeed, their question and premise have been addressed by subsequent researchers including Hallin and Mancini's study on media systems in the western world, which resulted in a typology of media models for western media systems based on a set of theoretical indicators and empirical data.

Before Hallin and Mancini's prominent study, however, comparative studies were mainly "nation by chapter reporting" (Livingstone, 2003, p. 481) such as Donald Browne's work on

electronic media and industrialized nations (1999). This book identifies important factors useful to understanding the electronic media and then sets out to apply these on France, Holland, Germany, the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation in nation-specific chapters. Meanwhile, Sydney Head's *World Broadcasting Systems* (1985), remains a pioneering and important work in the field. Head identified a series of important factors influencing broadcasting systems including ownership, access, law and regulation, financial and technical provisions, content, media use, and foreign and transnational reach.

Such studies were followed by two-country comparisons, which are considered as "the second developmental step in the field's evolution" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 8). Some of these works falling into this category include Hallin and Mancini's early collaboration comparing US and Italian media (1984), Chalaby's comparison of French and Anglo-American journalism (1996), Åsard and Bennett's comparison of Swedish and American political rhetoric (1997). Frank Esser's comparison of British and German newsrooms and editorial structures therein (1998) and the comparison between the press in both countries (1999) also fall under this category. Other studies include Barbara Pfetsch's study comparing political communication culture in Germany and the United States (2001) and Hallin and Benson's comparative content analysis on the influence of states and markets on French and US print media (2007). A number of studies focus on particular issues or policies such as "Who owns the media?", which surveys patterns of media ownership in 97 countries (Djankov, McLiesh, Nenova & Shleifer, 2003) also fits this category. Moreover, studies focusing on press subsidies, broadcasting regulation, the representation of women have been released over the years by academics and institutions such as the European Union (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 8; Humphreys, 2012, p. 160).

In the 1990s, comparative and nationally focused studies with comparative dimensions increased (for instance Kaid and Holtz-Bacha's 1995 edited work on political advertising in Western democracies, Åsard and Bennet 1997, amongst others) thereby allowing the emergence of identifying transitional trends in political communication (Swanson, 2004, p. 46). The increase in the use of the comparative approach is due to its many benefits. These advantages can be summed up by "five practical steps or research goals": explaining differences and similarities; identifying functional equivalents (Wirth & Kolb, 2004; Hallin & Mancini, 2004) journalists attitude profiles, news reporting patterns (Esser, 2008; Patterson 1998) or political communication cultures (Pfetsch, 2004); and making predictions (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 10).

Since then, numerous works have been published, such as Michael Gurevitch and Jay G. Blumler's *State of the Art of Comparative Political Communication Research. Poised for Maturity?* (2004)*,* Frank Esser and Barbara Pfetsch's *Comparing Political Communication* (2004), Hafez's edited volume *Die Zukunft der internationalen Kommunikationswissenschaft in Deutschland* (2002), Kleinsteuber's *Comparing Mass Communication systems* (2004), which surveys theories as well as works by Humphreys (2012), Jakubowicz (2010) and Norris (2011). More recently, Hanitzsch and Esser's *Handbook of Comparative Communication Research* (2012), provides a discussion on methods, prospects and challenges of conducting comparative work in the field of communication studies. There are a number of other useful frameworks focusing on selected parameters such as media culture (Hepp & Couldry, 2009; Hanitzsch et al., 2011), journalism culture (Hanitzsch & Donsbach, 2012), media markets (Picard & Russi, 2012), election campaign communication and news-making within political communication systems (Esser & Strömbäck, 2012).

However, comparative political communication literature is considered limited in contrast to the field of comparative politics. According to Pippa Norris, it still lacks "theoretically sophisticated analytical frameworks, buttressed by rigorously tested scientific generalizations, common concepts, standardized instruments and shared archival datasets" and with the bulk of research carried out within the context of the "atypical" United States (2009, p. 323). The absence of a "theoretical map or conceptual compass" (Norris, 2009, pp. 322-323), is confounded when it comes to comparative studies that encompass the "rest" of the world.

Indeed, one lacuna has been the dearth of comparative work done beyond the western world prompting calls to 'de-Westernise' (Curran & Park, 2000) and to 'internationalise'[3] media studies (Thussu, 2009). These calls have heralded a series of chapters, articles and books on the subject including Hallin and Mancini's subsequent edited book *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World* published in 2011. This edited volume sought to examine the extent at which the framework they suggested fits other cases from around the world. There are a number of other attempts conducted on countries of Central and Eastern Europe, namely *Comparing Media Systems in Central Europe; Between Commercialisation and Politicisation* (2008), which examines possible models that may arise upon examining the media systems in Central and Eastern Europe. The edited volume, *Comparative media systems: European and global perspectives* (2010), also uses the Hallin and Mancini framework in other social and political contexts such as South Africa (Hadland), Turkey (Uce & De Swert), amongst others. Furthermore, Hedwig de Smaele's (1999 & 2010) work on the applicability of the Western media models on the Russian media system concludes

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[3] This refers to the title of Myung-Jin Park and James Curran (2000) edited book *De-Westernizing media studies* and Daya Thussu's edited book *Internationalising Media Studies*. Both shall be discussed further below.

that media systems are shaped by political and cultural factors in addition to economic factors and suggested an indigenous Russian (Eurasian) media system.

Meanwhile, there have been limited forays in the field of comparative Arab media research. Early classifications of the Arab press include William Rugh's *The Arab Press* (1979) and Ihsan Askar's description of the press' development in the Levant (1982). Rugh's *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio and Television in Arab Politics* (2004) updates his typology classifying Arab media systems into the "unclearly defined categories" (Mellor, 2005, pp. 49-51); "loyalist", "diverse", "mobilisation" and "transitional", which he added in his latest work. Rugh's main focus was on the political element governing the media, namely the political system in which they exist and the ownership and diversity of the media in a particular system. Criticism voiced against this typology included the "neglect of content" (Kraidy, 2012, p. 179), overlooking the media's rapid development in the region and the neglect of the "symbiotic relationship that takes place between the three actors involved in news production: government, journalists/editors, and the audience" (Mellor, 2005, p. 64). Another typology proposed is Muhammad Ayish's *Political Communication on Arab world Televisions: Evolving Patterns* (2002), which distinguishes three patterns of political communication; the traditional government-controlled television pattern, the reformist government-controlled television pattern and the liberal commercial pattern by analysing three broadcasting corporations which fit the typology suggested. However, the typology presented is rudimentary and overlooks content, journalistic practice, as well as diversity within each system.

Donald Boyd's 1983 volume on the broadcast media in the Arab world was also followed by a 1999 volume on Arab broadcasting systems, which surveys the historical development of

mass media in the Arab states. Meanwhile, Yahya Kamalipour and Hamid Mowlana's (1994) edited handbook, *Mass Media in the Middle East* assesses the media systems in the 21 Arab countries, with each chapter focusing on one nation. More recently, an edited work by Mellor, Khalil Rinnawi and Nabil Dajani (2011) surveyed Arab media industries with chapters analysing the press, publishing, broadcasting and cinema industries.

Whether studies on Arab media resulted in taxonomies or not, generally Arab scholars situate Arab media systems within the social responsibility theory proposed by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm. Socially responsible media are expected to sustain stability, support citizen participation and hold government accountable. Alternatively, the development theory suggested by McQuail (2002), which is also used to describe Arab media systems, refers to countries in transition from colonialism to independence, where the foundation for freeing and commercialising the media sector has not yet been cultivated and where the media strive to help develop society (Iskandar, 2007, p. 11). Yet, these are ideals that – though ingrained in the psyche of most journalists in the region – are yet to materialise in the face of market and political pressures.[4]

Meanwhile, the second branch of the research relevant to this study relates to the Lebanese political and media system. While Subchapter 2.3 on the Lebanese political and media system will expand on a variety of historical, social and media studies,[5] this section surveys some of the key research conducted to that effect. The Lebanese political system and its history have produced a multitude of works. Hourani (1985) Salibi (1976, 1976a, 2003), Traboulsi (2007), and El Khazen (2000) have written authoritatively on the history of the

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[4] The field of comparative media studies shall be discussed in full in Subchapter 2.1.
[5] This includes works by Kamal Salibi, Fawwaz Traboulsi and Albert Hourani regarding the historical perspective, Samir Khalaf from an anthropological perspective and Marwan Kraidy, Katharina Nötzold and Nabil Dajani's works on the Lebanese media, amongst others.

small troubled country and its political system. Others have focused on the political system and the coexistence between the myriad sectarian groups. This group of authors includes Khalaf (1977), Hanf (2007), Kingston & Zahar (2004), Kraft, Al-Mazri, Wimmen and Zupan on peacebuilding (2008), and Fakhoury Mühlbacher on power-sharing (2009) amongst many others. The Lebanese media have also piqued interests as it stands out in the Arab world in terms of its pluralism and freedom. However, the number of academic works on that front remains limited. William Rugh's categorisation of the Lebanese media as falling under the diverse media provides some historical perspectives and a cursory description of the apparent diversity in the system (1979, 2004). In the latter work, Rugh draws in part on Dajani's *Disoriented Media in a Fragmented Society: The Lebanese Experience* (1992), which though outdated, captures the fragmentation of the Lebanese media landscape and their reliance on political subsidy. In several of his works, Marwan Kraidy touches upon the Lebanese media with particular emphasis on entertainment. In *Arab Television Industries* (2009) with Joe F. Khalil, Lebanon's pioneer television stations as well as their relation to the Gulf and particularly Saudi Arabian market and financiers is explored. It is this nexus, which Kraidy later teases out in a chapter in Hallin and Mancini's edited work on media systems beyond the west. This shall be further explored in Subchapter 2.1.

Whereas Katrin Nesemann's (2001) work focuses on media policies and media law in Lebanon in the post-war years, Ines Braune (2005) discusses journalist syndicates in Jordan and Lebanon. Judith Pies (2008) meanwhile discusses journalistic ethics and media education in Lebanon and Jordan. Media education in Lebanon is further explored in Jad Melki's article *Journalism and Media Studies in Lebanon* (2009). Media ethics, fairness and balance, according to Yasmine T. Dabbous (2010), are not priorities due to the partisan

influence, which according to her dominates the media. The distribution of the broadcast licenses in the post-war years to key political players, which shall be discussed further in Subchapter 4.1, is analysed by Dima Dabbous-Sensenig's doctoral thesis. Katharina Nötzold's work on Lebanese Televisions (2009) exhaustively explores the post-war broadcasting landscape and the televisions' relationship to political elites. In addition to that, a chapter on the Lebanese broadcasting system, state policies and the national broadcaster by this author offers an updated view about the main issues relating to this system (2013). Zahera Harb (2009) focuses on Hezbollah's media operation during the Israeli Occupation of Southern Lebanon in her article on the subject. The so-called new media have also attracted some research with Maha Taki's doctoral dissertation assessing the Lebanese and Syrian blogosphere (2010) as well as Bruce Etling, John Kelly, Robert Faris and John Palfrey's article (2010) mapping the Arab blogosphere and particularly political blogging.

As briefly outlined, the Lebanese media and particularly the broadcast system have been well-researched, albeit with a focus on the post-war years. Still, when it comes to assessing the Lebanese media system as a whole, there are few in-depth works that take stock of this system. Furthermore, studies assessing this system from a comparative perspective where existing typologies are used as "a yardstick to interpret and contextualise the single case at hand" are even rarer (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 7). With the exception of Kraidy's work (2012) exploring the transnational media system, there have been hardly any explicit or implicit comparative media studies conducted on Lebanon. It is for this reason that this work sets out to fill this gap.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Comparative research in the field of media and communications

Although the first use of the comparative method can be traced back to Aristotle's *Politics Book Three*, in which constitutions are compared, it was not until the 1800s that it was introduced as an instrument of systematic research by the British philosopher and utilitarian John Stuart Mill. As Mill states: "there are such things as general conceptions by means of which we can think generally: and when we form a set of phenomena into a class, that is, when we compare them with one another to ascertain in what they agree, some general conception is implied in this mental operation. And inasmuch as such a comparison is a necessary preliminary to Induction...the conception originally found its way to us as the result of such a comparison" (Mill, 2006, p. 650).

Indeed, the myriad benefits of using the tool of comparative research, according to Hans Kleinsteuber, make this approach useful in analysing complex interrelations such as the interrelation of media and politics (2004, p. 68). Comparative research also allows for the testing of hypotheses about the interrelationships among social phenomena (Durkheim, 1982, p. 147) as well as the ability to reach necessary generalization and theoretical abstractions (Hafez, 2002a, p. 59). Using this approach also helps "render(s) the invisible visible", as put by Gurevitch and Blumler, and may highlight aspects of media systems that may have been overseen or taken for granted in ethnocentric works (as cited in Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 2). It has also been deemed epistemologically important in assisting the formation of ideas as "an object only develops an identity of its own if it is compared with others" (Esser & Pfetsch, 2004, p. 7).

Furthermore, comparative analysis can also reduce the risk of "conceptually impoverishing" false generalizations such as the common theoretical extrapolation from what Downing calls "the Anglo-American 'data-dyad'" (1996, p. 29) whilst encouraging the move from overly particular explanations to ones that are more general, where appropriate. Finally and in addition to challenging "naive universalism" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 4), the comparative approach allows researchers to describe and explain differences and similarities; identify functional equivalents, establish typologies, and make predictions (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 10).

Although some may argue that in essence all social research is comparative by nature (Beniger, 1992 as cited in Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012, pp. 5-6; Lasswell 1968, p. 3), some believe that the comparative research approach in the field of media and communications remains limited despite its power to reveal "transnational trends and similarities" that are only apparent when we step back from the uniqueness of political communication in each country (Swanson, 2004, p. 46).

In spite of the vast benefits this approach promises, attempts to push the realm of media and communication studies in the direction of comparative analysis emerged only in the 1970s (Esser & Pfetsch, 2004). Although Gurevitch and Blumler argue "comparative political research has almost become fashionable" (2004, p. 327), there is still much work to be done. Still, the frameworks suggested have proven useful including the framework for comparing political media systems (Esser & Pfetsch, 2004), media culture (Hepp & Couldry, 2009), media markets (Picard & Russi, 2012) and journalism culture (Hanitzsch & Donsbach, 2012), election campaign communication (Esser and Strömbäck, 2012). Others, such as Hafez (2002), Humphreys, (2012), Jakubowicz, (2010) and Norris (2011), have

contributed conceptually to the process of comparative media research as well as in comparative research of democratic-normative media roles (Hanitzsch & Esser, 2012, p. 502).

In essence, the comparative approach involves the contrasting of two or more "macro-level units" such as world regions, countries, sub-national regions or social milieus at one point or more points in time and "with respect to some common activity" (Edelstein, 1982, p. 14).[6] Be they spatial or temporal, it is important to note that the objects being compared must neither be identical nor entirely dissimilar (Kleinsteuber, 2004, p. 65). Furthermore and despite the fact that the word comparison, is Latin for "with same", the comparison should endeavour to reveal both similarities and differences (Kleinsteuber, 2004, p. 65) for both the common features and the differences are at the core of every comparative approach (Kleinsteuber, 2004, p. 64). It is also important to note that "everything is comparable, as long as they are not deemed the same" (Hafez, 2002a, p. 60), with the two approaches being either a most similar systems design or a most different systems design (Wirth & Kolb, 2004, p. 97).

The units of study can also vary. Although the ideal unit of comparison in comparative research and the "most clear cut" has so far been the "national-territorial" (Curran & Park, 2000; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Esser & Pfetsch, 2004, p. 8; Hafez, 2007, p. 21), this "container-thinking" argue Thomas Hardy and Andreas Hepp ignores other phenomena which transcend national borders (Hepp, 2009; Hepp & Couldry, 2009, pp. 33-39 ; Hardy, 2008, p. 237). Indeed, rather than "container thinking", a term borrowed from the philosopher Wolfgang Welsch, a contemporary "transcultural approach", which

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[6] Alex Edelstein defines comparative research as the study that compares between two or more nations with regards a common activity (1982, p. 14).

circumvents traditional cultures and national borders is advised (Hepp & Couldry, 2009, p. 39). Globalisation, the internet and transnational media corporations transgress national borders and the borders of what Hepp[7] calls the "cultural thickenings" and reduce the importance of the nation-states. However the nation-state remains of key importance in terms of national community construction (Kleinsteuber, 2004, p. 81).

Having said this, even Hepp and Couldry, who advance an admirable attack on the "narrow" "unquestioned and essentialised" frame of the nation state (2009, p. 43), concede that for political aspects of media systems the use of the nation-state is more than just "understandable", it is obvious (2009, p. 36).[8] For, despite the internet, entertainment programmes and transnational news corporations which transgress the "artificial boundaries of bourgeois nation states" (Boyd-Barett, 2009, p. 122) and have indeed detracted from some of the nation-state's influence (Kleinsteuber, 2004, p. 81), the nation-state and its political system continue to dominate the media system, media policy and history (Hafez, 2007, p. 161). The state, particularly for comparative and analytical purposes, therefore "retains salience" as it encompasses the "locus of decision-making and the source of certain kinds of identity-formation" (Hardy, 2008, p. 237).

Meanwhile, Hardy suggests a combined method, which joins comparative analysis with the national frame thereby joining the vertical media relationships, with the "horizontal

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[7] Hepp speaks of four levels of media cultures on the level of ethnicity, commercial, political and religious levels that circumvent territorialised "container thinking" (2009).

[8] Despite the "cultural thickening" that connects the Levantine Arab states and which transcend the artificial and at times non-existing borders, the media systems particularly in terms of political diversity, freedom and content differ widely amongst the states of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan largely due to the authoritarian and semi-authoritarian political systems, which differentiate Syrian and Jordan from Lebanon. In his presentation at the *Theories of International and Intercultural Communication* in Mannheim in October 2009, Mikkel Fugl Eskjaer considers a regional media system of the aforementioned Levantine countries by focusing on the foreign language local press. Not only is the focus on the press publishing in foreign languages in the three countries not representative, the political differences amongst the three largely impacts political communication and dwarfs the impact of cultural, linguistic and/or ethnical similarities.

transnational and transverse media and cultural relationships" (Hardy, 2008, p. 237). This method helps avoiding errors in analysis that result from a narrow national approach (Ibid.). Some of these oversights that Hardy may have been alluding to in focusing on the nation-state may be similar to Hepp and Couldry's criticism of the Hallin and Mancini approach not because they adopted the "narrow frame" of the nation-state as unit of comparison but because they seem to "essentialise" it and by doing so overlook important element such as religion, the role of civil society, and economics (Hepp & Couldry, 2009, p. 43). Hallin and Mancini are also accused of making hasty cultural conclusions when they argue that a state's relation to a model reveals the political media system but also about its society and culture (Hepp & Couldry, 2009, pp. 36). Indeed, when focusing on the state media systems, the transnational "nationhood" is overlooked. In the Arab world for instance, where the media market and language are shared and where cultural similarities exist, the "transnational Arab media construct dual narratives, one of the state and the other of nation, sometimes in concert but often in contrast" (Iskandar, 2007, p. 32). Still the nation-state and its "political and legal orders" even in confederations such as the European Union continue to dominate media policy (Hafez, 2007, pp. 142-143).

 Therefore "despite exaggerated and premature obituaries of the nation state" (Thussu, 2009, p. 2), Sreberny is right in announcing "the nation is dead, long live the nation!" (Sreberny, 2008, p. 19). After all it is through comparative research that the "bridge between traditional studies of (national) media, which are no longer sufficient, and new media and globalisation perspectives, which have tended to neglect nationally based media, even though this forms a crucial part of their smooth and frequently overstated narratives of transformation" can be best explored (Hardy, 2008, pp. 20-21).

Hallin and Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* cautiously crosses the bridge by using the nation state as a unit of comparison and offering a narrative of homogenization and convergence, albeit with several qualifications heeding countertendencies. Their conceptual framework and adaptation of the convergence theory shall be fully assessed below, as their parameters and models constitute an essential point of reference for this work.

2.2. Hallin and Mancini framework

Hallin and Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* sought to determine the relation between media and politics by comparatively analysing 18 media systems in the West. They proposed a framework consisting of key dimensions influencing media systems such as the development of the media markets, political parallelism, journalists' professionalization and state role as well as other key political characteristics namely state-society relation and the differences in patterns of government (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 65).

In line with these dimensions, Hallin and Mancini distinguish between three different models of media systems in an effort to reveal the politics-media interplay within the framework of established western democracies. The three models are the Polarised Pluralist, the Democratic Corporatist and the Liberal Model. They repeatedly warn that the models provided are in fact "ideal types" *à la* Max Weber where they serve as a simplification of a complex reality usefully capturing the most important aspects of empirical reality. While some heterogeneous national media systems may at times not fit comfortably under each of the categories, the three models identified – they argue – still capture significant characteristics of media systems and political systems, and they enable classifications of individual systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 69).

Indeed, even a cursory glance reveals ill-fitting national media systems grouped with others that are quite different or that fit only after several qualifications including the reminder that the purpose of the work is not only classification of individual systems, but the identification of characteristic patterns of relationship between system characteristics (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 11). However, the work lives up to the value of classification as argued by Weber and that it helps "enlarge our thinking" about what has been classified by thinking about the media systems and variations between them through these models (as cited in Patterson, 2007, p. 330).

Hallin and Mancini use the influential *Four Theories of the Press*[9] as a springboard for their study highlighting the argument "the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates" as well as Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm's attempt at analysing media systems comparatively and "the appeal of being able to classify media systems in terms of a smaller number of models" (McQuail, 2005b). Siebert, Peterson and Schramm are criticised first and foremost for hyper-simplification and failing to empirically analyse the relationship of media systems and social system and rather focusing on the state-media relationship. Hallin and Mancini, instead, sought to explicate connections between media system patterns and political system characteristics in the West rather than on a global scale. They thus choose cautiously to limit the study to a region in the interest of "comparability" which, they reason, is "more likely in an area than in a randomly selected set of countries" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 7), although this is not always necessarily the case.[10]

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[9] A caustic yet accurate remark on the "inadequate schema" comes from Nerone and colleagues in *Last Rights, revisiting Four Theories of the Press*, which they argue "does not offer four theories: it offers one theory with four examples" (Thussu, 2009, p. 17).

[10] While certain geographical areas may have several similarities – be it linguistic, historical or cultural – political

Hallin and Mancini survey the different political and economic system variables relevant to the comparative analysis of media systems and which impact the four dimensions they put forth. These variables draw on historical and political characteristics that have influenced the media systems of the Western states included in the study. These characteristics include market-related factors such as the development of advertising, the concentration of capital and its effect on the media through clientelist ties, as well as the relation of state and society where and particularly the distinction between liberal and welfare-state democracy; the distinction between consensus and majoritarian government, between organized pluralism or corporatism, and liberal pluralism, the development of rational-legal authority as defined by Max Weber, and the distinction between moderate and polarised pluralism.

Based on the political, economic and historical context, Hallin and Mancini propose four dimensions according to which media systems in Western Europe and North America can be compared. Hallin and Mancini's dimensions almost coincide with those put forth by Blumler and Gurevitch[11] although they add media market development with an emphasis on the strong or weak development of the mass circulation press to the other dimensions of political parallelism or the "degree and nature of the links between the media and political parties", the development of journalistic professionalism; and the degree and nature of state intervention in the media system. Each of these complex dimensions is further sub-divided into several qualitative distinctions (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 21-22). A discussion of each of the dimensions put forth follows.

and media systems do not always develop analogously. Indeed, neighbouring states can vary drastically. Some examples include the differences between Poland, the former Yugoslavian states, Russia and their neighbours (Kleinsteuber, 2004, p. 81) as well as Lebanon and autocratic Syria. Similarly, Arend Lijphart claims that while the Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy share a common geographical area and several other important background characteristics, they practice different forms of democracy (Lijphart, 1988, p. 22).

[11] They proposed, originally in 1975, four dimensions for comparative analysis: 1) degree of state control over mass media organisation; 2) degree of mass media partisanship 3) degree of media-political elite integration; and 4) the nature of the legitimating creed of media institutions (as cited in Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 21-22).

2.2.1. The four dimensions

Development of Media Market

As shall be critiqued below, Hallin and Mancini "obliquely" confine their consideration of the media market variable, which is an important factor in comparative media research, to the development of the mass circulation press (Humphreys, 2012, p. 165). They argue that higher circulation rates, present in Northern Europe, are linked to the early development of mass circulation press in countries. In particular they claim that countries, which did not develop mass circulation newspapers in the late 19th century to early 20th century have never went on to develop these regardless of whether their literacy levels and political and economic development reached levels similar to the high-circulation countries. They also trace presence or absence of a mass circulation press to the development of the media as political institutions. Furthermore, they link the nature of the audience to the early development of the mass circulation press with the Southern European press appealing to "a small elite-mainly urban, well-educated, and politically active" and with larger gender gap, whereas the Northern European and North American press is characterised as being more "vertical...mediating between political elites and the ordinary citizen" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 22-24). Another factor they shed light on is the gender difference and its connection to the development of the press with the gender gap in readership in Southern Europe larger than that in Northern Europe.

In addition to these indicators, which privilege the press over the electronic media, the distinction between a sensationalist mass press and "quality" newspapers addressed to an elite readership, as is most evident in Britain, is also an indicator. However, it is not clear what these indicators provide in their categorisation process as the yellow press and

quality press coexist in many heterogeneous national media systems and seem to be a general trend rather than characteristic to one media system. Another indicator they consider is the division of newspaper markets between systems dominated by a national or regional press.

In spite of these sub-dimensions, it is not clear how a quantitative indicator limited to the press can reveal social and political communication patterns particularly if these dimensions were to be considered in other systems where the electronic media dominate or where the press, whether due to limited literacy rates or other socio-economic reasons, never fully developed. In addition, just as the figure of internet connections in Arab households is not the best guide to determine the extent of internet use due to the prevalence of internet cafes, circulation rates today are also not an inadequate indicator due to the availability of most newspapers online and for free, shared copies as well as the prominence of an oral tradition in certain cultures (Sakr, 2008, p. 193). Finally, this approach to media markets renders the audience as mere objects and does not shed light on the formation and existence of structured public opinion. The media market shall be discussed further not only in relation to the Lebanese case (cf. Subchapter 4.4), but also as an important variable as part of the structure-content-performance paradigm, where market structure is seen to determine the market conduct, which in turn determines market performance (Picard & Russi, 2012, pp. 241-242). The size of markets and their influence on the legislation and policy as Puppis and d'Haenens (2012) acknowledges is yet another element that has been overlooked by Hallin and Mancini, despite the fact that this was later conceded (Hallin, 2009). Hallin and Mancini's approach to the integral variable of media market, even in the 18 Western states considered, has been deemed limited. As the

discussion in Subchapter 4.4 will show, this variable needs to be approached in a wholly different manner when considering it in completely different social, political and historical contexts.

Political Parallelism

The second dimension Hallin and Mancini propose is political parallelism. This term is an adaptation of the concept of "party-press parallelism" proposed by Seymour-Ure in some of the earliest works on comparative analysis of media systems (as cited in Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 27), which was later expanded into "media-party parallelism" to also address television news (Van Kempen, 2007, p. 303-304). This concept attempts to gauge "the degree of neutrality or partisanship in the media" (Humphreys, 2012, p. 168) with 20th century Denmark, where each newspaper represented a party, serving as the purest form of external pluralism and high political parallelism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 27). While the partisan media are said to have "lost ground to commercial press forms" (McQuail, 1994, p. 15), "vestiges of the old-time partisan press remain especially in European newspaper systems" (Donsbach & Patterson, 2004, p. 255).

As with each complex dimension, Hallin and Mancini identify a number of indicators to assess how strongly political parallelism is present in a media system. Media pluralism and diversity discussions usually pivot around the issues of structural diversity and content diversity (McQuail, 2010, p. 197; Balčytienė, 2009, p. 40). Hallin and Mancini's indicators cover this gamut by gauging media content as well as the organizational connections between media and political parties. The latter indicator effectively encapsulates media ownership, and the tendency for media personnel to be active in political life or work for media organizations with similar political inclinations.

Whilst the managerial revolution has been put forth to describe the autonomy journalists and their managers enjoy in larger companies and conglomerates (Curran, 2000, pp. 32-34), the radical political economy approach to the media argues that owners directly influence the media they own (Goldsmiths Media Group, 2000, pp. 22-25). Still others argue, that although there are surely margins of freedom, managers have an "operational rather than allocative control" where they ensure adherence to key objectives and goals laid down by the owners (Curran, 2000, pp. 32-34). Furthermore, the fact that the majority of journalists in Britain, for instance, are employed as free-lancers, part-time or self-employed, journalists have less job security to challenge editorial lines (Curran, 2000, pp. 32-34). In addition, key managerial posts in some organisations, as shall be shown in the case of Lebanon, are selected directly by the owners and serve as "gatekeepers" who manage news production and selection (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). The gatekeeping models (White, 1950; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009) differs from Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's (1988) "propaganda model" as the former is rather "micro-analysis" focusing on the "Mr. Gates" (White, 1950, p. 384), and their influence on the new selection process (Klaehn, 2005, p. 139). Whereas the "Propaganda model" as put forth in Herman and Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* focuses on the media as an institution and an instrument of power mobilised to safeguard the interests of the state and elites. It is worth noting that the title *Manufacturing Consent* is taken from the American journalist Walter Lippmann whose classical work *Public Opinion* claims that the state manufactures consent to defend the interests of elites (1922, p. 230).

In addition to the dimension of staff and their partisan allegiances, another factor identified relates to the partisanship of media audiences with supporters of different political groups

consuming the media, which reflects their political aspiration. The gravitation towards media that "reinforce their sense of themselves and their distinctive qualities" (Murdock, Dahlgren, & Wieten, 2000, p. 63) is likened by Chantal Mouffe to "a kind of autism" (Carpentier & Cammaerts, 2006, p. 968). In light of the proliferation of a myriad media outlets with distinct audiences, there has been an increase in the segmentation of audiences which in extreme cases can be referred to as the "Balkanisation" of audiences (Blumler & Gurevitch, 2000, p. 161). While the partisanship of audiences is expected to be high in terms of political communication particularly in systems where politicisation is high, it is imagined here that, had entertainment and non-political communication been considered, a less partisan audience fragmentation would be observed.

Yet another indicator suggested is the journalistic role orientations and practices. According to Hallin and Mancini the perception of the role of journalists is linked to the level of political parallelism in the system. Journalists, who perceive journalism as a "political profession", as Max Weber put it, are probably in systems where political parallelism is high (Hallin & Mancin, 2004, p. 39). Meanwhile journalists who aspire to provide neutral information are associated with systems of low political parallelism. These journalistic cultures or traditions, according to Hallin and Mancini, can be traced to historical institutional ties connecting the media and social groups in Western Europe. This controversial indicator emerges as rather normative as shall be discussed later under each of the three models put forth. This is particularly so, as, a number of studies including the work carried out by Thomas E. Patterson and Wolfgang Donsbach (1996), reveals that partisan bias influences news decisions in Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Sweden and the United States.

Finally, Hallin and Mancini assess the organisation of diversity on the level of the media system. While media pluralism is regarded as a vital political goal for democracies (Thomaß, 2007, p. 44), a clear definition of plurality and how this could be achieved and empirically measured remains contentious (Just, 2009, pp. 106-107). Hallin and Mancini differentiate between external pluralism, which they deem as politically parallel and internal pluralism, which is regarded as less politically parallel and more neutral. External pluralism refers to pluralism achieved at the level of the media system as a whole, where media outlets reflect the points of view of different groups or tendencies in society. Internal pluralism, is present in systems with low political parallelism, and refers to pluralism achieved in each individual media outlet. The media in those systems allegedly have little or no institutional links to political groups and seek "balance" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 29). Alternatively, these could also include media corporations, which include representatives of a number of political forces (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 27–30). In order to assess internal pluralism it would be useful to consider the representation and nature of social or political groups as well as the nature and characteristics of their representation (La Porte et al., 2007, p. 386). Diversity within outlets and differentiation of outlets unfortunately tend not to appear simultaneously in one system (D'Haenens, Antoine & Saeys, 2009, p. 53-54).

In addition to UNESCO's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions,[12] the Council of Europe's Recommendation (2007) perceives the media not only as an economic product but also as a cultural good. Articles 21-23 of the European Union Charter, as well as Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 and

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[12] UNESCO (2005, 20 October) Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Paris. Retrieved from:
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.phpURL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (last accessed on 30 October 2014).

similarly article 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union prohibit discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, religion or opinion and call for the respect of diversity.[13] Unfortunately, however, legal principles pertaining to pluralism and diversity have had limited consequence on the audiovisual landscape.[14] A report conducted by the Media Diversity Institute, the NGO Article 19 and the International Federation of Journalists (2012), found that despite journalists' awareness of EU anti-discrimination regulation, racial and ethnic stereotypes in Europe's media persist. Another report focused solely on the coverage of immigration issues in the US contends that there is an absence of immigrants' voices in such news items, with only 12% citing immigrants (Migrant Voice, 2014).

In any case, media pluralism, which is connected to democratic and public sphere-related theories, should be addressed not only in terms of media ownership but also in how "communicative power" is distributed (Karppinen, 2009, p. 151). In her latest work on media pluralism, Kari Karppinen discusses three democratic models and their ensuing conceptualisation of media pluralism as a normative and theoretical value (2013). The Liberal democratic model, which is often likened to the "free marketplace of ideas", seems to confound the market and consumer choice with pluralism. This approach also seems to equate the market and commercialisation with media freedom and diversity whereas experiences reveal that markets without political, social and legal scaffolding fail. Examples to this reality abound, with the large conglomerates or "corporate mercenaries" (Curran, 2000b, p. 124) often used as an example of the dangers media concentration and an

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[13] More information about the legal instruments can be found here:
http://ethicaljournalisminitiative.org/assets/docs/055/024/9acea37-8fbc218.pdf (last accessed on 30 September 2014).
[14] Several works have assessed the effectiveness of diversity regulation. Some cases where media regulation has been largely ineffective include Portugal (Sousa & Costa e Silva, 2009, p. 95) and the Baltic states (Balčytienė, 2009).

unchecked market can pose on democracy (Humphreys, 1996). Even U.S. media mogul Ted Turner has lamented how "the sluggish oligopolies" that are "profit-focused and risk-averse could undercut democracy if the market is left unfettered" (2004). One common example is Berlusconi's infamous "tele-democracy" and his exploitation of his media empire to consolidate his private and political assets and effectively change the media culture in his culture (Habermas, 2006, p. 421). Another example of the exclusions that considering media freedom as "synonymous with commercialization" (Papatheodorou & Machin, 2003, pp. 43-44) was the marginalisation of Greek voices who were ironically calling for deregulation (Sims, 2003, p. 212).

However, while it may sound logical to contend that media concentration may lead to enormous opinion-forming power (Humphreys, 1996, pp. 71-74; Meier & Trappel, 1998), "the fact that only a few media players are operating in a small market may not in itself threaten media pluralism" (Balčytienė, 2009, p. 40). The manner in which media content is produced, the voices represented and the efforts made in presenting a diversity of opinions also impacts the pluralism of the media (Ibid.). By the same token, in her work on the Arab media, Naomi Sakr argues that increases in the quantity of television programmes are not automatically matched by increases in diversity (Sakr, 2006, p. 2). It is for this reason that Chapter 4 on Lebanon will also assess the diversity of the staff, the guests hosted on political programmes and the sources cited, in addition to ownership. Furthermore, audience share as well as content, which is not given as much attention by Hallin and Mancini, will also be assessed. Furthermore, state intervention to promote diversity shall be discussed further in the section on state role as some states or confederations have introduced protectionist legislation to guarantee media pluralism.

It is important to note, however, that the discussion on pluralism and its importance is grounded in democratic theory. The deliberative democratic model in particular, which draws on Jürgen Habermas' work on the *Öffentlichkeit* or the public sphere (1991) is particularly relevant. The public sphere is envisaged as a space or locus where citizens engage, deliberate and discuss. The initial conceptualisation of the bourgeois public sphere has been critiqued primarily for "problems of underdevelopment or omission of significant issues" (Calhoun, 1992, p. 33). These include the unhelpful idealisation and historically inaccurate description (Schudson, 1992). The fact that the public sphere also excluded women, and the less privileged (Fraser, 1992; Benhabib, 1992) as well as neglected nationalism (Eley, 1992) religion and science (Zaret, 1992) as well as social movements thereby neglecting agency have also been criticised (Calhoun, 1992, pp. 36-37). However, it should be noted that Habermas himself has acknowledged the shortcomings and in part amended his conceptualisation of the public sphere (1992, 1993, 1996, 1997). His reconceptualisation of the public sphere can be regarded as more optimistic insofar that audiences are regarded as uncritical. Furthermore, rather than private individuals, civil society and interest groups in the latter version participate in the debate acting like "sensors of society" who with the assistance of the media lead to critical debate and the formation of public opinion (Habermas, 1996, p. 360). Still, despite the press' work alongside the public "to support reflection and value or policy choice" (Benson, 2011, p. 193), Habermas remains pessimistic about the mass media's ability to fulfil its democratic role due to the distorting effect of "administrative and social power" (1996, p. 360; 1997, p. 378). Furthermore, it is not entirely clear how the media should be organised to best serve democracy (Curran, 2000, pp. 135-136).

Proponents of radical democratic public sphere also take issue with rational-consensus, which Habermas claims is possible in his harmonious public sphere (Curran, 1991, p. 29). Chantal Mouffe contends that despite Habermas' later versions, which though accept criticisms regarding exclusions and power forces within this agora, overlooks sub- and multiple public spheres and the "tension" or "democratic paradox" between pluralism and integration. Indeed, Mouffe argues that "the belief in the possibility of a universal rational consensus has put democratic thinking on the wrong track. Instead of trying to design the institutions which, though supposedly 'impartial' procedures, would reconcile all conflicting interests and values, the task for democratic theorists and politicians should be to envisage the creation of a vibrant 'agonistic' public sphere of contestation where different hegemonic political projects can be confronted" (2005, p. 3). It is for this reason that an externally pluralistic media system may be more appropriate and more just in pluralistic societies with deep fissures than the attempt to mainstream, which may at times marginalise minorities and vulnerable communities. Indeed, it is the powerful and dominant groups, which determine cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986).[15]

One final consideration is that democracy and press pluralism are not always correlated. A comparative study[16] assessing the relationship between democracy and press pluralism in seven countries found the debate following September 11, 2001 attacks in countries ranked as highly democratic were less pluralistic than in countries with weaker democratic

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[15] Bourdieu coined the term "cultural capital" to refer to these assets, which can be monopolized and used to the benefit of those who enjoy it (1986). There are several examples where women, minorities and immigrant populations are altogether marginalised or excluded from public broadcasters as well as commercial broadcasters (Migrant Voice, 2014; Article 19, MDI & the International Federation of Journalists, 2012).

[16] The study carried out by Joshua Woods (2007) assesses the relationship between democracy and press pluralism in seven countries: China, Colombia, Egypt, Germany, India, Lithuania, and Russia. The term "pluralism" is defined as the extent to which diverse and competing views appear in the content of the mainstream press on a given news topic. The content of 2,172 articles from the 10 largest newspapers in each country, published in the first months after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, is analyzed to evaluate the level of press pluralism.

institutions (Woods, 2007). Joshua Woods acknowledges some limitations such as the fact that this study was a snapshot of a landmark moment in history, covering only two months. Another drawback recognized is the temporary reaction to crises[17] where media may homogenise and rally around the flag (Mueller, 1970, p. 21). Following the attacks in 2001, White House Spokesman cautioned the media "be careful what you say and watch what you do" (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2002b). Despite these limitations, however, making generalisations is scientifically sound. The confounding of democracy, particularly liberal democracy with low political parallelism and the free market approach with pluralism, as has been argued above, is therefore an unwarranted leap.

Although measuring pluralism and diversity in the media is difficult, a system of protection measures including policy and laws that shall be a part of the discussion on the state role in the media system could help ensure diversity. Audience control and media criticism, research and the support of public service broadcasting can also help establish a "healthy diversity" in the media (Balčytienė, 2009, p. 40).

Hallin and Mancini also address the nature of public service broadcasting governance models and their relation to the political system as part of this variable. As the name implies, public service broadcasters are expected to serve the "the public good" by promoting diversity, encouraging local productions and offering quality, popular and specialised programmes for a variety of audiences (Mendel, 2002, pp. 15-16). The manner in which these ideals are achieved or targeted varies, however, with a variety of governance models. Drawing on Humphreys (1996, pp. 155-158), Hallin and Mancini identify four different styles of governance: the government, professional, proportional representation

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[17] The effect of crises and wars on the media system can indeed prove to be a salient feature, which shall be picked up again in Subchapter 5.2.

and civic or corporatist models. These they caution are neither rigid nor as simple as they seem and could even be combined with most systems in northern Europe are seen as combining the parliamentary or civic/corporatist and the professional model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 32).

The professional model, as the name implies, aims to insulate broadcasting from political interests and leave the production of radio and TV to the professionals. This model has been identified as the civil service model, with trustees' representing the people serving as a "fig leaf – a facade of public accountability" (Curran, 2000, pp. 143-144) thereby granting producers creative autonomy within the framework of public service objectives (Seaton, 1997, p. 314). This governance model is therefore not adequately pluralistic due to the fact that securing representative pluralism is not an aim (Curran, 1998).

A second governance model identified, the parliamentary or proportional representation model, divides public broadcasting control among the political parties by proportional representation, as part of what is known in Italy as *lottizzazione* or in German-speaking countries, the *Proporz* principle. This model is also known as the liberal corporatist mode. Yet another group is the civic or corporatist mode or the social franchising approach. This is similar to the parliamentary model in the sense that control of public service broadcasting is distributed among various social and political groups. However, it differs from the parliamentary model, in that representation is extended beyond political parties to other "socially relevant groups" – trade unions, business associations, religious organisations, ethnic associations, and the like (Curran, 2000, pp. 143-144; Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 30-33). The Dutch "pillarised" system, in which broadcasting is run directly by associations rooted in diverse religious and ideological subgroups, is the purest example of such a

system. This model can also be seen in certain forms of community radio in Europe and in Germany's broadcasting councils of the *öffentlich-rechtliche Anstalten*, which represent "socially relevant groups" along with political parties. The last two models reflect a consociational political system's attempt to include all factions in the process and reflect a medium degree of political parallelism. The governance of the regulatory authorities that oversee the commercial broadcasters sometimes reflects this approach (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 30-33). Still, it is worth considering to what extent new communities are being represented in light of demographic changes in Europe.

Finally, as the name implies, the government model refers to systems that are directly linked to governments. In Spain, the parliament appoints the directors of the Public Serving Broadcaster (PSB), which grants the parliamentary majority effective control (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 107). This model falls towards the higher end of the political parallelism spectrum.

However, despite the differences between the governance models described above, publicly owned or regulated media are all subjected more or less to political pressures rendering them "at worst neutral and at best supportive of government" (Elstein, 2001).

The concept of political parallelism in all its complexity is an integral dimension in a study that aims to ascertain the nexus between politics and media as Hallin and Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* does. This notion and its indicators shall be used to assess the politicised and pluralistic Lebanese media in Subchapter 4.2. In the process, additional sub-dimensions reflecting the political links to the media and overlooked by the pair shall be teased out and explored further in Subchapter 5.2.

Yet another suggested concept, which lends itself to sharp debate, is the notion of journalistic professionalism as opposed to instrumentalisation. This dimension is particularly controversial since journalism has "ambiguous" boundaries with no "systematic body of knowledge or doctrine" (2004, p. 33). Furthermore, the academic study or training in the field is relatively new and unnecessary for this profession.[18] The rise of social media and citizen journalism, which effectively enables anyone with access to the internet to voice their opinions and report on events they witness, has posed an additional challenge. While, the "traditional media" – despite budget cuts and staff reductions (Weaver & Willnat, 2012) – are still very much the go-to source for accurate news, the emergence of the "new media" has invigorated the agora by providing alternative and previously censored voices with a platform to express their views. Yet, in spite of the rampant "techno-optimism" regarding the "new media" particularly in light of the role it played in the so-called Arab Spring, the social media are yet to challenge "the ascendancy of dominant news brands" nor have they dramatically influenced news values and format "sustained by tenacious journalistic cultures" (Fenton, 2011, pp. 14-15).

However, can professionalization be fairly assessed and – if so – can claims of professionalization be justly attributed to national systems? Hallin and Mancini suggest four sub-dimensions including relative autonomy, distinctive norms, devotion to the public good and degree of instrumentalisation. The latter sub-dimension refers to the extent to which journalism is penetrated or controlled by outside forces – parties, politicians, social groups or movements, or economic actors seeking political influence – who use them to

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[18] Indeed, the world's renowned journalists and reporters rarely have degrees in journalism; some have no university-level degrees either.

intervene in the world of politics, or for commercial purposes or even for both simultaneously (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 33-37).

Hallin and Mancini claim journalism has never achieved a comparable degree of autonomy because it "lacks esoteric knowledge", such as in the engineering or the medical professions (2004, p. 34). While they hold a key position in the flow of information, the waves of new media have further threatened what Bourdieu has identified as a "weakly autonomous field" (2005, p. 41). Furthermore, the fact that journalists remain employees of large enterprises rather than owning their "means of production" further exacerbates their level of autonomy (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 35). According to Michael McDevitt, autonomy is "a central component of professionalism", which "entails self-direction in the application of occupational techniques" (2006, pp. 155-157). The "degree of judgement" and decision-making abilities that are insular from external or internal influences has been deemed a key ideal by several researchers including Bourdieu (2005). Autonomy is in itself is "a multidimensional construction", which can be understood by taking into consideration a variety of factors including the levels of freedom journalists have, the importance of this ideal to their profession, as well as the individual, organisational and geopolitical factors (Mellado & Humanes, 2012, p. 998). Other factors include the size and type of the news outlet, commercialisation, media concentration and ownership (Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, & Wilhoit, 2006). Meanwhile, McDevitt identifies the following characteristics of autonomy: "resistance to publishers, revulsion toward "pack journalism",[19] cynicism toward politicians, defensiveness toward critics in the academy, the use of irony...and a desire to transcend restrictive conventions" (2006, p. 161).

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[19] The term "pack journalism" was coined by Crouse (1973) and used to refer to journalists who travel in groups to cover a campaign or the White House for instance. The corps is therefore addressed by one important source (Schudson, 2002a, pp. 256-257).

However, commercialisation, politicisation and the dependency on elite sources pose a threat to professional autonomy (McDevitt, 2006, pp. 155-159). Indeed, the key word preceding autonomy is often "perceived". This emphasises the subjectivity of this notion and the difficulty in gauging autonomy, or, indeed, the "idea of autonomy". Although Hallin and Mancini concede that autonomy differs considerably over time, across media systems, and often within media systems from one type of news organization to another (quality vs. popular press, press vs. broadcasting), this does not stop them from using it as one of the indicators to assess and categorise whole media systems (2004, p. 35).

The next sub-dimension is also debatable for ideological and practical reasons. It includes distinct professional norms, which refers to "style of life, code of ethics, self-conscious identity… and practical routines" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 35-36). These interrelated sub-dimensions can be considered under the "inclusive" notion of journalism culture (Hanitzsch et al., 2011, p. 274). Journalism culture is a set of ideas and practices including values, perceptions and beliefs, as journalistic practices in terms of coverage and editing and finally as news content produced (Hanitzsch & Donsbach, 2012, p. 262) by "which journalists legitimate their role in society and render their work meaningful" (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 369). Journalistic cultures have been discussed by several theorists (Zelizer, 2000; Donsbach & Patterson, 2004; Gurevitch & Blumler, 2004, and Hanitzsch, 2007) and empirically gauged in 22 countries by the Worlds of Journalism Project,[20] which surveys institutional roles, approaches to news coverage and ethical considerations (2011).

Journalists' roles and attitudes can differentiate journalistic practice in countries with similar social systems (Weaver, 1998; Weaver & Willnat, 2012) such as concerning perceptions to partisanship, analysis and critical outlook towards the elites (Patterson &

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[20] More information pertaining to this project can be found on the website: http://www.worldsofjournalism.org.

Donsbach, 1996). However, it is also expected that historical and cultural conditions as well as norms, political and socio-economic structures and media system characteristics are all important variables (Donsbach 2010; Hanitzsch & Donsbach, 2012, p. 271). In *The Global Journalist* (1998, p. 473), David H. Weaver et al. reveal that journalists from 21 countries tended to agree that the quick coverage of news as well as the importance of feedback are important goals in the profession. They differed on "objective reporting" with professional ethics reflecting distinct national and social idiosyncrasies (Hanitzsch & Donsbach, 2012, p. 265). In Hanitzsch et al.'s comparative study, three constituents of journalistic culture are identified including institutional roles, in both normative and actual terms, the epistemologies including objectivity and finally their ethical ideologies (2011, pp. 276-277). A comparative study of ethical codes in Thomas Cooper's *Communication Ethics and Global Change* identified three key ethical aspects of global concern including: the "quest for truth" focusing on media objectivity and accuracy, "the desire for responsibility", which relates to accountability, the "adherence to social mores" and the "compulsion" for free expression (Cooper, 1990, p. 3). Similarly, other studies comparing codes of ethics in Europe also found that truthfulness, safeguarding independence and integrity of journalists, protection of sources as well as freedom of expression are all part and parcel of these codes (Laitila, 2005, pp. 200-201). With yet another study arguing that a new generation of ethical ideals such as those committed to human rights, cultural diversity and peace have been on the rise (Ibid.). Yet another, comparative survey of professional norms pitting professional codes of ethics from Europe, the Middle East and North Africa including Islamic countries has identified "truth", "accuracy" and "objectivity" as "almost consensual cornerstones of journalism ethics", thereby confirming Cooper's observation on the universal features of

truth and objectivity (Hafez, 2003, pp. 42-43). Indeed, the German, Malaysian and Saudi Arabian codes include reporting the truth as part and parcel of a journalist's obligations (Hafez, 2002b, p. 228). Yet another near-consensual[21] aspect of codes of ethics is the existence of "a private/public dichotomy" whereas "internationalism" is ignored by the Western codes studied and referred to "defensively" by several Middle Eastern and Islamic countries, which warn against colonialism, Zionism but also promote good international relations (Hafez, 2002b, p. 239). Finally, the aforementioned study also revealed a difference between European and *some* Arab and Islamic codes pertaining to the role tradition, mores, and religion play in journalism ethics (Hafez, 2002b, pp. 241-242).

However, this does not mean that these ideals are practiced in a similar fashion in all these systems due to other influencing factors such as state and commercial interference, as well as differences in the nature of the press (Hafez, 2003, pp. 42-43). Indeed, it is no surprise that Arab journalists surveyed in one study identified "professionalism" and "a lack of ethics" as the most pressing challenges facing Arab journalism in addition to government control (Pintak & Ginges, 2009, p. 163). Meanwhile, a comparative study of 18 countries found that "non-Western" journalists tended towards a situational and contextual approach to ethical decision (Hanitzsch et al., 2011, p. 285). Indeed while some expectations such as publishing accurate information are universally accepted, other matters such as the line between privacy and public interest as well as omission of information in the interest of national security can be a context-specific and subjective ethical decision. The fact that some journalists operate in difficult and politically tense contexts where they do not enjoy legal protections or the backing of their organisations can impact ethical decisions. Indeed,

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[21] Amongst the few codes of ethics that does not mention privacy is the Islamic Media Charter of the 1980 Jakarta Conference (Hafez, 2002, p. 230).

during political upheaval journalism practices can be affected as the cases of Thomas Paine and Charles Dickens reveal (Pintak & Ginges, 2009, p. 173). When national consensus reigns, journalists may abandon their "objectivity" and act "sacerdotal" and as "guardians of social consensus" as journalists in the United States did following September 11, 2001 (Schudson, 2002a, pp. 262-263).

It is also worth noting that in addition to the formal ethics that are codified and tangible, it is also necessary, particularly in less democratic contexts, to assess the "informal discourse(s) on journalism ethics" where some values are regarded as important but difficult to officially include in such documents (Hafez, 2002b, p. 226).

Finally, it is important to note that there is often a variation in terms of accepted practice within the same national system and at different times (Voltmer, 2008, p. 27).

Still, the mercurial nature of values such as objectivity where "what was a commonplace of journalistic ethics a few years ago is now increasingly regarded as the modern equivalent of knight errantry" presents one challenge (Hallin, 2000, pp. 218-220).

While objectivity, for instance, is largely regarded as a common and "global concern" of the media (Cooper, 1990, p. 3), whether the media have ever proven to be fully objective is questionable. Perhaps Judith Lichtenberg's assessment of the notion of objectivity in *In Defence of Objectivity Revisited* captures the entire spectrum of views about this "tattered around the edges" ideal. "Some say that journalism *is not* objective; others that it *cannot be* objective; and still others that it *should not be* objective", she says before going on to explain that complaining about bias and unfairness intrinsically suggests that objectivity ought to be plausible or even "imaginable" (2000, pp. 238-239). Others argue that is even undesirable and dangerous insofar that it is "a strategy of hegemony used by some

members of society to dominate others"; a "strategic ritual" enabling professionals to "defend themselves from critical onslaught"; even the "most insidious bias of all" (MacKinnon, Tuchman, Schudson as cited in Lichtenberg, 2000, pp. 238-239). Some journalistic practices and routines such as the construction of news in a certain manner where news is attributed to sources, statements are balanced and expressions watered down so as not to alienate some segments of the audience are a few examples of how commercial consideration impacts professionalism (Goldsmiths Media Group, 2000, pp. 22-25) and how professionalism can be at times perceived as "species of control" (Nerone, 1994, p. 7). Michael Schudson seems to lament the fact that the American press does not "actively engage" the public into public debate in a Habermasian sense and refrains from publishing "mobilising information" (2002, p. 197). Indeed, the "detached" stance taken by US journalists since the media converged to a more commercial press in the 20th century has featured a larger focus on the technical such as political technique rather than the ideological. As Schudson concludes, "the problem with the press is professionalism, not its absence" and the "quest for objectivity...a source of bias" (Schudson, 2002b, pp. 9-12). The "reverse inverted pyramid" (Hallin, 1986, p. 78) is also blamed by Oliver Boyd-Barrett for suppressing important context and offering simple and selective information. In addition, Boyd-Barret censures the US "objective media" for their dependence on "authoritative" sources, which is oblivious to the possibility of the dishonesty of authorities and in privileging "facts" in line with "newsworthiness, a fuzzy neo-magical term mixing marketing, cultural bias and propaganda" (2009, pp. 118-119).

Still, while there are some with a quasi-solipsistic view who argue that reality is constructed, or that people's perception is imperfect, it should be possible to agree inter-

subjectively, based on culturally construed schemes of perception (Hafez, 2008c, pp. 149-150).

There is therefore the expectation that journalists should report on the imperfectly perceivable reality, as they see it, however jaded and "intersubjective" it may be and with good intentions. After all, "yesterday's massacre is yesterday's massacre: you might not agree on the causes that led to it, but it should be possible to agree on the number of dead, for instance, as we should be able to agree on the number of people that have been killed in Iraq, and that are still being killed" (Hafez, 2008a, pp. 36-38).

Meanwhile, in their study on *Al-Jazeera,* Mohammed El-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar suggest the notion of contextual objectivity where media balance between impartial reporting and catering to the context and local audiences (2002a; 2002b). While this "tit-for-tat" approach has been deemed "problematic" (Hafez, 2008a, pp. 36-38), it challenges "absolutist notions of objectivity" (Sakr, 2007, p. 52) and is a realistic perception of the manner in which the media operate. Yet another suggested to objectivity is that of "pragmatic objectivity". This concept concedes that truths are plural and fallible, yet argues journalists should still "have a passionate commitment to dispassionate inquiry" (Ward, 2004, p. 282). In light of this debate on this elusive notion, Lichtenberg is right in arguing that "we cannot get along without assuming both the possibility and value of objectivity" (Lichtenberg, 2000, p. 252).

One important means in the quest for truthfulness, and its kin responsibility, is media accountability systems. Self-regulation is part and parcel of media accountability systems (MAS) as conceived by Claude-Jean Bertrand. However, it is by no means the only means of making the media responsible towards the public. Indeed the following MAS "long-term solutions to problems of quality" come into play: training, which is the most common and

accessible, evaluation and criticism or monitoring to assess omissions, feedback from a national ombudsman or from the audience in the form of ratings or letters to the editors (Bertrand, 1997, pp. 43-44) and finally journalism education and its effect on moulding future journalists (Thomaß, 2000, p. 380).

Media accountability systems therefore are a range of self-regulatory and quality controls. Some examples include: Ralph Pulitzer's "Bureau of Accuracy and Fair Play",[22] the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Swedish Press' ombudsman, which looks into complaints from audiences, or even to disciplinary committees, set up by journalistic Unions or the Press Complaints commissions who advocate codes of ethics. Although press councils consisting of representatives of the public and the profession could be useful, they are regarded as toothless and are few with no more than 40 "true nation-wide" councils in 174 nations (Bertrand, 2005, p. 6). Despite the view that self-imposed regulations are a form of oppression and is a "simulation of social responsibility" (Hallin, 2000, p. 231), the practical approach regards self-regulation as a necessary measure to ward of government regulation. The latter opinion argues that self-regulation ideally should suffice particularly with the less intrusive medium of the press, which some established democracies regard as corporations subject to civil law.

In some cases, public authorities, which in principle should be shielded from political or economic intervention, can be established to oversee media regulation, without functioning as "a quasi-judicial organ" (Article 19, 2009, p. 4). Despite their limited efficacy, there have also been attempts to establish transnational media accountability supranational bodies such as with the *World Association of Press Councils* (WAPC) (Hafez, 2003, pp. 16-17),

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[22] Pulitzer established the "Bureau of Accuracy and Fair Play" at his newspaper the *New York World* in 1913 to deal with complaints. Media ombudsmen were later formally proposed in the late 1960s as to help maintain accountability of the newspapers to their audiences (Ferre, 2009, p. 23).

UNESCO,[23] the European Council[24] and the Arab League's Arab Charter for Satellite TV,[25] which aimed to restrict and sanction satellite broadcasters (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, p. 141). One recent case revealing the shortcomings of media regulators was the Leveson Inquiry[26] in the UK in light of the phone hacking scandal.[27] The inquiry was tasked with investigating the links between the press and the police, politicians and society and suggesting recommendations, which resulted in the establishment via a Royal Charter of a press regulator, which can order front-page apologies and fine erring newspapers up to £1m.[28]

One other impetus behind promulgating effective regulatory bodies is the dissonance between ethical principles and practical implementation. The Anglo-American journalistic tradition, a term repeatedly used by Hallin and Mancini despite its misleading nature[29] (Hardy, 2008, p. 127), identifies a cluster of characteristics such as accuracy, objectivity, detachment and neutrality (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 33-37). Citing Siebert, Peterson and

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[23] The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005) states "cultural activities, goods and services have both an economic and a cultural nature, because they convey identities, values and meanings, and must therefore not be treated as solely having commercial value".

[24] The European Council established a Convention based on the UNESCO provisions, which entered into force on 18 March 2007.

[25] The charter or the Principles for Organizing Satellite TV in the Arab world was adopted on 12 February 2008 by the Arab Ministers of Information, with the exception of Qatar.

[26] "The Leveson Inquiry: culture, practices and ethics of the press" was announced by UK Prime Minister David Cameron on 13 July 2011 and was headed by the Lord Justice Leveson. This was the seventh report commissioned by the government to address concerns regarding press behaviour. The results of the first part of the inquiry were published in November 2012 and suggested a regulatory body consisting of members independent of the press where editors are not allowed to "mark of their own homework". Leveson also suggested regulation with a statutory process to support the freedom of the press and to guarantee the efficiency of the regulatory body. This claim was not altogether accepted and circumvented by adopting a royal charter instead (Leveson, 2012).

[27] The inquiry was initially triggered by outrage at the fact that "News of the World" journalists hacked into the mobile phone of a murdered teenager and intercepted her messages. However, it eventually expanded to cover police-journalist relations, which were deemed "too close", and other transgressions, committed by the now-defunct "News of the World" and other dailies (Leveson, 2012).

[28] Morris, N., & Burrel, I. (2012, March 19). David Cameron insists plans for post-Leveson Royal Charter for press regulation will 'work and endure' despite hostility from newspaper groups. The Independent. Retrieved from http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/david-cameron-insists-plans-for-postleveson-royal-charter-for press-regulation-will-work-and-endure-despite-hostility-from-newspaper-groups-8539779.html. As a general principle, newspaper articles and other minor sources analysed in this thesis will only be sourced in the corresponding footnote and do not appear in the bibliography.

[29] Hardy deems the term problematic and misleading due to significant differences between the US and UK schools of journalism, with the former attempting 'neutrality' as opposed to the British "agitational" style (Hardy, 2008, pp. 127-128).

Schramm's social responsibility theory, Hallin and Mancini identify the notion of public service as another sub-dimension of professionalization (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 36). Despite H. L. Mencken's oft-repeated dictum, which argues that the role of media is "to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted", the tension or discrepancy between how media organisations "should work" and how they actually work emerges (Curran, 2000a, p. 38). In addition to the gulf between intent and practice, it is also worth noting that not all media aim or fulfil their "public sphere expectation" (McQuail, 2005a, p. 91). Still others may use this "altruism" for ulterior purposes (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 36). Another reason this ideal is "under assault today" is the mercurial notion of the public interest (Hallin, 2000, pp. 218-220). As McQuail puts it, the general good of society is no longer as clear as when national elites decided what the audience needed and applied it to national media systems (2005, pp. 89-90). While more and more groups are allowed to have a say in what is deemed as "the common interest", a small elite still dominates such decisions. In the words of the supercilious Sir Humphrey Appleby, a high-ranking and erudite civil servant in the classic BBC comedy *Yes, Minister* "subsidy is not to be given to what the people want! It is for what the people do not want but ought to have!" (Jay & Lynn, 1982).[30]

Finally, Hallin and Mancini also contrast the degree of professionalization with the degree of instrumentalisation of the media by political and commercial forces (2004, p. 37). Instrumentalisation is defined as the control of the media by outside forces, be they political or economic actors seeking political influence or commercial profit (Ibid.). While they admit that some media moguls such as Robert Murdoch have shown how instrumentalisation of the media can occur in national media systems they deem as characterised by "rational-

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[30] Cultural policy, in political systems where the state exists in its institutional form, is formed at the juncture between culture and politics "articulated within policy, moulded by profit, aesthetic value" (Schlesinger, 2009).

legal authority" and therefore high professionalism, they argue that instrumentalisation is inevitable in contexts where transparency and rule-based processes of decision-making are absent (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 57). Hallin and Mancini therefore contend that instrumentalisation of the media is more ubiquitous in the countries of the Mediterranean model citing Italy's Silvio Berlusconi case where he flagrantly used his media empire to reach the position of Prime Minister. Still the power of media corporations like Murdoch's News Corporation, "to shape 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).

Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent* (1988) puts forth a radical view of political economy, media ownership and instrumentalisation. Their propaganda model perceives the media as tools mobilising support for state and private interests by using five filters (1998, pp. xi, 2). Yet this rather extreme view of the media overlooks the important impact of the political system and the fact that media ownership does not always impact content (Schudson, 2002a, p. 254). In liberal societies, however, the concerns of those championing the radical perspective remain pertinent particularly in light of deregulation and media concentration where fewer conglomerates own more media (Goldsmiths Media Group, 2000, p. 22-25). While pluralism, for instance, is most likely served in systems with "multiple types of ownership and funding" be they governmental, private or not-for-profit (Benson, 2011, p. 194), ownership alone does not limit pluralism (Balčytienė, 2009, p. 40). Indeed, other factors can come into play including "levels of individual autonomy" that journalists may have as well as the layers of managerial elites (Curran, 2000a, pp. 26-28).

Instrumentalisation and its kin, clientelism, will be discussed further upon the discussion of the three models Hallin and Mancini suggest in line with these dimensions. However, it is important to point out how slippery this sub-dimension of professionalism is and how it actually fails to serve as an accurate benchmark of professionalism. Generalising especially on the issue of professionalism is "pejorative" and an unfair label to be plastered on whole systems, which are infinitely more complex and colourful (Hardy, 2008, pp. 100-101). Furthermore, although Hallin and Mancini's dimensions look at the journalism bodies, their professionalization, autonomy and neutrality, they do not give particular importance to media corporations, which can circumvent journalists' objectivity and ethics on certain issues[31] thereby evoking Karl Marx's dictum "those who control the material means of production also control the mental means of production" (1845). While "production" is transiently assessed under the rubric of professionalization and state control, a closer look at the actual media organisations, conglomerates, the hierarchies within them, the manner in which they function and the decisions on frames, content and agendas is absent.

Although, the dimension of professionalization is an important dimension in assessing the media, empirically and fairly gauging this notion is difficult. While, content analyses, journalists' role orientations and working conditions may shed light on the existence of professional norms, autonomy and public service ideal, it remains highly problematic to assign the label of "low" or "high" professionalization to variegated national systems. As discussed above, instrumentalisation of the media exists in all media systems in varying levels therefore underlining the importance of approaching this dimension with caution.

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[31] One of the Axel Springer conglomerate's five guiding principles relates to its favourable stance towards the state of Israel, retrieved from: http://www.axelspringer.de/en/artikel/Principles-and-Guidelines_40219.html (last accessed on 15 August 2014).

The role of the state in shaping the media system in each country as well as in protecting and widening the public sphere is another of the four key dimensions considered by Hallin and Mancini. Conceding that the nation-state remains the "main site of communications and cultural policy-making" (Hafez, 2007, pp. 149-150), Hallin and Mancini contend that the less the state is involved, the more liberal the system (2004, p. 44). Chapter 4 on Lebanon reveals that the state's limited involvement is not due to the state's political and ideological predilections, but due to its institutional weakness. While the liberal approach tends to demonize state intervention, Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) obliges states to interfere positively to safeguard freedom of expression and ensure access to plural, diverse and reliable sources of information on topics of interest to the public (Article 19, 2009, p. 4).

Amongst the sub-dimensions considered in this dimension is the legal and regulatory framework, which includes media laws and policy. Media policy includes regulation as well as decisions made in relation to media structures, organisations and performance (Puppis & d'Haenens, 2012, pp. 221-222). Regulatory approaches to media diversity, for instance, could either follow a market approach with no constraints on who can enter the market or an interventionist approach where governments introduce and safeguard public service broadcasters, public service obligations on licensed commercial broadcasters, provide subsidy or introduce quota regulations (Puppis, 2009, p. 13). Other forms of state intervention may include laws and media policies pertaining to access to information, media concentration, ownership and cross-ownership, and political communication particularly during election campaigns, as well as broadcast licensing laws relating to libel,

defamation, privacy and hate speech. Therefore, contrary to the liberal system of the United States where the First Amendment does not allow such restrictions, *dirigiste* or social democratic traditions are evident in the European Union, which has enshrined pluralism of the media in its Charter for Fundamental Freedoms. Furthermore, the media systems of small states are also likely to introduce regulation or other protectionist elements of a "cultural policy toolkit" (Grant & Wood, 2004) in order to safeguard national identities in the face of commercial competition from larger neighbouring states sharing a language (Puppis, 2009, pp. 14-15). In regions where rule of law is absent or diminished due to state weakness, this dimension is of limited importance but may still be interesting in revealing variations "in structuring the relationship of the individual and society" (Verhulst & Price, 2009, p. 139). Furthermore, issues pertaining to the degree of media freedom as well as the legal protections available to journalists are important indicators to consider particularly when studying transformation or authoritarian systems (Amin, 2002). What is certain however is that as the number of commercial televisions increases,[32] state intervention in the media in the West is decreasing (Curran, 2007).

This brings to the fore the "most important" and positive form of state intervention – public service broadcasting (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 41). Hallin and Mancini survey the nature of public service broadcasting across the 18 Western states considered in their study, with the exception of the micro-state of Luxembourg.[33] Public service broadcasting governance models were discussed above under the dimension of political parallelism in so far that these institutions in continental Europe are closely tied to the social and political fabric.

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[32] The growth in the number of commercial televisions has been heralded by deregulation, privatisation, market liberalisation and the weakening of public broadcasters.

[33] Luxembourg is not altogether inconsequential in the field of media. Radio Luxembourg is renowned in Europe and the majority-owned RTL Group, Europe's largest TV, radio and Production Company are based in Luxembourg. So too is the uplink home of SES Astra, carrier of major European satellite services for Germany and Britain (d'Haenens et al., 2009, pp. 58-61).

However, as states have also played an integral role in establishing, safeguarding and sustaining these "social and a political inventions" by enacting government policies, legislation and "imaginative political will", these efforts shall also be broached below (Seaton, 2001). Despite the resistance to rampant commercialisation, deregulation, be it controlled or "savage"[34], is prevalent (Traquina, 1995). Commercialisation has been further expedited by the wave of austerity, which more recently claimed the Greek public broadcaster after it had come to be known as a "haven of waste".[35] In principle, however, public service broadcasting has been deemed necessary to ensure that the airwaves are used to promote social objectives. A study has linked the prominence of public service in a given national system to "levels of public knowledge" and therefore an informed citizenry, which in turn is necessary for political accountability (Curran, Iyengar, Lund, Brink, Salovaara-Moring, 2009, pp. 6-14). In addition to pedagogic intentions, public broadcasting is deemed a central fixture of a democratic media system serving as an "open system of dialogue" (Curran, 2000, p. 148), which also promotes national consciousness and integration (Hardy, 2008, pp. 51-52). Furthermore, according to a study by Aarts and Semetko, consuming public service programmes in the Netherlands leads to what Norris called a "virtuous circle" (Aarts & Semetko, 2003, p. 778; Norris, 2000). Meanwhile, consuming commercial media leads to "a spiral of cynicism", where political involvement decreases (Ibid.). Yet, the PSBs have been generally weakened in recent decades with ever-dwindling audiences due to the advent of "deregulation, market liberation, and privatisation" (Curran, 2007).

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[34] The term was coined by Nelson Traquina (1995) to refer to Portuguese media policy in the 1980s and 1990s, which introduced commercial broadcasting in an uncontrolled way, and according to Hallin and Mancini, applies to most countries of Southern Europe (2004, p. 44).

[35] Alderman, L. (2013, 11 June). Greece Shuts Broadcaster in Bid to Show Resolve. The New York Times. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/12/world/europe/greece.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 (last accessed on 30 October 2014).

As discussed under the sub-heading of political parallelism, broadcast governance can vary greatly. The social franchising or "civic" or "corporatist" model such in the Dutch case, where airtime and facilities are allotted to groups or organisations or the liberal corporatist or "parliamentary or proportional representation model" such as in the German and Scandinavian systems where the civil society and groups are represented in the governance systems is one approach. Another type is the "professional" model, which is intended to be insular to political and social calculations (Curran, 2000b, pp. 143-144; Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 30-33). It should be noted, however, that while these systems are fluid, the selection of directors and broadcasters in the most impartial of the systems – the professional – cannot be entirely insulated from political calculations and often come from "narrow elites", particularly when the interest of the state is at stake (Hardy, 2008, p. 55). Furthermore, as Elizabeth Jacka notes what is deemed to be in the public interest and regarded as cultural capital is to a certain extent both elitist and paternalistic and therefore exclusionary (as cited in Karppinen, 2007, pp. 501-502). A recent 11 nation study revealed that although public service political programmes can strengthen "citizens' sense of connection to the political process", they can also simultaneously alienate some citizens as they are often elite and male-oriented (Curran et al., 2014, pp. 824-825).

Moreover, the relations of the PSBs to the configurations of power is also not always as balanced and objective particularly when it relates to civil unrest or conflict where the state is involved. These situations often give rise to the "rallying around the flag" phenomenon (Mueller, 1970, p. 21; Hardy, 2008, p. 55). It should be noted however that the model exemplified by the German system which includes *gesllschaftlich relevante Gruppen"* stymies government interference.

Despite the PSBs enriching contribution to the deliberative democracy as well as offering generally balanced and objective[36] coverage, calls to reduce their budget for complete deregulation are regularly sounded. Be it "BBC-bashing"[37] (Schlesinger, 2009) or closures of networks[38] or full corporations, the decrease in size and the future of PSBs in general is "a crucial global concern".[39] This attests to what Hallin and Mancini regard as a convergence in media systems towards a more liberal and de-regulated system (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Curran et. al., 2009). The abolition of PSB monopolies and establishment of dual systems, where public and private broadcasters compete, was brought on by the development of cable and satellites, which offered a greater channel capacity. This was also compounded differences regarding both the goals of this programming and their modus operandi.

However, this apparent-hijacking by market ideologists has not succeeded entirely, as the European media systems, particularly those in Northern Europe, which are committed to the general EU policy on media, have shown (Hardy, 2008, pp. 58-60). While the Bangemann Report (1994)[40] called for further deregulation *à la Americaine,* the European Parliament supported the Tongue report on PSB (1996), which called for safeguarding these "pillar[s] of a free public life" (Hardy, 2008, pp. 152-153; Schudson, 2000, p. 181).

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[36] Phillip Schlesinger, author of the program "Putting 'reality' together" has acknowledged that the BBC has "failed to give more than a one-dimensioned picture of the conflict" in Northern Ireland (1979, p. 10). The article cites a statement issued by Lord Hill, then BBC Chairman assuring the Home Secretary at the time that "between the British Army and the gunmen the BBC is not and cannot be impartial" (ibid.).

[37] In addition to commercial and business interests, some cite infrequent lapses to unleash attacks at PBS. Recently, the erroneous accusation of a former MP of child abuse, and shelving an investigation into former BBC presenter Jimmy Savile's rampant child abuse were considered as adequate reasons (BBC, 2012).

[38] In March 2010, the BBC announced it would axe its Asian network amongst other sites by 2013 as they were deemed "pretty expensive because its audiences aren't very big" by Mark Thompson, BBC Senior Producer. Retrieved from: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/mar/05/worrying-times-bbc-minority-audiences (last accessed on 18 October 2014).

[39] Seaton, J. (2001, 25 June). Public broadcasting: imperfect but essential. *Open Democracy*. Retrieved from: https://www.opendemocracy.net/media-publicservice/article_68.jsp (last accessed on 30 October 2014).

[40] Retrieved from: http://www.cyber-rights.org/documents/bangemann.htm (last accessed on 13 October 2013).

The sustainability of public service broadcasting, despite its financial cost, can be seen to outweighing the costs of the liberal market approach where cold calculation supersedes pluralism and democratic ideals and favours the commodification of news and the further rise of infotainment (Goldsmiths Media Group, 2000, pp. 22-25; Brants, 1998). Even in Italy and despite competition from Berlusconi's MediaSet media empire, RAI, which though is regarded as "imperfect just like the democracy in which it evolved", is credited for promoting national cultural policies (Padovani, 2005, p. 5) and continues to have the largest audience share of 40.2 percent.[41] The fact that Roberto Benigni's recital of one of Dante's Divine Comedy cantos during RAI1's prime time in 2003 drew a record of 13 million is a quintessential example of the edifying and still accessible nature of public service broadcasting (Padovani, 2005, p. 251). This however does not mean that the public service broadcasters, who are forced to compete, are not also broadcasting more commercial shows on their network (Mancini, 2000, p. 322) or sometimes even breaking news akin to commercial broadcasters were "the local fire engine, followed by 'bombs around the world'" are featured (Seaton, 2001). While it is true that these social and political institutions are not entirely impartial, they remain "spaces where the hegemonic values imposed by the market can be contested" (Karppinen, 2007, p. 505).

The space that is envisaged as essential for deliberative democracy however also hinges on "a diversity of sources is thought to provide the conditions necessary for a diversity of ideas, issues and genres" (Puppis, 2009, p. 13). The state's role as a "primary definer" of news, where it influences the agenda and framing is also given a cursory consideration by Hallin and Mancini (2004, pp. 41-44). The predominance of official sources is an important

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[41] This figure is based on statistics published by RAI's website on the performance of its TV companies, retrieved from: http://www.rai.it/dl/bilancio2012/eng/relazione/rel05b.htm (last accessed on 10 October 2014).

factor to note. News is after all "as much a product of sources as of journalists" with bias emanating not only from political but also from professional considerations such as the media's detached and technical approach (Schudson, 2002b, pp. 9-11). A study by Stuart Hall et al. on "mugging" in Britain (1978) revealed how journalists sought and reproduced "authoritative" perspectives. These "information subsidies, which continue to prevail are (Curran, 2000, pp. 34-36) are considered by Herman and Chomsky as filters in their propaganda model where elites including state officials facilitate the "news-gathering process". This is achieved by providing press releases, copies of speeches and ready-for-news analysis as well as by "flak" where institutions are used to pressure the media to play a propagandistic role in society (Klaehn, 2005, p. 146). While "autonomous" journalists can insist on their own sources or even vary their sources, again, particularly in times of conflict and in light of the "national security culture", it is a gargantuan challenge (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 233-234). In these cases, journalists appear to be simply "voicing" or in the words of Mikhail Bakhtin, "ventriloquating" the accounts of "spin doctors" or other authoritative voices (as cited in Schudson, 2002b, p. 42). To corroborate this, a content analysis of 1,200 CNN International reports aired between 1994 and 2001 revealed that while technology now allows live coverage from the scenes of events, the number of stories without "official" sources has not increased (Bennett & Livingston, 2003, pp. 359-361). However, it should be noted that the role of the primary definer of news or the existence of beat systems (Molotch et al., 1987), where loyal media are granted exclusive information, is not restricted to the state or its apparatuses such as the army (Wolfsfeld, 1997, p. 43), but could also include business elites as well as politicians. A recent study revealed that in nine countries,[42] in

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[42] The results are based on a survey as well as content analysis in 11 countries. The results pertaining to women's participation however are regarding nine of the participating countries: Australia, Canada, Colombia, Greece, India,

both public and commercial television, news is more an elite man's world with women cited in a mere 30 percent of hard news stories (Curran et al. 2014, p. 824).

Hallin and Mancini also consider the existence of press subsidies[43] as well as the ownership of other media outlets such as agencies, newspapers, or other media-related enterprises as an indicator. Financial subsidies, be they direct or indirect such as by offering tax cuts or rewarding or penalising media by the placement or withholding of substantial advertising, are also revealing about the system's approach or inclination. Other forms of disguised subsidies may come in the form of excessively steep subscription fees. An illustrative example of this is the case of *Agence France-Press* (AFP), which was receiving from France an annual sum of 111.65 million Euros[44] (equivalent to around 40 percent of AFP's annual revenue) whereas the EU itself was merely charged a sum of 323,374 Euro for a five-year subscription. Upon the official complaint of the now-defunct German private news agency dapd[45] to the EU in August 2011, the French National Assembly altered AFP's legal status in January 2012. The 1957 AFP status law, which had already granted the agency a legal status *sui generis*, was amended thereby legalising subsidization.[46] Systems where social democratic traditions are extant such as in Norway, Sweden, France, and Austria, for

Italy, Japan, South Korea and the United Kingdom.

[43] Picard (1984) summarises the basic forms of state financial intervention in the newspaper industry and attempts a ranking of countries in terms of such intervention however his ranking only takes into account the presence or absence of a particular kind of state support, not its magnitude or the policy growing its allocation.

[44] EU regulators have questioned France's relation to AFP in light of the steep subscription fees it pays to AFP since the agency sells its services to other organizations for considerably less such as the German government which pays 3.75 million Euros per year to the dpa and dapd. Retrieved from: http://businessetc.thejournal.ie/eu-investigates-french-funding-to-news-agency-afp-215231-Aug2011/ (last accessed on 29 August 2014).

[45] The German private news agency which was founded in 2009 upon ddp news agency's purchase of AP's former German service. In October 2012 however, dapd officially declared bankruptcy and terminated all operations on 11 April 2013.

[46] The following clause was added to legalise the subsidies received: "la compensation financière par l'état des coûts nets générés par l'accomplissement de ses missions d'interêt général (the financial compensation by the State of net costs that were produced by the accomplishment of its missions in the public interest)." AFP Press release from 05 March 2012, retrieved from: http://www.afp.fr/en/agentur/pressemitteilungen-newsletter/8733/sitemap/sitemap/ and article "Gesetz soll AFP-Einnahmen fürs "Gemeinwohl" verankern" on 27 January 2012, retrieved from: http://www.agenturjournalismus.de/news/192-afp-gemeinwohl.html (both last accessed on 15 October 2014).

instance, subsidise newspapers, particularly those offering political information and from a variety of viewpoints. There are numerous studies which show that subsidised newspapers do not necessarily withhold criticism of the government (Schudson, 2002a, p. 254). It is, however, probable that in less-established democracies and in places where political conflict is at its height, the political elite may use state power to resort to clientelism whereby licenses, loans, subsidies, subscriptions and advertising, positions in state-owned media are granted in accordance with such considerations (Curran, 2000a, pp. 133-134).

The dimension of state role, and its sub-dimensions, attests to the importance of the nation-state in any given media system. Despite, the rise of transnational media and confederations where policies and laws are expected to homogenise, the nation-state still plays an important role. The extent or nature of its intervention in the media system, however, varies. It is therefore important to consider the manner in which the state intervenes in any study that gauges a media system or attempts to categorise it.

The four dimensions discussed above underpin the models suggested by Hallin and Mancini. The three models shall be discussed in the following pages.

2.2.2. The three models

Hallin and Mancini put forth the following three models: the Liberal or North Atlantic Model, the Democratic Corporatist or Northern European Model, and the Polarised Pluralist Model or Mediterranean Model. The Liberal Model is characterised by dominance of market mechanisms and commercial media whereas the Democratic Corporatist Model features a historical "coexistence" of commercial and political media and an active but legally limited role of the state. The third model, the Polarised Pluralist or Mediterranean Model is

characterised by high political and state interference and a weaker historical development of commercial media (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 63-65).

Although they repeatedly qualify their models as "ideal types" it remains problematic to categorise "media systems in toto". As McQuail (2010, p. 177) points out, it is often the case that the press and electronic media have different rationales and do not "constitute a single 'system'" (Hardy, 2012, p. 188). Furthermore, the focus on the print media in increasingly broadcast-dominated systems is another limitation. Overlooking the electronic media, which widens the public sphere, reaches more people and is "more seductive and subversive than the political press" is indeed questionable (Sreberny, 2000, p. 65). Had broadcasting been considered as a "salient axis", there would have been the need for a fourth model heeding the American exceptionalism, which differentiates it from the other systems categorised as Liberal with their strong public service component (Hardy, 2008, p. 232). In spite of this, however, Peter Humphreys points out that the purpose of these models is not to classify countries under ideal types, but rather to assist in the exploration of the media-politics relationship (as cited in Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 300). The three models will be discussed in greater detail below.

The Polarised Pluralist Model

The Polarised Pluralist Model includes the states of Southern Europe and is characterised by the political sphere's dominance of the media. The nations that are categorised under this ideal type are Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and France, with the latter acknowledged as a "borderline case" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 90). Reflecting their political systems, the media systems in these countries are complex with many contending factions with the ideal type resembling Curran's (1991) model of the "radical democratic" public sphere, in which

56

the media function as a "battleground between contending social forces" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 140).

It is worth noting that while the Southern European democracies may have some similar characteristics as well as share a common geographic area, their forms of democracy vary with majoritarian and consensus models making this cluster less cohesive (Lijphart, 1988, p. 22). Indeed, the similarities in their histories and democratic transitions, their economic development and political culture have led these states to be grouped together regardless of the differences in "nation-building processes, socio-economic structures and intellectual traditions" (Papatheodorou & Machin, 2003, p. 33). Although Hallin and Mancini acknowledge the difference in the democratic models, they choose to give less weight to these differences and instead focus on the pattern of relationship between politics and the media in these countries that is linked to their late transition to liberal democracy (2004, p. 89). As its politics, the media in the Polarised Pluralist model – as the label also entails – is deeply polarised and conflictual (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 129). The model is therefore differentiated by the integration of the media into party politics and a lower degree of professionalization, with little or no formal accountability systems.

In addition to political intervention in the media, the state also tends to play a large role in those countries. Besides the lucrative subsidies the AFP received in France, mentioned above, the media in Greece and Spain, are also heavily reliant on state "paternalism" (Papatheodorou & Machin, 2003, p. 33-35). In Portugal, which witnessed savage deregulation, governments have treaded carefully with regards to imposing legal instruments pertaining to diversity as they have been more concerned with their "electoral fragility" (Sousa & Costa e Silva, 2009, pp. 96-99). Hallin and Mancini also point to political

clientelism in the media, where politics takes precedence over professional appointments and decisions or where owners may use their media to garner political favour (2004, pp. 58-59). The political elite in such cases use the state's prerogatives to develop and sustain a "clientelist system of patronage and influence" using the "combination of carrot and stick" where they award licenses, subsidies, advertising, waive restrictions on media concentration (Curran, 2000b, pp. 133-134). Clientelistic relationships however are often interspersed "with other forms of political organisation" (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002, p. 175) and though are arguably prevalent in all societies to varying degrees are according to Hallin and Mancini higher in the Southern European countries (2004, p. 117).

Another characteristic of this model is the limited historical development of a commercial press and low circulation rates where only a small elite is addressed and where the electronic media reign as "the only true mass media of Southern Europe" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 97). While this may well be an accurate description of most countries in Southern Europe, France remains an ill-fit under this model. Although France is witnessing a decrease in its newspaper circulation,[47] its strong regional newspaper market dominated by *Ouest-France* and its renowned centre-left daily *Le Monde* challenge this trend (Rouger, 2009, p. 194).

According to Hallin and Mancini, this model is also characterised by high political parallelism with newspapers playing an activist-like and politicized role that tend to reflect political tendencies (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 98). Furthermore, journalists and media owners are often involved in politics and it is common that journalists move into the realm of politics (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 115). Greece, for example, has many polemical

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[47] France saw a 5.7% decrease in newspaper circulation in 2007. Retrieved from: http://www.wan-press.org/article14362.html?var_recherche=circulation (last accessed on 20 August 2014).

newspapers reflecting a spectrum of ideologies. The media are often used as a means of political pressure as the threat noted by Papathanassopoulos "give me a ministry or I will start a newspaper" reveals (as cited in Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002, p. 177).

Public service broadcasting in the countries categorised under the Polarised Pluralist Model have also tended to be party-politicized or "politics over broadcasting" systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 106). Italy's proportional representation democratic system had a bearing on its public broadcasting operation resulting in *lottizzazione* or nepotism in the allocation of positions and benefits (Mancini, 2000, p. 320). The still extant phenomenon of *lottizzazione* was prevalent in its public broadcaster (RAI); however, it has declined with the beginning of the Second Republic in Italy in 1992 and the weakening of major parties (Padovani, 2005).

Under this model, the related issue of professionalization is – according to Hallin and Mancini – weak. Instead, the media in this model are fraught with a high level of instrumentalisation (2004, pp. 113-114). According to the authors, autonomy is also rather weak in those countries where journalists are described as succumbing to external influences from commercial and political players (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 112-113). The crudest example of the instrumentalisation of the media is Berlusconi's use of his media empire to achieve political power, which has elicited some concern at the state of Italian democracy[48] (Hardy, 2008, p. 110). Industrialists in Greece also dominate media ownership and have used the media as means to pressure politicians (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 114) and as a manifestation of political involvement and high cultural status (Papatheodorou &

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[48] Indeed, Berlusconi exploited legal opportunities for self-promotion and later exploited his media empire to support questionable legislation in order to consolidate his private and political assets. Berlusconi is seen to have changed the media culture in Italy "from political education to the marketing of depoliticized entertainment", which included films, football, variety shows and cartoons (Habermas, 2006, p. 421).

Machin, 2003, p. 41). Still, sweeping judgements about the Southern European national media systems seem more of a "cultural stereotype" than an objective and empirical observation (Humphreys, 2012, p. 164).

Assessing the role and efficiency of the Southern European journalist unions, the two authors conclude that these are weaker than those in the Northern European nations and with relatively low professionalization (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 111-112). While French and Spanish unions are largely affiliated to political parties, Italy, Greece, and Portugal have journalists' unions that cut across political lines. The Italian union is deemed closer to the Democratic Corporatist Model as it has even become a significant force, with influence on media policy in so far as they helped establish a code of ethics[49] (Ibid.). Meanwhile, formal education in journalism in countries categorised under the Mediterranean model also developed late. It remains unclear, however, if obligatory journalism education necessarily makes the system more professional. Formal accountability systems are also weak or entirely absent in the Mediterranean countries, which more or less all lack press councils on the national level. While Hallin and Mancini attribute the absence of such institutions to a lack of consensus on ethical standards in the media, this does not mean that there have not been attempts to codify ethics.

Finally, the role of the state in the media of the Mediterranean model is deemed to be a vital one. The role, they argue, "reflects a combination of authoritarian traditions of intervention and democratic traditions of the welfare state" although this they deem may at times also be limited due to a lack of resources, political consensus or stronger clientelist connections

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[49] The National Federation of the Italian Press and the National Council Order of Journalists established and adopted a Charter of Duties of Journalists in 1993 (retrieved from: http://www.mediawise.org.uk/italy). More recently, in 2008, the Italian Council of Journalists' Association approved a code of ethics regarding the reporting of asylum and migration issues (retrieved from: http://www.unhcr.org/4852a0c92.html, both last accessed on 29 August 2014).

(Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 119). Savage deregulation means that there are neither public-service obligations on commercial broadcasters nor a framework protecting the interests of the public such as access to information, a variety of political opinions and the promotion of the national culture, amongst others (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 124-125). France is the exception, however, with the *Conseil Supérier de l'Audovisuel* requiring commercial and public broadcasters to dedicate airtime for special programming and to safeguard values including the "national cultural heritage" (Hardy, 2008, p. 71; La Porte, Medina et al., 2007, pp. 381-383).

It is worth noting that the classification of national systems under this typology is at times problematic and subject to "broad-brush inclusiveness" (Humphreys, 2012, p. 164). Even Hallin and Mancini have cautioned about the fact that France does not fit too comfortably alongside the other states categorised under this model. Indeed, France was lumped into this model primarily for its media history as well as the fact that the Napoleonic invasion introduced the modern newspaper to Italy, Spain and Portugal (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 90). Still, the categorisation – or miscategorisation – of the second most populous Western European nation remains questionable.

Democratic Corporatist Model

The second model, which includes Northern European states, is characterised by what Hallin and Mancini refer to as three coexisting trends. Political parallelism in this model, they contend, coexists with commercial media and professionalism and the role of the state – while legally limited – is active in the support of the public-service sector. The Democratic Corporatist countries is also characterised by a strongly developed mass-circulation press with high circulation rates. Though political partisanship has weakened in recent decades,

the tradition of a strong advocacy press characterizes the Northern and Central European media system. Hallin and Mancini trace the harmonious coexistence between market and partisanship to Protestantism and its role in spreading literacy and in using pamphlets to mobilise support in the 16th century (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 152). This method was later adopted by the Catholics and other groups leading to "segmented pluralism", a notion Val Lorwin put forth to refer to the organisation of groups along religious and ideological divisions observed in the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, and Belgium (1971, p. 141, 144). Media institutions were also separated according to these social divisions with the most flagrant example being the pillarised system of Dutch society from the beginning of the twentieth century to the mid-1960s "where social movements, educational and communication systems, voluntary associations and political parties organized vertically (and often cross cutting through social strata) along the lines of religious and ideological cleavages" (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007, pp. 13-14; Hallin and Mancini, 2004, pp. 151-152). However, the end of the century brought on the commercial catchall newspapers which weakened the political press. In the small state of Switzerland where protectionism is expected in light of its small media market size and the large audience share claimed by foreign television channels sharing the languages of the region of their neighbours, media concentration and cross-media ownership are high (Künzler, 2009, p. 67). Matthias Künzler argues that this is tolerated because it is expected that the cross-media ownership would allow the sustainability of the decentralised media and therefore sustain opinion diversity (2009, pp. 70-72). In another of the small states, Belgium which is divided into two linguistic communities and adhering to communaturisation (Erk, 2003, p. 206), francophone Belgium has succumbed to competitors from nearby Luxembourg and France,

Flanders obliges the broadcasters operating in its linguistic communities to offer diverse programming thereby enforcing its cultural policies (d'Haenens et al., 2009, pp. 63-65).

The second "coexistence", which Hallin and Mancini identify, is the coexistence of a high level of political parallelism in the media with a high level of journalistic professionalization. This coexistence is perceived as mirroring the nature of democratic corporatism with "moderate rather than polarised pluralism" and "relatively high level of consensus" with regards the functioning of unions and press councils. The notions discussed under professionalization such as regarding journalism as a public service, distinct set of norms and relative autonomy in addition to a high level of rational-legal authority are all according to Hallin and Mancini elements to be factored in achieving this balance between political parallelism and professionalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 191-192). While Hallin and Mancini concede that this does not mean that instrumentalisation is altogether absent from this model or the Liberal Model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 84-85), they argue that this model has strong formalised systems of self-regulation such as codes of ethics that have been accepted by journalists or publishers' organisations.

However, these media accountability systems do not always function or exist in the systems of the democratic corporatist models. Austria, for instance, lacks most media accountability systems with the exception of a newly revived press council in 2010 and a TV personality commenting on political and media-related issues on social media platforms (Eberwein, Fengler, & Leppik-Bork, 2011, p. 7). Another example is Germany, which makes use of some accountability systems. Yet, the concept of the ombudsmen has rarely been put in practice[50] (Eberwein et al., 2011, pp. 11-12). Furthermore, the efficacy of the extant media

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[50] The *Main-Post* newspaper, a regional and relatively small newspaper in the city of Main, Germany is the only ombudsman or *Leserrat* in Germany writing on ethical considerations (Blum, 2007, p. 76).

accountability systems such as the "toothless" Austrian press council are also doubtful in light of questionable coverage in some cases as well as the tabloidization or boulevardesque nature of some outputs leading to ever-dwindling "trust" in the media[51] (Eberwein et al., 2011). Furthermore, in the field of foreign news, particularly in reporting crises, there is a general lack of "intertextuality in news...[or of] growing awareness of the other's stories and perspectives" due to a variety of reasons including minimal if any international education, language barriers, austerity measures decreasing number of bureaus and foreign correspondents amongst others (Hafez, 2009, p. 329). The Dutch press council, which was founded in 1960, is also dubbed "a toothless tiger" by some journalists in Holland. The press council is even not accepted by some key media players in the Netherlands (Groenhart, 2011, p. 7).

In spite of their acknowledgement of Murdoch, Springer and Berlusconi's media conglomerates and the possibility of instrumentalisation in the Liberal and Democratic Corporatist media systems, Hallin and Mancini still seemingly normatively underline the power of "rational-legal authority" overlooking how conglomerates like *News Corporation* have instrumentalised the media to support corporate or political interests (Hardy, 2008, p. 115).

The third coexistence they point out is the limits on state power, allowing the very early development of freedom of expression dating as far back as Sweden's 1766 constitution, coexisting with strong welfare policies and other forms of active state intervention developed in the 20th century, which emphasize the importance of public-sector (Hallin &

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[51] According to the GFK Trust Index 2013, 43 percent of Germans trust the media (Retrieved from: http://www.gfk-verein.org/files/press_release_gfk_verein_global_trust_2013_eng.pdf, last accessed on 10 August 2014). Meanwhile according to another study by the Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research, only 11 percent of Germans have a high respect for journalism, with the report Journalism 2009 revealing that 69 percent find the public service broadcasters trustworthy as opposed to private television (15 percent) and online magazines (18 per cent) (as cited in Evers & Eberwein 2011, p. 4).

Mancini, 2004, pp. 144-145). The strong political tradition of welfare states typical of the Democratic Corporatist countries makes it a duty for the state to ensure citizen participation in social life and see the media as a social institution rather than a commercial enterprise, manifested in press subsidies and strong public broadcasting institutions. Most of the countries classified under this category with the exception of but Denmark (Hardy, 2012, p. 192), Germany and Switzerland have direct press subsidies and all of them have indirect subsidies in the form of tax exemptions, which are intended to hinder unbridled commercialisation and the further decrease in pluralism. Strong "rational-legal authority" in those states has prevented the abuse of subsidy systems. Legally, there are several laws banning hate speech, which in the Netherlands, Germany and Austria include the ban on holocaust denial and Nazi propaganda. Sweden bans children-targeted advertising. Regulation governing commercial broadcasters is also extant and limits advertisement and bans paid political advertising. Strong press councils and right of reply laws and generally the state regulation of the media attempts to control the commercial competition as they approach media as a social institution rather than a business. Broadcasting is yet another manifestation of the strength of the welfare state tradition, where most public service broadcasters are "pure", or untainted by commercial revenue.

Governance of the PSB particularly in Sweden tends towards the professional model, which aims to truly insulate the broadcaster from politics by (Brants & De Bens, 2000, p. 9). Meanwhile, countries like Holland, Belgium, Austria and Germany are more in line with the civic model and the "politics in broadcasting system". Holland, for instance, runs on the "internal pluralism" notion where diversity is represented within a single organization, although traces of external pluralism from the former pillarised system remain extant on

the level of the print media landscape and the public service broadcaster (Groenhart, 2011, p. 4). However, Germany's system stands out due to its unique and complex system of "broadcasting federalism" (Kleinsteuber, 2004, p. 68), where boards represent socially relevant groups from trade unions to churches.

While Hallin and Mancini hold that "objective" reporting is more likely in this model's media, it would be naive to think that the reporting is always professional. Ironically enough, the authors cite the Danish newspaper *Jyllands Posten*, which printed the infamous Prophet Mohammad cartoons, to portray the objective approach to journalism. While this newspaper's treatment of a report on "Danishness and integration" does not include flagrant commentary (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 183), its position on immigration is hardly subtle or objective. Similarly a study on the image of Islam on the two German public service television stations ARD and ZDF revealed the following disconcerting results: 80% of the non-fictional content selected frames Islam as a "problem and a danger for politics and society" and "the central explanatory for society's ills" (Richter & Hafez, 2009, p. 177).

Although public institutions form the basis for education, there is also room for other alternatives with a continuous need for further education and so-called lifelong learning. Formal journalism education, which proliferated in the Northern European states in the post-war period, remains just the beginning for some journalists and what they do with their education in practice is more important (Weibull, 2009, p. 77). Indeed, it remains common in northern Europe that most journalists are not graduates of a journalistic programme with more than 60 percent of German journalists training and learning on the job (Weibull, 2009, p. 75) as opposed to Spain, for instance, where journalists are more likely to have journalism degrees (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 34).

While journalism programmes in Northern Europe and particularly Germany are not essential for a career in the field, media studies as a field of research and study dates back to 1845 with the publication of Robert Prutz's "The History of German Journalism" (Hanitzsch, 2005) long before Karl Buecher's work (1926) which effectively established *Zeitungskunde* as a discipline (Lang, 1996, p. 5). Max Weber, who wrote extensively for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, describes journalism in *Politik als Beruf* as part of the world of politics, with responsibility by far more than that of the scholars or *Gelehrten* (Weber, 1999, p. 416). Still his interpretation of journalism includes the public service approach, and a notion of common standards of conduct (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 194-195).

Despite the diminishing coexistence mentioned above, this model still manages to reflect the potpourri of groups in its societies. Furthermore, the notion of public interest and common good despite some hurdles remains sacrosanct as is evidenced by the subsidies provided to the media. Finally, biased reporting by some media outlets notwithstanding, the political media remains identifiable politically with inclinations, which – though not as clear-cut due to increased sensationalism, negativism and personalised coverage introduced by commercial media adopting US formats – remain more or less extant (Schulz, 1997, pp. 61-62).

The North Atlantic or Liberal Model

The third and final model suggested, the Liberal or the North Atlantic Model is, according to Hallin and Mancini, characterized by an early development of press freedom and mass circulation press, the domination of commercial press, low political parallelism, and – with the exception of the British partisan press – high levels of internal pluralism. Other traits include relatively strong professionalization, high levels of rational-legal authority and a

limited role of the state. Exceptions in this model are Canada and Ireland who's "concern about national culture" has given the state a large role as well as Britain, where the tradition of public broadcasting and commercial broadcasting regulation is particularly strong. According to the authors, the public service broadcasting governance model is professional or characterised by the insulation of politics from the process of broadcasting and with an autonomous body in charge. Finally, all countries of this model are characterized by moderate pluralism with majoritarian political systems.

While the authors identify three coexisting factors in the Democratic Corporatist Model, they pinpoint three "tensions" in the Liberal Model namely between private ownership and the view of the media as serving the public interest and the related tension between the journalistic ethics and commercialism. They also cite the contradiction between the liberal tradition of press freedom and the pressures of government control (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 246-247).

However, this is questionable in some cases, particularly in systems where commercial media dominates. In the United States for instance, the media are structurally biased and disfavour news programmes with sports and crime news dominating (Aalberg, van Aelst, & Curran, 2010, pp. 258, 261). While the period following the September 11 attacks in 2001 demanded more coverage of international affairs as well as what was dubbed the "war on terror" these reports remain limited (Hardy, 2008, pp. 124-125) and relatively low (Aalberg et al., 2010, p. 266).

The profit-driven nature of the US media system at the expense of social responsibility makes is categorisation with the United Kingdom puzzling. For in addition to the UK's strong public service television and its partisan press, broadcasters transmit a similar

amount of prime-time news as the Democratic Corporatist Model (Aalberg et al., 2010, p. 262). Furthermore, the BBC, the largest and oldest public service television in the world has a formidable audience, which in addition to the publicly-owned Channel 4 claimed circa 45 percent audience share of the market in 2012 (Broadcasters' Audience Research Board, 2013). However, in the liberal US model where an "absolutist...fundamentalist interpretation of the First Amendment"[52] applies (Benson, 2011, p. 194), public broadcasting "resembles public service only in name" (Kleinsteuber, 2004, pp. 80-81).

The US Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) is a private, non-profit corporation, founded in 1969, whose members are America's public TV stations and which receives funds from foundations and individuals alike.[53] However, its audience share remains below two percent (Curran et al., 2009, p. 6). The uniqueness of the American case with regards this indicator makes grouping it with Britain, Canada and Ireland under the Liberal Model untenable. Furthermore, the British press and its "external pluralism" presents yet another problem, which makes it, sit uncomfortably with the alleged "neutral and information-focused" style described by Hallin and Mancini as belonging to the Liberal Model or the Anglo-American style of journalism. Although the authors qualify the use of this term by arguing that the British press is more politically parallel than the other states grouped under this ideal type, the rise of partisan media in the US also challenges the alleged catch-all and neutral nature attributed to this style. While they acknowledge the "explicit patriotic stance" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 217) taken by Fox and Clear Channel in the US, where in 2009 the latter provided its audience with tips on organising protests or "tea parties"

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[52] Whereas the first amendment has played an important role in safeguarding free expression, some of its drawbacks are the little or no privacy protection it offers, and the unfettered political campaign advertising it allows. In a shocking case brought before the Supreme Court by a journalist dismissed by Fox news for refusing to lie as instructed by her superiors, the court ruled "there is no fundamental requirement in the media to tell the truth so its legitimate to ask an employee to lie" (Money-Kyrle, 2005, p. 9).

[53] Retrieved from: http://www.pbs.org/aboutpbs/aboutpbs_corp.html (last accessed on 29 August 2014).

against government taxes and spending (Stroud, 2011, p. 9), they seem to belittle its dominance or the fact that "if the market demands partisan news, the media will supply partisan news" (Stroud, 2011, p. 176). Furthermore, the inherent biases harboured by the "neutral" approach are also overlooked. A political economy critique of the US media points to how the quest for neutrality and objectivity, "the most insidious bias of all" (Schudson, 1978, p. 160) effectively privileges official sources,[54] decontextualises the news and offers detached coverage, and focuses on matters that do not harm commercial owners and advertisers (McChesney, 2003, pp. 303-306; Schudson, 2002b, pp. 9-12). Indeed, it is fair to state that the profit-driven and capitalist media, which is owned "by less and less hands" does suffer from "serious defects" (Schudson, 2002b, p. 4).

The British press however, as Hallin and Mancini acknowledge, have "distinct political identities" with some being partisan in nature (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 212). With the British tabloid newspapers infamous for their unabashed emulation of Robespierre or the Roman games as they close in on their prey "with both real and sublimated violence" (Seaton, 2005, p. 292). The Canadian and Irish systems are also in some ways closer to the Democratic Corporatist Model in so far that these two systems are also characterised by a strong public broadcaster. The issue of categorisation therefore emerges once again in this case with Norris blaming the "fuzzy, impressionistic and unscientific" impressions used rather than basing the classification on standardised indicators or a set of explicit decision rules, which could be tested (2009, p. 334).

In spite of these nagging issues, the Liberal Model of journalism has been promulgated around the world as the normative ideal (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 300). This is rather

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[54] According to McChesney, coverage of the US president grew from 3 percent in US newspapers in the late 19th century to 10-25 percent in the late 20th century (2003, p. 303).

ironic in so far that public trust in the media generally and the British press in particular is among the lowest in Europe with 21 percent claiming to trust the press (European Commission, 2012, p. 18) with another poll showing that 72 percent of British citizens do not trust journalists.[55]

Although Hallin and Mancini are accused by Hardy of privileging the Liberal Model, they do mention its drawbacks of the liberal media such as the low newspaper circulation, high level of commercialisation, the lack of diversity in the US and the instrumentalisation and partisanship in Britain. In terms of pluralism, the US laissez-faire approach does not serve pluralism as it is often the case that well-resourced media dominates and the alternative voices are marginalised (Curran, 2000a, pp. 34-36). In addition to hegemony in the broad and complex sense which comprises "a whole system of meanings and values" reconfirming themselves (Williams, 2005, p. 38), the US media in particular, has been guilty of using discriminatory frames such as the study by Robert Entman "African Americans According to TV News" reveals (Luther, Lepre & Clark, 2012, p. 80). The "newsworthy" crimes often reported are perpetrated by African-American although the majority of crimes are carried out by Anglo Americans. Even if the reports are impartial, the minimal contextual information provided arguably accentuates stereotypes (Entman, 2001, p. 3). Indeed "the practices of representation" in the "cultural circuit", as the late Stuart Hall would have it, further questions the media's alleged objectivity and inclusion (Hall, 1997, p. 15). Public service broadcasting in Northern Europe as well as the incorrectly-categorised United Kingdom are reported to have more members of disadvantaged groups partaking in the "ritual of watching the evening new" (Curran et al., 2009, p. 20). Furthermore, unfettered

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[55] Cf. the poll and ensuing report "Politicians trusted less than estate agents, bankers and journalists" conducted by Ipsos Mori published on 15 February 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Polls/Feb2013_Trust_Topline.PDF (last accessed on 30 July 2014).

commercialisation and competition is also partially to blame for what is perceived as also partially to blame for the rise of infotainment – a portmanteau joining information and entertainment in news programmes. Although the rise of this phenomenon has been linked to "the decline of ideology" and the rise in populism and political marketing (Blumler, 2005, p. 120), the quest for higher ratings and therefore larger profits have resulted in content "where style triumphs over substance…[and where] soft news about celebrities, crime, corruption" reigns at the expense of politics and public affairs (Thussu, 2009, pp. 7-8). A study comparing the public service institutions in Denmark, Finland, the UK and the US has revealed a connection between the "patterns of news coverage and levels of public knowledge" (Curran et al., 2009, p. 14). Unsurprisingly, the study by James Curran and his colleagues reveals greater public ignorance in nations where public service broadcasting are weak or not present thereby accentuating the importance of "the architecture of the media system" – or how the media are organised (2009, p. 22). Still, Kees Brants argues civic-minded Europeans ought not to panic over the encroachment of infotainment with deregulation and commercialisation in Europe (1998, p. 329). Nonetheless, and as will be discussed and critiqued in the following subsection, Hallin and Mancini have announced the "triumph of the Liberal Model" the so-called "wave of the future", tensions, contradictions and important countertrends notwithstanding (2004, pp. 247-248).

2.2.3. Convergence, homogenisation and Americanisation

In general and according to Hallin and Mancini, the differences among their three models have diminished substantially over time with the "triumph of the Liberal Model" as best exemplified by the United States (2004, p. 251). According to the two authors, the shift towards the Liberal Model is characterised by the decline of media connected to organized

social groups whose primary purposes were to intervene in the public sphere, as is characteristic of the Democratic Corporatist and the Polarised Pluralist Models. Instead, purpose-driven newspapers delivering "information and entertainment to individual consumers and the attention of consumers to advertisers" became the norm (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 251). Another trend they point to is the alleged change in the style of journalism where rather than the polemical style of writing more journalists in the Polarised Pluralist and Democratic Corporatist Model are adopting the "objective" and politically "neutral" writing. As already critiqued above, the liberal media system and particularly the United States journalists may claim objectivity, yet, their performance and coverage of the Afghan and Iraq invasions has left much to be desired (Hafez, 2009, pp. 329-330; Russ-Mohl, 2013, p. 223; Hallin, 2013, pp. 101-103). Indeed, based on several works such as Groseclose and Milyo (2005), McChesney (2003) and Allan and Zelizer (2004) amongst others, where American journalists include their personal interpretation into the news coverage, and were the most popular media-Fox news-is unabashedly partisan, the United States might no longer be seen as the epitome of an "objective" journalism (Hanitzsch et al., 2011, p. 287). Furthermore, the inaccuracy of this label notwithstanding, the convergence towards an "Anglo-American" form of journalism overlooks the important differences not only within each media system but also between sectors but also within different sections of a newspaper or news programmes (Hardy, 2008, pp. 127-128).

Meanwhile, another trend identified by the two researchers is deregulation in broadcasting or the "commercial deluge", which took place in the 1980s and 1990s where the public service monopolies were displaced in favour of the dual systems, and in which commercial media are increasingly dominant (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 251). The technological

development of cable and satellite, offering channel capacity for the transmission of programmes and advertising from sources external to nationally regulated systems resulted in what many media theorists dubbed a "crisis". This term was coined not only because the monopolies were broken but more importantly because the loss of consensus over the purposes that broadcasting should serve and how they ought to be achieved. Effectively, these technological changes were "hijacked" by market ideologists (Hardy, 2008, pp. 57-60). Therefore, with the exception of Europe, where despite a decline in budgets and audiences, PSBs remain central to their media systems (Williams, 2005, p. 7), it is important to assess to what extent convergence is taking place in light of the global decline of PSBs. Having said that, the demise of the Public Service Broadcasters remains far-fetched, particularly due to Europe's perception of the media as a social entity (Hardy, 2008, p. 57).

Indeed, Hallin and Mancini can be seen to have belittled the continuous support the public service broadcasters receive. However as public-channels compete with commercial media, there may indeed be a change in the broadcasting style. The rise and prevalence of infotainment with an emphasis on information narrative, sensation and entertainment such as the prevalence of Oprah and Jerry Springer-like shows and the face-lift given to news shows broadcast even in Britain, "the birthplace of missionary public service Broadcasting" (Blumler, 2005, p. 118). While this may increase popular involvement in politics (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 277-279), the popularity and success of reality TV shows and extensive coverage given to soft news are a cause for concern for many. While some have deemed the trend of 'dumbing down' a "powerful discourse of diversion" and the "breads and circuses" of the 21st century (Thussu, 2009, pp. 9, 13), Kees Brants has deemed it to be not as

devastating as it seems (1998). Brants' "infotainment scale" and content analyses of the public and commercial television news services of several European countries precludes the trend of infotainment (1998).

In addition, Hallin and Mancini identify a change in the patterns of political communication away from party-centred configurations towards media-centred patterns involving marketing groups with political parties becoming professionalised, elliptically ideological and seemingly "catchall" such as Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 251). However, election results in Germany where the smaller ideological parties made some important gains, as well as American President Barack Obama's landmark victory, which relied on activists and volunteers using new media challenge these trends. Other examples from individual countries also attests to the fact that political communication is mainly shaped by cultures and structures that differ across media systems and which influence some of the ways in which politicians and media actors and citizens interact (Hardy, 2008, pp. 132-133). In short, they maintain that the Democratic Corporatist countries media systems have become differentiated from the political system where though not all links to parties have been broken but that the media now operate according to their own logic.

The convergence here is considered propelled by the interlinked forces of Americanisation, modernisation, globalisation and commercialisation and secularisation. These notions, they claim, can be labelled as a process of "Americanisation",[56] despite the hierarchy this term suggests and the fact that it overlooks the reciprocal exchange "globalisation" suggests (Esser & Pfetsch, 2004, p. 11). Hallin and Mancini credit globalisation in homogenising

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[56] Hallin and Mancini credit the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) and the US Department of State, the "free press crusade", for efforts exerted in the post-World War II and during the Cold War, to promote their conception of press freedom, journalistic professionalism and liberal media principles (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 254-256).

media systems citing organisations such as the World Association of Newspapers (WAN), which in its "code of newspaper practices" (approved in 1981) clearly reflects the influence of the liberal conception of press freedom and professionalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 256). However, as shall be discussed below, approving codes of practice does not directly mean that those will be implemented. Despite "the transnational networking of media and markets" the state, remains the dominant political and legal force in the national media systems (Hafez, 2007, pp. 142-143).

Though economic globalisation spearheaded by the "advertising lobby" and large conglomerates dubbed "the global media oligopoly" (Herman & McChesney, 2004, p. 104) has pushed forth commercialisation, Hafez is right to claim that assuming the dominance of the western media capital in the global media is "foreshortened and exaggerated" (2007, p. 161).

Furthermore, Hallin and Mancini identify secularisation as a catalyst in the convergence of models in so far that religious groups became separate from political and social order institutions leading to a rise in fragmented and individualised society, requiring catchall media (2004, p. 251). The pillarised system of the Netherlands or 'vertical pluralism', where the population is divided into organised groups (Thung, Peelen & Kingmans, 1982, p. 129), disintegrated by the mid-20th century due to the secularisation of society but also due to social and geographic mobility (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007, pp. 13-14).

Finally, commercialisation, the most powerful force for homogenisation of the media system, can be traced to the commercial deluge, which began in the 1970s and which challenged the public broadcaster's logic and audience share. One example for that is the

ongoing heated debate[57] on the costs of running the BBC discussing whether a regulated commercial media can deliver value for money public interest content. Chairman of openDemocracy.net David Elstein argues that competition has driven the BBC to compete and even demand its producers to "bring them drama like ITV's" (2001). As discussed above, the investment in public service broadcasters remains a deeply contested issue between those perceiving the media a social institution and those championing the US commercial model. Furthermore, the news provision, scheduling and consumption of British television reaffirms the view that the British media have more affinities with the television systems of the Democratic Corporatist Model and less to do with the "Liberal camp" (Aalberg et al., 2010, p. 267).

While Hallin and Mancini seem to privilege the Liberal Model implicitly and perhaps also unintentionally, they admit the deplorable consequences of this trend such as the production of entertainment and information that can be sold regardless of the "public good" (2004, p. 251). A slightly positive consequence of convergence, however, is the tendency to focus on the experience and perspective of the "common citizen". The media, they argue, become more of an agenda setter because of commercialisation.

Hallin and Mancini concede, however, that differences among systems remain substantial and that the homogenisation trend may not continue into the future. As they remind the reader, "history does not usually move in straight lines". Thus, the trends propelling convergence may slow down citing the "proliferation of advocacy journalism in Liberal media systems" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 283, 286). The use of the "straight line", however, invokes the image of the liberal model as an endpoint thus privileging this system.

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[57] OpenDemocracy a non-profit online platform published the pieces by Jean Seaton and David Elstein, a former BBC executive turned critic.

Despite their rejection of the modernisation theory that privileges one model of journalism as in Siebert's et al.[58] work, "their conceptual frame", argues Jonathan Hardy, "retains strong traces of modernization theory" (2008, pp. 106-107). Hardy's *Western Media Systems* offers a meticulous critique of Hallin and Mancini's model and accuses Hallin and Mancini of "reproducing a stagist, evolutionist model that privileges the liberal conception of media independence as a higher stage of development" (Ibid.). Yet, this is debatable as they qualify that model excessively and also stress that there may be convergence in opposite directions, which, though undermining the crux of the work, candidly reflects the complexity of such structures. However, Duncan McCargo goes one step further and claims that Hallin and Mancini's convergence and homogenisation discussion is to be "disregarded", citing Hallin's article "Not the End of Journalism History" (2009, p. 334). In this publication, the latter argues that while it had once appeared that "the end of journalism history was upon us", and that the world media are en route to resemble the American media, this is no longer the case with "diversity and often wrenching change" ruling the roost (McCargo, 2012, p. 220).

However, in addition to the saliency of diversity and change, some phenomena have proven resilient and, despite setbacks, have thus far successfully resisted the commercial onslaught. While public service broadcasters have faced significant challenges from commercial competitors, Hallin and Mancini do not fully recognise the resistance of the "civic-minded Europeans" governments to commercialisation (Blumler, 2005, p. 118). This notion is important as the call for strengthening public service particularly in developing

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[58] The *FTP* tradition of comparative media analysis, especially in the US was tied to modernisation theory, setting world press systems against a liberal ideal of a 'watchdog' press free from state interference or partisan affiliation. Hallin and Mancini seek to evade the FTP tradition.

democracies outside the reach of Hallin and Mancini's study, have also not subsided.[59] The desire for public service broadcasters to counter ownership concentration can indeed serve to offset homogenisation, particularly since a commercial system, even if closely regulated, "cannot realise the full benefits of technology for society as a whole since it is based on calculations and exclusions driven by the search for profit, not social benefit" (Hardy, 2008, p. 234). While there are many examples of commercial media producing content with the public interest in mind, such programmes would undoubtedly be cut should they prove unprofitable. Indeed, as summed up by Johan J. Graafland, "market competition does not only operate as an invisible hand that creates wealth and growth but also as an invisible foot that tramples upon the have-nots" (2007, p. 126).

Yet another criticism hurled at Hallin and Mancini's efforts is their focus on the news media whereas the majority of media output is not political in nature. Indeed, while it is next to impossible in comparative studies to be exhaustive, "it is an unwarranted leap" to speak of a global media change while disregarding a very important aspect of media systems and that is culture and cultural processes (Hardy, 2008, p. 232). These generalisations, argues Hardy, seriously challenge "smooth narratives of globalisation, convergence and commercialisation" (2008, pp. 231-232). Considering entertainment and popular culture, which according to Curran should be perceived as within the political domain[60] (2000, pp. 139-140) can indeed be deemed political (Hafez, 2008c, p. 150) and is also more central to

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[59] One such recommendation is Nötzold's work on the Lebanese media system, which prescribes the strengthening of the Lebanese public service broadcaster, *Télé Liban*, in order to strengthen national unity and identity.

[60] Curran argues that in addition to offering "cognitive maps of reality", entertainment addresses social values and identities, which are key to voting behaviour and therefore democracy. Media entertainment can also be regarded as a "vehicle of debate about certain 'political' issues" as well as a way in which marginal groups can register their opposition to dominant ideologies and institutions. Fourth, entertainment (and in particular popular music) is an important way in which disempowered groups are able to register their opposition to dominant structures and ideologies (Curran, 2000b, pp. 139-140).

globalisation (Hafez, 2007, p. 82), could be useful in assessing media convergence and market defragmentation.

Another overlooked factor which would have impacted the breakdown of media markets is entertainment. Although the term is sometimes used with "a hint of disdain" when measured against the more sombre arts and news (Frith, 2000, p. 201), many theorists have made a case defending the significance of entertainment. In addition to the fact that entertainment can be political by challenging norms and taboos such as reality shows in the Arab world have shown (Kraidy, 2005b, 2008), or by "de-ghettoizing" politics (Blumler & Gurevitch, 2000, pp. 163-164) through the placing of various social problems on the public agenda (Benson, 2011, p. 198). Further positive aspects are that they can allow disempowered groups to express their views vis-à-vis dominant ideologies, as well as offering "cognitive maps of reality" and the opportunity to join the fray on social values and identities (Curran, 2000, pp. 139-140). Thus, entertainment culture arguably has a more "universal appeal…with the greatest potential of all cross-border" communication (Hafez, 2007, p. 82). Furthermore, the emotions that "leak out through television" (Meyrowitz, 1985, p. 114) in addition to the multiple social arenas experienced have also impacted social interactions and roles (Meyrowitz, 1985, p. 3)

Finally, although Hallin and Mancini sought to avoid the normative and "rather Manichean" approach of Siebert, Schramm and Peterson, which in an unempirical fashion assessed world press systems against the liberal "watchdog" ideal, some normative reasoning with regards the ideal types and their "functionalist relativism" emerges as useful here (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 14). When comparing the three ideal types put forth, normative and philosophical considerations pertaining to the media's "implicit normative functionalism"

where it strives to arm the citizenry with information in the service of democracy rather than serving as a forum for elites (Schudson, 2000b, p. 194) or the media's role in representing the diversity within pluralistic societies can be considered. Indeed, since Hallin and Mancini emphasise the importance of the media-politics relationship in Western capitalist democracies, it is useful to assess the contributions to democracy and pluralism in each of the systems.

Deliberative democracy or the making of decisions based on the public deliberation of free and equal citizens draws on Jürgen Habermas' notion of the bourgeois public sphere, which has critical-rational discourse as one of its key tenets. Deliberative democracy has at its core the aim of transforming democratic politics to a "more refined and reflective process" (Held, 2006, p. 246). The notion of the public sphere was first advanced in 1962 in Habermas' *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*[61]. The notion was particularly seized upon in the 1990s partly due to its belated translation into English in 1989 but also as a response to deregulation and commercialisation of the media (McQuail, 2005c, p. 9). In light of several weaknesses including the idealisation of the public sphere as well as the exclusion of women and the underprivileged as well as the overlooking of social movements noted by Craig Calhoun and colleagues in his edited volume (1992, p. 37), with chapters by Michael Schudson (1992), Seyla Benhabib (1992) amongst others, Habermas modified his initial conceptualisation to signify the congregation of a more plural network for communicating information (1996, p. 360). Nevertheless, the Frankfurt School's second-generation critical theorist remained true to the importance of a rational-critical discourse or communicative

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[61] It is interesting to note that this publication was indeed Habermas' *Habilitation* thesis. The thesis was rejected by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno "as they deemed it not critical enough of the Enlightenment conception of democratic public life". The work was however accepted by Wolfgang Abendroth at the University of Marburg (Calhoun 1992, p. 4).

action. Habermas' claim which also features in what is deemed his magnum opus, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), again underlines the possibility of consensus through rational deliberation and discussion. Yet the public sphere's idealisation where this locus is free of state interference and is consensus-oriented rational discourse has been scrutinised and critiqued. In particular, the "overwhelmingly ratiocinative...macro-Socratic vision of the operation of public debate" (Downing, 1996, p. 25), which underpins Habermas' concept of the public sphere, overlooks power and hegemonic relations, according to Chantal Mouffe (2000, pp. 95-100). Indeed, building on the call for radical, pluralistic and democratic politics *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* co-written by Ernesto Laclau and Mouffe makes the case for 'agonistic pluralism' accentuating passions in politics as opposed to Habermas' rationalist ideals (Mouffe, 1993, p. 115). As discussed above, Mouffe argues for a public sphere were a variety of hegemonic political projects or adversaries vie for dominance through acts of power (2000, p. 99) rather than the "sterile" approach through deliberative procedures which effectively overlooks power and exclusion (2000, p. 8). After all, she argues the political is not a "rational moral calculus" where passions are to be expunged but rather where these passions should be mobilised towards "democratic designs" (Mouffe, 2000, p. 103). It is worth noting, however, that "agonistic confrontation" does not exclude any likelihood for consensus. Instead, Mouffe concedes that a certain amount of consensus can be reached on "a set of ethico-political principles". However, just as these values themselves, the consensus is conflictual (Mouffe, 2000, p. 103). This contentious consensus therefore is temporal and results from provisional hegemony thereby capturing what Mouffe has called the "democratic paradox" (2000). Still,

it should be noted that the public sphere, which heeds the hegemonising and temporally triumphant forces, remains a viable notion.

Drawing on this discussion, conjectures pertaining to pluralism and its conceptualisation through the media can be advanced. Indeed, it appears that diverse and plural voices are better represented in systems characterised by what Hallin and Mancini refer to as external pluralism where the media are tied to social groups and political parties and serve as the voice of the people to government. Systems with internal pluralism, where groups are mainstreamed, may in fact marginalise minorities and the underprivileged in a given society – particularly because not all conflicts can "be dissolved magically through discussion" (Curran, 2000b, p. 139). While it is not ipso facto the case that a multiplicity of owners reflecting the array of groups guarantees access to these groups and would be free of hegemonic tendencies, this approach remains more likely than in a liberal competitive media system. Indeed, the mythical liberal view of the media as a free market watchdog (Curran, 2000a, p. 121) unleashed against the state often overlooks media ownership structures and commercial interests that often comprise of elites who – though may keep a watchful eye on government and trigger public debate – often collude with the state and serve their own interests (Park & Curran, 2000, p. 47). Indeed, the media concentration that seems to emanate from the liberal laissez-faire doctrine results in limiting John Milton's 'free marketplace of ideas' to a handful of stall-owners only interested in marketing a limited produce. It is for this reason that the state, which remains a key social actor "defending and extending the public sphere" (Hardy, 2008, p. 239) by subsidising the media, supporting public-service and legislating for media diversity both in structure and content, is necessary (Curran, 2000b, p. 138). Particularly for proponents of the view that

the media serves democracy by educating civil society, given unbridled media commercialisation and the unfettered dumbing-down spiral, the role of the state in interfering positively in the public sphere such as in the social market model and on "behalf of democratic objectives", pluralism and cultural diversity, remains key (Hardy, 2008, p. 81).

Thus, despite some drawbacks including – for instance – the marginalisation of unorganised interests, Hallin and Mancini's Democratic Corporatist Model, which is based upon the social market or the Liberal Corporatist model, remains the most democratic. It is most capable – to a certain extent – to balance between the two centres of power; the state and the market.

Yet, it is most useful to recall Denis McQuail's warning that "the media do not constitute a single 'system'",[62] and that the media considered in a system are seldom homogeneous with different media having "different functions within the democratic system, calling for different kinds of structure and styles of journalism" (Curran, 2000b, p. 140).

Still, in spite of this macro-level approach put forth by Hallin and Mancini and their limitations, the framework and its dimensions to be discussed below are most definitely a useful approach that can be applied to other regions with "considerable adaption" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 6). The application of this framework should be based on "the cultural meaning of concrete historical circumstances" and should serve as points of reference against which other models and concepts can be constructed and tested (Eriksen, 2010, pp. 35-36). This shall be carried out in chapter 4 and 5 where the framework is critically applied to the Lebanese case and expanded accordingly to better suit the context.

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[62] This was one of Prof. McQuail's comments after the author presented this research project at the 2008 ECREA European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School held in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

2.3. Lebanon political system

2.3.1. Historical overview

"The ongoing search for a unified account of history is at the intersection of Lebanon's weak state, its

society's brittleness and the imported mythology of states."[63]

Before embarking on the route to testing and adapting the Hallin and Mancini indicators on the Lebanese case, it is integral to offer a survey of the Lebanese political and media system, as the adaptations to be suggested will be drawn from the socio-cultural and political specificities of Lebanon.

The creation of "Greater Lebanon" was an outcome of "the cataclysm of the First World War when the Ottoman Empire, the 'Sick Man of Europe', finally expired" (Hirst, 2010, p. 5). Drawing on the 1916 Sykes-Picot accord,[64] Lebanon was carved out of its "natural hinterland" (Owen, 1976), while still under French mandate. This neither satisfied the Maronite Patriarch and some Christians' desire for a "Christian refuge" (Traboulsi, 2007, p. 85) nor the secular and Muslim parties who rejected the French mandate as well as the separation from Syria (Traboulsi, 2007, p. 80). However, it was a fait accompli by the time Lebanon announced its independence in 22 November 1943.[65]

With the new state, the National Pact (*al-miṯaq al-waṭanī*)[66] came into being. The National Pact was an oral agreement by Sunni Muslims and Christians, which would allocate the Presidency to a Maronite Christian, the Premiership to a Sunni Muslim and the position of

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[63] Frangieh, S., *Mafqūdū at-tārīḫ fī lubnān* (Arabic for "The history of absentees in Lebanon"), *Al-Hayat*, 16 March 2012. Retrieved from: http://daharchives.alhayat.com/issue_archive/Hayat INT/2012/3/16/مفقودو-التاريخ-في-لبنان.html (last accessed on 18 October 2014). The article discusses the ongoing debate regarding the writing of Lebanon's contemporary history, which is absent from school curricula.

[64] Sykes-Picot was an Anglo-French agreement to divide the Arab world into French and British zones (Halliday 2005, p. 341).

[65] In 1943, Lebanon ceased to be governed by France to which it was mandated by the League of Nations in 1920.

[66] The transliteration of Arabic terms in this thesis follows the system of the German Oriental Society (Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, DMG). Proper names of persons, institutions or newspapers that have an English-language name have not been transliterated to increase legibility.

Parliament Speaker to a Shi'a Muslim. This "communal approach to *Realpolitik*" came "to symbolise post-independence confessional politics" (El Khazen, 1991, pp. 3-5). Although some claim this compromise sought to *Lebanise* Muslims and *Arabise* the Christians, it appeared later that the incentive behind the agreement was meant to secure President Bishara al-Khuri's election (Firro, 2003, p. 208).

Prior to the outbreak of the 1975 civil war, and discounting the one-year civil war in 1958, the Lebanese state and its inequitable economy prospered. Lebanon was often referred to as "Switzerland of the Middle East" with its free market economy that attracted wealth. The existing freedom and its established universities lured students from across the region resulting in trained and educated individuals vital for the services-based economy (Salibi, 2003, pp. 190-191). Despite what is often called Lebanon's "golden age",[67] the deep socio-economic, sectarian and political fissures, which predate the birth of the republic, were only to intensify and serve as a sceptre that would haunt the precarious nation.

Indeed, although sociologist Edward Shils described the small nation as a "happy phenomenon, a prosperous, liberal country. [With] a parliamentary body, freely elected", he warned in 1963 that Lebanon is not a civil society. "It lacks that attachment to the national society as a whole, that sense of identity" which could subsist provided the country is "kept completely still politically...within a still Middle Eastern environment (as cited in Hourani, 1985, pp. 1-2). This, however, was not to be.

The notion of a national society, however, is one that had been also broached by Lebanese sociologist Fadia Kiwan who spoke of a communal society as opposed to a civil society

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[67] While Lebanon prospered in the period before the outbreak of the civil war, to what extent this period can be described as "the golden age" is questionable as the implosion in 1975 was due to a series of social, financial and political tremors that had not been dealt with appropriately during that period.

(1993). This, however, overlooks an active, autonomous but small civil society[68] that exists

and attempts to present a counterbalance not only to the state but also to the primordial

ties to the sect and leaders. These phenomena permeate the political and social arena and

intensify in times of conflict. Civil society organisations or communal societies that are

formed around "nationalist, ethnic and religious interests" could indeed "become a force for

division and conflict rather than compromise and integration" (Newton & van Deth, 2005, p.

179). Yet, even during the civil war when sectarian militias dominated, civil society resisted

the sectarian splintering of the public sphere through a variety of measures (Haugbølle,

2010, pp. 61-63).

In addition to the "sectarianism of politics" and the economic inequalities, the regional

turmoil including the influx of Palestinian forces into Lebanon expedited the outbreak of the

civil war in 1975 (Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe, 2008, p. 60). The conflict initially pitted

right-wing Christian Maronite militias against the Palestinian Liberation Organisation

(PLO), which were later joined by Pan-Arab groups including Sunni Muslims and Druze

forces. This quickly spiralled into *bellum omnium contra omnes*[69] with the intra-sectarian

battles[70] considered the bloodiest (Hirst, 2010, p. 208). Regional powers – particularly

Israel, Syria and the cold war poles – also played a role in the war prompting the

euphemism "a war of/for the others".[71] Historian Fawwaz Traboulsi notably lamented this

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[68] Despite the significant number of secular, "general-interest-based CSOs" during the civil war and after, most organisations remain identity-based mirroring "the social, political and confessional divide in Lebanon" (Kraft, Al-Mazri, Wimmen, & Zupan, 2008, pp. 7-8).

[69] Latin for "war of all against all" used by Hobbes to describe human existence in the state of nature (Hobbes 1651, 2009, p. 70).

[70] Indeed, the war of the camps between the Shiite Amal movement against the then-newly formed Hezbollah, and the "war of liberation" waged by Maronite Army General Michel Aoun in part against the Syrian forces but also against the Lebanese Forces, a powerful Maronite militia in the closing year of the war, are counted amongst the bloodiest battles.

[71] Cf. Ghassan Tueni, 1985, '*Une guerre pour les autres*', Paris: Lattes.

"hegemonic and amnesic discourse", which reduces the conflict to one cause, "transfers guilt and blocks the narration of memory and reflection"[72] (2009, p. xviii).

With the end of the Lebanese war(s) under the 1989 Ta'if Accord, the hardly heeded "blueprint for national reconciliation" attempted to establish a more equitable but still disputed political system, which further entrenched sectarian divisions.[73] The post-war phase also secured the power of the traditional "consortium" of elites and traditional and neo-feudal leaders, most of whom had taken part in the war. Although the "reconstituted national political field" was generally stable, it featured severe restrictions on freedoms and political life brought upon by the Syrian hegemony. In particular, the Maronite Christian leadership[74] and others who opposed Syria's views and intervention were targeted (Kingston & Zahar, 2004, p. 91).

The passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1559[75] in early October 2004, which called for the withdrawal of "all foreign forces from Lebanon", heralded a change in the country. In February 2005, one of the architects of the resolution – former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri – was assassinated. This was followed by a series of killings targeting "anti-

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[72] In *Sand and Foam* (1926), Gibran Khalil Gibran says "Forgetfulness is a form of freedom" and indeed there are recurring accusations reproving the Lebanese society for their "collective amnesia" (Haugbølle 2010; Traboulsi 2009).

[73] Ta'if Agreement or Accord was negotiated in the city of Ta'if, Saudi Arabia. The agreement covered political reform, the ending of the war in Lebanon, the establishment of special relations between Lebanon and Syria, and a framework for the beginning of complete Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon. It was signed on October 22, 1989 and has institutionalized sectarian divisions by curtailing the powers of the President, traditionally held by the Maronites, granting more power to the council of ministers headed by the Sunni Prime Minister, the Speaker of Parliament to the Shiites and the head of the Senate, which has not yet been established, to the Druzes. The Ta'if Accord maintained parity between Christians and Muslims in parliament. Tamirace Fakhoury Mühlbacher (2009) and Michael Kerr (2005), amongst others, offer a thorough analysis of the Ta'if Accord and the attempt at power-sharing.

[74] The Maronite Christian leaders who fought each other in the closing days of the war were targeted. General Michel Aoun, who also launched a war against the Syrian army, was exiled to Paris and rejected the Ta'if Accord. Meanwhile his rival, Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea who joined the political game after the war was later purportedly framed and imprisoned for bombing a church in 1994. He was released in 2005 after Syria withdrew its troops from Lebanon.

[75] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559, adopted on 02 September 2004. Retrieved from: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/498/92/PDF/N0449892.pdf?OpenElement (last accessed on 24 February 2013).

Syrian" politicians and journalists lobbying to end Syrian hegemony, which in turn triggered an international and national campaign which put an end to the near thirty-year Syrian grip over Lebanon. The so-called 'Independence intifada'[76] left many Lebanese optimistic for a brighter democratic future in spite of the continuing Syrian meddling, the July War with Israel in 2006 and the war in neighbouring Syria. Yet, the rising tensions between the March 8 and March 14 camps[77] which were split on the Syrian withdrawal in 2005, Hezbollah's arms, the international investigation and tribunal set up to try the assassins of former PM Hariri in addition to continuous violations by Israel and the war in Syria however, leave very little room for optimism for the "geo-political rentier state"[78] that is Lebanon.

2.3.2. Political system and culture

"Pity the nation divided into fragments, each fragment deeming itself a nation."[79]

In addition to the highly agitated milieu, Lebanon has historically been susceptible to outside influence largely due to "geo-political architectures" (Dodds, 2007, p. 52) for as Albert Hourani once wrote about the geographical position of greater Syria, "even were there no Syrian people a Syrian problem would still exist" (Hourani, 1946, p. 6). However, in addition to its geographical position, the qualities of the population also play a role in the

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[76] The "independence intifada or uprising" was branded "Cedar Revolution" by the U.S. Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs Paula J. Dobriansky. Retrieved from: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A1911-2005Mar2.html (last accessed on 22 February 2013).

[77] Following the mass protest held on March 8, 2005 by the pro-Syrian camp consisting of Hezbollah, the Amal Movement as well as some Christian parties, opponents of the Syrian regime held a large protest demanding the withdrawal of Syrian troops on March 14, 2005. These two dates would come to signify the two alliances.

[78] In a lecture delivered in May 2011 on economic factors fuelling the 'Arab Spring', Ali Kadri referred to geo-political rent-based economies where rather than rents emanating from natural resources, rents are exchanged for political influence. Retrieved from: http://www2.lse.ac.uk/middleEastCentre/events/2011/KadriAli.aspx (last accessed on 24 February 2013).

[79] Taken from the poem "Pity the Nation" written by Gibran Khalil Gibran and published posthumously in *The garden of the Prophet* (1933). "Pity the Nation", was selected as a title of Robert Fisk's book on the Lebanese civil war (2002).

history and trajectory of the country. Although Lebanon is the only state in the Arab world with no state religion (Salibi, 2003, pp. 194-195), its "amalgam" of religious groups and political subdivisions makes "Lebanon "the sectarian state par excellence" (Hirst, 2010, p. 2). Indeed, the "hyper-pluralism", which could result in ungovernability (Newton & van Deth, 2005, p. 179) in Lebanon partially run along sectarian lines with the 18 officially recognised confessions at times seeking external backers.[80] For political and confessional reasons, the groups share power in accordance with a "virtual demography" (Firro, 2003, p. 205) drawing on an antiquated census carried out in Lebanon in 1932, and which yielded a slight majority for the Maronites. Therefore, despite a clear demographic tilt, official records remain absent (Traboulsi, 2007, p. 91).

The pragmatic and *realpolitik* National Pact hashed out by the independence leaders effectively was a power-sharing compromise made primarily between the Maronite and Sunni political elite. In addition to the distribution of the three key positions to the largest religious groups, the allotment of seats and positions in state institutions also followed a similar pattern. Seats in parliament, for instance, are also divided between the Muslims and Christians despite an ever-tilting demographic scale. Yet according to al-Khuri's memoirs, the oral National Pact, which has become part and parcel of Lebanon's political life, was simply political manoeuvring to ensure his election. This confirms that confessionalism is indeed only one part of the equation. Firro argues that sectarian and regional disputes prevail prior to the composition of electoral lists and clannish competition, which then take over when alliances needed to be forged between leaders so as to secure successful lists

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[80] In the late 1830s the European powers started to get engaged in Syria and Lebanon. Consuls established relations with communities with the French establishing close relations "with the Maronites, the British with the Druzes, the Russians with the Orthodox Christians". However, this engagement can be traced back to 1736 when the Maronite church, which is an Eastern Church independent of the Vatican, sought an alliance with Rome and accepted the papal dogma in order to consolidate its position (Hourani, 1985, p. 9).

(2003, pp. 206-208). These alliances amongst the leaders as well with religious institutions are, as Lebanese sociologist Samir Khalaf suggests, often based on "purely Hobbesian motives of self-interest and political survival" (Khalaf, 1977, p. 198).

In trying to understand the Lebanese political and media system, a series of key theories ought to be taken into consideration. While Lebanon is often labelled a consociational democracy, a closer look at the political system reveals that despite the intent, the political system is not quite a Lijphartian[81] consociational democracy. Indeed, the sharing of the spoils along confessional lines therefore does not constitute a consociational democracy. Drawing on Arend Lijphart's formulation, the consociational "art of government" – to use a Foucauldian term – is identified by four basic characteristics. These traits include a grand coalition government, cultural autonomy, proportionality and minority veto (Lijphart, 2008, p. 4).

Sharing with corporatism the "ideology of social partnership" and the absence of "a winner-takes-all mentality", consociational democracy, which power-sharing is a part of, also requires a series of elusive favourable conditions. These include the presence of threats common to all communities, loyalty to the state, and a tradition of elite accommodation,. Although the Lijphartian consociational democracy has been prescribed as a resolution to crisis-laden, plural and 'deeply divided societies"[82] (Lijphart, 2002, p. 108), questions pertaining to its effectiveness arise particularly in light of unsuccessful attempts in Cyprus, Belgium, and indeed Lebanon.

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[81] The author draws here from Arend Lijphart's *Democracy in Plural Societies* (1977) and *Patterns of democracy* (1999).
[82] Nordlinger's definition of deeply-divided society is used here (as cited in Guelke, 2012, pp. 7-8). He argues "a society is deeply divided when a large number of conflict group members attach overwhelming importance to the issues at stake, or manifest strongly held antagonistic beliefs and emotions towards the opposing segment, or both (Guelke, 2012, p. 30).

In Lebanon, the disproportional consociationalist pact was one of several factors that lead to the civil war. Meanwhile, the post-war Ta'if accord, brokered by external forces in 1989, drew on the notion of consociationalism as a "fig-leaf" for the victors' interests (Kerr, 2006, p. 199). Although the Ta'if divided parliament equally between Muslims and Christians and guaranteed representation for all religious communities, in practice the electoral laws favoured one community over the others. Furthermore, while proportional representation represented the potpourri of religious denominations, the government officials were effectively selected by the Syrian government thereby doing away with the characteristic of the minority veto (Kerr, 2006, p. 178). It could even be argued that Syria drew on the consociational system as it made government governable, thereby accentuating the role of exogenous factors on the success or failure of the consociational system in a country with "low sovereignty" like Lebanon (Kerr, 2006, pp. 199-200; Fakhoury Mühlbacher, 2009, p. 426). Despite the oft-repeated slogan of "no victors, no vanquished" and occasional formation of grand coalition governments representing all factions, the vacancy in the Presidency from April 2014 and the postponement of the parliamentary elections from 2013 in light of the ongoing war in Syria raises serious questions about the stability of this democracy.

Moreover, patronage and elite interests arise as another important feature of the Lebanese political system. In addition to the traditional feudal leaders of the mountains who are large landowners and who have since diversified their sources of wealth and patronage, Hourani identifies two other types of political patrons commonly referred to as *Zuʿamā*[83] (Hourani, 1985, pp. 1-2). The "populist" lords are said to infuse their patronage with ideology and the

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[83] Plural for *Zaʿīm*, Arabic for "leader". Arnold Hottinger captures the peculiarities of this type of leader (1961, pp. 128-129).

leaders of the Muslim populations of the coastal cities, who also rely on a mixture of ideology and exercise of patronage.

Similarly, Khalaf suggests "three forms of political patronage; 'feudal', 'administrative' or 'pseudo-ideological', which continue to exist "by highly personalised, tightly circumscribed and reciprocal obligations typical of all patron-client networks", which are in turn fed by the existence of primordial and neo-primordial allegiances and family and communal/sectarian loyalties (1977, pp. 201-204). While some of the traditional patrons or *Zu'amā'* amongst the Maronites, Shiites and Sunnis have been weakened after the war; those who have replaced them or are in the process of doing so can be regarded as neo-*Zu'amā'*. Indeed, those neo-patrons and leaders are reproducing the tradition of patronage and using wealth, nepotism and influence[84] as tools to maintain their support. This category of neo-*Zu'amā'* includes former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and his son Saadeddine Hariri, the Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri who heads the Amal movement[85] and its ally Hezbollah. Hezbollah began its ascent in 1982 as an Iranian-backed resistance group fighting the Israeli invasion of 1982 but also came to establish a social welfare programme for its once-neglected Shiite constituency. These neo-*Zuama* are "both a consequence of and a reinforcing factor in Lebanon's inability to forge a strong state" (Young, 2010, p. 251).

Indeed, these patrons or patron-like entities have contributed to the weakness of "the rational instruments of a nation state – i.e. anonymous large-scale organisations such as political parties, civil bureaucracies or class loyalties", which more or less continue to be

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[84] The term used in the Arab world is *Wasṭa* which refers to informal practices carried out for a positive outcome. This common "force" rather than being "hidden" (Cunningham & Sarayrah, 1993) is analogous to cronyism or using clout to assist clients or followers.

[85] The "*Movement of the Dispossessed*" (later transformed into the Amal movement, which was its military wing) was founded by Imam Musa al-Sadr (Hanf, 1990, p. 363). The Iranian-born and highly regarded Imam who sought to better the situation of the neglected Shias in Lebanon, "disappeared" in Libya in 1978 with his two companions (Ajami, 1986, pp. 86-88; 181-183).

lacking (Khalaf, 1977, pp. 201-204). This state of affairs is also reflected in the Lebanese media system and will be examined below.

Although all of these *Zuʿamāʾ* head political parties or movements (El Khazen, 2003),[86] some even with internal structures, bylaws and elected boards, this does not mean, that they no longer serve as a locus of patron-client networks (Khalaf, 1977, pp. 201–204). The line between a political party or a movement and a client group is a fuzzy one in Lebanon where in return for the political or financial support, the patron throw in their political weight, influence and social prestige behind *his* clients. In light of the lack of proper political parties that appeal to a national audience, political life was left to politicians who brokered temporary parliamentary blocs depending on the their interests at any given time, leaving many alienated (Salibi, 2003, pp. 188-189).

While several actors or interest groups such as non-governmental organisations and religious institutions have played a role in the Lebanese political and media systems, the role of the *Zuʿamāʾ* has been far more critical. It is fair to state that these actors have hindered the growth of the state, the potential for secular, ideology-based parties and reduced "the entire political process to one of squabbles over patronage rights and boundaries" (Khalaf, 1977, p. 199).

As Khalaf concludes, "patronage, like confessionalism, has become institutionalised into Lebanon's body politic" (Ibid.) thereby serving as "impenetrable barriers to state predominance" (Acemoglu, 2005, pp. 1200-1203).

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[86] Loyalties in the Arab world are more often to individuals, tribes, or sects (Abu-Rabiʾ, 2004, p. 293). Political parties and movements in Lebanon in particular revolve around sectarian identities as ideological parties "lost their substance during the civil war" (Kraft et al., 2008, p. 20). This, however, is not characteristic to the Arab world. Rather than mass bureaucratic parties, such as those in Europe, young democracies in Asia have a hybrid of patrimonial practices and political and electoral marketing and professionalism (McCargo, 2012, pp. 218-219).

2.3.3. The weak state

"Lebanon's strength lies in its weakness"[87]

As discussed in the previous chapter, the power yielded by those non-state actors, which may be likened to interest and lobby groups in the United States, is regarded as largely responsible for the state of the Lebanese state. Indeed, the most serious attempt at state-building, often referred to as *"le Chehabisme"*[88], after the term of President Fou'ad Chehab, faced stiff resistance from the *Zu'amā'* who he dubbed *"les fromagistes"* (AbuKhalil, 1998, p. 197). His attempt, described "as the first-and-last-fling with *etatisme"* (Ajami, 1986, p. 87) was largely unsuccessful. The main obstacle to extending the "roots of the State into the heart of society and the founding of political domination on the ramparts and trenches of civil society" (Sharara, 1980, p. 19) and by doing so circumvent the "constitutional oligarchy" (Goldschmidt Jr., 2002, p. 289), was the threat such a project posed on their rents and profits (Traboulsi, 2007, pp. 141-142).

However, before classifying the Lebanese state as a weak state, quasi-state, a shadow state or even a "penetrated state"[89] (Najem, 2005, p. 100), it is necessary to define the concept of the state more broadly. This section begins with a discussion of some key theories on this notion and important considerations to the application of some approaches. Despite the ambiguity[90] regarding the nature of the state, Max Weber's approach to the ideal state is

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[87] Lebanese motto; cited in Traboulsi, 2007, p. 145.

[88] The term or notion of "Chehabism" was coined by journalist and former minister Georges Naccache in 1960 in *"Un Nouveau Style – Le Chehabisme"* in 1960. Since then, this notion has been used in reference to the attempt to administer reforms and strengthen the state by enacting long-term nation-wide development projects as well as "his brand of moderate, non-sectarian Lebanese nationalism" (AbuKhalil, 1998, p. 197). President Chehab, the "neutralist" (Golschmidt Jr., 2002, p.308) downplayed any philosophical or ideological attribute to it. President Fou'ad Chehab's term as president from 1958 to 1964 was tarnished by violations to the "tradition" of rights committed by the army intelligence, the *deuxieme Bureau*, particularly after the failed coup d'état of 1961.

[89] This refers to the *Pax Syriana* phase when Syria exercised significant control over Lebanon (Najem, 2005, p. 100).

[90] "We have come to take the state for granted as an object of political practice and political analysis while remaining quite spectacularly unclear as to what the state is. We are variously urged to respect the state, or smash the state or study the state; but for want of clarity about the nature of the state such projects remain beset with difficulties"

often used as a universal benchmark on which states – their "strength" or "weakness" – are measured. The work loosely adopts Max Weber's definition where the state is perceived as the organisation which has a "monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory", which includes institutions such as the armed forces, police and state bureaucracy and are generally consolidated by a government in Western democracies. In addition to the "legitimate authority" to use force and coercion Weber adds in *Politics as Vocation* domination through justice and rationally created laws (Weber, 1999, p. 402).

However, heeding Joel Migdal's warning, the study does not over-emphasise "the power and effectiveness of the state" (Kingston, 2004, p. 4). This is because the state "is far from being able to occupy the whole field of actual power relations and…Because the state can only operate on the basis of the other, already existing power relations" (Foucault, 2002, pp. 122-123). Indeed, while Michel Foucault sees the state as "superstructural in relation to a whole series of power networks", he maintains that even the state with an "omnipotence of its apparatuses is far from being able to occupy the whole field of actual power relations…Because the state can only operate on the basis of the other, already existing power relations". By apparatuses here, Foucault, as Weber before him, refers to the army, police and judiciary, which he typically calls "the power of death" and "punitive instances" (Foucault, 2002, pp. 122-123).

Yet, despite the prominence of the Weberian approach, many scholars and intellectuals have deliberated the state and attempted to arrive at a definition or theory that can capture the essence of this mercurial concept. The divide has traditionally been between Weberians and Marxists, which classically regard the state as a repressive apparatus that enables the ruling classes to subject and exploit the working classes. Thus, the main difference between

(Abrams, 2007, pp. 112-113).

both approaches is that the latter tends "to prioritise processes of capital accumulation, relegating states to derivative or secondary analytical positions", whereas the former focuses on the "autonomy of the state as an actor in its own right" (Kelly, 2000, pp. 215-216). State theories, which exist in abundance, all seem to hone and expand on either of these two main approaches.

Today, prevailing modern state theory takes from Weber the central issue of monopoly of violence in a given territory, occupied by a population and adds to it some further criteria. Customary International Law and the 1933 Montevideo Convention provide the following accepted benchmarks for statehood: (a) a defined territory, (b) a permanent population, (c) a government in control and (d) a willingness to participate in international relations (Maass, 2009, p. 68).

Several theorists have added to the basic yardsticks additional characteristics such as the provision of security, rule of law, right to political participation, as well as the provision of infrastructure and social services (Eriksen, 2010, p. 29). Meanwhile, Robert Jackson (1990), as well as Stephen Krasner and Carlos Pascual (2005) add an international relations angle to the Weberian approach and focus on the notion of sovereignty. Jackson uses the term "quasi-states" (1990) to denote states which have external sovereignty i.e. recognition, diplomatic relations and access to international aid, but lack domestic sovereignty or control over their territory. Like Jackson, Krasner also adds to the Weberian ideal the issue of sovereignty with its three components; non-intervention by external forces, legal recognition as a state and being the highest political authority domestically (Krasner, 2004; Eriksen, 2010, pp. 30-31).

However, this long tally, which seems quite difficult to meet even for established democracies, has been criticised most prominently by Migdal. Migdal argues that states are shaped by "image and practices" and there is a disjuncture in the perception of the oft-contradictory state as a coherent entity in a territory and "the actual practices of its multiple parts" (Migdal, 2001, p. 16).

Furthermore, Migdal points out that Weber's approach tends to "essentialise the state and overstate its capabilities" and in the 21st century, globalization, supranational entities, divisive ethnic conflict have stripped the "state" of "its myths of unity and omnipotence" (2001, pp. 250-251). In the same vein, Timothy Mitchel argues that Weber's criteria are "only a residual characterization. It does not tell us how the actual contours of this amorphous organization are to be drawn...the state appears to stand apart from society in [an] unproblematic way" (2007, p. 174).

When measured against Weber's criteria, the American state's shortcoming is a case in point. In well-argued essay, William Novak (2008) challenges what he calls "the myth of the US weak state" by using a pragmatic approach, which examines the "state in action rather than in theory" (Novak, 2008, pp. 766-767). This approach takes a "bottom up" rather than top down, "taking account of the periphery as much as the centre, horizontal organization as much as vertical consolidation, and the distribution, separation, and delegation of power as much as its centralization, rationalization, and integration" (Ibid.). His argument shows how power is horizontally distributed in the United States thereby rendering the perception of the United States as weak state a "historical fallacy" which confuses liberalism with state weakness (Novak, 2008, pp. 760-761).

Prior to judging the Lebanese state in action rather than in theory, some other formulations are worth examining. These include the notions of failed state, quasi-states and shadow states. The notion of a failed state is analogous to Robert Jackson's conception of a "quasi-state". This is defined as a situation in which a state does not possess the elusive features of statehood such as monopoly of violence and control over the territory, which does not fit current day Lebanon (Jackson, 1990). In addition to the fact that such labels "obscure" the nature of a given state, such terms rely on an ideal Western form of the state and its benchmarks (Eriksen, 2010, p. 33). Furthermore, in the context of Lebanon, it overlooks the fact that even during the civil war when the state was at its weakest, the sectarian and political units never existed separately from the loosely knit Lebanese collectivity (Kingston, 2004, p. 81). Despite the necessary intertwining of state and non-state actors due to a variety of factors including liberalism, hyper-pluralism as well as the relative weakness of the state, the relationship between the two remains dialectical where rather than dissolution, coexistence is brokered (Kingston & Zahar, 2004, p. 81). One other formulation that is perhaps more appropriate is the notion of the "shadow state" put forth by William Reno, where the patronage system enforced by the leader sidelines bureaucracies (1998, pp. 2-3). This is similar to the notion of neo-patrimonialism, where a leader rules by relying on informal relations (Pawelka, 2002). In Lebanon, the network of clientelism has not only limited the influence of the state but also taken over industries that traditionally fall under the remit of the state (Kraft et al., 2008, p. 18). In light of elite personal interests and their subsequent wheeling's and dealings at the expense of state building, the notion of shadow states and neo-patrimonialism can be applied, however loosely.

In light of the above discussion about the nature of the state and its characteristics, Robert Morrison MacIver's is right in saying "it is easier to agree on the nature of a particular state than on the nature of the state itself'" (as cited in Kelly, 2000, p. 220). Still, using the term "weak state" in the traditional sense where a state faces difficulty in taxing, regulating and playing a developmental role may be more appropriate for this case (Acemoglu, 2005, pp. 1200-1203). Indeed, one could safely say that the Lebanese state both "by design and by default" as well as in theory and in action, is a weak state.

This discussion will be tapped into in Chapter 4. Specifically, the role of non-state actors in limiting state intervention,[91] but also in playing a key role in the actual media system and in the expression of this pluralism through the media will be explored. While state intervention plays an important role in shaping media systems, in Lebanon and in light of the state's weakness, the role of non-state actors appears to be just as influential.

2.3.4. Small state

Finally, another characteristic that has an impact on the nature of the state as well as on the media system is state size. "Beware of small states" warned Mikhail Bakunin without venturing to precisely define what qualifies as a small state.[92] However, he was not alone in balking at a definition as there remains no characterization of 'the small state' that academics can agree upon (Henrikson as cited in Masss, 2009, pp. 66-67). The best approach therefore has been to apply a "loosely defined concept" sometimes consisting of a number of indicators (Ibid.).

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[91] Hallin and Mancini's approach to state role, which shall be discussed further below, relates to the state's intervention in the media system. These include the legal framework, which the government oversees, the public service broadcaster which it sets up and supports, financial subsidies the government provides as well as the state's role as the prime definer of news.

[92] Mikhail Bakunin was writing of 19th century Europe in reference to small states such as Belgium and Latvia, which were victims of the larger states but were also a source of trouble because they were an area of competition between powers of the time.

Some of those criteria vary from the straightforward benchmarks of population and territorial size to the more complex notion of self-perception. Other indicators that have also been taken into consideration include military size, state strength as well as the Gross National Product (GNP) and how it compares to the total world GNP (Maass, 2009, pp. 71-72).

While the indicators of territorial and population size may seem clear-cut with the data readily available, a key problem that may arise is the arbitrariness with which "cut-off points" are selected[93] thereby attesting to the difficulty of "operationalising" the criteria of population size (Maass, 2009, pp. 75-76). Another indicator that is also difficult to operationalise is self-perception or the relational approach, where "smallness" is defined "in relation" to bigger and more powerful countries (Puppis, 2009, p. 8). Accordingly, the smallness of a state is not determined by some absolute measurement such as a state's population or territorial size, but by a state's position in a certain context or geographical area. This evokes a remark by former Canadian PM Pierre Elliot Trudeau likening Canadian-US relations to "sleeping with an elephant, no matter how friendly and even-tempered is the beast...one is affected by every twitch and grunt".[94] This relational approach effectively renders Canada a small state.

It is worth noting that the assumption that small states are less viable and lack "economic sovereignty" due to their small population size and markets is not necessarily true. On the contrary, small homogeneous states seem to be just as successful if not more than larger states as due to their homogeneous nature and ensuing national solidarity, states can ask

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[93] Population figures of what constitutes a small state vary between a maximum at 1.5 million, which seems rather low, 10-15 million (Maass, 2009, pp. 75-76) and even a minimum of 100,000 and a maximum of 18 million inhabitants thereby rendering the Netherlands also a small state (Puppis, 2009, p. 8).

[94] O'Malley, M. & Thompson, J. (2003, November 22). Prime Ministers and Presidents. CBC News Online. Retrieved from: http://www.cbc.ca/canadaus/pms_presidents1.html (last accessed on 20 August 2013).

for sacrifices with little or no coercion (Anderson 1992, p. 6). The success stories of Norway, Austria, the Netherlands, Singapore, Thailand and South Korea, amongst others are a case in point. South Korea, in particular, a nation with the 10th largest economy in the world, a powerful military and a stable and strong alliance with the US, may still be regarded as small as it perceives itself as small in the vicinity of its gargantuan neighbour – The People's Republic of China (Maass, 2009, p. 79). To resolve this definitional problem, this thesis shall apply a multidimensional approach including GNP, population and territorial size whilst accepting that the line between small and large states is to a certain extent arbitrary (Puppis, 2009, p. 8).

While state size may impact the political and financial landscapes of states, its influence on the media landscape and in particular on media market, policy and regulation is of particular interest to this study. In *Comparing Media Studies,* Hallin and Mancini do not comment on state size but later acknowledge that it is indeed an important variable. According to Hallin, small states share some characteristics such as vulnerability to "global political and economic forces" (Hallin, 2009, p. 101). Despite the fact that language can protect some media markets, as is the case in Scandinavia, "limited ability to follow paths of self-sufficiency and, internally, relatively tight elites, a condition that can facilitate strong collective organization and compromise" makes the impact on small states all the more likely (Ibid.).

Manuel Puppis, therefore, argues that population size is a useful indicator that directly influences the size of media markets (2009, p. 8). However, Hallin is right to caution that it does not always result in "simple, consistent pattern" (2009, p. 101). Indeed media market size does not only hinge on population size as the newspaper markets of small countries

both in terms of revenue and circulation in Northern Europe are larger in comparison to larger states in South America or Africa (Hallin, 2009, p. 101). This again points to the importance of considering state size as a multidimensional concept that cannot be gauged by simply looking at one indicator. Puppis argues that there are structural peculiarities distinguishing small media systems such as the shortage of resources both in terms of capital as well as production, small audience and advertising markets. This typically makes them easily influenced by phenomena such as globalisation or commercialisation and unable to influence media regulation on a macro-level – such as is the case in the EU – and finally vulnerable to foreign media influence (2009, pp. 10-11). Given these peculiarities, small media systems tend to be interventionist to ensure diversity is represented, which is otherwise difficult to maintain in small markets. While small states with a unique language are less exposed to competition from abroad, states that share a language with larger neighbours may enforce protectionist measures to preserve their national media culture (Puppis, 2009, pp. 14-15).

As shall be discussed at length in Chapters 4 and 5, the size of the Lebanese state in terms of population, territory, GNP and state strength is small. However, the aforementioned peculiarities drawn from wholly different cases do not entirely apply to the Lebanese case. While the size of the Lebanese state and its market have undoubtedly influenced the media landscape particularly in terms of political communication, in terms of production and foreign media influence, the Lebanese media landscape has been resilient and even influential despite its size. Indeed, rather than limited or lack of creativity and know-how – a peculiarity suggested by Puppis (2009, p. 10) – because of the freedom they enjoy and the

well-established educational institutions, Lebanese media professionals have been able to play a large role in the Arab transnational media scene.

The discussion in the foregoing pages serves to inform the following chapters of the thesis. The in-depth look at the Hallin and Mancini framework, the indicators and the models above is essential, as it is against this framework – despite its drawbacks – that the Lebanese media system will be assessed in Chapter 4. Similarly, the consideration of relevant concepts, such as the nature of the state, is vital as these additional factors have shaped the Lebanese political and media system. The overview of Lebanon's history and political system, which has greatly impacted its media landscape, shall be picked up again in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. Having discussed the key theoretical elements needed to conduct this study, it is important to turn to the methodological aspects of this work. The following chapter will delineate the research methods used in the study.

3. Methodology

3.1. Evaluation of existing data

The choice of research methods is defined by the epistemological goal of a study. As delineated in Subchapter 1.1, the aim of the work is to assess the Lebanese media system from a comparative perspective as well as outline the contours of a model that better suits such a system. Thus, a combination of field research complemented by the review of available literature served as an appropriate choice for this study. The work, therefore, began with the evaluation of the existing data. This first step helped provide a rationale for the work while also identifying gaps that this work would endeavour to fill (Dunne, 2011, p. 116). It also proved essential as it sensitised the researcher about the topic, helped inform the questionnaire that was later used in the interviews described below, as well as helped in the "contextualisation" of the study (Dunne, 2011, p. 121)

Bearing in mind that interviews alone are not an adequate source of information despite the vast benefits they provide, the work drew upon existing qualitative and quantitative data. Particularly when conducting comparative studies, secondary resources are of key importance. Therefore, in order to address the main research aim of this work, which is to assess the Lebanese media system from the Hallin and Mancini theoretical framework perspective as well as to identify influential variables, the study began with a survey of the extant literature.

Academic works ranging from William Rugh's books on the Arab media (1979, 2004) to Nabil Dajani's monograph on the Lebanese press were consulted alongside more recent literature focusing on some pillars of the media system such as entertainment industry, which Marwan Kraidy has examined. Kraidy's book co-written with Joe F. Khalil (2009) as

well as a subsequent work (2012) analyses the Lebanese media's trans-national nature and its relation to the Gulf and particularly the Saudi market. Other publications such as Ines Braune's research on the journalist syndicates (2005) and Judith Pies' work (2008) on ethics and media education shall be discussed at length in Chapter 4.

Furthermore, in addition to academic sources relating to the Lebanese political and media system, the work made use of quantitative data and analysed these statistics, which were kindly provided by the official media audience research company in Lebanon, Ipsos. The statistical data for the years 2010 to 2013 revealed audience shares of TV channels, radios and newspapers in Lebanon as well as a breakdown of audience share of the news casts and prime time shows. The statistics provided by Ipsos also shed light on the advertising expenditure per medium and outlet. As shall be described below, despite some caveats pertaining to the lack of people meters in some populous, politically-sensitive areas such as the Southern suburbs of Beirut and the South of Lebanon, the data is useful in revealing audience fragmentation, political parallelism and the impact of internal pluralism. It also accentuates the plight of the state-owned broadcaster, among other revelations, that shall be discussed in full in Chapter 4. Furthermore, the researcher was provided with quantitative data from a variety of sources that were also taken into consideration for this study. For instance, the advertising representative of LBCI, the leading Lebanese TV channel, supplied the author with the cost of placing advertisements on its programme grid, which further accentuates the importance of content as well as sheds light on the media market in Lebanon.

Moreover, reports compiled by media organisations, official bodies such as the National Audio-Visual Council and the Ministry of Information as well as by a law firm focusing on

human and media rights were taken into consideration. An example is the content analysis of Maharat, a reputed media institute, conducted on the state broadcaster *Télé Liban* and the time this station reserved for each party, religious group as well as the diversity in views and within the organisation itself. Other sources such as the Media Sustainability Index published by International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) and Maharat, which gauge the "objectives" of free expression, plurality of news, professionalism, business management and supporting institutions, were also tapped into and critically assessed. Furthermore, reports which analysed the content of a select number of political talk shows as well as the Lebanese media's coverage of poverty were also beneficial.

Several journalistic reports as well as an internal paper penned by a media rights lobby group campaigning on amending the media laws served as an update to Katrin Nesemann's work on Lebanese media policies and law (2001). The aforementioned paper also proposed drafts highlighting the contentious articles. Due to the fact that this is an ongoing process which has stalled in light of the political quagmire, no recent academic literature can be found on the legal and regulatory framework and the campaigns to modify these laws.

Moreover, reports issued by a free press outfit also operating in Lebanon and monitoring press violations in the Levant were useful in surveying the nature and number of violations perpetrated against the media by state and/or non-state actors. These reports provided factual information about the extent of intervention by state and non-state actors in the media system. A report compiled by the Nizar Saghieh law firm also surveyed free expression violations as well as legal cases filed against the media – be they justified or not. In addition to shedding light on the notion of state intervention, the cases offered insight into the professionalization of the media corps and the court cases they are involved in. The

study also drew on official reports provided by the National Audio-Visual Council and the Ministry of Information pertaining to media performance, their violations of the audio-visual law and book of conditions as well as their recommendations.

In light of the highly polarised sphere as well as the central role the media plays on the political front, journalistic articles relating to media performance were also considered, with the necessary methodological caveats due to the newspapers' political agendas. As discussed in Subchapter 2.1, no empirically founded, qualitative study can present an exhaustive set of original data. It is for this reason that the researcher has had to draw on a number of empirical and secondary as well as qualitative and quantitative sources.

3.2. Qualitative research

Qualitative research is a "naturalistic and interpretative" approach, which seeks "to understand the meanings which people attach to phenomena (actions, decisions, beliefs, values etc.) within their social worlds" (Snape & Spencer, 2007, pp. 2-5).

According to Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, "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" (2003, p. 4). This approach was therefore used for the purpose of this study due to particular assets of this methodology: 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 shall be delineated below and exhibited in Chapter 4 on Lebanon, the use of this method has allowed the delivery of in-depth and analysed understanding of the "social world" of the key stakeholders in the Lebanese media. The research at hand makes use of a number of inductive qualitative research methods which aim to identify patterns and associations derived from observations of the world and use the evidence gleaned to support the conclusion (Snape & Spencer, 2007, p. 14). In addition to the case study on Lebanon, which makes use of semi-structured interviews, "a thick/thin approach" is suggested in the final chapter to test findings on similar systems and to serve as a guideline for future research (Pierce, 2008, p. 54). A thick/thin approach or a "*case study and a quarter*" refers to the testing of the conclusions of an in-depth case study on another typical group (Ibid.).

3.3. Case study research

While this arrangement is not an absolute necessity, qualitative methods are most commonly used in combination with case study design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). In order to adequately test the Hallin and Mancini dimensions on a different context *en route* to suggesting a new ideal type, the study takes the Lebanese media system as a case study.

This allows the identification of areas that require an "adjustment" as well as defines the case "in relation to theoretical frameworks and...other cases" (Vennesson, 2010, p. 226). Indeed, the use of case studies can help test hypotheses of some theories as well as provide a comprehensive account of the case in question. Case studies can also address a representative issue or case and serve as revelatory tools (Yin, 2003, pp. 39-42). This study can therefore be perceived as an "interpretive case study" using the Hallin and Mancini theoretical framework to capture the Lebanese media system. Simultaneously, it serves a

heuristic purpose in so far that it tests and refines a theoretical hypothesis culminating in amendments to the framework they suggest (Vennesson, 2010, p. 227).

Selecting Lebanon as a case was made with the Hallin and Mancini framework and models in mind. "Typicality" and "self-containment" of the cases are often requirements that are sought, with the first pertaining to a typicality to other cases that might be studied and the latter meaning that the variables are possible to distinguish (Pierce, 2008, p. 53). Being – thus far – the only "democratically-oriented" nation in the Arab world (Hafez, 2008b, p. 336) with a vibrant and largely free media, Lebanon appears to some extent comparable to the Western, in particular the Mediterranean model. The factors that emerge as salient promise to make that case comparable and "typical" of other potential cases. The typicality shall also be tested in the final chapter where the "thick/thin approach" shall be applied. This will serve to implement the conclusions arrived at on similar cases suggested.

3.4. Interviews

The work draws on a series of semi-structured interviews carried out by the researcher in Lebanon in September and October 2010, January, May and June 2011. The interviewees included a large population of elite decision-makers closely linked to the Lebanese media and political system.

Elites are "considered to be influential, prominent, and well-informed people in an organization or community and are selected on the basis of their expertise in areas relevant to the research" (Marshall & Rossman, 1997, p. 83). Targeting this group is advantageous as they provide invaluable information and in-depth analyses. They are more likely to be familiar with a broader background of legal and/or administrative structures of an

organization and have – or are at least expected to have – an overview of the less obvious strategic long-term policies of their organisations, their histories and structural difficulties. On the other hand, these individuals may be difficult to reach and may have limited time to offer the researcher. They are also more likely to change the structure of an interview fundamentally by being unwilling or legally unable to speak about certain topics. Since they often strongly identify themselves with the organization they represent, it might also be difficult to glean information about organizational flaws and structural or communicative shortcomings, because they either do not acknowledge these problems, as they might be one of their originators, or they want to project a rosier image of their organizations. Some may also harbour conscious or unconscious institutional bias towards their work or organization whereas others may offer a "streamlined PR interview" toeing the official line, which do not contribute to the researcher's knowledge (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 221). In short, while elite interviewees often provide highly valuable, well-structured data, this sometimes-biased information must be handled appropriately and factored into the interview analysis. Triangulation, or the use of different methods and sources to "validate" data (Ritchie, 2007, pp. 43-44) by drawing on independent views, records, news reports and other research items, should be used where possible to corroborate or negate information (Pearce, 2008, pp. 89-90).

3.4.1. The interviewees

Who therefore are the elites in the Lebanese media system? In order to obtain the perceptions of the decision-makers and practitioners relating to the four key media pillars identified by Hallin and Mancini (political parallelism, media market, state intervention and

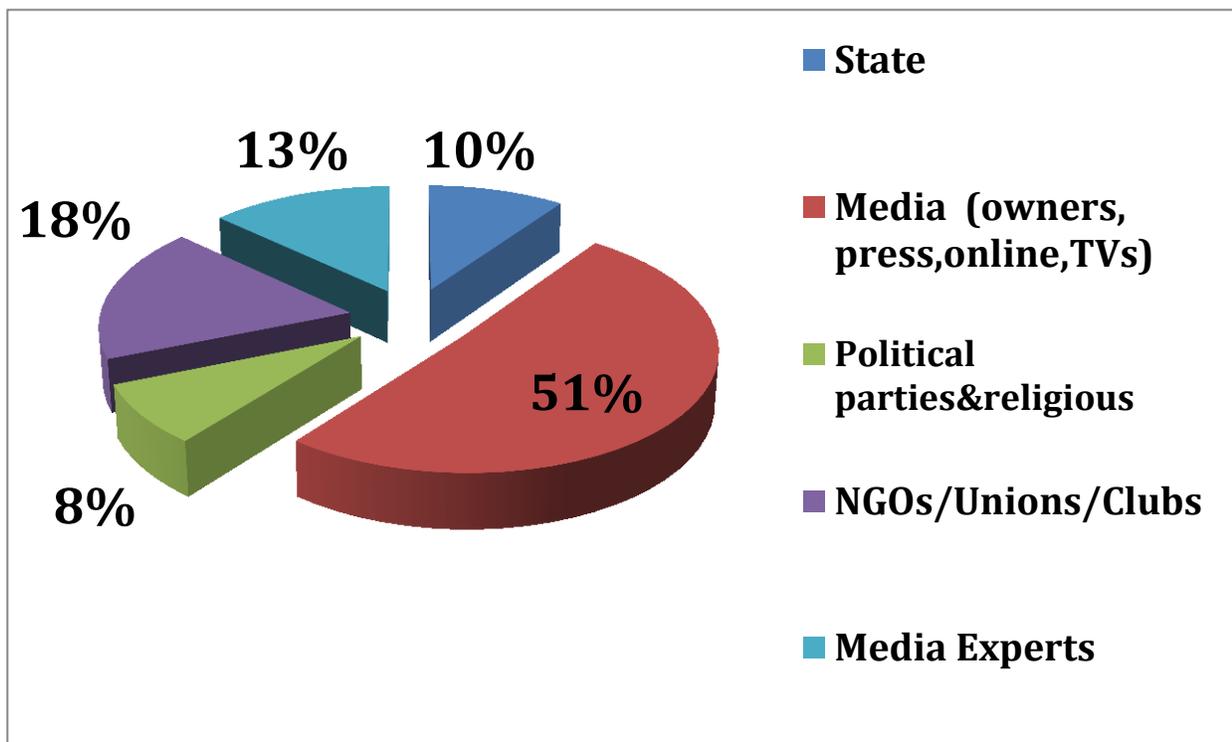professionalism) those who are directly involved in these four dimensions were

Figure 1: Distribution of interviewees by background (n= 63)

interviewed.

The selection of the respondents, aimed to explore the variety of opinions from across the Lebanese spectrum "on the basis of salient criteria" (Snape & Spencer, 2007, pp. 2-5) rather than "counting opinions or people" as in the quantitative research approach (Gaskell, 2010, pp. 40-41). The study therefore interviews different "members of the social milieu", although the complex issue at hand requires a number of respondents from several social and professional backgrounds (Ibid.).

Thinking in terms of "relevant milieus" has resulted in the complete matrix below, which selects respondents relating to the economic, political, and social aspects of the media in Lebanon (Gaskell, 2010, p. 42). Therefore, public stakeholders such as government officials from the Lebanese Ministry of Information, the state broadcaster *Télé Liban*, the regulatory

body, who correspond to the dimension of "state role", were interviewed. Public stakeholders can be regarded to also include non-governmental organisations or groups. Journalists, talk-show hosts, media managers and directors were interviewed to represent media organisations, to also shedding light on political agendas and professional structures. While a whole range of media professionals was interviewed, directors of the political programming and news were given a specific focus as these often serve as gatekeepers and are usually appointed directly by the CEO, owner or political patron of a given media corporation. This category also included the media departments or media directors of the major political parties as well as religious actors who also play a role in the media. Finally, in addition to quantitative evidence obtained from the statistics company IPSOS, interviews were also conducted with advertising and media market analysts such as the leading Choueiri Group. The full list of the interviewees and the transcriptions of the interviews has been appended to the dissertation.

Table 1: Hallin and Mancini's dimensions and interview targets

Dimension Cluster	State intervention	Professionalism	Political Parallelism	Media market
Public Stakeholders	1	2	2	3
Professional bodies/ Media training/freedom centres, Media representatives	1	1	1	1
Political/religious actors (parties, religious information centre)	2	3	1	3
Media market (Statistics, advertising companies)	3	3	3	1

Note: Priorities for each target are indicated from 1-3 in decreasing order.

In addition to interviewing most major actors that fit the categories of political/social actors, journalism professional bodies, clubs, training centres and professional organizations, state actors and advertisers, and media market researchers have also been interviewed. A selection[95] of online media users such as popular bloggers and active social media users were also interviewed as the potential this medium has in circumventing licensing obstacles and financial requirements emerged as the project progressed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rubin &Rubin, 1995).

The selection of interviewees was conducted in a strategic and pragmatic manner. Priority candidates were those who could provide new information particularly regarding most recent developments in terms of the four dimensions as well as interviewees with seasoned and in-depth perceptions regarding the Lebanese political and media system as a whole. Table 1 delineates the different topical priorities that were assigned to the different groups Still, some "snowballing" was also in use whereby one interviewee led to the next one by means of recommendation (Bertraux, 1981 as cited in Seidman, 2006, p. 55). Political and sectarian sensitivity was also taken into account in the selection process. Therefore, representatives from the whole spectrum of Lebanese political and media landscape were interviewed to avoid accusations of bias to one side or another. Particularly when "there is contention in the arena" all sides ought to be represented (Rubin & Rubin, 2001, p. 69). It is also worth noting that despite the prevalence of Lebanese women in the media occupying a variety of positions, the women interviewed only constituted 20 percent thereby pointing to a shy presence of women in senior positions.

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[95] Here the word selection rather than sample is used because it "carries connotations from surveys and opinion polls, where from the systematic statistical sample of the population, results may be generalised within specified confidence limits whereas in qualitative research the selection of respondents follows a different procedure as the purpose is not to count opinions or people but explore the spectrum of opinions (Gaskell, 2010, pp. 40-41).

The line was finally drawn at 63 interviewees, which by no means includes all practitioners, elites or experts in the field. However, at 63 the two criteria for what constitutes "enough" interviewees were achieved, namely sufficiency and saturation of information (Seidman, 2006, p. 55). In this situation, there was no longer anything substantial being learnt and the phenomena at play appeared to be sufficiently understood (Ibid.) in addition to the fact that most key players in the field had been interviewed (Gaskell, 2010, p. 43).

3.4.2. The topic guide

As it is important to maintain a certain degree of comparability with the other interviewees; a semi-structured questionnaire with standardized questions was developed. The questionnaire helped gather a specific mixture of qualitative data: a holistic, in-depth understanding of the interviewees' points of view towards a certain set of questions addressing the four main issues of state and non-state intervention, political parallelism, media markets and professionalization.

The frameworks or themes (*media market*: audience, public opinion, *state role*: in influencing media etc., *professionalism*: education and training, membership in associations, their usefulness and *political parallelism*) explored are in line with the Hallin and Mancini dimensions. Some dimensions and sub-dimensions from and beyond the framework were emphasised depending on the given interviewee.

The work began with de-facto pilot interviews with two NGOs, Maharat Foundation and SKeyes. The reason for choosing these two organisation was that it would have been easier to follow-up with them after a possible amelioration of the questionnaire than with harder to reach officials or media owners. This was useful as it elucidated the need to avoid academic rhetoric in posing the questions and the need to probe further with follow-up

questions. Indeed, following the pilot interviews, some of questions were narrowed and put in more lucid and concrete terms to avoid tangential rambling (Rubin & Rubin, 2001, p. 146).

The topic guide was designed to cover the aims and objectives of the research. It is based on close reading of the available literature and "a reconnaissance of the field" (Gaskell, 2010, p. 40). In addition to the core questions addressed to the different respondents across the different milieus to maintain a degree of comparability, there were several additional questions that specifically targeted the individual respondent. Other spontaneous questions also flowed from the discussion thereby allowing the interviewee's perspective of the phenomenon at hand and not that of the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 1997, p. 80). As can be seen in the transcriptions, the topic guide in most cases served simply as a prompt that structured the interview analysis. Further questions were probed, when issues or topics revealed themselves in the course of the interviews. Indeed, while the topic guide was meticulously prepared, the semi open-ended questions were "used with some flexibility", in so far that some questions were omitted or postponed depending on the conversation flow (Gaskell, 2010, p. 40).

3.4.3. Interviewing

Securing the interviews was not always straightforward but ultimately was manageable thanks to the networks and "the patrons"[96] (Lee, 1993, p. 131). Particularly with regards the senior respondents, such as the then-Minister of Information and the deputy chief of *Al-Manar*, patrons including colleagues and other contacts in the researcher's network were

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[96] Lee identifies three types of gatekeepers; the "bridge", who connects the researcher to a new research terrain, the "guide", who delineates the research area and explains phenomena the researcher is unfamiliar with and the "patron" who serves as a sponsor supporting the researcher and assisting him with securing the interviews and the interviewee's trust (Lee, 1993, p. 131).

able to assist arranging the interviews. Some patrons directly called their high-profile contacts on the researcher's behalf or provided the researcher with their private mobile numbers. In many cases, going through the official channels such as requesting an appointment from an interviewee's secretary or public relations' officer was frustrating and bore no fruit, although two eventually arranged a meeting after numerous phone calls. Meanwhile, one high-profile TV owner eventually responded to an email sent months after the initial attempt.

The overwhelming number of interviews was conducted in a friendly and constructive manner. Most were more candid than expected and expressed their views freely and with little caution. Due to the variety of interviewees selected, not all questions were discussed with all interviewees. The interviews were also of varying lengths with some business and high-ranking public officials taking less time due to their busy schedules. With those, the researcher focused on the themes or questions that they would be most attune to responding to. Several interviewees, including the Minister of Information, who had indicated beforehand he had limited time ended up speaking for much longer than originally anticipated. Most interviewees seemed to enjoy the interviews and commended the questions, which they said "pushed them to think"[97] and "helped them organise their thoughts"[98] about the issue at hand. Most also took a keen interest in the research. Others, such as the interviewee from the Hezbollah-linked TV channel *Al-Manar*, were initially suspicious although he also seemed to relax as the interview progressed and after the recording had stopped.[99] Due to the link to politics, sometimes an interviewee would go off

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[97] Author's interview with LBCI talk-show host Marcel Ghanem conducted on 27.5.2011.

[98] Author's interview with Ahmad Talal Salman, Assistant General Manager of *As-Safir*, and son of the owner/founder conducted on 26.1.2011.

[99] The interview with Hajj Ahmad Houmani, Assistant to the Secretary General of *Al-Manar*, was conducted on

on a tangent and speak very passionately about a certain issue, which though did not provide information of high quality, was a stark reminder of the deeply divided Lebanese media landscape. In such cases, the researcher remained silent, listening intently, allowing the interviewees to express their views (Legard et al., 2007, pp. 142-144).

"No interviewer can enter into the study of an interview as a clean slate" (Seidman, 2006, p. 117). As a Lebanese national who is informed about the media and political system as well as its often-hidden complexities, it was important to approach the interviews seeking to understand the perceptions of the interviewee rather than engaging with them. While neutrality in such cases can be impossible to achieve, balance is not, and this was achieved by querying different sides of the issues but also by the range of interviewees surveyed described in above. There was at times a suspension of disbelief on the researcher's part. "Empathy" was therefore achieved with different conflicting points of view without being blinded from noting "negative" aspects (Rubin & Rubin, 2001, pp. 12-13). This was helped by the fact that the author has resided abroad in recent years and was therefore somewhat detached from the political arena. The researcher's neutral name was also helpful as it made it slightly difficult for interviewees to place the researcher on the sectarian and political spectrum.[100]

29.10.2010 and was followed by a less formal informative chat after the author had stopped the recording. Since the TV is affiliated to Hezbollah, there was more caution and the interviewer requested that the recording be deleted after transcribing the interview.

[100] It is worth noting however, that this did not involve any trickery, because due to the distance from the country and the two poles, the author tends to understand the concerns of both camps without belonging to any of the political camps.

3.4.4. Transcribing, coding and analysing

With the exception of one interview,[101] all interviews were recorded and later transcribed. The bulk of the interviews were conducted in Arabic as the interviewees should be at ease and reveal their perceptions and opinions in the language they are most comfortable in, which in most cases was Arabic. Those working in English or preferring it were interviewed in that language.

This meant that the verbatim transcriptions were time-consuming as the interviews had to be translated and then transcribed. However, this process allowed the author to "live and breathe" the interviews and eventually transcend "the superficial selection of a number of illustrative quotations" (Gaskell, 2010, p. 43). Following the translation and transcription, and recognising Nietzsche's dictum "every word is a bias" (as cited in Pierce, 2008, p. 47), the interviewer listened to the interviews again ensuring that nothing was "lost in translation" and transcription, and that the transcript was of good-quality and close in content and tone to the actual recording.

The next step involved "imaginatively" (Gaskell, 2010, p. 53) structuring the bulk of "raw...highly rich in detail but unwieldy and intertwined" information into common themes (Ritchie et al., 2007, p. 220). One option would have been a matrix with the research aims and objectives as the column headings under which the data provided by the interviewees can be arranged followed by notes in the final column. However, the vast amount of the data made this approach convoluted. Instead, and following the reading and re-reading of the transcripts and an initial attempt to index, the researcher opted for coding[102] using a

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[101] One interviewee did not want the interview recorded. An interview protocol was therefore written after the interview was conducted.

[102] Ritchie et al. differentiate between "indexing" and "coding" with the former referring to sections of which a certain concept is referred to whereas the latter captures content already defined (2007, p. 224).

knowledge organisation software without falling for the "computer myth" (Gaskell, 2010, pp. 54-55). The programme simply made the corpus of text more manageable and easily searchable thanks to the categories or themes identified, the keywords summing up the data categorised and the search function. However, the programme did by no means substitute the researcher's interaction with the text itself as the transcriptions had to be revisited several times sometimes recoding if a theme emerged that was previously overlooked.

Finally after sorting the "thematic sets", the next step was collating, summarising and "distilling the essence of the evidence" to be used at a later stage (Ritchie et al., 2007, pp. 228-229) by way of empirical generalisation or "transferability" (Lewis, 2007, pp. 263-264). The resulting "narrative" shall be discussed below in Chapter 4 whereas the "external validity" or potential empirical generalisation shall be covered in Chapter 5 (Rubin & Rubin, 2001, pp. 228-229).

In addition to the gathering and evaluation of available quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher undertook a large number of interviews with a wide selection of stakeholders. The methodology selected, and described above, seemed to be the sensible choice to help capture the complex world of the Lebanese media and to assist in the remodelling and adaptation of the theoretical framework in question. Table 2 provides an overview of the main sources of information for the respective analytical dimension.

Table 2: Dimensions and corresponding sources

Dimensions	Media Markets	Political Parallelism	Professionalism	State Role
Sources	Media outlets, advertising agencies	Media outlets, journalists, media advisors. Non-state actors: religious boards, political parties and movements	Journalists Union, Audiovisual council, Press club, Media organisations TV and Newspapers owners/directors/journalists Media training centres	Parliamentary information committee, Ministry of Information, Télé Liban directors, regulatory bodies. NGOs

4. The Lebanese media system

"[Jamal] ʿAbd al-Nasir[103] didn't go to bed till the Lebanese newspapers were on his pillow"[104]

Perhaps one of the most resonating of Siebert, Schramm and Peterson's observations is that the "press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates" (Siebert et al., 1956). The Lebanese media system is no different. To a large extent, the Lebanese media reflects the political system in which it is situated, which as described above is pluralistic, confessional, consociational, and "democratically-oriented" (Hafez, 2008b, p. 336).

Despite a series of studies lamenting the "disoriented and fragmented media system" (Dajani, 1992), the diverse Lebanese media remains an interesting case. Although studies have concluded that the media serve the elite from their "communal trenches", the system as – Rugh's typology has pointed out – stands out in the region (Rugh, 2004; Nötzold, 2009; Dabbous-Sensenig, 2000).

The following chapter assesses the Lebanese media system using the Hallin and Mancini variables of 'state role', 'political parallelism', 'professionalism' and 'media markets'.[105] By

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[103] Jamal ʿAbd al-Nasir, was the president of Egypt from 1956-1970. His success in nationalising the Suez Canal in 1956, his "political" victory in the ensuing Suez Crisis as well as his strong support of the Palestinian cause alongside other feats made him the leader and symbol of Arab Nationalism, which dominated the 1960s and aspired towards a close union of Arab countries (Hourani 1991, p. 407). Arab Nationalism, which is sometimes referred to as Nasirism, "was embodied...in the personality of Jamal ʿAbd al-Nasir" (Hourani, 1991, p. 351).

[104] Author's interview with Khalil Khoury, editor-in-chief of *El-Sharq* newspaper conducted on 27.10.2010. According to the political analyst Nicolas Nassif, a private jet flew in to Beirut every morning since the beginning of ʿAbd al-Nasir's reign and returned to Cairo with 102 publications for the raʾīs (Arabic for "president"). Cf Nassif, N. (2013, September 26). *Abdul-Hamid al-Sarrage: hal yataḏakarahu al-lubnāniūn?* (Arabic for "Abdul-Hamid al-Sarrage: do the Lebanese remember him?") *Al-Akhbar*. Retrieved from http://al-akhbar.com/node/192080. At the time, the press in Lebanon was the freest drawing readers "far beyond the frontiers of the country" (Hourani, 1991, p. 393).

[105] The work focuses on television, the press and the electronic press. Unlicensed radios played an important role during the civil war, offering vital news updates about clashes and "bombing sites" (AbuKhalil, 1998, p. 222). By 1988, there were 52 Lebanese stations, with factions using these platforms as "part of their arsenal" (Boyd, 1991, p. 270). The post-war phase saw the closure of numerous unlicensed radio channels (AbuKhalil, 1998, p. 222). Today there are 19 category one licensed radio stations that are permitted to broadcast news updates (Ministry of Information, List of Licensed Audio-Visual Media). However, these are interspersed with music and lighter programmes. According to a survey, radios are the least important medium for Lebanese when it comes to news and

doing so, the Hallin and Mancini indicators will be tested and dimensions that better suit the system in question will be suggested. This assessment raises the need for context-specific indicators relating to socio-political and 'cultural' considerations that differentiate this small country, and potentially other non-'Western' democratically-oriented nations.

4.1. Role of the state and non-state actors

"The Lebanese barely needs government, as government can only bridle him and paralyse his efficiency."[106]

This section shall begin by examining the state role, which is a vital factor in shaping the media system in each country as well as protecting and widening its public sphere (Hardy, 2008, p. 239). In spite of globalisation and convergence, "media policy and media law remain firmly in the hands of nation" thus making this factor all the more pivotal (Hafez, 2007, p. 148).

In an attempt to gauge the interference of the state in the media, Hallin and Mancini suggest several sub-dimensions including what they call "the most important form of state intervention", public service broadcasting (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 41). Other sub-indicators include financial intervention, which take the shape of direct or indirect subsidies, as well as the legal and regulatory framework including laws limiting hate speech, libel, guaranteeing access to information. Another sub-dimension considered is the state's role as a source of information and primary definer of news, with enormous influence on the agenda and the framing of public issues (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 41-

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current events with only 49% citing the radio as an important source of information (Dennis, Martin & Wood, 2013, p. 24).

[106] Ghassan Tueni's editorial in *An-Nahar*'s 1967 yearly supplement "The Miracle, shall we make it ourselves?" attacked statism. Instead he argued "that the miracle was and always would be the achievement of the Lebanese individual, who is stronger than his government, more lucid, more patient, and more resourceful and farsighted... the Lebanese barely needs government, as government can only bridle him and paralyse his efficiency" (cited in Traboulsi, 2007, pp. 150-151).

44). These forms of positive intervention- as opposed to coercive intervention, which they give little attention to (Hadland, 2012, p. 110) - essentially aim to safeguard the right of freedom of expression and its subsidiaries such as accessing reliable sources of information and to promote pluralism within, and ensure equal access of all to, the media.

When approaching the Lebanese media system from the Hallin and Mancini framework the reader is struck by several important phenomena demanding adaptation to some of their indicators. Upon first glance using the prism of Hallin and Mancini's indicators, the Lebanese system seems to be one where the state role is dominant. Indeed, the state has passed several laws "organising" the media, continues to have a Ministry of Information, has a media and information committee in parliament as well as a public service broadcaster and a state-funded national news agency. A closer look at state role in Lebanon, however, reveals a more complex reality.[107] Despite the existence of the state structures and institutions, other factors come into play such as a shy role of the rule of law and the weakness of state institutions. As discussed in Section 2.3, the state's frailty is due to several factors including the consociational nature of politics and the general strength of the non-state actors such as religious groups, parties and feudal-like overlords. Indeed, just as in other realms, the Lebanese "weak" state plays a minor role in contrast to the dominating commercial enterprises usually owned by the political and confessional oligarchs and *Zuama'*. As Lebanese historian Kamal Salibi puts it, the Lebanese state left development "to unbridled capitalist initiative…[and] when planning was implemented, private interests applied pressures to make the plans ineffective…[as] the traditional leaders had no interest

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[107] The difference between appearance and reality in Lebanon evokes a statement made by a character in Maroun Bagdadi's *Hors La Vie* who says "This is Lebanon, man, don't trust your eyes, things are never the way they look. There's always a snake behind the rock" (Perrin & Bagdadi, 1991). The film won the Cannes Film Festival's 1991 Jury prize and is based on then-photographer Roger Auque's experience as a hostage in Lebanon.

in seeing their constituencies develop, fearing this would rob them of the mainstay of their power: the blind tribal or quasi-tribal allegiance of their followers…while their constituencies remained undeveloped partly because of government neglect, and partly through their own obstruction, such leaders could always lay the full blame on the government and present themselves as the protectors of the people" (Salibi, 2003, p. 190). However it is important to acknowledge that this minimal state role has been "both a boon and a bane" in so far that while the state's reluctant interference has enlarged the public sphere, it has also allowed internal and exogenous actors to influence the state's fate, for better or for worse (Braune, 2005, p. 105).

4.1.1. Legal and regulatory framework

"The red lines…are variable with the current political atmosphere… legality bends with the atmosphere and procedures bend with the political atmosphere."[108]

The following section shall first briefly describe the media laws currently "on the books", then set out to describe the de-facto situation, which often differs from the ""de jure". The section concludes with a brief description of the campaign and the draft proposals being discussed in parliament, the likelihood of amendments to the media laws in Lebanon as well as the "logic and climate of regulation" (Klimkiewicz, 2010, p. 911).

Press Law

Press laws in Lebanon were first passed during the Ottoman period in 1909.[109] Between 1908 and 1914 and with the rise of Arab nationalism, more than 60 newspapers were founded in Beirut (Khalidi, 1981, p. 27). The beginning of World War One saw the

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[108] Author's interview with Jamil Mroueh, former publisher of The Daily Star, conducted on 5.10.2010.
[109] Lebanese Ministry of Information (2011). *tārīḫ aṣ-ṣiḥāfa al-lubnānīya* (The history of the Lebanese Press). Beirut: Lebanese Ministry of Information, p. 23 Retrieved from http://ministryinfo.gov.lb/main/MediaMap/HistoryoftheLebanesepress.aspx.

introduction of stringent controls. In 1916, the Ottoman governor of Lebanon, Jamal Pasha, ordered the execution of 31 nationalist dissidents of whom 16 were journalists (Kassir, 2010, p. 328). The scene of the executions, al-Burj square, was later named Martyr's square and has come to have "elegiac stimulations" (Young, 2010, p. 31). This has propagated a strong tradition of free expression and press, which some argue dates back to 1858 when the first Arab non-official daily was published in Beirut.[110] The law was amended three times and stayed in effect till 1924, when under the French Mandate a new law was more repressive law was introduced. The post-independence phase featured several laws culminating in the Press Law of 1962, which remains in force today, save a few later amendments. Amongst those amendments was Decree 104 issued in 1977, which sought to penalise editors and journalists for material that might cause offense to the President of the Republic, to foreign leaders, confessional groups or that may harm state security.[111]

However, the most contentious issue pertaining to the Press Law is the licensing system for political publications. Decree number 74 issued by President Camille Chamoun on April 13, 1953, which is still in force today, stipulates that no more licenses shall be granted till the number of licenses for political publications drops to 25 from the 110 extant licenses. While the Ministry of Information has the right to withdraw the license of a publication that is not in use[112] thereby allowing others to apply for a new license, it has never done this. Thus,

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[110] While the first newspaper Al-Waka'eh was published in Cairo by the Ottoman Khedive (viceroy) Mohammad Ali Basha, ḥadiqat al-aḥbār published in Beirut by Khalil Khoury in January 1858 is regarded as "the mother of all newspapers (Lebanese Ministry of Information, 2011, p. 2).

[111] A copy of all press laws and relevant decrees can be found on the following link: http://ministryinfo.gov.lb/main/MediaLaws/ActNo.382.aspx.

[112] Some newspapers who did not issue used to "rent" their licenses to other newspapers to meet the minimum of 32 issues per year, because other newspapers were not allowed to publish more than six times per week. So *Al-Hayat*, for instance, would hire *Al-Zaman's* license on the 7th day to publish its 7 issue in the week. Author's interview with Nabil Dajani, American University of Beirut, Professor of Media Studies, conducted on 26.1.2011. Dajani had copies of those "tricks", which he says are allowed because the Press Union "does not try to protect the weak papers by limiting the growth of the professionally successful papers."

those licenses have become "privileges"[113] that can be sold and rented to the highest bidders. Therefore, anyone wishing to start a publication is forced to buy an existing but dormant license from license owners for an average of $200,000-500,000.[114] The staggering price is much higher than the reach of many Lebanese potential publishers. Fortunately, the advent of the internet has circumvented the monopoly and limitation imposed over the licenses and the public sphere and allowed groups and individuals to set-up virtual platforms and fora.

Another clause which is not being implemented is the Ministry of Information's duty to monitor the finances of the media to ensure their only profit is from advertising and, for newspapers, subscription and sales. The press system and its straits however mean that publishers have been "open to overtures of financial assistance" from foreign and local interest groups for editorial support (Dajani, 1992, p. 46). Indeed, according to one stakeholder,[115] editors and newspaper publishers would prefer that this clause remains dormant because the advertising market, as shall be discussed in Subchapter 4.4, cannot sustain the current amount of newspapers.

Further legal restrictions are the strict entry requirements for admission to the Press Association roll, sanctions for impersonating a journalist, and the licensing regime for newspaper vendors. Furthermore, the Press Law stipulated the formation of the Lebanese Press Association and the Lebanese Journalists Association for publication owners and journalists respectively. Together they meet as the Press Union, although some argue these associations ought to be formed voluntarily rather than by law (Article 19, 2009, p. iii). The

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[113] The Arabic word for license, *Imtiyaz* is the same as the word for privilege.

[114] The prices depend on the market. According to a member on the Press Union's Board, Fouad Harakeh, there are currently political publication licenses on sale "for 450 one is to be sold by 250 (thousand US Dollars)...the name also plays a role". The interview was conducted on 2.2.2011.

[115] Author's interview with Nizar Saghieh, lawyer and activist, conducted on 19.10.2010.

Journalists' Syndicate has undergone a process of restructuring after the death of its head Melhem Karam in 2010 who remained at the helm for nearly five decades and who selectively admitted applicants who would ensure his re-election (Braune, 2005, p. 89). "There was no syndicate, only a syndicate leader"[116] is a common description of that period, cited by several interviewees. Some however remain warily ambitious of the restructuring plans hoping it will be widened to include reporters working in television who remain without a professional syndicate.[117] There is also the hope that it transforms itself from being an exclusive club controlled by one individual (Braune, 2005, p. 113) to an active civil society organisation.

Other articles from the Press Law that are controversial, albeit rarely used, allow for the imprisonment of journalists.[118] As it stands, the penal code, the audio-visual and the military justice laws can be used to penalise "press crimes". Campaigners, as shall be discussed in this subchapter, are aspiring to amend the laws and are seeking to unify all articles pertaining to the media under one law.

Audio-visual media law and the National Audio-Visual Council

Broadcasting in Lebanon is subject to the audio-visual media law 382/94. With the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1990, Chapter III, Article G of the Ta'if Accord called for the reorganization of the media. Specifically, the aim was to limit the large number of unlicensed radio and television stations, which fell short of the international regulations that govern frequencies and the use of broadcast equipment. To that effect, the National Audio-Visual Council (NAVC) was formed, which in turn distributed (Al-Zubaidi, 2004)

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[116] Author's interview with Dr. Amer Mashmousheh, *Al-Liwa'* editor and university professor conducted on 27.1.2011.
[117] The issue of professional organisations shall be taken up again in the chapter on professionalism (Subchapter 4.3).
[118] Articles 16; 20 to 23; and 25 of the Lebanese Press Law.

audio-visual licenses in line with what Marwan Kraidy calls "an obsessive formula of confessional balance" (2005, p. 288).[119] The partitioning of the 'media cake' after the civil war reveals the power divisions along sectarian lines in the country with each of the licensed broadcast media having direct links to political/sectarian groups and rendering the system crudely politically parallel (cf. Table 3). This is primarily linked to the development of the Lebanese broadcast media during the civil war, when these outlets were set up to serve the warring factions and came to reflect the "partisan geography with each radio or TV serving a certain area and its respective audience".[120] Indeed, during the near-15 year civil war in Lebanon, more than 150 television and radio stations broadcast in "complete anarchy" and served as "direct instruments of political propaganda" (Kraidy, 1998, pp. 387-390). The reorganisation of the media in the post-war years reduced the television channels from 60 to four and the radio stations from 150 to 10 (Kraidy, 1998, p. 394). The law also made Lebanon the first country in the Middle East to establish a regulatory system for permitting private radio and television broadcasting to be both produced and distributed within its borders. In 1996 a decree or *cahiers des charges* was passed demanding "objectivity in the broadcasting of news and reports" in order to "safeguard supreme national interest", and to distinguish factual news from propaganda and advocacy.[121] The Syrian sponsors at the time also prohibited live broadcasts of demonstrations without prior approval of the government (Rugh, 2004, pp. 202-204) and generally kept a tight leash on the Lebanese media (Nesemann, 2001, p. 97).

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[119] With this the Sunni Muslims where represented by Future TV, the Shiite Muslims by *Al-Manar* TV (Hezbollah) and NBN, the Greek Orthodox by MTV, the Maronite Lebanese Forces militia was openly represented until mid-2006 by LBCI and the Maronite Church by *Télé -Lumière*.

[120] Author's interview with Ali Rammal, Lebanese University, Media and Communications Department, Professor, conducted on 27.10.2010

[121] The Book of Specifications can be found on the following link http://ministryinfo.gov.lb/en/main/LicensingFoundation/Bookofconditionstypicalofthenewsmediaand.aspx (last accessed on 01 September 2014).

The NAVC, which assessed the license applications, consists of 10 members; five of whom are appointed by the Parliament and five by the Council of Ministers.[122] The members are selected in line with the confessional balance and by the political players rendering it a politicised and dependent body. "There was a political-sectarian sharing of licenses and there was an attempt to tame and domesticate the audio-visual council in a manner that would subject it to the calculations of the political powers",[123] said a member of the council. Indeed, a study assessing the actual license applications, the NAVC comments and the technical reports reveals the extent of the politicisation of this process (Dabbous-Sensenig, 2003).

According to a political programme director working for a station temporarily shut down by the NAVC at the behest of the Syrian-Lebanese post-war alliance, the NAVC was "a body placed by Syria to repress freedoms".[124] The closure of the station in question, MTV, was described by then-Minister of Information as "purely political"[125] as it "exposed more than any other incident the convoluted regulatory environment in Lebanon which is prone to overlapping jurisdictions and crippling political interference" (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, p. 132). Furthermore, the politicisation and instrumentalisation of the Council was also reiterated by a long-time NAVC member who lamented that "they have accomplished nothing".[126] He also recounted an incident in 1999 when the "Syrian hegemony ordered the

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[122] The author held a series of interviews with several members of the NAVC as well as its director in September 2010, January 2011 and May 2011.
[123] Author's interview with Ghaleb Kandil, member of the NAVC, conducted on 25.10.2011.
[124] Author's interview with Ghayath Yazbeck, Director of News and Political programmes, MTV, conducted on 31.1.2011
[125] Minister Ghazi Al-Aridi (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, pp. 129-132).
[126] Author's interview with Fouad Daabboul *Al-Anwar*, editor-in-chief. Member of the NAVC, conducted on 1.2.2011.

council" to convene and suggest to the council of ministers the suspension of the prominent TV channel LBCI for three days for an alleged transgression.[127]

In addition to the subjection to external pressures where, according to one TV news manager, it "has become a council [convening] at the request or on demand [of some political actors]",[128] the body is also "toothless" in so far that it can only suggest sanctions to the Minister of Information rather than hold the violating party to account. This has rendered it according to one observer a "piece of decoration" unable to "crack a whip"[129] in case of violations such as incitement to hatred or sectarian strife.

Furthermore, on the rare occasions when the NAVC suggests sanctions, these are often disregarded by the Council of Ministers which, for personal interests, protect the 'violators' where necessary, as the case of LBCI above demonstrates. Even if the council wanted to carry out its watered-down task of monitoring the audio-visual media's adherence to the law and the Book of Specifications, the council claims that this is difficult. Indeed, NAVC members have claimed that contrary to the stipulation of the law, the Ministry of Information, conveniently located in the same building, has neither provided it with the apparatus nor the staff necessary to carry out this task.[130]

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[127] The Foreign Minister of Israel at the time, David Levy, had spotted the LBC microphone at a press conference in Jordan and used it as an opportunity to address the Lebanese people. The station did not broadcast Levy's message and so, argued Daabboul, ought not to have been penalised. That day Daabboul was the only one of 10 NAVC members to vote against recommending its suspension because according he was not appointed by the Syrians but elected by parliament. Following the meeting, Daaboul says he received a call from a Syrian-allied Christian politician from the North and son of former president, Suleiman Frangieh, asking what transpired. Daaboul advised him, if he wanted to consolidate his position as a Christian *Zaim* he should attend the council of ministers session and block the recommendation from the NAVC. "Then you will rise and we will fall and so he did because he defended freedoms and we did not", he added. (Ibid.). This case is reported in the Daily Star. Yehia, R., "Frangieh gets LBC off the hook". *The Daily Star.*, 26 August 1999, retrieved from: http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/1999/Aug-26/32567-franjieh-gets-lbci-off-the-hook.ashx (last accessed on 01 October 2014).

[128] Author's interview with Hussein Wajeh, Director of News and Political Programmes, conducted on 30 1.2011.

[129] Author's interview with Dr. Magda Abu-Fadil, American University of Beirut, Journalism Training Programme Director, conducted on 19.1.2011.

[130] Author's interview with Ghaleb Kandil, member of the NAVC, conducted on 25.10.2011.

Yet in addition to their lack of executive power and limited ability to monitor, many stakeholders have remarked that most members of the council have no experience in the audio-visual media[131] as the political elite "appoint people who are their stooges, [not] professional[s]"[132] and the members boycott each other due to the political divisions and divided loyalties.[133]

In a research interview, the then-Minister of Information, whose ministry and initiatives will be discussed in Section 4.1.2, also lamented the "cynicism" and resignation with which the NAVC responded to his requests for reports about the violations of the audio-visual law in the media. In addition to stating that they do not have the means to prepare such a report, they argued that because of the entanglement of politics and the media where the media are protected in the Council of Ministers any such attempt would be futile. "Minister, there is nothing you can do about it, listen to us, there is no hope," he recalled.[134]

While some argue that the Ministry of Information ought to be replaced with a stronger and more independent regulatory body,[135] although not necessarily in the form of the NAVC today, the council seems to be here to stay. Indeed, the director of the NAVC described a proposal to increase their terms from "3 to 6 years as in Europe"[136] under the new proposed law, which will be discussed in the following pages. Until then, the NAVC will most likely carry on as an unregulating regulatory body "only to discuss and give opinions."[137]

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[131] According to Nabil Dajani, one member has nothing to do with the media and used to export fruits to the Gulf but he happened to be a relative of a minister. Author's interview with Nabil Dajani, American University of Beirut, Professor of Media Studies, conducted on 26.1.2011.

[132] Author's interview with Nabil Dajani, American University of Beirut, Professor of Media Studies, conducted on 26.1.2011.

[133] Author's interview with Maryam Al-Bassam, Director of News and Political Programming, *Al-Jadeed* TV, conducted on 6.6.2011.

[134] Author's interview with then-Minister of Information, Tarek Mitri, conducted on 21.5.2011.

[135] Author's interview with Abbas Daher, Director of News and Political programmes, NBN, conducted on 4.2.2011.

[136] Author's interview with Abdul-Hadi Mahfouz, Director of the NAVC, conducted on 25.5.2011.

[137] Author's interview with Fouad Daabboul, *Al-Anwar*, editor-in-chief. Member of the NAVC, conducted on 1.2.2011.

Furthermore the law 382/94, which includes vague clauses that effectively give the government the right to censor[138] (Nesemann, 2001, p. 74), also ended the state's monopoly over electronic broadcasting, although this was already illegally challenged during the civil war (Rugh, 2004, pp. 202-204). This further sidelined a potentially unifying state institution, *Télé Liban* and by doing so limited the potential of this social adhesive.[139] The four television stations that were initially licensed at its expense represented key leaders and confessions (Ibid.): the *National Broadcasting Network* (NBN), often jokingly dubbed the Nabih Berri Network after its owner, the Shiite Speaker of Parliament and head of Amal Party, Nabih Berri. The station was also jokingly referred to as the "No Broadcasting Network" because it received a license in 1996 even though it was not yet in existence (Kraidy, 1998, p. 397). *Future TV* owned by the influential Hariri family represented the Sunni Muslims, *Murr television* (MTV), owned by the Greek Orthodox Christian family Al-Murr and the *Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation* (LBC), formerly owned by the Lebanese Forces, which was persecuted in the post-war period, represented the Maronite Christians. Later, *Al-Manar*, which began broadcasting in 1991 and is closely linked to Hezbollah, was also granted a license. Meanwhile *Télé Lumière*, set up by the Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops in Lebanon as a non-profit television station, continues to broadcast without a license, using *Télé Liban's*[140] frequencies.

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[138] For instance, Chapter 11, article 47, sanctions censorship at the behest of the Ministry of Information.

[139] The ailment of *Télé Liban* is presented further in Section 4.1.3.

[140] According to Father Abdo Abou-Kassam, in an interview with the author conducted on 10.6.2011, when the licenses were being granted the Council of Bishops visited then-Prime Minister Rafik Hariri inquiring whether he intends to close their media down, to which the latter responded "I will close down my house and not *Télé* Lumière." Father Abou Kassam added "there is a humanitarian, societal and religious need [for *Télé* Lumière and *Sawt al-Mahaba* radio station], in my view this is a license in and of itself."

Despite the requirements stipulated in the law for license applications, several members[141] of the National Audio-visual Council have said they were subjected to political pressure. Indeed, some TV stations such as *New TV* (later rebranded *Al-Jadeed*, which is the Arabic word for "new") purchased in 1992 by a wealthy Qatar-allied[142] Sunni businessman and a Hariri rival Tahsin Khayyat (Fawaz, 2013, p. 89), was refused a license despite having met all the requirements. In 2000, four years after it was shut down and after "waging battles and losing millions",[143] the State Council[144] ruled in New TV's favour and they were finally granted a license. In 2006, OTV, affiliated to Christian Maronite General Michel Aoun and his Free Patriotic Movement were also granted a license. The director of News and Political programmes at OTV[145] acknowledged, however, that "had there been no political side behind this license surely the license wouldn't have been granted this easily and of course now if a group of people with all the resources and conditions apply for a license it is not necessary that they will obtain it."

As the table below reveals, the spoils, which in this case are TV licenses as well as seats on the NAVC were distributed amongst the *"fromagistes"*. While the law allowed for

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[141] According to the author's interview with several members of the NAVC as well as its director in September 2010, January 2011 and May 2011.

[142] This is a widely known fact and was corroborated by Qatar's former Emir Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, who in a leaked telephonic conversation with Former Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi mentioned the station's affiliation to his regime. The recording could be heard on the following link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2-qb1Sktgk (last accessed on 05 May 2014). The following source provides a description of the conversation: Audio tape surfaces of former Qatari Prince attacking Saudi Arabia. *Now Lebanon.* Retrieved from: https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/gulfnews/545929-audio-tape-surfaces-of-former-qatari-prince-attacking-saudi-arabia (last accessed on 20 July 2014). Following the abdication of Emir Hamad in June 2013, the coverage on *Al-Jadeed,* which broadcast a glowing reportage about the emirate's development since Emir Hamad acceded the throne (Author's observation), did not mention that he had deposed his father in a bloodless palace coup in 1995 (Fromherz, 2012, p. 81) .

[143] Author's interview with Karma Khayyat, Deputy Director of News and Political Programming at *Al-Jadeed* TV and daughter of owner Tahsin Khayyat, conducted on 28.10.2010.

[144] The State Council, according to its website, is tasked with the control of the legality of the administrative work executed by the public authorities, through performing consultative functions, or later through annulling the administrative decisions tainted with illegality, cf. http://www.statecouncil.gov.lb/index.htm.

[145] Author's interview with Jean Aziz, OTV Director of News and Political Programming, conducted on 29.10.2010.

commercial competition, this was only feasible "in tandem with political calculations and sectarian considerations" (Kraidy, 1998b; Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, pp. 129-132).

Table 3: Owners and religious or political affiliations of Lebanese channels

TV Channel	Religious or political affiliation	Effective Owners
NBN	Shi'ite	Family members and close associates of a Shi'ite *Zaim* and Speaker of parliament Nabih Berri
Murr TV	Greek orthodox	Al-Murr family
LBCI	Maronite	Pierre Daher and family, plus other shareholders including PM Najib Mikati. LBCSat is owned by Saudi Prince Al-Walid Ben Talal
Future TV	Sunni	The Hariri family & associates
Al-Manar	Shi'ite	Hezbollah affiliated shareholders
Télé Lumière	Catholic Church	Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops
Al-Jadeed (formerly New TV)	Sunni	Tahsin Khayyat and family
OTV "*Al Lubnaniah Lil I'Lam S.a.l.*"	Maronite	Public trading company with largest affiliated to Free Patriotic Movement
Non profit TV (*Télé Liban*)	State/ President	Lebanese State

Source: El Richani, 2013, p. 71.

"Rule of Law" and policy

"The law is ink on paper and paper on a shelf. We are keen on the law, we try not to surpass it but at a certain point, all are surpassing the law. Anyone who tells you they are below the ceiling of the law...is lying...we are most keen on implementing the laws during sensitive periods such as the parliamentary elections because we have seen examples, such as MTV...it was not legal but a political issue...they are monitoring they won't come and arrest me or penalize us for being against them in politics however they use a legal article and wait for me to err. This is why we are more adamant to stick to the law particularly channels that have no political backing"[146]

This brings to the fore the important factor of rule of law.[147] The outdated and sometimes-

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[146] Author's interview with Maryam Al-Bassam, Director of News and Political Programming, *Al-Jadeed* TV, conducted on 6.6. 2011.

[147] The concept, though popularized by the British constitutional theorist A.V. Dicey, can be traced back to Aristotle. It signifies that no one should be above the law, which must apply equally to all. It is essential to good governance and as put by Tom Paine in 1776, "the Law is King", or ought to be (Bingham of Cornhill, 2010, p. 8).

vague Lebanese media laws and the Book of Specifications for TV and Radio corporations[148]

may be seen at times to contradict the constitution and international obligations[149] on free

expression in so far that harsh penalties are stipulated for violating the legal provision of

"objectivity" for instance. While objectivity is perceived by some as an important

journalistic aspiration, including it in the law would effectively have caused the shutdown

of all Lebanese television stations, which start their newscasts with generally biased

editorialised introductions (Nötzold, 2009, p. 148). The harsh sanctions include closing the

station for a period of three days upon the first violation, and upon the second

contravention within the same year, the corporation can be shut down for a period varying

between three days to a month.

Despite efforts and discussions on amending the media laws, there is a consensus amongst

stakeholders that the problem lies in the implementation, and at times non-

implementation, of the law. This is due to the deep divisions, politicians' whims and the

absence of a "common power".[150] Despite the legal constraints and the occasional pressures

facing journalists, the Lebanese press is regarded by researchers as the freest and most

diverse in the Arab world. This is largely due to the state's failure in silencing criticism

rather than what Rugh argues is "a degree of self-regulation", which diminishes in times of

discord (2004, pp. 90-91). Indeed, "the delicate balance of political forces" which stymied

"the emergence of a strong and oppressive government" can be credited with the levels of

freedom extant (Hourani, 1991, p. 393). Dajani meanwhile argues that media freedom in

Lebanon is a myth contending that although restrictions from the state are few, the

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[148] The Book of Specifications for the broadcast media can be accessed on the following link
http://www.ministryinfo.gov.lb/en/Main/LicensingFoundation/Bookofconditionstypicalofthenewsmediaand.aspx.

[149] Article 13 of the Lebanese constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the press as does Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which Lebanon has ratified.

[150] "When there is no common power, there is no law." Hobbes, Leviathan (1651), pt 1. Chapter 13.

restrictions from "a coalition of tribal-sectarian "bosses" or financiers" is substantial (2013). While deeming the margins of freedom mythical seems excessive, the categorisation of Lebanon as "partly free"[151] by freedom house appears more nuanced. Reporters without Borders also places Lebanon in place 106 referring to its polarising nature and its close link to the political and business leaders.[152]

The ceiling of freedoms in the country, according to then-editor of *Al-Akhbar*, a young opposition daily founded in 2006, has been paradoxically elevated due to the profound division in the country.[153] In contrast, during the Pax Syriana phase when there was full political agreement, the *Zuama* partitioned the spoils and the Syrians refereed the game, media were considerably restricted.[154] Despite the censorship and pressure on freedom of expression imposed by the presence of the "Big Brother" (Nesemann, 2001, p. 96) – or rather "sister", as the Lebanese called it, there was a margin of freedom, which only increased with their withdrawal.

In addition to the effect of consensus on rule of law in Lebanon, the general weakness of the state and its institutions due the strength of the non-state actors who directly or indirectly own media corporations, has also taken its toll rendering covenants mere words. Clear manifestations in this regard are the administrative aspects of the law such as the Ministry of Information's role to monitor the media's finances to ensure the media are not being "bought". Chapter ten of the audio-visual law stipulates that the Ministry of Information can ask the Court of Publications to stop the company from broadcasting for a period of three months to two years or even annul the company's license if the company is seen to have

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[151] Reporters without Borders, 2014 Country Report, retrieved from: http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/lebanon-0 (last accessed on 15 October 2014).
[152] World Press Freedom Index 2014, retrieved from: http://rsf.org/index2014/en-middle-east.php (last accessed on 10 September 2014).
[153] Author's interview with the then-editor-in-chief of *Al-Akhbar* daily, Khaled Saghieh, conducted on 19.10.2010.
[154] Ibid.

acquired funds that it could not prove to have legitimately attained. Similarly, article 48 in part three of the publications law stipulates that the Ministry of Information is to monitor the income of publications and that the Ministry can request the publications court to suspend a publication for a period ranging between three to six months and fining it double the amount received, if it is believed to have received illegal funding. However, as shall be delineated in Subchapter 4.4 on the 'media market', both the advertising market and the circulation and subscription rates in Lebanon are inadequate to sustain the number of televisions and publications available.

The figures as well as acknowledgements by one publisher admitting[155] in his editorial receiving funds and another one claiming that he, who does not accept bribes is an "ass" (quoted in Dajani, 1992, p. 48) clearly point to an influx of political money.[156] Furthermore, a leaked tape aired on *Al-Jadeed* of former Prime Minister Saad Hariri's testimony refers to the "blackmail" his father was subjected in exchange of favourable coverage.[157] In addition to the low advertising rate, circulation of newspapers is indeed very low. According to some stakeholders, all the publications sell no more than 60,000 copies.[158]

Returning to the issue of law implementation, according to the former Minister of Information, who upon taking up his post was intent on upholding the law, the NAVC advised him not to exert much effort as the TV stations, they argued, are stronger than the

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[155] In his editorial on 21 June 2011, *Ad-Diyar's* editor Charles Ayoub acknowledges taking funds from a variety of political sources. He explains in his editorial, that to maintain some independence, he will increase the price of the newspaper, cf. http://t.co/340nz05 (last accessed on 12 March 2014).

[156] The issue of political money will be picked up further under the section on professionalism (4.3) as well as the discussion regarding the Lebanese media market (4.4).

[157] In January 2011, *Al-Jadeed* TV broadcast leaked voice recordings it called "*ḥaqiqa (*Arabic "truth"*)* leaks" of the former Prime Minister's witness statement to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. *As-Safir* publisher and editor in question Talal Salman rejected this accusation in an editorial while his son chose not to comment further during the author's interview with him.

[158] This is an approximate figure given by a number of interviewees including Khaled Saghieh, Ahmad Talal Salman, and the media IPSOS STAT.

council and the Ministry. Therefore, if he was to act upon an NAVC consultation as per the law, the stations' backers in the council of Ministers would reject this motion and the sanction will not be imposed. The Minster attempted to impose the law in a case[159] perceived by the NAVC and the Minister to have incited sectarian feuds and civil strife. The popular political programme, however, was not penalised because the majority of the ministers were opposed to taking any measure against the programme and therefore were effectively against imposing the law.[160] The talk-show host Marcel Ghanem, however, stated that while the replay was cut the following day after direct intervention from the NAVC, the Council of Ministers chose not to penalise the programme for "political calculations."[161]

In contrast, at other times, legal clauses were imposed at the whim of the political leaders against media seen to be agitating against the state. During the phase of Syrian hegemony over Lebanon, article 68 of the electoral law on electoral advertising was used to shut down MTV sidelining the NAVC and its prerogatives (Nötzold, 2009, p. 167). The closure of the station was undoubtedly for political[162] rather than legal reasons and indeed, the decision was reversed in 2005[163] soon after the withdrawal of the Syrian troops and the station successfully re-launched in 2009.

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[159] The show in question was Marcel Ghanem's leading political talk show programme on LBC. The live episode broadcast on 14.10.2010 featured several reports as well as interviews with victims and relatives of the May 2008 events as well as youths from the Sunni areas that were attacked by Hezbollah and *Amal* party fighters. Statements made were deemed inflammatory.

[160] Author's interview with the then-Minister of Information, Tarek Mitri, conducted on 21.5.2011.

[161] Author's interview with LBCI talk-show host Marcel Ghanem, conducted on 27.5.2011.

[162] While article 68 of the electoral law was used to shut-down MTV, claiming that MTV campaigned for Gabriel Murr, the owner of the station who ran and won a by-election against his niece Mirna Al Murr, the daughter of Michel Murr, a politician close to the Syrian regime. Many believe that MTV was closed to avenge the loss of Mirna Murr and to silence a media that was agitating against Syrian interference in Lebanon. According to MTV's Director of News and Political Programmes, Ghayath Yazbeck, in an interview conducted on 31.1.2011, the station was "John the Baptist" who prophesied freedom and sovereignty and therefore was considered a nuisance.

[163] In an interview with Michel Murr, the owner and General Manager of MTV, he also reiterated that the decision was political taken "by the security/authoritarian system during the Syrian occupation" and that after the withdrawal of the Syrian troops, the electoral law was amended and the "sword over the heads of the media was removed". Interview conducted on 21.10.2010.

Yet another clause that is deemed problematic by the press corps is article 10 of the Press Law which provides that people "impersonating a journalist" – as described in articles 22 to 26 – will be punished in accordance with article of 393 in the Penal code and will be imprisoned between 6 and 12 months (article 35). Although the law does not explicitly necessitate membership to the press roll it restricts journalists to full-time practitioners, who have obtained a bachelor's degree from the Lebanese University in journalism or who have a baccalaureate and have interned for more than a year. However, some interpretations of this vague clause argue that the law does indeed perceive of journalists as those registered on the press roll claiming that if this was to be implemented, freedoms would be repressed and 4000 journalists would be in prison because they are not members of the Syndicate and therefore are, legally speaking, "impersonating" journalists.[164]

The view that "the media laws in Lebanon are all suspended, all the authorities have no authority and the authority which has some powers implements nothing"[165] is widespread. However, the number of cases in recent years before the publication courts regarding publication offenses such as "false news", "slander and defamation" and since 2005 "incitement", proves that the law, with the exception of administrative issues mentioned above and some other articles, is in fact being implemented.[166] What is not being implemented in this regard, however, are the time limits specified by the law where verdicts are to be issued within a week so that if a newspaper or journalist is to be held, it will not be stopped for long. Due to "chaos in the judiciary", as prominent lawyer Nizar Saghieh put it, court cases are taking between two to three years.[167] Finally, some cases are

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[164] Author's interview with Maharat staff and lawyer, Tony Mkhaiel, conducted on 8.10. 2010.
[165] Author's interview with Fouad Daaboul, *Al-Anwar* editor-in-chief. Member of the NAVC, conducted on 1.2.2011.
[166] Author's interview with lawyer Nizar Saghieh, conducted on 19.10.2010.
[167] Ibid.

often resolved outside the courts and end in conciliation due to the slow judicial procedures as well as the political nature of these disputes. The responsible director of one daily recounted how he successfully reconciled with an MP and a tribal leader not because the newspaper had erred but because for them "even if there are 60,000 laws the laws of the tribe is what governs...and he dropped his law suit."[168] Settlements are often sought and brokered particularly as there is a relative balance of power between the different groups which own the media.[169] Yet, representatives from most media outlets interviewed cited at least one or two court cases they are facing, with one acknowledging some of the blame for professional errors committed.[170]

In addition to the legal issues, there has also been a series of para-legal cases where de-facto powers have intervened to silence media corporations and journalists. In addition to the string of assassinations[171] that claimed the life of two journalists in 2005 and left one political talk show host maimed,[172] several media outlets belonging to the Future media family were forcefully closed for a period of four days by armed fighters in May 2008. "This is Lebanon. We were not protected, as we should have been. And, nothing will or can stop them from doing it again as simple as this," said Ramzi Jubayli, Future News General Manager, with regards to what he called a "purely political violation".[173] This again reveals the state's weakness and the strength of non-state actors. "In times of chaos, and organised

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[168] Author's interview with Youssef Howayek, *Ad-Diyar* responsible director, president of the Press Club, conducted on 30.5.2011.
[169] Author's interview with Jean Aziz, OTV Director of News and Political Programming, conducted on 29.10.2010. Although with one of their cases in June 2010, Societe Generale de Banque au Liban did resort to the judiciary, but they were able to "freeze this attempt".
[170] Author's interview with Khaled Saghieh, now former Editor in Chief of *Al-Akhbar*, conducted on 19.10.2010.
[171] The three attacks on journalists were by explosives planted in the journalists' cars or on the road side. Two anti-Syrian journalists, Hanin Ghaddar and Michel Hajji-Georgiou in interviews with the author, conducted on 5.10.2010 and 18.5.2011 respectively, said they have opted against owning cars to minimise chances of similar attacks.
[172] In June, December and September 2005, blasts claimed the life of Samir Kassir and Gebran Tueni and left May Chidiac severely injured. The investigations are at a standstill.
[173] Author's interview with Ramzi Jubayli, General Manager, Future News, conducted on 28.1.2011.

chaos, regulation is suspended."[174] Compromise therefore emerges as an important

specificity of the Lebanese media and political system, which is governed by a delicate

balance of confessional and political interests and considerations. While the director of the

NAVC laments the state's absence of a media vision or policy,[175] it is worth noting that for

instance, just as in Italian;[176] the Arabic language has just one word for both "politics" and

"policy": *Siyassah.* Policy is therefore rendered a political process, which in a pluralistic

context as Lebanon is based on compromise rather than policy, which is based on a

functional, administrative, output-oriented and technocratic logic (Freedman, 2008, p. 2).

Ghayath Yazbeck,[177] director of news and political programming at MTV, admits that the

MTV management selectively adheres to the laws and the Book of Specifications in the

areas they deem "useful to implement" such as concerning salaries and grades. Other

components he complains are outdated and beyond implementation. "Anyway, the state

cannot and is not requested to implement the law…If the patron of the house plays the

tambourine, the members of the family are likely to be dancers".[178] The media in this case

are unleashed against each other in "the tower of Babel".

Indeed, part of the reason some media are regarded above the law is due to the elite cartel's

commercial and political interests, which have effectively rendered the media very much

part of the political battle. The media's reliance on subsidies and backing from the elite

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[174] Author's interview with Abdulhadi Mahfouz, NAVC Director, conducted on 25.5.2011.
[175] Ibid.
[176] This is also the case in French and German. "Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa, a former finance minister, once noted that Italian has just one word for both politics and policy: politica. In Italy, politics never stops, and so policy is sidelined". Cf. "Bored by Brussels" http://www.economist.com/node/16693617?story_id=16693617 (last accessed on 10 October 2014).
[177] Author's Interview with Ghayath Yazbeck, MTV Director of News and Political Programming, conducted on 31.1.2011.
[178] This saying is attributed to the Iraqi poet Sabet bin Al Ta'weethy (b. 1125, d. 1187).

cartel,[179] who have over the years contributed to limiting the state's power and interfered to hinder the rule of law have made the media all the more captive. Furthermore, the lack of clarity and security has meant that self-censorship is very much extant (Nesemann, 2001, pp. 58-59). This could be due to the legal obscurity, security concerns or as some journalists said as a technique to "avoid trouble".[180]

Still, a margin of freedom remains intact. Paradoxically, state frailty and the balance of power existing amongst the different groups have helped safeguard individual freedoms. Freedom also remains highly valued and ingrained in the nation's mythology. The late *An-Nahar* publisher Ghassan Tueni[181] romantically summed up this issue: "the beauty of the press in Lebanon is its stubborn insistence on practicing its freedom despite all the difficulties and dangers. Part of its beauty also is its passion for freedom and saying the truth. It lives with its prophetic heritage which is the guarantee for its genuine freedom which is stronger and more effective than any law" (Tueni, 1990, p. 86).

Despite the fact that the lax application of the laws has at times allowed the tradition of freedom in Lebanon to remain intact[182] and rendered its media system de-facto a quasi-liberal one, calls for amending the laws, bolstering the rule of law and strengthening the public broadcaster continue to echo. In light of the current circumstances, however, it is not expected that these calls will materialise in the near future. What is for sure, however, is that due to the nature of the Lebanese media system, the need to analyse both the "de facto"

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[179] The term is used to refer to the *Zuama,* political and financial leaders described in Chapter 2.3.

[180] Author's interview with Mirella Hodeib, *The Daily Star*, Lebanon desk editor, conducted on 28.1.2011.

[181] Tueni's outspoken son Gebran, who was editor of the paper and a Member of Parliament, was assassinated in December 2005.

[182] In *The Ghosts of Martyrs Square* Lebanese journalist Michael Young argues similarly. Despite its many problems and institutionalized violence, Lebanon's political system has produced freedom because the power of religious and sectarian communities, the para-state groups, has weakened the state which as Young remarks, "is the main barrier to personal freedom in the Middle East" (2010, p. 247).

and "de jure" realities are *sine qua non* to any study on the Lebanese media (Fandy, 2007, p. 67).

Campaign for the amendment of the media laws

As discussed above, the Lebanese press and audio-visual law require a series of amendments to bring them in line with the ICCPR, which Lebanon has signed and ratified as well as the rarely-heeded Lebanese constitution.[183]

As a result of local lobbying, a draft comprehensive media law was put forth to parliament in November 2010 by Maharat Foundation after consultation with a wide array of stakeholders and with the support of the MP Ghassan Mkhaiber. Simultaneously, MP Robert Ghanem, a member of the committee for modernising laws, had also submitted amendments to the 1962 Press law, which included stricter sentences, higher fines and a new chapter on internet regulation. The former Minister of Information had also attempted to put together a comprehensive media law, for all media sectors. However, his attempt was unsuccessful. The parliamentary media and communication committee is studying the at times "vanguard" draft law put forth by Maharat Foundation.[184]

The proposed law has done away with prison sentence with the exception of one case, "hurting human dignity", as per the French law thereby attesting to the "vertical dependency" between Lebanon and France, particularly in terms of legislation (Kleinsteuber, 2004, pp. 68-72). In addition, the draft law proposes to abolish licensing of publications in exchange for "notification" just as the case is for associations and organizations. This means that decree 74 from 13 April 1953, which limited the number of

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[183] Chapter One, Article 13 of the Lebanese constitution pertains to freedom of expression and association. http://www.ministryinfo.gov.lb/en/sub/Lebanon/LebaneseConstitution.aspx (last accessed on 23 August 2014).
[184] The draft law can be found on the following link http://maharatfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/media-law-proposal2.pdf (last accessed on 23 August 2014).

political publications and which paved the way for license-monopolies that exist today, would be repealed. Furthermore, the proposed law also aims to improve transparency by allowing foreign investors, with the exception of members of enemy states, to openly invest in Lebanese media and to require media corporations to publish information regarding their ownership, accounts and revenues so as to limit illegal sources of funding. The draft law has also specified murky terms such as 'national security', 'sectarian incitement, and 'internal security', which are "arbitrary and harsh" and lend themselves to misuse, (Maharat, 2011).

Many stakeholders however are doubtful that a parliament, which reflects the political-sectarian divide and which has high stakes in the media, will pass a law that may threaten their commercial and political interests. Indeed, despite the praiseworthy attempt, cynicism prevails amongst the interviewees with one arguing that even initiatives that are supported by Members of Parliament have usually been torpedoed once they reach parliament.[185] The reasons for this are largely due to the interests – or rather conflict of interests – of the parliamentarians, the sectarian and political composition of the country and the interests of the owners who may also interfere to hinder such initiatives.[186] A case in point was how the late Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, who had purchased a number of media corporations as well as shares in others such as the state-television whilst in power, had a direct influence on regulatory matters. He thereby played "the referee and player in the same game" (Kraidy, 1998, p. 393). Furthermore, the war in Syria and subsequent spillover incidents has also influenced political life in the small nation. The parliamentary elections scheduled in June 2013 were initially postponed for 17 months, however are expected to be

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[185] Author's interview with LBCI talk-show host Marcel Ghanem, conducted on 27.5.2011.
[186] Ibid.

postponed once again purportedly for security concerns.[187] Meanwhile, the Presidential post has been vacant since the end of President Michel Suleiman's tenure on May 25, 2014. In light of the political impasse and security threats haunting Lebanon, the passing of such a law seems even more difficult. Thus, while the media law initiative appears to be of high professional standards and, in principle, praiseworthy, it is uncertain whether it will indeed become applicable law.

4.1.2. Ministry of Information

In light of this reality, the Ministry of Information continues to exist despite a series of announcements by successive Ministers of Information acknowledging its futility and the need to do away with it.[188] The cabinet portfolios are also distributed along sectarian quotas and the Ministry of Information often falls in the remit of the Prime Minister or at times is part of the quota of other communal leaders such as the Druze *Zaim* Walid Jumblatt or Shiite *Zaim* and speaker of parliament Nabih Berri. This renders it a mere bounty for a given political group rather than a portfolio.

"What on earth is the role of the Minister? [Can] Someone tell me?, asked *Al-Jadeed's* outspoken director for political programmes.[189] The former Minister of Information, who

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[187] Lakkis, H. & Ghattas Saab, A. (2014, 4 October). Extension of Parliament's term seems inevitable. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from: http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Oct-04/272953-extension-of-parliaments-term-seems-inevitable.ashx?utm_source=Magnet&utm_medium=Related%20Articles%20page&utm_campaign=Magnet%20tools (last accessed on 10 September 2014).

[188] In his handover ceremony, outgoing Minister of Information Walid Daouk argued "it is difficult to succeed in a ministry, which should be abolished" (17.2.2014). Retrieved from: http://maharatfoundation.org/?p=1625&lang=ar (last accessed on 23 August 2014). Another former Minister of Information, Ghazi Aridi, also announced a plan to abolish the Ministry to no avail. "Demanding abolishment of Ministry of Information...Why now?" The article by Hossein Koteich published on July 7, 2006, questions the brash demand at a moment of political instability. Retrieved from: http://ucipliban.org/arabic/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=251&Itemid=77 (last accessed on 02 September 2014).

[189] Author's interview with Mariam Al-Bassam, New TV Director of News and Political programming, conducted on 6.6.2011.

acknowledged that he had "failed"[190] in his role surely could not. "There is no reason why it should be here"[191], he said. Despite several attempts[192] at practicing his mandate, the Minister's initiatives were blocked due to the strength of the non-state actors backing the media organisation and due to the profound political divisions amongst them.

Moreover, while the media laws, as shown above, are to a certain extent implemented,[193] the administrative clauses, which fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Information and which include the withdrawal of licenses or the monitoring of the media outlets' financial records to ensure the corporations are not accepting bribes, are not. In addition to "implementing" the laws, and according to law number 25 passed on March 26, 1983 regarding the re-organisation of the Ministry of Information, the Ministry "ought to suggest and implement a media policy. According to that law, media policy should emphasise a unified national feeling and entrench and strengthen the links between political, cultural, social and financial fields with the relevant authorities, develop the national radio and broadcasting its programmes nationally, regionally and internationally with the aim of crystallizing a Lebanese identity and advertising the country with the aim of connecting the Lebanese at home and abroad".[194] The law also stipulates that the ministry ought to examine issues relating to the media, its laws and document relations between the media as well as ensure that the laws are implemented. Finally, the ministry ought to find the appropriate connection between the state, represented by its Minister of Information and

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[190] Author's interview with then-Minister of Information Tarek Mitri, conducted on 21.5.2011.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Mitri's initiatives focused on reforming the public broadcaster, *Télé Liban*, pushing forth media law amendments and a code of ethics. These have been discussed further under the heading *Télé Liban* (Section 4.1.3), Section 4.1.1, and Subchapter 4.3 on professionalization.
[193] Cf. Section 4.1.1 on the rule of law.
[194] The law in question can be retrieved from the following link:
http://ministryinfo.gov.lb/main/MinistryOfInformation/OrganizationoftheMinistry.aspx (last accessed on 02 September 2014).

Télé Liban Company as well as other audio-visual media and the National News Agency (NNA), which shall be discussed separately below.

Despite the variety of tasks stipulated in the law, the reality is such that a publisher and journalist has not felt the need to meet the Minister of information for nearly two decades.[195] Meanwhile, another media stakeholder said that the result of its genuine mandate amounts to "nothing. It [the ministry] is administering private interests in the government."[196]

Indeed, the ministry today seems superfluous and beleaguered with one senior editor calling it a charade smaller than the media bureaus of leaders in the country[197] and only there to squander public money. As discussed, half-hearted calls for replacing it with a strengthened regulatory body are often sounded by the Ministers themselves as well as by civil society. However, these remain unheeded due to the nature of the political set-up.

4.1.3. Télé Liban (TL)

Today, *Télé Liban* is often regarded as a metaphor of the Lebanese state. Older generations and former staff members alike reminisce about it with much nostalgia in a manner akin to the framing of the pre-war years arguably[198] called the "golden years".

"At the time we used to fight to push the limits, we were not the voice of the state, we were the voice of the people, we were not a state apparatus, although it was a state television, but [we were] a TV for all. We were the first who started the PAL/Secam system in the Middle East, *Télé Liban* was the leader. We used to receive delegations from the Arab world for

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[195] Author's interview with Jamil Mroueh, former publisher and owner of The Daily Star, conducted on 5.10.2010.
[196] Author's interview with Abbas Daher, Political news and programmes Director, NBN, conducted on 4.2.2011.
[197] Author's interview with Khalil Khoury, editor-in-chief of *El-Sharq* newspaper, conducted on 27.10.2010.
[198] As discussed in Section 2.3 while the affluent benefitted from the liberal and prosperous economy in the pre-war years, there were in fact a series of socio-economic problems and strikes which some historians (Traboulsi, Sharara et al.) argue added to the combustible situation in the mid-70s and are often glossed over when speaking about the "golden" period preceding the civil war.

148

training in our news department. The Lebanese productions...used to conquer the Arab world, the series, the programmes that TL used to produce", recalled a former editor-in-chief of the news section before he added wistfully "I am telling you about that phase when there was a state...This phase has ended."[199]

While politically the station managed to push limits imposed by the Ministry of Information[200] and the Presidents at the time, the station was also successful in its cultural and drama productions (Boulos 1995, p. 30). References by stakeholders regarding the wealth of its archives abound, despite having parts of it stolen during the war.[201] The rest is sometimes pulled out, re-broadcast and watched on *Télé Liban* and other channels thereby attesting to a period of faded glory.[202]

The ailment of *Télé Liban* began with the civil war when due to increased government intervention in "sanitising" the station, the station started to lose credibility (Kraidy, 1998, p. 390). The station's two headquarters and staff later found themselves on either side of

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[199] Author's interview with Arafat Hijazi, journalist syndicate board member, former *Télé Liban* anchor, conducted on 25.1.2011.

[200] Particularly in the years preceding the Lebanese civil war, Jean Khoury and Arafat Hijazi's defiant editorial approaches resulted in their suspension for about a year in addition to several conflicts with the Ministry of Information. One example is when they chose to break the pattern of the newscast and rather than begin with news of the President hosting a minister or the head of the Baalbek festivals, they began with a reportage about a strike by garbage collectors and the garbage piling up. The president at the time asked if garbage was more important than him. At another time, the pair interviewed the Prime Minister at the time and juxtaposed his interview with that of a former Prime Minister who was in the opposition. The Prime Minister at the time responded inaccurately and President Suleiman Frangieh, who presided till the outbreak of the war, was furious and demanded that he does not want to "see those two pimps Jean Khoury and Arafat Hijazi". Thus, they were penalised for a year and only after several interventions were the two allowed to return to the channel. Hijazi recalled how the head of the Editors association, Melhem Karam, invited them to join him in congratulating the President on his election anniversary. When they entered the Presidential palace those attending the ceremony broke into applause thereby attesting to the prominence of the channel at the time. They apologised and the President accepted the apology saying "my children I don't want anything from you I just want you to be cautious. You know, the country is sensitive and we don't want the situation to worsen". The next day, the prominent daily *An-Nahar*'s headline read "most striking of the September celebration was [the former PM Rashid] Karami's absence and the reconciliation between the President and the two presenters Khoury and Hijazi". "A headline". "At the time we used to fight to change the pattern...we used to try and regain our freedom." Source: Author's interview with Arafat Hijazi, journalist syndicate board member, Former *Télé Liban* anchor, conducted on 25.1.2011.

[201] In addition to archival material, some of its equipment is also reported to have been taken by militias.

[202] According to Wassef Awada, assistant to the General Director of TL, in an interview conducted on 14.10.2010 with the author, audience ratings increase when they rebroadcast shows from the archive such as Abu-Melhem and Abu-Salim, which *Al-Jadeed* has also been airing.

the front line. Depending on the pressure exerted on the staff by powerful militias, they were forced to air two different newscasts.[203] When pressure was lax, the splintered *Télé Liban* managed to air a united newscast thereby reuniting Arafat Hijazi and his colleague Jean Khoury. Hijazi is said to have started the broadcast with the statement, "a unified media for a unified Lebanon"[204] (Boulos, 1995, p. 135). This, however, did not last long and the sprouting of illegal radios and television in the 1980s such as LBC, amongst 53 others by 1990, also aggravated matters for *Télé Liban* and effectively broke its monopoly.

In the post-war period, the government sought out to reorganise the media landscape. The Audiovisual law 382/94, which granted licences to four commercial TVs; two for Muslims, two for Christians and owned by influential political actors and their families, legally revoked *Télé Liban*'s monopoly over the airwaves promised to it till 2012 (Harb, 2011, p. 97).

The small market, before the advent of satellite TV, and the limited subsidies it received from an indebted state further weakened its position. According to a report ratified by the Council of Ministers in 2007, the state had provided TL 123 Billion Lebanese Pounds between the years 1990 and 2007, which amounts to a mere $330,000 per month which was mainly used to covers salaries and pensions (Maharat, 2012, pp. 19-20). This prompted one TL executive to conclude that expenditure [on *Télé Liban*] has been regarded by the "government of reconstruction" in the post-Ta'if years as squandering of money rather than as an investment.[205] Furthermore, the bloated staff numbers with more than 550 employees, which to some extent were "politically motivated appointments" made the

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[203] Channel 7 and Channel 4 found themselves on the side of the "West Beirut" powers whereas Channel 5 and 11 where on the side of *East* Beirut powers.

[204] This incident is cited in an article by Maissa Awad published in *As-Safir* on 14 April 2014 entitled "Unforgettable memories for Boulos, Hijazi and Al-Ashi; 7 and 11 war and *Télé Liban*'s Bill". Retrieved from: www.centre-catholique.com/newsdetails.asp?newid=26150 (last accessed on 02 September 2014).

[205] Author's interview with Ghaleb Kandil, Audio-visual Media council member, conducted on 25.10.2011.

station inefficient. In an attempt to rectify this, the station closed in 2001, dismissed most employees and restructured, however that too was unsuccessful despite recruiting 110 staff members (Nötzold, 2009, pp. 241).

In addition to the financial difficulties facing the state, the director of the National Audio-Visual Council (NAVC) argued that the station was weakened by for largely political calculations using the pretext of financial deficit and the lack of means to revive the station.[206] Thus, according to a TL executive, the station was left "orphaned" with a very low annual budget of circa $4.5 million per year,[207] which is equivalent to what some Lebanese stations spend per month.

Staff and observers alike have even complained about the "tragic" state of the headquarters (Nötzold, 2009, p. 240), studios,[208] and equipment.[209] Up until December 2013, the station also had a weak, faded image as rather than broadcast using high definition technology as other stations in Lebanon and the Arab world, the station broadcast on analogue.[210] Furthermore, its humdrum content has the reach of 7.9 percent, with its news reaching a mere 0.8 percent of the national audience.[211] The content, a "stodgy diet" (Kraidy, 2005a, p. 123) consisting mainly of re-runs of shows from the sixties and seventies, "or whatever

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[206] Author's interview with Abdul-Hadi Mahfouz, Director of the National Audio-Visual Media Council, conducted on 25.5.2011. He added that "financing was kept from it and it was even put up for sale under the pretext of privatisation".

[207] Author's interview with Wassef Awada, assistant to the General Director of TL, conducted on 14.10.2010.

[208] Laure Sleiman, director of the National News Agency and Fouad Harakeh of the Press Syndicate, whom the author interviewed on 9.6.2011 and 2.2.2011 respectively referred to holes in the ground and tattered furniture they encountered at the station.

[209] A former staff member recalled how a French delegation visiting the transmission room was surprised to discover antiquated French-made equipment still in use by TL, which they no longer produce. He claims they wanted to buy the equipment as antiques. Spare parts were also self-made by some technicians as they were no longer on the market. Author's interview with Arafat Hijazi, journalist syndicate board member, former *Télé Liban* anchor, conducted on 25.1.2011.

[210] Author's interview with Wassef Awada, assistant to the General Director of TL, conducted on 14.10.2010.

[211] According to IPSOS ratings kindly provided to the author for the year 2013. The percentages provided show the average reach of the TV station and the main news (between 19:00 and 21:00) from January 1st to November 30th 2013.

hasn't been ruined in their archives", a popular cooking show and largely insipid news, is also often the subject of criticism and jokes both on Twitter and on TV.[212] Political satire shows have parodied TL by featuring actors dressed in an old-fashioned manner announcing the live coverage of events that have taken place years ago.[213] The official ratings statistics cited above attest to the fact that TL today cannot compete with its local or regional competitors.[214]

In addition to budget-induced challenges and the apathy of the political elite, the station is also subject to *Lottizzazione*: the partitioning of shares in institutions amongst key power brokers, as other state institutions in the country (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002, pp. 177-180; Padovani, 2005). While the term was used particularly to describe the Italian public service model it is also similar to the civic or corporatist model described by Hallin and Mancini where control of public service broadcasting is distributed among various socially and politically "relevant groups" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 30-33). In Lebanon, sectarian and political quotas are respected with the staff constituency representing "a smaller picture of Lebanon".[215]

Indeed, it is this partitioning or quotas, which though in principle can ensure diversity within any organisation potentially leading to a rational consensus or public reason,[216] in the Lebanese context it effectively leads to nepotism. Quite often, it is elite loyalists rather

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[212] Such jokes abound with a Twitter user @AhmadRasoul on 1.1.2012 labelling *Télé Liban* "The Middle East History Channel", and another @Sikawika writing on 4.12.2012 "If you want to go back in time just watch *Télé Liban*".

[213] Meanwhile, the political satire show *Mā fī miṯlū* on MTV and some of their TL skits are available on the following links http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bIfMs5Xvu4 and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkF117KhBpI (last accessed on 02 September 2014).

[214] Author's interview with Marcel Ghanem LBC, Talk-Show host Interview, conducted on 27.5.2011.

[215] Author's interview with Wassef Awada, assistant to the General Director of TL, conducted on 14.10.2010.

[216] This refers to John Rawls' conception of public reason, which is reached by groups debating and agreeing on basic principles (1993, p. 68).

152

than qualified individuals who are hired and appointed to most positions[217]. The then Minister of Information attempted to change what he termed an "incompetent" board but was also unable to do that as appointments to any public institutions have been frozen due to political disagreements[218] and apparent sectarian calculations.[219] After long delays, the subsequent Minister of Information filed a case before the Court for Urgent matters and managed to circumvent this stalemate. Since mid-2013 an interim director was appointed and was- along with the accountant- granted the powers of the board of directors. [220]

While it is difficult to ascertain the criteria according to which people are hired in most organisations in Lebanon, it is expected that due to the state of the station, many ambitious professionals would leave to other stations in Lebanon (Boulos, 1995, p. 141) and the region where they would receive higher pay and more recognition. Indeed a number of TL "faces" now appear on other 'screens'. The young Director of News and Political Programming at NBN himself who "graduated from TL" eventually left because no improvements, despite repeated promises.[221]

In addition to the distribution of staff in line with quotas, "the infiltration of most of the political and confessional problems into the body of the TV"[222] has also had an impact on the TV's influence and content. The internal pluralism or contradictions that may arise from

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[217] "TL *does not* give opportunities for those qualified it will force in the 'affiliates'...of the sectarian and political Za'amat. Who is in TL now? It is a group of affiliates. There are no broadcasters in the full sense of the word. They are very few there" said Dr. Amer Mashmoushe Professor, *Al-Liwa'* Editor-in-chief, Head of Media Graduates Association, conducted on 27.1.2011.

[218] Author's interview with the then-Minister of Information Tarek Mitri, conducted on 21.5.2011.

[219] Lakkis, H. (2012, 9 October) Delay in appointments for *Télé Liban* posts. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from: http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2012/Oct-09/190678-delay-in-appointments-for-TéléLiban-posts.ashx#ixzz2EHhQMbNI (last accessed on 03 September 2014).

[220] Lakkis, H.; Lutz, M "Judge appoints Talal Makdessi as new head of Tele Liban" 9.6.2013 The Daily Star. Cf. http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2013/Jul-09/223018-judge-appoints-talal-makdessi-as-new-head-of-tele-liban.ashx#ixzz2yQS6aRSq (last accessed on 03 September 2014).

[221] Author's interview with Abbas Daher, Director of news and political programming, NBN, conducted on 4.2.2011.

[222] Author's interview with Ziad Majed, Researcher at the American University of Paris and columnist, conducted on 5.11.2010.

staff representing rival groups,[223] further incapacitates the station particularly in times of conflict as is evidenced by the lack of consensus in appointing members to the board and the void left at this level. Furthermore, in spite of government decree number 7576 issued on March 8, 2002, which decreased the administrative board from six members to three, due to sectarian calculations, the board continues to consist of six members; three of which are Christian and three Muslim (Maharat, 2012, p. 21).

In addition to a difficulty in making appointments due to the lack of consensus, this has also had impact on the rhetoric and content. A study conducted by Maharat foundation (2012), which included content analysis, found that while TL's news coverage is split almost equally between March 14 and March 8 (the two poles in the political struggle in recent years), 86.9 percent of its coverage is non-field coverage or what they summed up as "He welcomed, he sent off, he stated" coverage. The lacklustre "protocol news", it has been argued, serves the politicians' vanity rather than political dialogue (Nötzold, 2009, p. 284). In addition to that the shirking from covering confrontational issues was also cited by one stakeholder as the reason why the audience has migrated to commercial and satellite media.[224] Furthermore, the study revealed that 100 percent of the films and series broadcast were re-runs of old shows taken from TL's archives (Maharat, 2012, p. 35).

In perhaps the crudest of terms, TL resembles the Lebanese state; frail, impoverished, divided against itself and peripheral to the political and sectarian tug of war.[225] It is worth noting as well that almost every incumbent minister of information expresses their intent

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[223] Author's interview with Dr. Amer Mashmoushe Professor, *Al-Liwa'* Editor-in-chief, Head of Media Graduates Association, conducted on 27.1.2011.

[224] Author's interview with Ali Rammal, Lebanese University, Media and Communications Department, Professor, conducted on 27.10.2010.

[225] One of TLs executives whom the author interviewed was thrilled to discover that – according him – there were two or three stations behind them in the ratings, which he deemed encouraging. Author's interview with Wassef Awada, assistant to the General Director of TL, conducted on 14.10.2010.

to revive TL, which according to one of its executives "remains intent".[226] Indeed, in early 2009, the Minister of Information Tarek Mitri, as previous ministers before him and the Minister who succeeded him,[227] submitted a thorough road map for TL. The proposal, as many expected,[228] was shelved due to the difficulty of reaching a unanimous political decision as well as the scarcity of funds necessary for the required technical, technological and personnel overhaul.[229] In addition to financial obstacles, the then-Minister argued that the rejection of his five-year plan approved carried also "a subliminal message",[230] whereby if the public media are strengthened it would come at the expense of the private media all owned by the political-confessional leaders. "LBC, *Al-Manar*, OTV, MTV are more powerful than me in the council of ministers", acknowledged former Minister Tarek Mitri thereby echoing comments made by a number of observers and journalists.[231]

There is also the fear, or the "distrust", as put by Mitri, that the station can be rendered a tool in the hands of the government and those who control it due to "previous incarnations

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[226] "There are always plans which we put together in cooperation with all the Ministry of information who come to office but these plans rarely makes it to the council of ministers sessions to be passed because it needs the approval of all the ministers who are owners of the private TVs and therefore it needs a good enough amount to revive TL which today has old equipment, you will notice the picture today we are in the world of HD we still work on analogue", says Mr.Wassef Awada in an interview with the author, conducted on 14.10.2010. Three years later, though, TL finally was able to broadcast in high definition.

[227] "Mikati, Daouk discuss plan to improve *Télé Liban* conditions". *National News Agency*, 25 July 2013. Cf. http://www.nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/11823/Mikati-Daouk-discuss-plan-to-improve-Tele-Liban-conditions (last accessed on 02 September 2014).

[228] Indeed, most interviewees including the Minister and TL's director and former staff members were cynical when asked about TL's revival prospects and expected that the proposal will not yield any results for a variety of reasons including the limited amount of funds available as well as the politicians' vested interest in TL's effective competitors, as well as the fear that it may be used by whichever party is in government against them one day. Amer Mashmoushe (interviewed on 27.1.2011) called it "a failed project. It will lead nowhere". As any institution in the country as well, TL is and will be partitioned according to political-sectarian quotas, thereby paving the way for partisans and loyalists of the elites to be granted the positions rather than qualified individuals.

[229] Author's interview with Dr. Magda Abu-Fadil, American University of Beirut, Journalism Training Programme Director, conducted on 19.1.2011.

[230] According to the then-Minister of Information Tarek Mitri in an interview conducted with the author on 21.5.2011 a former Minister of Information (Michel Samaha) used to spend more time at the station than in the ministry and he would decide who would make it in the news. Another Minister of Information (Albert Mansour) behaved in the same fashion. It is for this reason, according to Mitri, the political class prefers to keep TL weak.

[231] Popular talk-show host Marcel Ghanem and university professor, editor and head of Journalism school's association Amer Mashmoushe on 27.5.2011 and on 27.1.2011 respectively also stated that the private televisions in Lebanon are stronger than the government.

when Ministers of Information interfered directly and acted as gatekeepers.[232] Another stakeholder reiterated the fear that the TL may be rendered a tool in the hands of the regime, rather than serve as a public broadcaster, so it is preferable to most to withhold funding from it. Examples of how TL was instrumentalised by the government for electoral and political reasons and the difficulty in having it serve as a public sphere in which all actors engage freely in an effort to reach consensus were cited by several stakeholders as a reason behind the disinterest in strengthening it.[233]

Despite the prevalent view that *Télé Liban* seems to be in a comatose state "limping on half a leg",[234] the incessant proposals and campaigns finally bore fruit. In 2014 TL finally got a revamp, which featured the switch to the use fibre optics, the renovation of studios and the introduction of new programmes, which may help revive this channel.[235] Despite the apparent disinterest from the political elite who have their own media and are divided on most issues,[236] many seem to acknowledge the important role it can serve. Frustrated TL staff[237] cite the BBC and other public service TVs in Europe rather than governmental stations as role models and as a necessary alternative to the commercial stations.[238]

Yet one question as one stakeholder put it resonates "how can there be a strong public TV with a flavour in the absence of the state?"[239] Despite all intents[240] and the thirst for a

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[232] Author's interview with the then-Minister of Information Tarek Mitri, conducted on 21.5.2011.

[233] Author's interview with May Chidiac, conducted on 4.6.2011.

[234] Author's interview with Dr. Magda Abu-Fadil, American University of Beirut, Journalism Training Programme Director, conducted on 19.1.2011.

[235] Kullab, S. (2014, 31 January). Tele-Liban gets glossy hi-tech overhaul. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from: http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Jan-31/245895-tele-liban-gets-glossy-hi-tech-overhaul.ashx (last accessed on 23 August 2014).

[236] Author's interview with Saad Kiwan, Director of SKeyes Centre, conducted on 21.10.2010.

[237] Wassef Awada in his interview with the author conducted on 14.10.2010 said their aspiration "is a smaller version of the BBC and to be funded from the public. I do not think adding 100 Lira to petrol prices or adding 1000 Lira [= 66 US$-ct., the author] to the electricity bill per month for TL is too much to ask...this requires that TL is not to be biased to one side, nor works for the interest of politicians. This is our ambition but this ambition resembles dreams".

[238] Author's interview with Ziad Majed, Researcher, columnist, conducted on 05.11.2010.

[239] Author's interview with Hazem Saghieh *Al-Hayat* columnist, conducted on 2.2.2011.

source that would unify in a milieu replete with divisive rhetoric, it does indeed seem that a successful re-launching of TL is "utopic".[241] It is however more likely that the station will continue to "limp on", despite the recent improvements. "No one wants to kill it"[242] it seems for once in the government, parties who have called for TL to be closed down realise that "a running creek is indeed better than a dried river".[243]

Essentially though, as delineated above and reiterated by the NAVC director, the revival of TL "can be linked…to the notion of the state, and the return to the notion of the state. We are now in a position where the notion of the state is regressing in favour of statelets and quotas in the central government."[244]

4.1.4. The National News Agency[245] (NNA)

Meanwhile, the National News Agency (NNA) situated in the building of the Ministry of Information, is also overseen by the ministry and as any state institution, is also subjected to the political-sectarian quota system. In response to accusations of a political and sectarian bias in staff recruitment,[246] the NNA director recalled how she was asked by the

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[240] Minister Mitri's successor, Walid Daouk, also announced his intent on revamping the station and improving its audience ratings by appointing a dynamic board of directors who would make it a "haven for the centrists" attracting those "sick of watching partisan television stations". Hodeib, M. (2011, 13 August). Daouk hopes to see speedy action on media law. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2011/Aug-13/146176-daouk-hopes-to-see-speedy-action-on-media-law.ashx.

[241] Author's interview with May Chidiac, former LBC news anchor and political talk-show host, conducted on 4.6.2011.

[242] According to then-Minister of information and Assistant to the Director at TL, Wassef Awada in an interview with the author conducted on 21.5.2011 and 14.10.2010 respectively, it will continue because it is not too expensive and as Awada mentions "it provides services. When the President travels, TL covers its trips…Some fear the President does not have a TV".

[243] Author's interview with Abbas Daher, Director of news and political programming, NBN conducted on 4.2.2011.

[244] Author's interview with Abdul-Hadi Mahfouz Director of the National Audio-Visual Media Council conducted on 25.5.2011.

[245] The NNA was launched in 1962 shortly after the failed coup of 1961 and the challenges facing Chehab's policies and the involvement of the *deuxième bureau* in political life and was meant to serve as the state's official media apparatus. "The *deuxième bureau* was from here you know, but now no", said the Director of the NNA.

[246] These allegations were reported in Khoury, S., *al-wikāla al-waṭanīya liliʿlām: yubīl al-mašākil wa at-tasāʾulāt* (Arabic for "The national news agency: the jubilee of problems and questions"), Al-Akhbar, 04 May 2011. Retrieved from: http://www.al-akhbar.com/print/11374 (last accessed on 10 September 2014).

Minister to prepare a list with the sectarian affiliation of the new recruits. She reported that unintentionally they were equal in number. "I want degrees and qualifications...the employee is neither hired to sanctify nor to call to prayer. I am interested in their work [and not political or sectarian affiliation]."[247] In addition to reflecting the diversity, the NNA director has also revealed that with regards to sensitive issues such as the Syrian civil war, she has had to refer to the Minister as the political supervisor of the agency, who encouraged her to publish all news items and not to self-censor.[248]

As is the problem with the state television, NNA has had a limited budget hindering its expansion and development. Several journalists interviewed acknowledged it as an important source.[249] The service, however, is free of charge. Plans to transform the agency into an independent public institution, allowing it to expand and develop by charging for subscriptions however have stalled awaiting a political decision.[250]

Thus, with regards to the variable of state role, the Lebanese media system does indeed seem to tend towards the Liberal Model in practice in so far that the state intervention is low while also resembling the Polarised Pluralist Model by nature. Hallin and Mancini concede that while the state often plays an influential role in the Mediterranean Model "the state's grasp often exceeds its reach: The capacity of the state to intervene effectively is often limited by lack of resources, lack of political consensus, and clientelist relationships that diminish its capacity for unified action" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 119). Unlike the Polarised Pluralist states however, the Lebanese state's role does not reflect a "combination

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[247] Author's interview with Laure Sleiman, director of the National News Agency, conducted on 9.6.2011.
[248] Ibid.
[249] "We all rely on the information. The website is not bad, they work a lot, we rely on the information that they get. They publish a transcript of everything that happens, and the small stories coming from different services." Author's interview with Tania Mehanna, LBC senior reporter, conducted on 28.5.2011.
[250] Author's interview with Laure Sleiman, director of the National News Agency, conducted on 9.6.2011.

of authoritarian traditions of intervention and democratic traditions of the welfare state similar to those that prevail in the Democratic Corporatist countries" (Ibid.).

Furthermore, the notion of "savage deregulation", which Hallin and Mancini borrow from Traquina (1995) to describe Portugal and other Southern European systems, is also worth considering in this context. Savage deregulation refers to the uncontrolled introduction of commercial broadcasting without imposing public-service obligations on these broadcasters or protecting the interests of public broadcasting systems. This means that commercial broadcasters were not requested to provide diverse viewpoints, support national production and content or even provide information to the populace (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 124-125). Unlike the Mediterranean systems, there was no deregulation in Lebanon to begin with. Instead, it was only after the end of the civil war that *Télé Liban* became a public broadcaster fully owned by the state. Indeed there was a move to re-regulate what was a de facto savagely de-regulated state of affairs by limiting the number of commercial channels, while breaking the promise of monopoly of airwaves to the public broadcaster. Despite this, Lebanon, unlike the Southern European states, enacted laws demanding the promotion of local culture, providing information and representing diverse views. It is the lax application of these decrees, coupled with direct and indirect opposition, which is the issue and not the state's approach. Therefore, the state's role, regarding de-regulation, is a liberal application of the ideals of the Democratic Corporatist Models.

4.2 Political parallelism

"Welcome to your second country, Lebanon"[251]

The variable of political parallelism can be regarded as a crucial characterisation of the Lebanese media system. This notion considers the degree and extent of the connections between the media and political groups as well as the degree at which the media system reflects the political landscape (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 21-22).

Hallin and Mancini suggest several sub-indicators to gauge the degree of political parallelism. These include: media content, partisanship of audiences, organisational connections between the media and parties or groups. Moreover, they analyse how diversity is expressed in the media institution itself, differentiating between internal and external pluralism. *External pluralism* is defined as the pluralism achieved at the level of the media system as a whole with a range of media outlets reflecting the perspectives of different groups in society. Externally plural systems are seen to have a high level of political parallelism. *Internal pluralism*, on the other hand, is defined as pluralism achieved within each media organisation. This occurs in systems where media organizations avoid institutional ties to political groups and attempt to maintain neutrality. Such systems are considered to have a low level of political parallelism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 29). Internal pluralism can also refer to media, particularly broadcasting organizations that formally represent a variety of political forces within the structure and content of a single organization (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 27-30).

The Lebanese media system, particularly its broadcast system, reflects a high degree of political parallelism. Media corporations, most television stations and newspapers are

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[251] Former Lebanese President Charles Helou is said to have told a number of journalists he received in the Presidential Palace, "Now that I have met you in your official capacity, may I learn what foreign countries your papers unofficially represent. Welcome to your second country, Lebanon!" (Dajani, 1975, p. 168).

directly linked with social and confessional groups, *Zuʿamāʾ*, neo-*Zuʿamāʾ* and political parties and are very much part of the political tableau. The following sections shall assess diversity in the Lebanese media system both in terms of content and structures (McQuail, 2010, pp. 196-198).

4.2.1. Media ownership

As mentioned in Subchapter 4.1, the audio-visual media law reinforced the media divides of the civil war. This meant that in addition to the public broadcaster *Télé Liban*, four television stations which represented or belonged to elites were licensed and the other 46 had to be shut down. As described, the seven licensed stations *NBN*, *LBCI*, *Future TV*,[252] *MTV*, *Al-Manar, Al-Jadeed* and *OTV* reflect the sectarian and political forces. Several members of the National Audio-visual Council have acknowledged[253] the political pressures the council was subjected to during the license-allocation process. The subsequent landscape is one where most political leaders or wealthy elites from main religious groups, were granted their own television stations in a manner, which guaranteed a sort of pluralism on the level of the media "system" rather than within the individual media organisations. The press in Lebanon, as will be discussed in Section 4.2.5, despite the existence of three partisan publications and Hariri's purchase of several dailies, remains more diverse than television.

However, it is worth noting that it is misleading to equate the existence of different private broadcast media with pluralism with media freedom as only those media owned by

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[252] The Hariri family also own *Al-Mustakbal* daily and the now defunct Future News.
[253] The author held a series of interviews with several members of the NAVC as well as its director in September 2010, January and May 2011.

powerful confessional or economic groups were actually given a voice whereas other groups were excluded from the agora (Sensenig-Dabbous, 2000, p. 14).

Still, as argued above, an externally pluralistic media system may be more appropriate in pluralistic societies with deep fissures as opposed to the attempt to mainstream, where stronger groups may hegemonize. However, in this particular case, it is questionable if the media system is truly representative. Furthermore, the manner in which media content is produced – namely the range of voices that are represented and whether media companies have codes that promote diversity of opinion, also has an impact on the overall level of plurality in the media (Balčytienė, 2009, p. 40). It is for this reason, that in addition to ownership, this chapter looks into the diversity of staff, guests hosted, audiences as well as content, which is not given as much attention by Hallin and Mancini.

4.2.2. Staff

The size of the local market has propelled some stations to pluralise internally, particularly with regards to non-political programming, so as to reach beyond their traditional partisan audiences and thereby attract more advertising revenues. The advent of satellite TV has also driven commercialization in so far that it has allowed a few successful Lebanese television stations to transcend the Lebanese borders and secure necessary advertising from the lucrative Gulf market.

To do so, these stations have had to offer catch-all content, especially in terms of entertainment programming (Nötzold, 2009, p. 311) and employ staff and host guests from across the spectrum. While some staff obviously belonging to other religious sects were placed at the forefront,[254] such changes have remained essentially cosmetic. It is

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[254] On its satellite channel, LBC had a number of Muslim staff. Amongst those was talk-show host Shatha Omar, who

noteworthy that these staff members are usually placed on screen rather than in management, in part due to the geographic locations of certain stations but mainly regarding political communication due to the clear ideological "lines" of the media outlets. According to a study conducted by Nötzold, LBCI and *Al-Manar* have the most homogeneous staff body from a sectarian point of view (2009, p. 318).

Yet even if the staff are politically and religiously diverse, this does not necessarily translate into a more diverse and nuanced content. Instead, content largely remains in sync with the overarching political inclination of the station. This is particularly due to the directors of news and political programming who are closely linked to the owner of the respective station and effectively act as gatekeepers overseeing the implementation of the politician's agenda.[255] Content issues and discussions around so-called "red lines" shall be addressed in Section 4.2.3.

Future TV are known to employ the most diverse staff partly due to its location in the capital and partly due to what current Future News Director Ramzi Jubayli calls "the legacy of Rafik Hariri".[256] In fact, the Future TV staff are amongst the most diverse in terms of sectarian affiliation, which is evident from the names of presenters and technical staff. According to media researcher Jad Melki, many journalists work in stations that strongly contradict their ideologies, citing cases where leftists and communists opposed to the liberal Hariri legacy work in Future TV and produce content in line with that stations

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later resigned on air, and Malek Maktabi, the host of the show the "Red Bold Line" which sensationally discusses social issues such as homosexuality, cohabitation, amongst others. More recently they hired another Muslim anchor for the news and morning talk-show, Dima Sadek, who during the war on Gaza in 2014 donned a *kūf īya* (typical Palestinian headdress) on air. MTV likewise has Mona Abou Hamza, a Druze, hosting its popular "Talk of the Town" show. *Al-Manar* also featured Omar Marmal, a tie-wearing Sunni.

[255] Author's interview with Jad Melki, American University of Beirut, Media studies, Assistant Professor, conducted on 3.2.2011.

[256] Author's interview with Ramzi Jubaili, General Manager, Future News, conducted on 28.1.2011.

policies.[257] Future TV's director of news and political programming[258] confirmed that some cadres in the station are supporters of politically opposing groups but as most reports are signed off by the editors, the general political line of the station is adhered to.

While Future TV is to a certain extent diverse in terms of the sectarian make-up of its staff, the assassination of former PM Hariri in February 2005 was a turning point in terms of its political orientation. The Future media outlets are very close to the objectives of the Future Movement with the current directors also serving as close associates and consultants to the former Prime Minister Saad Hariri, the son and political heir of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. In particular, the personal consultant of Saad Hariri is the editor-in-chief of *Al-Mustakbal* (Arabic for "The Future") daily and as of December 2011 the general manager of the Future TV.

While most Lebanese television stations today seek some religious diversity, OTV news and political programming director, Jean Aziz also admits that in terms of political diversity "there is harmony".[259] Yet, this does not preclude hosting political guests who come "from all directions."[260] Meanwhile LBCI, a station which has moved from being a militia mouthpiece to a successful commercial channel embroiled in a "political and legal battle"[261] over the ownership of the station with its founders,[262] has been accused to have dismissed staff in connection to the ownership battle (El-Richani, 2015). A renowned former LBCI news anchor and political talk show host, who is a supporter of the Lebanese Forces, also

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[257] Author' interview with Jad Melki, American University of Beirut, Media studies, Assistant Professor, conducted on 3.2.2011.

[258] Author's interview with Hussein Wajeh, Future News, News and political programmes director, conducted on 30. 1. 2011.

[259] Author's interview with Jean Aziz, OTV Director of News and Political Programming, conducted on 29.10.2010.

[260] Ibid.

[261] Author's interview with Ziad Majed, American University of Paris, conducted on 5.11.2010.

[262] The battle is between the Lebanese Forces (LF), the founders of LBC, and Pierre Daher, its CEO, who claims to have purchased the station when the LF was dissolved and its leader, Samir Geagea, imprisoned. Geagea was released in 2005 and has been trying to regain LBC.

resigned on air due to what she said were "wars waged against her".[263] The LBCI owner and director, however, claims that these accusations are inaccurate as in terms of religious affiliation, 82% of his staff were Christians and simultaneously supporters of the Lebanese Forces, which he is said to have targeted.[264] Despite the sectarian and political inclination of the majority of LBCI's staff, the news and political programming have been the most balanced thereby giving the channel the largest outreach, which in 2013 amounted to 34.2% according to IPSOS' statistics. This shall be discussed further in Section 4.2.4.

Meanwhile, a competitor of LBCI, which is regarded to be very close to March 14, has employed people from across the sectarian spectrum, despite being cynically labelled the channel of the "panic-struck Christians".[265] This was reiterated by an observer who stated that the station primarily addresses the existentialist fears of Christians.[266] The geographical area where the station is located is composed of mainly Christians and that is why – according to the channel's owner – 90% of applicants are Christians.[267] Furthermore, the general political direction of the station is lucid with the station embodying the principles of March 14 and the so-called Cedar Revolution.[268]

On the other side of the political spectrum is *Al-Manar*, the station affiliated with Hezbollah with party members or supporters serving as staff (Nötzold, 2009, p. 210). The station was credited by Hezbollah's Secretary General for the liberation of South Lebanon as it served as

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[263] Author's interview with May Chidiac, former LBC news anchor and political talk-show host, conducted on 4.6.2011. A video of May Chidiac's on-air resignation in February 2009 can be found on the following link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbk0QlgwwMg (last accessed on 3 September 2014).

[264] Author's interview with LBC owner and general manager Pierre Daher conducted on 14.9.2011.

[265] Journalist Amal Al-Andari labelled the channel as such in an article "Joe Maalouf...a panic-struck Christian in MTV" about a new show on MTV deemed sectarian by the author. Cf. Al-Andari, A., *Qanāt al-masīḥī al-maḏʿūr* (Arabic for "The channel of the panic-struck Christian"), *Al-Akhbar*, 15 March 2012. Retrieved from: http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/45559 (last accessed on 03 September 2014).

[266] Author's interview with Roula Mkhail, Maharat, conducted on 8.10.2010.

[267] Author's interview with Michel Murr, MTV owner and General Manager, conducted on 21.10.2010.

[268] Ibid. The Director of News and Political Programmes at MTV Ghayath Yazbeck who in an interview with the author conducted on 31.1.2011, went even further and likened MTV to John who prophesised and demanded freedom, which he claims eventually lead to the March 14 protests and coalition.

a platform for Hezbollah's "liberation propaganda" (Harb, 2009, pp. 55-56 & 72). According to one of its executives, it is not a secret that the station had "a Shiite nature" reflecting the area from where it was launched. However, he argues, as per the law, the administrative board represents a variety of sects and the staff a variety of nationalities.[269] Yet, he conceded, that employees are expected to meet their "intellectual, cultural and political inclination."[270]

Al-Manar's closest political ally's media operation NBN is less religiously stringent with the names of the presenters revealing some religious diversity.[271] The top positions however are occupied by Shiites with very close links to its effective owner, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri (Nötzold, 2009, p. 219). The Director of News and Political Programmes conceded that following the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri, which exacerbated the political and sectarian schism, a more homogeneous staff emerged with 90-95 percent of those involved in the news belonging to the same political milieu.[272]

Finally *Al-Jadeed* TV, an independent station traditionally in the opposition and particularly opposed to the Hariri family and legacy, was ranked second in Lebanon in 2013 in terms of audience reach.[273] The station has a clear and brazen political line, which the owner's daughter and deputy-news director describes as "pan-Arabist, left-leaning, anti-corruption and pro-resistance".[274] The station has no clear link to any political party or leader and

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[269] Author's interview with Hajj Ahmad Houmani, Assistant to the Secretary General of *Al-Manar*, conducted on 29.10.2010.
[270] Ibid.
[271] NBN talk-show hosts Karim Gemmayel and Saeed Ghorayeb for example.
[272] Author's interview with Abbas Daher, Director of News and Political Programmes, NBN, conducted on 4.2.2011.
[273] According to IPSOS' statistics, which were kindly provided to the author, *Al-Jadeed* ranked second overall with 31.8 percent average reach during the period from January 1st to November 30th 2013.
[274] Author's interview with Karma Khayyat, Deputy Director of News and Political Programming at *Al-Jadeed* TV and daughter of owner Tahsin Khayyat, conducted on 28.10.2010.

employs staff from a variety of religious backgrounds however with similar political sympathies.

Here it is worth noting that although there may be internal pluralism within some media outlets in terms of sectarian and religious diversity, the position of Director of News and political programmes is often hand-picked by the station owner and serves as the gate-keeper and implementer of the owner's political agenda. Furthermore, while most directors clarified that they always strive to also represent the "other side", several directors interviewed conceded that they also deem their role as "driving political and social change" (Pintak & Ginges, 2009, p. 171). The fact that journalists are often also politically involved, either as consultants, party members or even as parliamentarians such as *An-Nahar*'s publisher Gebran Tueni "blurs the line between journalist and political activist" (Ibid.). This, according to Hallin and Mancini, is a common feature of a system with high levels of political parallelism (2004, p. 28).

4.2.3. Guests and content

While most news and political programming directors argue that they host guests from across the political spectrum to prove their openness and objectivity, it is evident that reality is by far more complex. Data released by Statistics Lebanon reveal that political figures considered close to the March 8 coalition overwhelmingly appeared on stations representing this coalition, hosted on shows whereas March 14 guests were mostly hosted on Future TV, LBCI, MTV and *Al-Jadeed*.[275] Even when channels host representatives from

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[275] Rabih Habre's *Lebanese Statistics* released data on 12 October 2014 pointing to a monopolisation of March 8 figures on March 8 affiliated media and vice versa with March 14 political actors and media. Of 96 March 8 guests on political shows, 21 appeared on NBN, 21 on OTV, 18 on *Al-Jadeed*. Meanwhile of 86 March 14 guests who appeared on political programmes in September 2014, 33 appeared on Future TV, 15 on LBC, 15 on MTV, 14 on *Al-Jadeed*, and 8 on NBN. Independent hosts were hosted a mere 7 times on MTV and 5 times on LBCI. These results are relating to September 2014 and are not published. They were however broadcast on LBCI on October 12, 2014.

rival groups, according to media scholar Jad Melki, these are often "milder" guests and are challenged with difficult questions.[276] While the directors of the political programming frequently choose the interviewees hosted, CEOs are also known to interfere with the decisions (Nötzold, 2009, p. 149). Yet, the selection is not always in the hands of the gate-keepers. Some stations, such as Future TV have been snubbed by political actors such as Hezbollah, whose representatives have refused to appear on their screen despite invitations.[277] Meanwhile, the director of the media department of the Free Patriotic Movement, an ally of Hezbollah, also questioned the rare invitations their representatives get on Future TV while conceding that they also refrain from hosting divisive figures.[278] LBCI, which has faced threats from the Syrian regime,[279] has also been "vetoed" by Hezbollah in particular who following the episode discussed above, boycotted the channel and refused to appear as guests for nearly six months. A "reconciliation meeting",[280] in typical Lebanese fashion, resolved the matter.[281] Former LBCI talk show host May Chidiac, who is a supporter of the Lebanese Forces and who survived an assassination attempt, recounted late withdrawals from her talk-show on LBCI. She claimed these sudden absentions by guests who had confirmed were akin to "hidden censorship", an attempt to sabotage the show and to "discredit" her by making it appear that she only hosted guests from one political side.

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[276] Author' interview with Jad Melki, American University of Beirut, Media studies, Assistant Professor, conducted on 3.2.2011.

[277] Author's interview with Ramzi Jubaili, General Manager, Future News, conducted on 28.1.2011. Hussein Wajeh, Future News, Director of News and Political Programming also admitted they "very rarely appear as guests".

[278] Author's interview with Wassim Henoud, Director of Media Department, Free Patriotic Movement, conducted on 3.6.2011. Henoud said they would not invite Mount Lebanon Mufti Ali Jouzo who he deemed to be particularly divisive and who makes their audience "uncomfortable".

[279] Author's interview with LBCI CEO Pierre Daher, conducted 14.9.2011. Daher claimed that Hezbollah has boycotted them several times and members of the Syrian security apparatus threatened them.

[280] Author's interview with LBCI talk-show host Marcel Ghanem, conducted on 27.5.2011, whose talk-show episode caused the rift.

[281] Author's interview with LBCI CEO Pierre Daher conducted 14.9.2011.

Similarly, MTV has also faced problems inviting certain guests. The director of news attributes this to two reasons including that these guests assume *a priori*, that MTV represent a political pole despite its attempts to equally divide the *number* of guests between the two camps. The second reason, argues the news director, is that prominent leaders who own their own competing TV stations refuse to give them full legitimacy by appearing on these stations. Therefore while the key leaders of the March 8 coalition refuse to be hosted on this station, the "second row" politicians do thereby acknowledging the importance of reaching the audience which consumes MTV.[282] Furthermore, MTV's owner reiterated that his channel always begins the news with the most important news of the day.[283] This raises the issue of "running order" of news which varies considerably from station to station depending on the political orientation (Nötzold, 2009, p. 309).

Meanwhile *Al-Jadeed*'s news and political programming director Maryam Al-Bassam considers the complaints received from both political poles a good gauge of their balanced coverage.[284] While she said they strive to alternate between guests on *al-Jadeed's* morning political show, events sometimes dictate who is to be hosted arguing that as a professional she cannot always cater to and appease the political class. She also cited a few snubs imposed by prominent leaders of the March 14 coalition but argued that they continue to try.[285] Meanwhile the NBN news director conceded that representatives from March 8, the political coalition, which the station is inclined to, dominate, although he stressed that they

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[282] Author's interview with Ghayath Yazbeck, News and Political Programmes Director, MTV, conducted on 31.1.2011.

[283] Author's interview with Michel Murr, MTV owner and General Manager, conducted on 21.10.2010.

[284] Author's interview with Maryam Al-Bassam, Director of News and Political Programming, *Al-Jadeed* TV, conducted on 6.6. 2011. Her statement echoes the words of Ghayath Yazbeck, MTV News and Political Programmes Director in his interview with the author conducted on 31.1.2011.

[285] Author's interview with Maryam Al-Bassam, Director of News and Political Programming, *Al-Jadeed* TV, conducted on 6.6.2011.

aim to represent the "other side" as well.[286] With regards to guests hosted on *Al-Manar*, the assistant manager stated that the only prohibition imposed is regarding the dress code where women must appear wearing the veil.[287]

However, it is important to note that pluralism involves not only the presence of different voices or guests but also the nature of their intervention. Therefore, although the different stations may indeed host a variety of guests representing the different voices in society, the manner in which the discussion is framed and the questions posed is also worth considering. Therefore, in addition to the structural diversity of TVs in Lebanon, content diversity, particularly with regards to political communication also emerges as a necessary gauge (Balčytienė, 2009, p. 40).

Nötzold's content analysis of newscasts concluded that the media in Lebanon serves the elites rather than the public with the news primarily focusing on political and religious officials (Nötzold, 2009, pp. 279-282). Her study also revealed that *Al-Manar* and LBCI were the stations which identified most strongly with the sect of their majority stakeholders and audiences (2009, p. 340). Meanwhile, as expected, stations with the closest link to a politician or a party (*Al-Manar*, Future TV, NBN) have the highest percentage of political views representing the owners in their news bulletins (Ibid.). Furthermore, a content analysis study conducted by Maharat during the internal crisis in 2008 revealed how the Lebanese media, both broadcasting and print, effectively "poured oil on the fire" and served to incite their audiences and marginalise their political opponents (Sadaka & Nader, 2008).

The above results reveal that the diversity in staff as well in guests hosted does not always lead to a diverse and balanced content. As discussed in the previous Section 4.2.2, even the

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[286] Author's interview with Abbas Daher, Director of News and Political Programmes, NBN, conducted on 4.2.2011.
[287] Author's interview with Hajj Ahmad Houmani, assistant to the General Manager, *Al-Manar*, conducted on 29.10.2010.

most professional of journalists become socialized in their particular working environments and know precisely what the station requires of them regardless of how opposed they are ideologically and personally to these demands. Still, and while many practice self-censorship (Nötzold, 2009, p. 329), this does not discount the existence of some challenges, which take advantage of the small margins of freedom extant. Indeed, according to a senior media professional,[288] the so-called "red lines"[289] regarding some issues are common in all corporations and a journalist tends to take note of the political ceiling. In Future TV and due to what one staff member called "political calculations", Saudi Arabia is considered to be among the taboo topics which they cannot address while in other corporations such as *Al-Manar* it could be Iran.[290] The media, argued the Future TV presenter, have become an integral part of the political process with the media battle intensifying or subsiding in sync with the rhythm of the political process.[291] Following the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005, Future TV's programming focused more on politics, which "scared off advertisers". Therefore Future News channel was established in 2007 "to liberate Future TV" from the political burden and allow the once-lighter and profitable entertainment-focused channel to focus on its market, seek out advertisers and increase its revenues locally and regionally.[292] According to the long-serving Future TV news anchor and Future News programme host, the assassination had a

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[288] Author's interview with Najat Sharaffeddine, Future News, conducted on 6.6.2011.
[289] According to Nötzold's account, Future TV was in sync with Hariri's position and was made to broadcast clips promoting Bashar al-Assad, when the latter acceded the presidency of Syria (2009, p. 188). Meanwhile, *Al-Manar*'s red lines involve anyone who views Israel as a friend or an Israeli (Nötzold, 2009, p. 210). Though Israeli guests or "friends" would not be hosted, *Al-Manar* has a unit, which monitors, translates and broadcasts relevant material taken from the Israeli media (Harb, 2011, p. 186).
[290] Author's interview with Najat Sharaffeddine, Future News, conducted on 6.6.2011. She conceded that despite attempts at lobbying the political director to for example allow the discussion of the Bahraini protests on her show, she resignedly admitted "no, it didn't work".
[291] Ibid.
[292] Author's interview with Ramzi Jubaili, General Manager, Future News, conducted on 28.1.2011.

significant impact on the station and rather than debate and compromises as was previously the case; issues were suddenly either black or white. As the political movement affiliated with Future TV network developed, so did their media bodies with staff joining the party and the relationship between the two becoming organic. As one senior Future TV representative put it, "from the name to the colour...not only in appearance but also in content, the political rhetoric in the political news and political programming in the end is the rhetoric of the Future Movement. Any press release issued by Future Movement, or Future members of parliament or the Hariris is in the newscast. But, do I have this space for others in the news cast? No, surely not. The main space is for the Future Movement so as to publicise and market my opinion and that is why [they] have a TV, a radio and a newspaper."[293] However, due to financial setbacks resulting from their decreasing market share,[294] Future TV and Future News eventually merged in August 2012 into one channel, with a stronger focus on entertainment in an effort to regain a position among the top three stations on the Lebanese market.[295] In 2013, and according to IPSOS, Future TV was ranked in fifth out of the nine Lebanese stations with a 16.2 percent average reach.[296]

The small size of the national media market and the desire to reach the considerably larger pan-Arab media market, has impelled local stations to adopt a mixed strategy, which would appeal to a larger audience both locally and regionally (Nötzold, 2009, p. 340). The dawn of satellite technology allowed some Lebanese television stations such as LBCI and Future TV to reach the Arab market. This phenomenon can be regarded as a direct factual challenge to

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[293] Author's interview with Najat Sharaffeddine, Future News, conducted on 6.6.2011.
[294] In 2010 for instance, the prime time newscast on Future News and Future TV had a mere 5.7 percent reach according to IPSOS, which kindly provided the author with these statistics.
[295] Dockery, S., Future TV aims to get back on top with revamp. *The Daily Star, 25 August 2012.* Retrieved from: http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Aug-25/185617-future-tv-aims-to-get-back-on-top-with-revamp.ashx#ixzz2EkB5vCXM (last accessed on 03 September 2014).
[296] IPSOS kindly provided the author with ratings and statistics.

Puppis' reading of small states with larger neighbours and the same languages being unable to influence anyone beyond their territory (2009, p. 11).[297] To achieve this, there was a severing between the political ideology and programming particularly with regards to non-political communication. Entertainment programmes such as *Superstar, Star Academy*, *Basmat waṭan,* as well as talk-shows such as *Kalām an-nās, nahārkum saʿīd* or *sirrī wi infataḥet* managed to attract a large audience across the sectarian spectrum and beyond national borders. As Kraidy has argued, "when presented with well-crafted programs, viewers will watch television programs (and listen to music) that do not cater to the particularistic ideologies of their confessional group" (Kraidy, 2005b, pp. 288-290). Adhering to market logic, several stations managed to accomplish just that. For instance, since the 1980s, Christian-owned LBCI had scheduled special programming during the Muslim Holy month of Ramadan, when viewership increases by 30 percent (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, p. 116; Kraidy, 2005b, p. 288; Sakr, 2007, p. 184). Furthermore, its political talk shows and prime time news cast has the widest reach locally with its news cast averaging 13.2 percent during 2013.[298] The internal pluralism that LBCI strove for and the "jeweller's balance" they use,[299] particularly in terms of political content has allowed it to reach a larger audience. Its CEO and owner clarified that although it was initially a mouthpiece of a Christian right-wing party and was seen to represent the Maronites, it aspires to represent all of Lebanon.[300] LBCI has exhibited a knack at manoeuvring in a dynamic political minefield with its unclear position today-as its owner concedes- a strategic choice. While

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[297] Qatar, a small state with "big politics" also challenges this statement be it through *Al-Jazeera* or its "diplomatic hyperactivism" (Kamrava, 2013, p. 63).
[298] Statistics kindly provided to the author by IPSOS.
[299] Author's interview with Marcel Ghanem, conducted on 27.5.2011.
[300] Author's interview with Pierre Daher, LBC CEO, conducted on 14.9.2011.

politically they have managed to be "neither here nor there",[301] they are still considered to be closer to March 14 than they are to March 8. Moreover, religiously, as evidenced by their coverage of Christian festivities and Sunday mass, the station is still very much true to its origin (Nötzold, 2009, p. 147). Undoubtedly, however, shows classified as "entertainment" have proven to be the most commercially viable. LBCI for one has successfully penetrated the Pan-Arab market by broadcasting the profitable and successful rendition of the Endemol television format *Star Academy*,[302] which launched its tenth season in 2014. Other game and entertainment shows and series aired during the holy month of Ramadan have also been successful. According to its CEO, the LBC satellite channel (LBC Sat), now owned by Saudi Prince Al-Waleed Ben Talal after a fallout,[303] and its replacement (LDC), were both set up in order to tap into the Arab advertising market and create sustainability between the regional operation and the local channel operating in a small national market.

Despite a few attempts to pluralise internally, such as LBCI's endeavours, most broadcast channels, based on the voices given a platform as well as content analyses, remain true to their nature and serve their owners politically. Assessing content in addition to structural diversity are important indicators to measure political parallelism as the mere existence of diverse staff or even guests are not a guarantee that these voices are being heard.

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[301] Author's interview with Marcel Ghanem, conducted on 27.5.2011.

[302] The show attracted up to 80% of viewers in some Arab countries and massive revenues. The so-called *Prime* or show put on by the Academy participants receives the highest ratings in Lebanon as well nearing 40% in 2010.

[303] LBC Satellite TV is owned by Prince Al-Waleed Ben Talal who owns Rotana. In 2007, Rotana and LBC Sat briefly merged. In 2012, the two parties went their separate ways with the Saudi Prince hanging on to LBC Sat forcing Daher to launch LDC as LBC Group's satellite channel (El-Richani, 2015).

4.2.4. Partisanship of media audiences

Other characterisations of political parallelism suggested by Hallin and Mancini include the partisanship of media audiences. According to Chantal Mouffe, this phenomenon is akin to "a kind of autism", where audiences only consume media, which reinforce their beliefs (as cited in Carpentier & Cammaerts, 2006, p. 968).

According to most stakeholders interviewed, particularly with regards to political programming, Lebanese audiences are autistic with "built-in audiences"[304] exclusively consuming their corresponding station. A recent survey with a sample of 787 respondents from the different regions of Lebanon found that there is a deep correlation between political orientation, religion, income, educational levels and geography and consumption patterns.[305] While some may draw a parallel between the confessional distribution of broadcast licenses and lament Lebanese TV's inability to contribute to a national public discourse (Nötzold, 2009) this does not always "correspond to Lebanese audience realities" (Kraidy, 2005b, p. 288). Particularly in terms of non-political programming, as mentioned above, several media corporations have striven to vary their programmes in a bid to attract a wider audience and much-needed advertising in the small Lebanese market. Indeed, entertainment programmes have managed to attract viewers who would otherwise not tune in to a certain TV station with one example being the prurient "jokes" show 'LOL' on OTV. The five most popular shows on most Lebanese stations reveal that the Lebanese

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[304] Author's interview with Dr. Magda Abu-Fadil, American University of Beirut, Journalism Training Programme Director, conducted on 19.1.2011.

[305] The research was conducted by Imad Bou Hamad and his team from the American University of Beirut. The full results are expected to be published towards the end of 2014.

audience prefer entertainment programmes such as "Dancing with the Stars", "Celebrity Duets", "Miss Lebanon" and drama series to other programmes.[306]

Politically, shows and newscasts attract smaller audiences, which more clearly reflect the political and confessional lines. Particularly during internal crises, the Lebanese media know how to fan the existential fears of their audiences.[307] It is for this reason (as discussed in Section 4.2.3.) the positions of director of news and political programming are considered to be so integral.[308] Indeed, all media executives and directors of the political programme departments interviewed acknowledged that the crux of their audience is those within the same "political milieu".[309] While *Al-Manar* is known to have high ratings during wars and crises involving Israel[310] they admit that their main audience is based in the South of Lebanon, the Southern suburbs of Beirut and the Bekaa valley, areas known to be sympathetic with the party.[311] Similarly, NBN's director of news and political programming, whose office is decorated with a number of pictures of him and Nabih Berri, the political patron of the channel, also admitted that their audience primarily consists of those who share the same inclinations, despite the zapping phenomenon.[312] The OTV director meanwhile realistically conceded the reliance on partisan audiences but occasionally also

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[306] IPSOS statistics revealing the average reach for the top 5 programs per TV Stations during the peak time from 18:00 to 22:59 during the period from January 1st to November 30th 2013, which were kindly provided to the audience.

[307] Author's interview with Roula Mkhaiel, Director of Maharat, conducted on 8.10. 2010.

[308] Author's interview with Ali Rammal, Lebanese University, Media and Communications Department, Professor, conducted on 27.10.2010.

[309] Author's interview with Abbas Daher, Director of News and Political Programmes, NBN, conducted on 4.2.2011.

[310] The July war in 2006 saw the ascendancy of *Al-Manar* regionally, reaching "the top ten in pan-Arab ratings" (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, p. 141).

[311] Author's interview with Hajj Ahmad Houmani, Assistant to the Secretary General of *Al-Manar*, conducted on 29.10.2010.

[312] Author's interview with Abbas Daher, NBN, Director of News and Political Programmes, conducted on 4.2.2011.

on their respective political opponents, who may tune in so as to know how to confront them.[313]

In some areas, however, the audience's choice to access stations offering a different viewpoint is restricted. Illegal cable providers, from whom most Lebanese obtain their cable services, sometimes choose to bar access to certain channels in some areas. LBCI and Future TV were said to be removed a number of times, whereas *Al-Manar* is also said to be unavailable in some areas in the north of Lebanon.[314]

Despite the fact that audiences may prefer to consume the political programmes which represent their views and beliefs, some Lebanese TVs, namely LBCI and *Al-Jadeed* have challenged that trend by resorting to a strategy where they employ staff and host guests from across the spectrum to ensure a wider audience. LBCI in particular has transformed from a Christian, partisan station to one that though still covers the Maronite Patriarch's Sunday masses and sermons in its newscast,[315] for commercial and at times political reasons has strategically targeted a larger audience (El-Richani, 2015). Still, the desire to consume the media closer to one's aspirates despite the abundance of options available at a low fee from the illegally distributed satellite channels, rings true for most, particularly in terms of political programming.

Although it can be safely said that the broadcast system is to a large extent politically parallel, some convergence or homogenisation to a more catch-all and mainstream American-style TV must be acknowledged. In addition to responding to the market logic

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[313] Author's interview with Jean Aziz, OTV Director of News and Political Programming, conducted on 29.10.2010
[314] Journalist Sami Hamad cited in Maharat's Media Sustainability Indicator, 2010/2011 "Developing independent and sustainable media in Lebanon" p. 5. Retrieved from:
http://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/u81/rita%20mena%20arabic%20newnew.pdf (last accessed on 03 September 2014).
[315] In an interview with the author conducted on 26.1.2011, media analyst and professor Nabil Dajani cynically argued that LBCI would even report the "patriarch's sneezes".

and trying to attract a wider audience in Lebanon and the Arab world, channels air programming that attracts audiences in the wealthy Gulf States. Channels have also recruited personnel from across the spectrum, in an effort to lure a wider audience. The obstacles to commercialisation in such a small, polarised state, however, are many. The ongoing ownership battle between LBCI's CEO and the party that launched the station is a case in point. In light of the acute polarisation as well as the political and security-related crises afflicting the nation, the "media are part of the great battle that the country is witnessing".[316] It is for this reason that its high political parallelism is expected to remain as such.

4.2.5. The Lebanese press and political parallelism

Meanwhile, the press in Lebanon can also be said to be politically parallel although it is slightly more differentiated than the broadcast media. One reason that may explain the press' special nature is its development well before the establishment of the state and the fact that it is also the fruit of individual or intellectual labour.[317]

While most newspapers have developed and were forced to transform into shareholding companies or regularly accept financial support from a variety of sources, the link between newspapers and political groups is less clear cut than with broadcasting. This, however, does not preclude political interference and ownership in the Lebanese press, be it indirect or direct. In addition to two partisan newspapers on the market, a newspaper owned by a

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[316] Author's interview with Ziad Majed, Researcher, American University of Paris, conducted on 5.11.2010.
[317] This has been emphasised by Press Union head Mohammad Baalbacki. At the press conference announcing the transformation of *As-Safir* daily from an individual company to a shareholding company on 19.9.2011 he said: "We all know the dangers facing the Lebanese press particularly the financial pressures facing this industry which has since the 19th century been the result of individual efforts, although in recent days these institutions have necessitated what may allow it to continue to avoid what we all fear may face it".

politician was recently re-launched[318] and the Hariri family and its associates currently own a number of newspapers and shares in a number of dailies.

This, however, does not mean that the "independent" newspapers are not politicised. On the contrary, newspapers in Lebanon have generally situated themselves politically ranging from the liberal newspaper such as *An-Nahar* to the left-oriented *As-Safir* and more recently *Al-Akhbar*, whose editor's explicit wish is that the American ambassador would "wake up in the morning, read it and get upset".[319] With the exception of the traditionally centrist *Al-Anwar*, and the more recent commercial and "centrist" newspaper *Al-Balad*, the rest of the newspapers have for a variety of reasons adopted political positions.

While the print licenses were not distributed in line with the political and sectarian division as was the case with the audio-visual media, the limit on the number of licenses for political publications has meant that acquiring a license for a political publication is difficult for most citizens. A decree issued by President Camille Chamoun on April 13, 1952 ruled that no more political licenses would be granted until the number of political publications drops to 25. The Ministry of Information was tasked with suspending "inactive" licenses that are not publishing thereby allowing the total number of licensed publications to drop and others to apply for licenses. As discussed in Subchapter 4.1, due to political considerations, the Ministry has not been carrying out this role. As a result, the inactive licenses have indeed become "privileges" for those who own them and who can choose to sell them on the market for extortionate prices depending on the brand name.[320] The purchase of already

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[318] *Al-Jumhouriyya,* owned by former Minister of Defence, MP and son of a former Minister of Interior and influential political leader, Elias al-Murr was re-launched on 28.2.2011.

[319] Worth, R.F. (2010, December 28) Rarity in Region, Lebanese Paper Dares to Provoke. *The New York Times* Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/29/world/middleeast/29beirut.html (last accessed on 03 September 2014).

[320] Author's interview with Fou'ad Harakeh, Press Union, conducted on 2.2.2011.

existing licenses in order to a launch a newspaper therefore necessitates political money or the support of larger conglomerates.

While some might argue that a country the size of Lebanon neither requires nor is able to sustain more than 100 political publications,[321] the status-quo has effectively established an illiberal monopoly.[322] The advent of the internet, however, has helped circumvent these restrictions. A meek attempt by the NAVC demanding all online news sites to register their information with it in November 2011 was fruitless due to the lack of a legal decree and wide condemnations from politicians and stakeholders alike.[323] Later, the Minister of Information submitted a decree to the cabinet along the same lines; however, that too was "shelved".[324] The number of websites publishing political news and analysis without the need for licenses is therefore on the rise;[325] however, television remains the preferred medium for most Lebanese.[326]

In addition to this limitation on the distribution of licenses, political money in the media is also prevalent. This is due to the size of the market, the alleged advertising monopoly[327] and the dismally low circulation rates where all publications together, according to a number of

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[321] Ibid.
[322] Author's interview with Dr. Amer Mashmousheh, Head of the Media Graduates' Association and editor-in-chief of *Al-Liwa'* newspaper, conducted on 27.1.2011.
[323] Media Sustainability Indicator, 2010/2011 "Developing independent and sustainable media in Lebanon", Maharat Foundation, p.3.
[324] Gatten, E. (2012, April, 7). Government shelves online media regulation bill after outcry. *The Daily Star*. For a more in-depth analysis cf. www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Apr-07/169523-government-shelves-online-media-regulation-bill-after-outcry.ashx#ixzz2EpO9jSkr (last accessed on 3 September 2014).
[325] The three most prominent news sites, Now Lebanon, *El-Nashra* and Lebanon Files shall be discussed below.
[326] According to a study conducted by Harris Interactive and Northwestern University-Qatar, 89% of a sample of 1256 Lebanese interviewees prefer television as a source of news and current affairs. 69% rely on the internet and interpersonal communication, and 57% on the radio (Dennis, Martin & Wood, 2013, p.24).
[327] Most interviewees as well as some studies have referred to the Antoine Chouieri group on the advertising market as a monopoly, arguing that the newspapers represented by the advertising company they represent; *An-Nahar*, *As-Safir* and L'Orient-le-Jour as well as the TV, LBCI, get the highest share of advertisers despite the fact that they are not always those newspapers with the highest circulation or ratings (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, p. 117). The role of the CMG shall be discussed further in Subchapter 4.4.

stakeholders sell 50,000-60,000 dailies per day.[328] Furthermore, the still shy

advertisements available on the internet only enforce this weakness.[329] Nations such as the

wealthy oil and gas Gulf States, local politicians and other influential stakeholders, purchase

shares in newspapers, buy entire newspapers or provide "gifts" either to keep them at bay

or to support them in the difficult financial "setback"[330] they are facing. The controversial

publisher of *Ad-Diyar*, a newspaper which at one point used to sell thousands of copies and

reached a wide audience, due to its risqué nature has candidly admitted accepting "gifts". In

an editorial explaining the need to double the price of his newspaper, Charles Ayoub, the

publisher of the daily named politicians – both local and regional – who have reneged on

promises to support the daily.[331] Ayoub, who was likened to "a whore" by former PM Saad

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[328] Several interviewees including Jamil Mroueh, Khalil Khoury, amongst others, fielded the above-mentioned number.

[329] Newspapers that launched only online have complained about advertisers' reluctance to place advertisements online. According to Joseph Semaan, editor of *El-Nashra*, a popular online news site, (interview with the author conducted on 9.6.2011) advertising online remains "inadequate". Former publisher of The Daily Star, Jamil Mroueh, interviewed on 5.10.2010, likened advertising on the web to a steppe or plateau but expected this will spike as online media facilitates gauging the consumer.

[330] Term used by Khalil Khoury, editor-in-chief of *El-Sharq* newspaper, interviewed by the author on 27.10.2010.

[331] On June 21, 2011, Charles Ayoub wrote an editorial in his newspaper, *Ad-Diyar* entitled "Ad-Diyar between honesty, commitment, and between the positions of manipulation, scarcity and selfishness". In this piece, Ayoub announced an increase in the cost of his newspaper as he claimed he no longer wanted to rely on aid from local and regional sides. "What Syria has given to Ad-Diyar is not enough to buy paper and is inadequate to cover the cost of printing the newspaper for three days...But I am no merchant, I stood with Syria due to principles...Even Issam Fares who used to support me...no longer responds today...this is how friendship and nobility are...Saad Al-Hariri never stands by his word nor is committed to his commitments...he wants people as his servants and I, Charles Ayoub, have taken a stance with Saad Hariri, no one has taken...but he is asleep...Had Ad-Diyar sold, and bought and got along with them, it would've been the richest newspaper and I have not done that. Another story with the Saudi Minister Abdul-Aziz Khoja, who asked me to defend Arabism and to take a stance with the Kingdom, but off he went and did not fulfil his promise." Author's translation of Ayoub, C., *Baīn aṣ-ṣadq wa al-iltizām wa bain mawāqif at-talāʿub wa aš-šaḥ wa al-anānīa* (Arabic for "Between honesty and commitment and between manipulation, scarcity and greed"), Ad-Diyar, 21 June 2011. Retrieved from: http://diyar.charlesayoub.com/index.php/article-details/68663 (last accessed on 22 June 2011). In 2012, Ayoub again wrote an editorial acknowledging the receipt of "financial assistance in exchange for "balanced" reporting on Lebanon's internal politics" from the former head of the internal security forces, who was effectively a Hariri associate and who was assassinated in October 2012". Ajbaili, M. (2012, 1 August). Lebanese editor close to Syria says he was paid to be 'unbiased' Al-Arabiya.Retrieved from: http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/08/01/229830.html (last accessed on 16 October 2014). Meanwhile As'ad AbuKhalil who pens the Angry Arab News Service, a blog, wrote that Ayoub has also taken aid from Saudi Prince Bandar. "To be fair to Ayoub: he accepts money from any source", he quipped. AbuKhalil, A. (2012, 01 August). Al-Arabiyyah: one of your worst news sources. *The Angry Arab News Service* [Web log post]. Retrieved from: http://angryarab.blogspot.com/2012/08/al-arabiyyah-one-of-your-worst-news.html (last accessed on 03 September 2014).

Hariri,[332] was candid enough to admit it in the editorial mentioned above. This practice, however, is not unique to Ayoub. In that same recording, Saad Hariri said *As-Safir*'s publisher Talal Salman "blackmailed" his father for money, a claim the latter rejected in his column. The engagement of media in the "extortion business" (McCargo, 2012, p. 201) where they suspend criticism of even praise a politician or corporation in exchange for contributions, is indeed prevalent in the Lebanese journalistic realm.[333] These "bad habits", which include an "envelope culture" (Pintak & Ginges, 2009, p. 164) is not altogether foreign in the Middle East. Indeed, a survey conducted by the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) found that circa 80 percent of PR practitioners polled said journalists rarely refused free travel or products (IPRA, 2002). Meanwhile, 60 percent of the polled practitioners said it was common for favourable stories to be published in exchange for ad purchases, and 40 percent said journalists accepted payments to print press releases (Ibid.). Much to the chagrin of many and through purchases of shares and other forms of contributions, Hariri and associates have several newspapers on their payroll.[334] The English-daily *The Daily Star* founded and owned by the Mroueh family for two generations, sold their shares in the newspaper to Hariri associates on October 30th, 2010.[335] Its former owner and publisher explained it was an inevitable move as the industry had been

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[332] In January 2011, *Al-Jadeed* broadcast a leaked recording of Saad Hariri's recorded testimonies to investigators probing his father's assassination. In a recording made on July 30, 2007, Hariri tells investigator Lajmi Mohammad Ali that the nature of the relationship between Talal Salman, the publisher and owner of *As-Safir* was "purely blackmail", where "if you don't give me money I will write everything negative about you."He said if Syria wanted to help someone, they would ask his late father to pay him. "Talal if you paid him money he would write nicely about you like Charles Ayoub [Publisher of *Ad-Diyar*]. Charles Ayoub was worse, Charles Ayoub is like a whore", he said. The *Al-Jadeed* broadcast is available on YouTube http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYjBJp0_I7c (last accessed on 03 September 2014).

[333] Author's interview with Khaled Saghieh, *Al-Akhbar*, then editor-in-chief, conducted on 19.10.2010.

[334] Author's interview with Nabil Dajani, American University of Beirut, Professor of Media Studies, conducted on 26.1.2011.

[335] Kamal Mroueh who founded *Al-Hayat* in 1966 sold the pan-Arab daily to Saudi Prince Khaled ben Sultan in the late 1980s (Sakr, 2007, pp. 176-177).

neglected and the consumer had migrated.[336] In addition to partially purchasing *The Daily Star*, the Hariri family, that heads the Future movement, also owns a newspaper which is part of the *Future* media empire which includes Future TV, Future News, Radio *al-Sharq* and *Al-Mustakbal* newspaper (Arabic for "Future"), as well as 38% of the shares in *An-Nahar*.[337] The Hariri media are funded directly by the owners and often carries advertisements from Hariri-owned companies such as Bank Med amongst others thereby creating synergy. One of the paper's editors is also the personal consultant of former PM Saad Hariri. Moreover, according to a Future TV reporter who also works as a journalist in *Al-Mustakbal,* the readers of the newspaper, which are known to be limited in number, are partisans of the Future movement, some Druze and Lebanese Forces members, which increase or decrease depending on the political situation.[338]

As mentioned above, the financial difficulties facing newspapers has facilitated the transformation of a number of family/individually-owned newspapers into shareholding companies. The renowned liberal *An-Nahar* newspaper – founded in 1933 and run by the Tueni family since – has sold, as mentioned above, 38 percent of its shares to Saadeddine Hariri after having previously bought back 34.5 percent stake owned by Saadeddine's father, Rafik Hariri.[339] Other stakeholders with political aspirations who may be seen as in a different political line politicians such as Issam Fares, owning circa 10 percent of the shares, and the Saudi-Lebanese Prince Walid bin Talal with 11 percent.[340] Despite the variety of

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[336] Author's interview with Jamil Mroueh, then-publisher of The Daily Star, conducted on 5.10.2010.

[337] Although it was difficult to verify the ownership of the pro-Hariri *Al-Liwa'* newspaper, the Angry Arab News Site, which is a useful source of information on the Arab world, claims *Al-Liwa'* is also owned by "Hariri Inc."

[338] Author's interview with Omar Harkous, Al-Mustakbal and Future News journalist, conducted on 10.11.2010.

[339] According to the late Gebran Tueni, he had bought back the shares saying you "when you want to pay for your freedom, it costs you a lot." (2004, 01 February). Q & A: Gebran Tueni. *Executive.* Retrieved from: www.executive-magazine.com/business-finance/business/qa-gebran-tueni (last accessed on 26 October 2014).

[340] Figures were revealed by Ali Hamadeh, a manager and columnist at *An-Nahar* and political talk-show host on Future TV in an interview with the author conducted on 12.10.2010.

shareholders, the newspaper, which was once known for the diversity of voices it offered despite its "liberal" stance, has moved to become more in line with the March 14 coalition under the management of MP Gebran Tueni, its publisher and editor, who was assassinated in 2005. After his assassination, his daughter MP Nayla Tueni succeeded him with the aid of other editors. One of the managing editors, Ali Hamadeh, who also hosted a talk-show on Future News and is a member of the Future Movement argued that Gebran Tueni, "an *An-Nahar* martyr" was one of the founders of March 14 and that is why the content is closer to March 14 but not the newspaper of March 14.[341]

In September 2011, *As-Safir*, the Pan-Arab, left-oriented newspaper with the slogan "a voice for the voiceless, the newspaper of the Arab world in Lebanon and of Lebanon in the Arab world" and a Jamal Abdul Nasser quote on the back page, partnered with Jamal Daniel,[342] an Arab businessman and announced the transformation of the newspaper from "an individually-owned company to a company capable of and ready to barge into the future". The newspaper aims to attract more stakeholders from the ranks of those who respect free expression and "promote the Arab and Palestinian cause, participate in saving the press close to the conscience of the *Ummah* and not the Sultan's mouthpiece".[343] While *As-Safir* is not directly affiliated to any particular political party, they have a clear political stance, which is not only to transmit the news but also to support the philosophy of the resistance against injustice and tyranny. The "resistance media", as an executive labelled the

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[341] Author's interview with Ali Hamadeh, *An-Nahar* columnist and manager conducted on 12. 10.2010.

[342] Jamal Daniel is an affluent Syrian businessman who is also the founder of the US news website *Al-Monitor*. In 2014 the American University of Beirut announced a $32 million donation to the elite institution, "the largest single donation in its 147 year history." AUB Office of Communications. (2014, 2 May). Jamal Daniel and the Levant Foundation commit to the largest gift in AUB's history. Retrieved from: http://www.aub.edu.lb/news/2014/Pages/jd-acc.aspx (last accessed on 16 October 2014).

[343] National News Agency article "Announcement of partnership between *As-Safir* and Jamal Danial" September 19, 2011 regarding the press conference held at the Press Union where the partnership was announced, cf. http://www.nna-leb.gov.lb/print.aspx?id=349262&lang=JOU (last accessed on 03 September 2014).

newspaper, also supports the struggle in Palestine.[344] In addition to having some of its lead journalists leave to set up a more stringent opposition paper, which shall be discussed below, others with a differing point of view to the newspaper's political line, especially regarding local issues, departed due to the deepening political schisms in the country particularly since 2005. According to an *As-Safir* executive, one commentator and the opinion page editor, left to platforms where they feel "more comfortable".[345] Yet, despite the departure of some staff who felt inclined to join newspapers that better represented their political inclinations, *As-Safir* still has a variety of writers with differing point of views,[346] which Salman believes is important to help maintain a wider audience. However in light of the deep polarisation, their audience has also declined. In particular, "the Sunni or Beirut audience", which used to read *As-Safir,* has migrated due to what an *As-Safir* executive called "sectarian fanaticism", despite their keenness to maintain a diverse audience.

As-Safir, which remains one of the leading papers obtaining a share of the advertising, although not for luxury products as its managing editor opined,[347] is, according to several

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[344] Author's interview with Ahmad Talal Salman, Assistant General Manager of *As-Safir*, and son of the owner/founder, conducted on 26.1.2011.

[345] According to Salman, Wissam Saadeh, a former writer at *As-Safir*, who in a matter of a year had his teacher Samir Kassir and uncle George Hawi assassinated, could no longer write in the balanced and professional manner expected and left for *Al-Mustakbal*, which is "more comfortable" for him and where he can express his "emotions". Similarly Houssam Itani, who headed the opinion page, left to another platform more in sync with his political beliefs. Salman regretted their departure and wondered if they should have been more tolerant and accepting.

[346] Salman mentioned Sateh Noureddine, Faisal Salman and Nouhad al-Mashnouq, the latter started writing for *As-Safir* and is an MP belonging to Hariri's parliamentary bloc and was one of Rafik Hariri's consultants.

[347] Talal Salman, the owner and founder of *As-Safir* has referred to his alliance with the Antoine Chouieri Group as dealing with the 'ghoul' or a large capitalist whale. Ahmad Talal Salman, son of the publisher and assistant to the General Manager, in an interview with the author spoke about the difficulty in attracting luxury advertisements due to the slogan of "a voice for the voiceless". "We are seeking to convince them [the advertisers] that this is not accurate and this includes a lot of stereotyping and prejudgement it's true that this is our slogan...but we also get a lot of influential readers who have money and who spend and it's not that if we carry this slogan you cannot reach those people via our platform and we are working [to rectify that]...because it has cost us a big portion of advertising which can reduce our deficit." According to Salman, another factor is the sectarian composition of the country and "the cartel" of advertisers which shall be discussed further below under the section on "media market".

stakeholders, most popular amongst the Shiites and some left-oriented intellectuals.[348]

According to IPSOS' sample, the newspaper was second in 2013 in terms of readership.[349]

While some traditionally family-owned newspapers have developed into shareholding companies with the family still present at the helm, other newspapers have managed to continue either with the support of larger publishing houses to which they belong or by individual efforts. The former type includes the once popular centrist daily *Al-Anwar* and the smaller *El-Sharq* newspaper, which are both supported by publication companies which publish a number of magazines. *Al-Anwar* newspaper was founded by the prominent writer Sai'd Freiha who founded *As-Sayad* publishing house. *As-Sayad* publishes several magazines including *Al-Shabaka* which is distributed widely in the Gulf States and attracts advertisements from GCC states thereby covering the expenses of the newspaper. *Al-Anwar* continues to attract some readers due to its cautious coverage of news and its well-respected, left-leaning editor-in-chief. Another of the family-owned newspapers is *El-Sharq*, which was founded in 1926 continues till today under the ownership and management of the brothers Moeen and Awni El Kaaki. The newspaper is published by *El-Sharq* publishing house which also publishes a number of magazines such as Nadine, Olympiad magazine and Automobile magazine amongst others.

Other newspapers with direct links to political movements that are funded by its owners include *Al-Jumhouriya*, which was first launched in 1986 and stopped due to the civil war, re-launched in 2011. Its owner is former Minister of Defence Elias al-Murr, the son of influential politician Michel Murr and relative of the MTV TV owners. The newspaper is

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[348] This was expressed by a number of interviewees including Ali Hamadeh, Hazem Saghieh, Rami Rayyes amongst others.
[349] IPSOS statistics kindly provided to the author.

186

funded directly by its owner, despite some advertising and the dubious claim[350] by its editor that they are first in terms of sales and subscriptions. According to its editor, the newspaper "speaks in the name of the Christian community" and though it is not March 14, it is close to the coalition.[351]

The partisan newspapers with direct links to the political parties are also funded by them. Amongst these are: *Al-Anba'* weekly – owned and run by the Progressive Socialist Party, *Al-Bina'*[352] – owned and run by the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party, *Al-Massira* magazine – owned and run by the Lebanese Forces and Hezbollah's *al-'Ahd* which became an online news site. The prime readers of these publications are usually partisans.[353]

Meanwhile *Ad-Diyar*, which is owned by the infamous Ayoub, who had previously enjoyed close relations to the Syrian presidents and has acknowledged receiving financial gifts in exchange for favourable or unbiased coverage.[354] His populist newspaper used to reveal "inside" information and sell nearly 20,000 copies per day. This, however, is no longer the case and its editor Ayoub has admitted to effectively be in the "extortion business".[355] According to the newspapers' managing director,[356] receiving funds from sources may lead to compliance or some embarrassment where the newspaper will have to humour the

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[350] According to IPSOS' survey between March and November 2013 excluding the month of Ramadan, *Al-Jumhouriya* was ranked third.

[351] Author's interview with Anthony Geagea, editor-in-chief of *Al-Jumhouriya*, conducted on 7.6.2011.

[352] "The newspaper is considered an official spokesman of the opposition, the resistance and Hezbollah and their arms are our ceiling and red line that is not touched. This is surely the policy of the SSNP party before it being also my position", said its editor-in-chief Kamil Khalil who while is in the opposition, is not a member of the SSNP which owns the newspaper. Author's interview with Khalil conducted on 24.1.2011.

[353] According to PSP *Al-Anba'*s editor Rami Rayyes in an interview with the author, conducted on 20.10.2010, "the areas with strong party presence the paper is distributed strongly of course we don't have to hide this but it is also available and read in other areas". Similarly Kamil Khalil editor of the *Al-Bina'*, the SSNP party newspaper acknowledges without a doubt, the readers are partisans.

[354] Cf. Footnote 331.

[355] The term "extortion business" was used by Duncan McCargo to refer to local newspapers in a province in northern Thailand who would dig "the dirt on local politicians and businesspeople...asking to be paid not to publish it" (McCargo, 2012, p. 201).

[356] Author's interview with Youssef Huwayek, President of the Press Club, former syndicate member and managing director of *Ad-Diyar*, conducted on 30.5.2011.

patron.[357] Indeed, evidence from the study on media ownership patterns in 97 nations, excluding Lebanon, reveal that there exists a "large amenity potential (control benefits) associated with owning media—be it political influence or fame (Djankov, McLiesh, Nenova & Shleifer, 2003, p. 373).

Meanwhile, *Al-Bayrak*[358] and its sister publication *Monday Morning* issued by *Alf-Leila wa Leila* publishing house owned by the former head of the Journalists' Syndicate, the late Melhem Karam, folded on August 1, 2011 after Karam's children could not come to an agreement regarding the inheritance.

Finally, *Al-Balad* and *Al-Akhbar* are two unique newspapers. Both issue in the tabloid size and are amongst the newest publications on the market. While *Al-Balad* is a catch-all "centrist" newspaper part of a much larger media conglomeration, *Al-Akhbar* is a rising star on the press scene in Lebanon and has become an influential opposition daily. The two newspapers are interesting in that they both reveal much about the Lebanese media scene and readers' predilections.

In 2003, *Al-Balad* newspaper, a commercial, ad-funded, politically neutral catch-all daily was launched. In its first year, the newspaper sent free copies to thousands of readers. The newspaper has a high number of subscribers largely due to the many gifts it promises upon subscription and the low subscription and delivery rate. "They pay you to have a subscription and send you a washing machine if you subscribe," said one journalist

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[357] The "envelope culture" in the Arab world is pervasive with Abdel Bari Atwa then-editor-in-chief of the Pan-Arab *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* acknowledging that they are offered millions from several governments (Pintak and Ginges, 2009, p. 165).
[358] *Al-Bayrak* was founded by Sa'id Akl, a poet and writer. The newspaper was later purchased by Melhem Karam in the 1960s. "Folding of Al-Bayrak reveals Lebanese Press Crisis" (Ar.) Nicolas Tohme, *Al-Jazeera* 18/9/2011, cf. http://www.aljazeera.net/mob/f6451603-4dff-4ca1-9c10-122741d17432/1693b184-8f3d-4f21-a6fd-422e1b5d59ff (last accessed on 03 September 2014).

cynically.[359]

Despite dropping from first to fourth widely circulated newspaper in a matter of three years[360] according to its editor-in-chief who comes from a graphic-design background, the newspaper is not breaking even but it is also "not in scary place".[361] It is sustained by the company *Al-Watanieh* which has offices in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and publishes a number of magazines including Marie-Claire, *Al-Waseet, Layalina, Al-Balad* French edition (which has since folded) and Top Gear. While the newspaper reaches the largest number of homes, most stakeholders believe that its "insipid, sort of USA Today"[362] content in a politicised country like Lebanon means its success and impact is in fact limited. The timing of *Al-Balad*'s launch was also somewhat unfortunate as the situation in 2003 was neither politicised nor polarised with little or no disputes. At the time, editors had "headaches" writing headlines and were forced to focus on socio-economic issues as well as sports and "mondanités".[363] In 2004, *Al-Balad* started charging a subscription fee and soon after UN Resolution 1559 demanding the withdrawal of all troops and the disarming of all armed groups in the country was passed, followed by the assassination attempt on MP Marwan Hamadeh's life. In February 2005, former Prime Minister Hariri was assassinated and in 2006 the July war between Lebanon and Israel erupted. The series of crises and milestones left citizens hungry for political and security-related news rather than soft news, which *Al-*

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[359] Author's interview with Khaled Saghieh, then-editor of *Al-Akhbar*, conducted on 19.10.2010. As a general remark, gifts for subscribing to newspapers are of course not unique to Lebanon but a commonly used tool of advertisement in several countries.

[360] According to IPSOS readership "face-to-face survey" which surveyed 2543 adults aged 15 years and above all over Lebanon *Al-Balad* was ranked 1st in 2009 whereas another IPSOS survey conducted in 2013 placed them in fourth place, after *An-Nahar*, *As-Safir* and *Al-Jumhouriya*. The data was kindly provided to the author by IPSOS.

[361] Author's interview with George Gebara, Manging editor, *Al-Balad,* conducted on 20.10.2010.

[362] Author's interview with Dr. Magda Abu-Fadil, American University of Beirut, Journalism Training Programme Director, conducted on 19.1.2011. Abu-Fadil wondered if "anyone remembers stories from *Al-Balad* the next day? But you are bound to remember something from *Al-Akhbar*, or some stinging comment from *An-Nahar* or *As-Safir* or *Ad-Diyar*, which are highly politicised".

[363] Author's interview with Ahmad Talal Salman, Assistant General Manager of *As-Safir*, and son of the owner/founder, conducted on 26.1.2011.

Balad offered. A former staff member[364] argued that *Al-Balad* cannot even be considered as news media and is rather a commercial business primarily publishing advertising nestled amongst a potpourri of stories. While – according to several interviewees – this catch-all approach with a focus on lifestyle, sports and politically balanced coverage "does not work" in Lebanon, its current manager believes the number of subscribers is their gauge. According to its managing editor, to maximise profit, the newspaper decided not to take any political position and abstain from any defamation or coverage of religious and judicial issues to steer clear of problems. In addition to the "balance" they employ deemed by many as bland, *Al-Balad*, according to its editor, revolutionised the approach to newspaper work in so far that they believe the journalist ought to be multi-skilled; were they are able to write, edit and in put it into the software.[365] While some readers enjoy *Al-Balad*'s lifestyle section, people were not hooked on it,[366] largely because it skirts controversial issues and "does not provide things that the general public wants".[367] Despite reports that *Al-Balad* may be folding due to its tumbling subscriptions and financial deficits, the newspaper was still in print at the time of writing.[368]

Diametrically opposed to *Al-Balad* is *Al-Akhbar* with its strident views. Contrary to *Al-Balad*, which launched at a time when apathy and stability reigned, *Al-Akhbar* launched on August 14, 2006, a few days after the end of the July war between Lebanon and Israel. Two editors from the left-oriented *As-Safir* daily launched *Al-Akhbar* with funding from a group of

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[364] An interviewee who asked not to be named on this issue argued that staff were home at 8 or 9 pm to ensure that the newspaper would reach Syria or remote Lebanese towns; therefore the main concern was the advertiser and subscriber rather than content.

[365] Author's interview with George Gebara, Manging editor, *Al-Balad*, conducted on 20.10.2010.

[366] Author's interview with Mirella Hodeib, Lebanon Desk Editor, *The Daily Star*, conducted on 28.1.2011.

[367] Author's interview with Nabil Dajani, American University of Beirut, Professor of Media Studies, conducted on 26.1.2011.

[368] Al-Andari, A., *ǧāʾ dawr „al-balad" wa aḥwāthā: baʿd maḏbaḥat al-LBC* (Arabic for "It is *Al-Balad*'s and its sister companies' turn: after the massacre at LBC"), *Al-Akhbar*, 06 April 2012. Retrieved from: http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/61711 (last accessed on 03 September 2014).

investors of whom only Hassan Khalil, a London-based investment banker, was publicly announced. According to its then-editor, other personal financiers chose to remain anonymous, not because they were Iran or Hezbollah, but because they feared the contrarian paper might harm their political careers.[369] Indeed, a Wikileaks cable revealed that former Prime Minister Najib Mikati provided $150,000 "in start-up capital" for *Al-Akhbar* but is "ashamed" and "disgusted by its barely disguised propaganda at times."[370] Furthermore, according to a report by the Lebanese NGO Maharat,[371] Qatar has also provided funding for the paper up until it assumed its position regarding Syria and decided to withdraw its funding from the largely pro-Syrian *Al-Akhbar* newspaper. Suddenly, the report details, the newspaper started publishing reports criticising the small Gulf emirate. The newspaper's position in favour of the Syrian regime and its restriction on articles censuring it since the start of the Syrian uprising in March 2011 eventually lead to the resignation of Khaled Saghieh, the editor of the newspaper, in addition to others.[372] In spite of the dynamism and diversity of opinions in the paper, columnist Hazem Saghieh's observation that the paper aligns behind one group, in times of crises rings true.[373]

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[369] This and the following statements by Khaled Saghieh, then-editor-in-chief of *Al-Akhbar*, are taken from the author's interview with Saghieh, conducted on 19.10.2010.

[370] Wikileaks cable "Former PM Mikati Insists he Supports Siniora" The cable reveals that the money he acknowledged giving to *Al-Akhbar* was three times the amount he had previously admitted "as part of his overall investment strategy of helping all Lebanese media enough to help ward off unfavourable press." He denied being one of the owners. Retrieved from: http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/11/06BEIRUT3604.html (last accessed on 03 September 2014).

[371] Maharat's Media Sustainability Indicator, 2010/2011 "Developing independent and sustainable media in Lebanon p. 6. Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/u81/rita%20mena%20arabic%20newnew.pdf (last accessed on 03 September 2014).

[372] Indeed, As'ad Abu-Khalil, who writes a weekly column in the Arabic version of *Al-Akhbar,* had two of his articles condemning Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and the Baath party withheld. In spite of this he defended the newspaper against criticism for its pro-Syrian support in the face of some claims that several journalists and columnists were ceasing their contributions to the English and Arabic *Al-Akhbar* as a result. In June 2012, Max Blumenthal a journalist and writer who had been contributing to the Lebanese daily's English website wrote "The right to resist is universal: A farewell to *Al-Akhbar* and Assad's apologists" explaining his decision to stop contributing to the newspaper. Retrieved from: http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/8674 (last accessed on 03 September 2014).

[373] "So, while they draw on the ideological illusion of being with the resistance, the resistance without Hezbollah and

191

According to several interviewees, *Al-Akhbar's* website has proved to be very successful because it provides political, critical content that appeals to the masses rather than to politicians.[374] Today, it can be stated that the newspaper has attracted a considerable readership, whether due to its layout or the content. Particularly the content has at times resulted in legal cases, some of which, the then-editor acknowledged, were due to errors on *Al-Akhbar's* part. While in 2011, the ranking website Alexa reportedly ranked *Al-Akhbar's* website the first online newspaper in Lebanon and rank 21 overall (Melki, Dabbous, Nasser & Mallat, 2012, p. 73), in 2014 it was ranked 8th in terms of news websites and ranked 22 overall.[375] According to its then-editor, one reason behind its success was that unlike other newspapers, the daily does not euphemise. This of course does not mean *Al-Akhbar* itself does not have its own political considerations. The newspaper is publicly in the opposition; it "supports the resistance", with some of its senior staff members having served in the leftist resistance during the civil war (Fawaz, 2013, p. 115). Furthermore, its then-editor conceded that if there was a decision to shut down the newspaper, the political side to which they belong will defend it. While he argued that the fact that they are relatively new and little-known has protected them from direct political interference with objections coming only after publication, his departure following an impasse regarding Syria and the extent of criticism permissible is a reminder of the extent of instrumentalisation in the Lebanese media.

Furthermore, the revelation that former Lebanese Prime Minister and wealthy businessman Najib Mikati contributed sizeably to the newspaper also shows the extent of

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the Shiite sect means nothing", he added. Author's interview with Hazem Saghieh, *Al-Hayat* columnist, conducted on 2.2.2011.

[374] Author's interview with Nabil Dajani, American University of Beirut, Professor of Media Studies, conducted on 26.1.2011.

[375] Cf. http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/LB (last accessed on 04 May 2014).

their relations. While Saghieh, said he personally did not respond to calls, despite once receiving a call from a Hezbollah MP, he prophesied his untimely departure from the newspaper acknowledging that as the newspaper grows and its political relations develop it will likely be less immune to political intervention.[376]

Yet, as mentioned previously, the newspaper's political inclinations in support of the resistance does not mean that the journalists are partisans or all from the same political leaning. Indeed, the newspaper is regarded as a forum for leftists, liberals and some Islamists. Although it is politically within the same camp as the March 8 coalition, it is also critical toward this coalition particularly on social and economic issues where its stances do not correspond to the large March 8 parties. The newspaper's columnists are also diverse, ranging from the caustic anti-imperialist, US-based professor As'ad Abu-Khalil to Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) columnist Jean Aziz who also holds the position of director of news and political programming at OTV, the FPM's television channel.

In 2011, the newspaper launched an English version and has cited plans to expand to the Gulf in order to attract advertising there as a "financial solution". However, how it would manage in light of substantial political differences on Syria remains in question. Sales and subscriptions, according to its editor, have not managed to cover the deficit, which is paid by the owners. According to IPSOS, the circulation rate of *Al-Akhbar* was ranked in 8th place in 2012 and 5th in 2014, but its online readership is well ahead of other newspapers.

While detailed audience research remains deficient, its then-editor believes that its youthful nature has contributed to its online success in so far that it receives more visits than other dailies and it appeals to an Arab audience. According to its editor, Mount Lebanon is the

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[376] Author's interview with Khaled Saghieh, then-editor of *Al-Akhbar*, conducted on 19.10.2010.

geographical area where it sells most although, many believe it is most popular with Shiite readers, leftists and some "Aounists".[377]

The relative success of *Al-Akhbar* proves that in a politicised culture as the one that exists in Lebanon and with regards to political news, politicised and engaged media , are more likely to succeed than the liberal catch-all media exemplified in Lebanon by *Al-Balad*, which offers news and "lifestyle" in a balanced manner and aims to remain apolitical.

Still, the low circulation rates and limited advertising revenues have meant that the industry has had to yield to the questionable means of income generation, either by selling shares to politicians or by accepting political money (Fawaz, 2013, p. 114).[378]

Thus, Rugh's claim that the Lebanese press "achieved sufficient variety and balance within their own pages so that observers often have difficulty identifying a clear bias and some even call them objective," is erroneous (2004, pp. 90-91). While the bleak view that the industry is wholly subservient to political trends and is, in essence, "his Master's voice"[379] may have been challenged recently by the relative success of *Al-Akhbar*, it remains to be seen if this may help invigorate the press in Lebanon and their potential in playing a more influential role.[380]

In light of the above discussion, it is certain that the Lebanese media system, in terms of its press and broadcasting, is one which is externally plural and where diversity is expressed

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[377] Author's interview with Hazem Saghieh, *Al-Hayat,* columnist, conducted on 2.2.2011.
[378] In the author's interview with Khaled Saghieh, then-Editor of *Al-Akhbar*, Saghieh noted that profit can be made from newspapers and that not all political money is used for the newspaper, but rather goes to the owners of the newspapers. "So if I have a paper I go beg on its behalf get two million, I close the deficit and take one million," he said.
[379] Author's interview with Jamil Mroueh, The Daily Star, former owner and publisher, conducted on 5.10.2010.
[380] The Lebanese press claim some credit for the downfall of the first government after independence, and it is alleged that Gamal Abdul Nasser did not sleep before he had copies of Lebanese newspapers on his pillow, according to Khalil Khoury, editor of *El-Sharq* and interviewed by the author on 27.10.2010.

on the level of the whole system rather than in each media system. While the media relations to oligarchs, *Zuʿamāʾ*, parties, religious institutions, influential families and corporations may in some way represent the diversity that exists on the level of the state, it is worth questioning the thin line between "healthy diversity" and "unhealthy dissonance" dominated by elites rather than the public (Karppinen, 2007, p. 495). Even the internet, which was expected to widen the Lebanese public sphere and has indeed allowed for some independent marginalised voices to find a platform, is dominated by the same elite-serving partisan news sources, which have simply converged online (Melki et al., 2012, p. 29).

Although the journalistic role orientations particularly that of directors of news and political programming were discussed above as an indicator of close links between the political players and the media, this shall be further discussed below as it also pertains to the parameter of professionalism. Hallin and Mancini used the differentiation theory in an attempt to show that a high level of professionalization of journalism means that journalism "is differentiated as an institution and form of practice" from politics (2004, p. 80). They argue that where political parallelism is very high, with media organizations closely tied to political organizations and journalists deeply involved in party politics, professionalization is likely to be low because journalists lack autonomy. Furthermore, journalism is likely to lack a distinct sense of purpose – apart from the goals of the political actors with which the media are affiliated (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 38). While in some cases this may well be true, it does not necessarily follow that journalists who are involved in the political process are unprofessional and lack autonomy. While they acknowledge the possibility of "coexistence" between commentary-journalism and external pluralism in the Northern European states with a high standard of journalistic values, they seem to privilege the view

of that journalists are to be "objective" rather than politically engaged as Weber regarded it (Hardt, 2001, p. 134; Weber, 1999, pp. 416- 417). Parallel to that, they belittle the distinct possibility of instrumentalisation at the hands of commercial owners. The following section shall examine the level of professionalism in Lebanon in light of the high political parallelism and a highly engaged journalistic body.

4.3 Professionalism

The question this section addresses is whether professionalization can be fairly and empirically gauged and, if so, whether claims of professionalization can be attributed to entire national systems, which are "internally complex and variegated, dynamic and changing" (Hardy, 2008, p. 55).

To assess this variable, Hallin and Mancini suggest the following four indicators: autonomy, distinct professional norms, a public service orientation and the degree of instrumentalisation. While instrumentalisation and autonomy are useful indicators, dimensions such as the existence of professional norms, as well as the public service orientation provide a challenge in measuring professionalization due to the discrepancy between ideals and practices. Therefore rather than relying on the "mythical (self-) representations of journalists" (Zelizer, 2004, p. 112), quasi-hagiographic documentation of journalistic coverage and the mere existence of idealistic codes of ethics,[381] there are several other dimensions that can help analyse what concepts "do" and "what counts as truth" rather than mere words and their meanings (Rose, 1999, p. 30).

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[381] Poland, for instance, has three journalists' associations and three codes of ethics, none of which are effectively monitored (Eberwein et al. 2011, p. 17). This and many similar examples, emphasise the importance of assessing these associations and the efficiency of accountability systems rather than their mere existence.

Further indicators exploring the efficiency of press associations and unions, the scope of media NGOs and training provided may prove useful. In addition to that, taking into consideration the perception of journalists in a given system as well as the effectiveness of ethical codes and accountability systems can also be indicators.

Considering the autonomy of the journalistic profession in Lebanon, it is first essential to assess the professional organizations, namely the Press Union and the Journalists' Syndicate, which congregate under the umbrella of the Press Federation. The first syndicate in Lebanon dates back before the foundation of the Lebanese Republic in 1943. However, the structure that currently exists was delineated in the 1962 Press Law.[382] At the helm of the syndicate for nearly 50 years was Melhem Karam, who effectively embodied the syndicate.[383] Karam's death in May 2010 was followed by claims of corruption, lawsuits against the syndicate, a battle over its leadership and the hope that the "syndicate" would finally develop into an institution.[384]

While members of the board concur that some "mistakes" and "gaps" existed, other stakeholders have revealed a catalogue of violations ranging from the arbitrary admission to the syndicate roll, to violations relating to the internal system. Many stakeholders interviewed said some individuals were admitted to the syndicate roll on the condition they would re-elect Karam.[385]

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[382] Article 77 of the 1962 Lebanese Press Law, which remains in force today, stipulates that the profession is to be organised into two syndicates, one for the journalists and one for the owners and responsible directors. Articles 77-98 in the Press Law describe the procedures and conditions for these two bodies, their membership and elections as well as the joint Press Union.
[383] Author's interview with Joseph El-Kosseify, member of the administrative council of the Lebanese Journalists' Syndicate, conducted on 21.10.2010.
[384] Ibid.
[385] Several stakeholders including May Chidiac, Youssef Huwayek, Kamil Khalil, amongst others voiced their concerns in interviews conducted by the author.

Yet due to the lack of consensus on the successor, the council decided to continue their term with the vice-president filling in the post till the elections held in mid-2012. Several members who served under Karam were re-elected to the administrative board with some new faces being voted in.[386] According to one of the candidates[387] who was elected to the board, priorities include readdressing the journalists' roll, developing the internal bylaws and systems, restoring privileges for journalists such as deductions on phone bills and municipality taxes as well as renting headquarters for the Syndicate. Until recently, the headquarters were located in a building owned by Karam, which also housed the publications and newspapers he owned. One additional and glaring violation was the fact that while members of the Journalists' Syndicate are not allowed to own or serve as responsible directors of newspapers, ironically the long-serving head, Karam, owned several newspapers, which folded shortly after his death.[388]

The difficulty of accession to the syndicate roll was a common complaint by most journalists including current members. Indeed, according to its assistant manager, who is a member, half of *As-Safir*'s staff, are not registered in the syndicate.[389] Saghieh, then-editor of *Al-Akhbar,* said when they launched the newspaper, new members were admitted to the Syndicate based on confessional and newspaper quotas. Yet the majority, himself included,

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[386] "Elias Aoun takes helm of Journalists Union". The Daily Star, 02 June 2012. Retrieved from:
http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Jun-02/175449-elias-aoun-takes-helm-of-journalists-union.ashx#axzz2FFCaMlYP (last accessed on 04 September 2014).

[387] Author's interview with Joseph El-Kosseify, member of the Syndicate's administrative council, conducted on 21.10.2010. Similarly, another member Arafat Hijazi, said the amendments were shared with the Minister of Information in accordance with Protocol and they are preparing for a "free and fair elections".

[388] As per the 1962 Press Law, Section IV, Ch.2, article 79 stipulates that the Press Union are to be composed of publishers or owners or responsible directors of publications. Meanwhile, Section IV, Chapter 3, article 89 stipulates that the Journalists Syndicate ought to be composed of editors or journalists. The reality however is that Karam owned several publications. Furthermore, Mohammad Baalbacki, the head of the Press Union, is neither a publisher nor a responsible director. According to Youssef Huwayek, who filed a lawsuit against the Journalists' Syndicate for being omitted from the roll, there are other members who also own publications and therefore should not be allowed to be members.

[389] Author's interview with Ahmad Talal Salman, *As-Safir* Assistant to the General Manager, conducted on 26.1.2011.

remain outside the Syndicate, where even the most basic privileges are linked to the loyalty to the syndicate leader.[390] Others deny[391] that there were quotas or criteria for journalists to be accepted other than the patron-client calculations (Braune, 2005, p.91). While it is difficult to ascertain the extent of these violations, several stakeholders claimed that while several members are either not journalists or unemployed,[392] the majority of journalists working in Lebanon remain outside the Syndicate (Braune 2005, p. 95). One interviewee estimated that "70 percent of the journalistic body" are not members.[393]

In addition to the difficulty of accession due to the wide gap between written and de-facto criteria,[394] nearly 1000-1200 journalists[395] working for the audio-visual media, a much larger body than the press corps, are barred from joining the Journalists' Syndicate and do not have their own professional union. One of the obstacles facing a potential syndicate for audio-visual media workers is the variety of jobs that exist in broadcasting. A syndicate for all audio-visual workers joining technicians, reporters, and producers is seen as counter-productive. While some argue reporters should be able to join the Journalists' Syndicate, the Syndicate has thus far refused this proposal. Managers and owners of the broadcasting media are also regarded as not belonging to the Press Union as TV work is "different". In an attempt to remedy the "tragic" situation, some audio-visual media professionals convened

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[390] Author's interview with Khaled Saghieh, then-editor of *Al-Akhbar*, conducted on 19.10.2010.

[391] Author's interview with Kamil Khalil, editor-in-chief of *Al-Bina'* and member of the syndicate since 1986, conducted on 24.1.2011.

[392] Author's interview with Saad Kiwan, Editor in chief of *El-Nashra*, online newspaper and Jean Aziz, OTV Director of News and Political Programming, conducted on 21.10.2010 and 29.10.2010 respectively.

[393] Author's interview with Rami Rayyes, editor-in-chief of *Al-Anba'* and media director of the Progressive Socialist Party, conducted on 20.10.2010. He joined the syndicate just before the death of Melhem Karam and upon the latter's insistence but insists "it does not make a big difference anyway."

[394] According to Article 22 of the Press Law, journalists should have a Lebanese high school diploma or equivalent or have served as journalists for four years, to be listed as an intern or have a degree in Journalism from the Lebanese University. Potential members are supposed to have a degree in journalism from the Lebanese University and are exempted from a traineeship. Graduates holding a Bachelor's degree in other fields are subjected to one year traineeship.

[395] Approximate figure given by Ali Hamadeh, *An-Nahar* columnist and manager during the interview with author, conducted on 12.10.2010.

and attempted to set up a syndicate for reporters in their field. However, due to the sharp political polarisation and some personal problems, the Minister of Labour eventually received three notifications from three different groups, who could not agree on a common syndicate. The President of the Press Club recounted how the then-Minister of Labour asked him to try and reconcile the groups without avail. The Minister therefore rejected the requests as he didn't want to "consecrate" a division and have two or three competing syndicates for broadcasting staff.[396] Due to the thorniness of this issue and the wider political circumstances in a nation where "politics always dominates", this issue remains unresolved.[397]

In addition to the need for professional organisation and representation, one TV executive cited a case when one of their reporters was arrested and accused of "impersonating a journalist" because he was neither a member of the Press Syndicate.[398] A union for broadcasters does not exist, despite several attempts to set up one.[399] Still some journalists expressed no interest in joining the extant syndicate as there are little or no benefits[400] in light of its limited role.[401]

In effect, journalists have been left without protection or professional representation. This has compelled them to rely on the nature of the system,[402] their corporations and

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[396] One stakeholder argued there is no need or role for unions if the struggle and distrust amongst the "decayed" journalistic body was to be transferred into groups labelled as "unions" as union work, he stated, loses its purpose in such a divisive atmosphere. Author's interview with Ali Rammal, Lebanese University, Media and Communications Department, Professor, conducted on 27.10.2010.

[397] According to one interviewee, in light of the situation in the country and the region, rights and demanding a union are deemed trivial. Author's interview with news anchor and former talk show Najat Sharaffeddine, Future TV, conducted on 6.6.2011.

[398] Author's interview with Karma Khayyat, Deputy Director of News and Political Programming at *Al-Jadeed* TV and daughter of owner Tahsin Khayyat, conducted on 28.10.2010.

[399] The unsuccessful attempts at setting up a syndicate for broadcast journalists will be discussed in the pages below.

[400] Author's interview with Anthony Geagea, editor-in-chief of *Al Joumhouria,* conducted on 7.6.2011.

[401] Author's interview with Ziad Majed, Researcher and lecturer, American University of Paris, conducted on 05.11.2010.

[402] Author's interview with Michael Young, opinion editor, *The Daily Star*, conducted on 27.9.2010.

"godfather-like figures", who in times of need may step in and assist a journalist in a non-institutional, patron-client fashion.[403] The mass dismissal of staff in recent years from several corporations including LBC's Productions and Acquisitions Company accentuated the need for such a body. The intervention by the Ministry of Labour and religious figures were fruitless.

While some have credited Karam with offering some services and assistance such as sending flowers to funerals, issuing obituaries or visiting journalists in hospital,[404] these were largely seen as inadequate and symbolic in nature. Interviewees expressed hopes that the post-Karam era would be more fruitful. However, many are also sceptical that change will come at the hands of members of the administrative council, who served as members for several years and could not or would not affect change.[405]

However, a member of the administrative council[406] indicated that the Syndicate was instrumental in amending the verdicts in article 104 of the Press Law and were behind stopping pre-emptive prison sentences and the suspension of newspapers. He also claimed the syndicate and its leader assisted those who were made redundant when requested to do so and also expressed his surprise that the complaints have surfaced only after the death of the syndicate leader whereas there "was quasi-absolute acceptance of his leadership" prior to his death.[407] Furthermore, according to the then-Minister of Information, the Press Union

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[403] Author's interview with Khaled Saghieh, then-editor of *Al-Akhbar*, conducted on 19.10.2010.

[404] According to Future News reporter Omar Harkous who was physically assaulted in 2008, Karam visited him in the hospital and promised that the syndicate will be with him in court. However, these promises did not materialise. Author's interview with Omar Harkous conducted on 10.11.2010.

[405] Author's interview with Anthony Geagea, editor-in-chief of *Al-Jumhouriyyah* conducted on 7.6.2011.Geagea joined the syndicate in 2008 after a thirty years career in journalism.

[406] Author's interview with Joseph El-Kosseify, member of the administrative council, Lebanese Journalists' Syndicate, conducted on 21.10.2010.

[407] Ibid.

and Journalists' Syndicate primary concern regarding the media laws was that the practice of the profession should remain limited to members of the syndicate.[408]

The divisions afflicting the professional body bring to mind Kiwan's view that a "communal society" rather than a civil society exists in Lebanon (1993). This cynical view is further corroborated by columnist and writer Hazem Saghieh, who argued that there is no journalistic body outside of the sects.[409] "Rather than civil society, a term too grand for a divided society, we are a collection of mini-civil societies for each sect," he said. This "gangrene" afflicting the journalistic body, has made the organisation of the profession all the more difficult, and has left the body weakened with very little camaraderie.[410]

Meanwhile, the Press Union was created by law as a forum for newspaper owners or their responsible directors to help facilitate relations between the owners of newspapers, their relationship to the market and to the political authorities.[411] The Press Union and the Journalists' Syndicate meet under the Press Federation, which is headed by the Press Union. While there are instances when the Press Union is credited with having defended freedoms, at other times, it has been perceived as weak, due to the political situation in the country.

 A member till October 2010, the former owner of The Daily Star placed "a big negative responsibility" on the union for failing to establish a forum for the industry.[412] By most accounts, the journalistic organisations in Lebanon seem to trudge along, offering very little to the work force and the profession. In addition to the weak institutions, journalists lack a

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[408] Author's interview with the then-Minister of Information, Tarek Mitri, conducted on 21.5.2011.
[409] Author's interview with Hazem Saghieh, columnist, *Al-Hayat*, conducted on 2.2.2011.
[410] Author's interview with Ghayath Yazbeck, Director of News and Political Programming, MTV, conducted on 31.1.2011.
[411] As the Journalists' Syndicate, the 1962 Press Law (article 77) stipulated the formation of the Press Union for owners and responsible directors of the publications. Article 79 to 88 inclusive put forth the duties of the Union and delineates the election processes.
[412] Author's interview with Jamil Mroueh, then-publisher of The Daily Star, conducted on 5.10.2010.

pension plan and any legal protections rendering them more vulnerable both legally and economically.[413]

While there have been calls to dissolve both,[414] this seems unlikely in light of the status quo, where a balance is struck by customarily having a Christian head the Journalists' Syndicate and a Muslim, the Press Union.[415] Instead, according to one interviewee, a futile "attempt to patch-up" the two "sclerosed" organisations seems to be underway, but is unlikely to succeed due to the lack of political will.[416] The mass dismissals due to the financial downturn as well as the liquidation of LBC's Productions and Acquisitions Company have been cited as examples justifying the importance of having a syndicate. While the professional organizations, clubs and free press groups have taken a symbolic stance and provided these journalists with platforms, these organisations have proven they are by no means *ersatz* syndicates.

Amongst the groups that have formed in parallel to the largely ineffectual syndicate is the Association of Media Graduates set up by Amer Mashmousheh in 1972. Its members are graduates of the Lebanese University Media and Communications department. Its *raison d'être* was to critique the union's lamentable modus operandi and attempt to fill the gap. Mashmousheh concurred that they were not successful due to what he said was Karam's financial strength.[417] A member of the "inactive association", however, questioned the

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[413] Author's interview with Khalil Khoury, *El-Sharq* newspaper, Editor-in-Chief, conducted on 27.10.2010.
[414] Author's interview with Kamil Khalil, *Al-Bina',* Editor-in-Chief, conducted on 24.1.2011.
[415] Author's interview with Dr. Magda Abu-Fadil, American University of Beirut, Journalism Training Programme, Director, conducted on 19.1.2011.
[416] Author's interview with Jean Aziz, *OTV*, Director of News and Political Programming, conducted on 29.10.2010.
[417] Author's interview with Author's interview with Dr. Amer Mashmousheh, President of the Association of Media Graduates, *Al-Liwa'* editor and university professor conducted on 27.1.2011.

purpose of forming such bodies or "shops", which he believes increase the fragmentation and may have been formed as a means of financial profit, influence or even prestige.[418]

Meanwhile the Press Club, deemed as the equivalent of the Association but mainly catering to Christian journalists, was set up by Youssef Huwayek in 1993 to bring together media graduates, assist them in finding jobs as well as hosting conferences. While Huwayek argues that they have a diverse group of members, he concedes that the club is no substitute for a union, which is why he has filed legal suits against the syndicate after several altercations with its board and *Nakib*.[419] Yet another outfit is the press freedom NGO established in 2007 to commemorate historian and columnist Samir Kassir, who was assassinated in 2005. Under the name "SKeyes", it monitors all violations on free expression in the Middle East region. Journalists Against Violence (JAV) is another group formed in 2008 after the May 7 events in Lebanon.[420] This organisation aims to defend media and public freedoms and often releases statements in support of journalists and their "freedoms" which they deem intrinsic to Lebanon's moral value. The group is politically affiliated to the March 14 coalition.[421]

Another non-governmental organisation, the *Maharat* Foundation, has led on the media law reform initiative and consists of senior journalists. The foundation monitors violations of the right to free expression, conduct training and lobby on media related activities. While their effort on the media law reform debate has been admirable, it remains to be seen if the outcome will fit the aspiration, for effectively, they are demanding change from the elite

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[418] Author's interview with Abbas Daher, Director of News and Political Programmes, *NBN*, conducted on 4.2.2011.
[419] Arabic for "Syndicate head".
[420] On May 7, 2008 an armed conflict erupted in Lebanon. Armed members of the opposition groups Hezbollah, Amal and the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party forced media affiliated to Hariri off the air.
[421] The author's interview with JAV director Charles Jabbour was held in the March 14 headquarters on 30.5.2011. The director acknowledged the political connection of JAV but said it is not at the administrative or organisational level.

who own the media corporations. This essentially renders demands for change at odds with the social and political reality.[422]

Whether these organizations are "vanity projects" (McCargo, 2012, p. 215), seek financial profit or change emanating from genuine concern for the state of the Lebanese media, what is certain is that their impact has largely been limited to mere rhetoric. The disarray afflicting the professional journalistic organizations aside, many still concur that Lebanese journalists remain in demand in the Arab world for their professional prowess. The complaints often lamenting the state of Lebanese journalists' "professionalism" in fact refer to their partiality and ethics – or lack thereof. Due to the political parallelism of the media and the formal and informal political and sectarian pressures, some journalists are perceived to have become "mortgaged to whoever is subsidising them" and are therefore deemed unethical.[423] This brings up again professionalism as an indicator and the problem that arises in attempting to asses it empirically in a media system. The weakened professional organisations, the lack of job-security, and the generally low salaries, despite the wide differences in what is mainly a labour market governed by a model of "supply and demand", has made some journalists "vulnerable to possible conflicts of interest and outright corruption" (Amin, 2002, p. 127).

Despite the fact that Lebanese journalists, technicians, directors and editors are in high demand in the Arab world, a young director of news and political programming referred to

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[422] Author's interview with Ali Rammal, Lebanese University, Media and Communications Department, Professor, conducted on 27.10.2010.
[423] Author's interview with Nabil Dajani, American University of Beirut, Professor of Media Studies, conducted on January 26, 2011.

the brain drain as one reason explaining the "depression"[424] in the Lebanese media where amateurs and mediocre but well-connected journalists are left behind.[425]

Another factor influencing the quality of the media content is the fact that most correspondents and reporters refuse to stay in their position for more than two years and aim to move on to becoming presenters or managers.[426] While the flight of senior journalists and reporters to regional satellite channels offering more lucrative packages is extant, many also remain in Lebanon.[427] Contrary to general belief, while most salaries particularly in the press and radio are low, there is also diversity in payments as well as other sources of income, such as by working more than one job. It is *de rigueur* to have journalists juggling a number of jobs which may pose a conflict of interest.[428] As mentioned above, corruption is also rife with some journalists accepting money, gifts or services either to write positively about someone or to cease attacking politicians and commercial institutions such as banks, for instance.[429]

Another problem often cited afflicting the Lebanese media is regarding "sourcing" or the publishing of unsourced information. An extreme form of beat systems, where information granted by politicians to "loyal media" in a "symbiotic" relationship, is at play (Molotch, Protess & Gordon, 1987, p. 58). "Leaks", privileged information or "hearsay" is a common

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[424] Word used by editor-in-chief of *Al-Jumhouriya*, Anthony Geagea, in interview with author conducted on 7.6.2011.
[425] Author's interview with Abbas Daher, NBN, Director of News and Political Programmes, conducted on 4.2.2011.
[426] Author's interview with Tania Mehanna, LBC, Senior reporter, conducted on 28.5.2011.
[427] Assistant General Manager of *As-Safir* Ahmad Salman also complained about this trend where London or Gulf-based newspapers lure trained journalists by offering threefold the salary with insurance, a retirement plan and less work. "If he is not a fighter or one who enjoys poverty he packs his bag and moves to London and has his fun", he said. Author's interview with Salman, conducted on 26.1.2011.
[428] According to Dr. Magda Abu-Fadil, American University of Beirut, Journalism Training Programme, Director, in an interview conducted with the author on 19.1.2011, it is not uncommon to have journalists or columnists who work as a "spokesperson or press attaché" for a politician or a minister.
[429] Author's interview with Tania Mehanna, Senior reporter, *LBC*, conducted on 28.5.2011 and Youssef Huwayek, President of the Press Club and responsible director of *Ad-Diyar*, conducted on 30.5.2011. Meanwhile in an interview with Kamil Khalil, *Al-Bina'*, editor-in-chief, conducted on 24.1.2011, the interviewee commented about the lavish lifestyles and luxurious homes some journalists have, which he believes is a sign that they are getting paid from other sources.

feature in the Lebanese media (Nötzold, 2009, p. 287). Rather than inform, said one observer,[430] the information is often meant to destroy the opponent and serves as another form of what he called "psychological warfare".[431] Still, as argued earlier, it is unjust to make sweeping statements about a complex and diverse system, where some professional journalists, 70% according to a study conducted by a media researcher, challenge the restrictions imposed on them, attempt to include a variety of voices and suspend judgement when reporting.[432] Indeed, many journalists in Lebanon regard their job as a "calling" (Nötzold, 2009, p. 319) however are often left frustrated as they tilt at windmills (à la Don Quichotte) and face power struggles they cannot win.

In addition to the American University of Beirut's *Journalism Training Programme*, which receives funding to organize pro-bono training workshops, there are other organizations such as BBC World Service, Thomson Reuters, *Al-Jazeera* and UNESCO who offer trainings in which journalists and news corporations participate. The Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ) is a regional organisation training journalists on investigative journalism all over the Arab world. The formula for success, according to one of its founders, has been skirting political issues and focusing investigative work on everyday life issues such as corruption and drug addiction.[433] Another training centre, the May Chidiac Foundation, was launched by the eponymous May Chidiac, and offers training programmes, lectures and seminars aimed at graduates of media departments who desire the necessary skills to find

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[430] Author's interview with Ali Rammal, Lebanese University, Media and Communications Department, Professor, conducted on 27.10.2010.

[431] "It is their daily bread to uncover dirt on others," said Dr. Magda Abu-Fadil, American University of Beirut, Journalism Training Programme Director, in an interview with the author conducted on 19.1.2011.

[432] Data revealed in author's interview with Jad Melki, American University of Beirut, Media Studies, Assistant Professor, conducted on 3.2.2011.

[433] Author's interview with Nabil Dajani, American University of Beirut, Media Studies, Professor, conducted on 26.1.2011. Dajani was one of ARIJ's founders.

work opportunities.[434] In-house training is rare due to a lack of resources. Some training, come in response to "crises" such as a dip in ratings.[435] Meanwhile, the *An-Nahar* training centre has ceased its regular activities due to the financial crisis facing most media corporations. In addition to financial considerations, several editors conceded that another reason they do not invest in training is that journalists are not bound to the corporation and often leave for a better offer after they have been trained and taught. "In the end, we are not Caritas", said one editor candidly.[436] Junior journalists therefore often "learn on the job" and begin their careers with an internship, varying in length between three and six months.

Media education programmes attract circa 2.5 percent[437] of the total body of university students in the country. A common complaint regarding media education is the curricular imbalance with a focus on theory and very little practical work.[438] The several media programmes on offer have also faced a shortage of qualified teaching staff (Melki, 2009 p. 677). The theory-focused media education necessitates a period of training to bridge the gap that amateur journalists face when starting work. Finally, although media ethics is covered in seven out of 12 universities offering media studies (Pies, 2008, pp. 171-172), issues such as blackmail and conflicts of interest prevail in the Lebanese journalistic body.

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[434] Author's interview with May Chidiac, Director of May Chidiac Foundation, Lecturer at Notre-Dame University and former talk-show host and news anchor, conducted on 4.6.2011.

[435] LBCI brought in trainers for its news bulletin after a dip in ratings. Author's interview with Pierre Daher, owner and general manager, *LBC*, conducted on 14.9.2011.

[436] Author's interview with Kamil Khalil, *Al-Bina'*, editor-in-chief, conducted on 24.1.2011.

[437] According to a "student demographic analysis", the most popular media-related academic programmes are advertising and marketing, followed by broadcast journalism and public relations. Enrollment in the print journalism programmes is, however, on the decline (Melki, 2009, p. 686).

[438] A curricular analysis conducted by Jad Melki revealed that three universities offered practical programmes (Lebanese University, University of Balamand, and the American University of Science and Technology), one was purely "liberal", meaning it focused on theory and research (American University of Beirut), and two were liberal-professional (Lebanese American University and Notre-Dame University) (Melki, 2009, p. 680).

This brings up the issue of media accountability systems and quality control. While the Lebanese Press Federation "continues to hang on to a ludicrous"[439] code of ethics penned in 1974, there had been a number of attempts to promulgate a new code of honour that would unanimously be adopted by Lebanese media. In consultation with several stakeholders including the press union and the NAVC, UNESCO suggested a charter. This, however, was not adopted by all media outlets.[440] This latest attempt was spearheaded by then-Minister of Information Tarek Mitri. He proposed a legal or moral authority consisting of "wise men and women" that would help settle out of court disputes, guide the judiciary and ensure that the code of ethics is respected by serving as a resort for those who wish to complain.[441] With the introduction of an instrument of quality control, the aim was to make it easier for the judiciary, which is ill-equipped and often have to resort to the harsh and archaic articles in the penal code on issues of defamation, libel and public good.[442] Amongst the factors the minister wished to include in the code were principles which some thought were superfluous, others an attempt to curtail freedoms. Differentiating between opinion and news was one suggestion which they opposed arguing that neutrality in the face of Zionist occupation is untenable. While Mitri claimed that "80% of the media agreed", four including *Al-Akhbar*, *As-Safir*, *Al-Jadeed* TV and OTV objected. These outlets also attacked the Minister for subtly attempting to censor the media by suggesting this body, in light of the difficulty in pushing forth a repressive law through parliament. The stringent defiance, reasoned the Director of the NAVC, was due to the journalists' suspicion of state intervention in the

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[439] Author's interview with Dr. Magda Abu-Fadil, American University of Beirut, Journalism Training Programme Director, conducted on 19.1.2011. Abu-Fadil called the code ludicrous and the head of the Press Federation "a Neanderthal" who should've been ousted a long time ago".
[440] Author's interview with George Awad, UNESCO, conducted on 3.6.2011.
[441] Author's interview with then-Minister of Information, Tarek Mitri, conducted on May 21, 2011.
[442] One example he gave is the penal code article barring kissing in public, which is tolerated.

media.[443] Indeed one of those outlets, which opposed Mitri's initiative, was *Al-Jadeed* TV which is renowned for its bold, coverage of scandals and leaks. Its feisty director of political programmes argued that upon scrutiny, the suggested code of ethics aimed to restrict the media and the publication of news. For instance, one of the articles put forth suggested restraint in the coverage of religious leaders as well as issues that harm national security. This, she, argues limits the media from playing its role as a monitoring power.[444] Another executive at the station reiterated the view that the code aimed to gag journalists and was rejected because they know how to do their jobs.[445]

While most editors and directors interviewed referred to the importance of ethics and prided themselves on having such codes, with one newspaper even publishing an ombudsman column,[446] the reality is that "codes of ethics come and go. They are interpreted a zillion different ways...The problem is not just codes of ethics, it's the implementation thereof."[447] This resistance against any attempt – be it legal or ethical – to fetter the media, conjures up former Prime Minister Hoss' oft-cited statement that Lebanon has much freedom, and very little democracy. It also evokes the tendency of "interventionism" amongst journalists from developing societies, where journalists strive to affect change in their respective society (Hanitzsch et. al., 2011, p. 281).

Here it is worth discussing the role orientation of journalists further, which relates to their level of professionalization. In light of the entanglement between politics and the media on

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[443] Author's interview with Abdul-Hadi Mahfouz, *NAVC* director, conducted on 25.5.2011.

[444] In the author's interview with Maryam Al-Bassam, *Al-Jadeed,* Director of News and Political Programming, conducted on 6.6.2011, she argued that reporting on the corruption in *dār al-fatwa*, the highest Sunni authority in Lebanon, does not constitute a personal attack on the Mufti as a religious leader.

[445] Author's interview with Karma Khayyat, *Al-Jadeed*, Deputy Director of News and Political Programming, conducted on 28.10.2010. Khayyat is also the daughter of owner Tahsin Khayyat.

[446] Author's interview with Michael Young, The Daily Star, opinion-editor, conducted on 27.9.2010. He suggested the column but due to colleagues' disgruntlement with it, it was removed three months later.

[447] Author's interview with Dr. Magda Abu-Fadil, American University of Beirut, Journalism Training Programme Director, conducted on 19.1.2011.

the ideological level, as well as on the very basic level of sustainability, the Lebanese media cannot all survive without the financial assistance provided by non-state actors. In all their varieties, journalists, generally, have been rendered political actors, extensions of patrons and the political class and in some cases "employees".[448] Most journalists interviewed perceived their role as that of activists,[449] serving as "mediators" and *journalistes engagés*, denouncing violence and promoting peace.[450] While some argued that there are causes that demand journalists to take a stance with such as autonomy, freedom, bread, the environment and the like, other divisive issues argued one seasoned talk-show host, ought to be presented objectively.[451]

The aggrandised perception of journalists of "crusading reporters" (Soloski, 1989, p. 207) reinforcing freedoms contrast with the traditional Arab media's roles. Historically, the Arab world's journalists either fulfilled a developmental role (Mellor, 2008, p. 471), or the role epitomised by the slogan "no voice is above the voice of the battle", where the media are loyalist and serve as government mouthpiece (Pintak & Ginges, 2009, p. 164).[452] This binary, however, has been challenged by technological developments, which for the most part has shattered the "triangle of taboos- politics, sex and religion" (Hafez, 2008b, p. 322). In Lebanon, the interventionist approach reigns with journalists normatively regarding their job "a refined mission",[453] where journalists work to direct, enlighten and educate public opinion. Despite the generally low-wages, this profession, continues to attract young graduates. It remains an enticing profession mainly because in a small country like

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[448] Author's interview with Saad Kiwan, then-director of SKeyes, and journalist, conducted on 21.10.2010.
[449] Author's interview with Hanin Ghaddar, *Now Lebanon*, editor-in-chief, conducted on 5.10.2010.
[450] Author's interview with Michel Hajji-Georgiou, *L'Orient-le-Jour*, columnist, conducted on 18.5.2011.
[451] Author's interview with Marcel Ghanem, *LBC,* talk show host, conducted on 27.5.2011.
[452] Author's interview with Ali Rammal, Lebanese University, Media and Communications Department, Professor, conducted on 27.10.2010.
[453] Term used by Youssef Huwayek, President of the Press Club, *Ad-Diyar* newspaper responsible director in an interview conducted by the author on 30.5.2011.

Lebanon, fame can be achieved quickly. Furthermore, the journalist's perceived ability to affect change, whether a reality or delusion, is also one factor interviewees cited as a reason for the increased interest in journalism. Also, several journalists can juggle a number of tasks and take on consultancies as "legal means of revenue",[454] as opposed to the "widespread bribery and blackmail" discussed above (Pies, 2008, pp. 169-170).

It was argued at the outset of this section that it would be unjust to label an entire system as having low professionalism. The raucous Lebanese media system, dubbed "the region's media Tower of Babel" (Pintak, 2011, p. 16), is renowned for its skilful journalists and media professionals, who are in high demand in the Arab world and populate the highest echelons in Arab national and transnational media (Kraidy, 2012, pp. 198-199). In spite of this, however, a number of factors point in the direction of low professionalism. Amongst those are: the poor organisation of the profession; the high levels of instrumentalisation where journalists "ventriloquate"[455] the community of financiers and owners and where the "power distance" is minimal (Hanitzsch et al., 2011, p. 275), and the rampant corruption. As discussed above, ethics – or the lack thereof – is often cited as a problem facing the Lebanese media (Dajani, 1992). This could be linked to the low salaries (Braune, 2005, p. 83), which in some cases lead to bribery and to the political instrumentalisation thus limiting the "independence" and autonomy of the media (Pies, 2008, pp. 169-170). The political importance of the media in Lebanon has also rendered it an open stage, which welcomes whoever can pay the bill (Braune, 2005, p. 106). Even the Journalists' Union, as delineated above, is permeated by patron-client relationships, which limits the number of members as well as the organisation's role in organising the profession (Braune, 2005, pp.

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[454] Author's interview with Khaled Saghieh, *Al-Akhbar*, then-editor-in-chief of, conducted on 19.10.2010.
[455] Mikhail Bakhtin uses the term "ventriloquation", which is the process in which one speaks through the language or voice of a community (as cited in Schudson, 2002b, pp. 40-42).

112-113). These aspects have rendered the system, with some exceptions, one characterised by low professionalism. It is, after all, difficult to "call someone professional when he is unethical".[456] Whether due to the direct or indirect funding, the patterns of media ownership, or the media's politicisation, what is clear is that despite the existence of technical competence, the professionalization in terms of autonomy, professional organisations, ethical standards and even skills, at times, is low. In light of the above discussion, the view that while there may be free journalists, there are no free media, resonates.[457]

4.4 Media market

As discussed above, Hallin and Mancini restrict their treatment of the media market to a quantitative indicator linking circulation rates and the development of the mass circulation press. They argue that the development of mass circulation press in the late 19th and early 20th century is reflected in higher rates of newspaper circulation today. This approach to media markets, as critiqued in Subchapter 2.2, renders the audience mere objects and does not shed light on the existence and formation of public opinion. Furthermore, it is unclear how helpful this indicator as described by Hallin and Mancini is when applied to media systems beyond the West, where mass circulation press either never developed or where the circulation rates were and remain low. In the Arab world in particular, the press has struggled to overcome market limitations resulting from "low literacy levels, low incomes along with distortions caused by government controls on printing and distribution" (Sakr, 2008, p. 195).

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[456] Author's interview with Nabil Dajani, American University of Beirut, Professor of Media Studies, conducted on 26.1.2011.
[457] Author's interview with Ghayath Yazbeck, Director of News and Political Programming, *MTV*, conducted on 31.1.2011.

Still, as a starting point and for comparative purposes it is useful to assess the Lebanese press system based on Hallin and Mancini's indicators. The press in Lebanon by far predates the Lebanese Republic: in 1873, Beirut published the first daily in the Arab world. Despite restrictive Ottoman policies and the subsequent execution of journalists of the Arab nationalist movement in May 1916 as well as the restrictive policies of the French mandate period (1920-1941), the Lebanese newspapers developed and played an important political role in demanding independence. Amongst several other "feats", the press is credited with having exposed corruption in the first government after independence (Nesemann, 2001, p. 42) and struggled against censors attempting to gag it. Lebanese journalists also successfully led on similar projects in the Arab world by launching newspapers such as *al-Ahram* in Egypt and the London-based *Al-Hayat* as well as other newspapers in the Americas and beyond[458] (di Tarazi, 1913, pp. 11-12).[459] However, mass circulation press did not fully develop as the Lebanese press during this early period were written originally by and for intellectuals and influenced by French journals (Rugh, 2004, p. 93). In the 1970s, Rugh cites estimates that three of four Lebanese read a newspaper on a daily basis (1979). More recent and reliable circulation figures promulgated by UNESCO place the rate at 54.23/1000[460] as opposed to Greece's rate of 78/1000. Some claim that figure is also

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[458] In the Viscount Di Tarazi's *Tārīḫ aṣ-ṣaḥāfa al-ʿarabīya* (Arabic for "The history of the Arab press") published in 1913, there is reference to al-Raqib newspaper established by As'ad Khaled and Na'um Labaki in Rio di Janeiro, *ğaridat al-ʿalamein* established by Father Iftimos Afeish in Montreal Al-Islah newspaper founded by Shebl Dammous in New York, and *al-ʿadl* founded by Chekri Jerjes Antoun in Rio di Janeiro, Al-Barazil owned by Caesar Maalouf in Sao Paolo amongst several others (1913, pp. 11-15)

[459] The Lebanese diaspora set up newspapers in New York, South America, France and Egypt. According to Khalil Khoury, editor of *El-Sharq*, this prompted French President Charles De Gaulle to say "if man was to go to the moon he would've found a Lebanese on the moon who has founded his paper". Khoury added that man would find two Lebanese who founded two newspapers one of which is in opposition and one pro-government as evidence of the wonderful diversity in Lebanese political thought". Author's interview with Khalil Khoury, *El-Sharq* editor-in-chief, conducted on 27.10.2010.

[460] Circulation figures in Lebanon are often taken with a pinch of salt as publishers rarely divulge accurate figures. According to UNESCO statistics from 2004, however, distribution rates per 1000 inhabitants were at 54. In 1995 the figure was 110 per 1000. Retrieved from: www.unesco.org/webworld/wcir/en/pdf_report/chap14.pdf, last accessed

inflated. "The press market in Lebanon is ridiculous. It's hilarious, all the newspapers in Lebanon barely sell 60,000 copies...this creates a problem and makes the newspapers lose their independence leading to political money".[461]

While it could very well be the case that the lack of development of the mass circulation press has had a direct impact on circulation rates today, it does not explain the steep decline in newspaper circulation in the past decades. This has been rather attributed to the political situation, monopolies over the press and possibly due to the fact that rather than cater to the public,[462] the newspapers have come to serve the political elite, thereby expediting the readers' migration. Other indicators that are more likely to have an impact on the media system would be the size and nature of the audience, its fragmentation and the advertising market. These factors have had a direct bearing on the Lebanese media system as they have allowed the political penetration of the media and disallowed the full commercialisation[463] of the media industry. Indeed, the advent of satellite technology, the internet and the shared language in the region have formed a "geo-linguistic entity" (Hafez, 2007), which inevitably led to the expansion of the media market. Yet, it has also caused a "balkanisation" of the market and the migration of audiences and thus failing to alleviate financial burdens, with a few exceptions including the successful entertainment programmes on transnational television.

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on 01 March, 2013. Meanwhile, Rugh maintains that the highest combined circulation in Lebanese history was circa 175,000 in 1986 with *An-Nahar* and *As-Safir* claiming 60,000 copies each (Rugh, 2004, pp. 93-98).

[461] A number of stakeholders gave varying figures ranging from 40,000 to 60,000 publications. Author's interview with Khaled Saghieh, then-Editor-in-chief of *Al-Akhbar*, conducted on 19.10.2010.

[462] Author's interview with Nabil Dajani, American University of Beirut, Professor of Media Studies, conducted on 26.1.2011.

[463] What is meant here is the transformation of the small-scale media enterprises into profitable businesses with wider circulation such as what occurred in the US where newspaper companies in the late 1800s, became among the largest American manufacturing companies (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 202-203).

With the exception of a few newspapers which were allowed to be distributed in Syria, the Lebanese press has remained "stubbornly local and national" (MacKay, 2000, p. 45). Furthermore, while *Al-Akhbar* and other purely online platforms such as Now Lebanon, *El-Nashra* and Lebanon Files boast large numbers of online visitors, online advertising remains limited and "insufficient".[464]

However, the advertising market in Lebanon is not only inadequate for the online media, it is generally not enough for the costly "traditional" media as well. Typically, the local advertising market in Lebanon varies depending on the situation in the country. Instability – sadly, a regular feature of Lebanese life – has led to market stagnation as advertisers may be reluctant to spend their funds when the situation is precarious. According to many observers, despite the official figures floated by advertising firms and published in publications such as *Arab Ad*, the entire advertising market is estimated to be between $100-180 million annually.[465] The discrepancy between the official yet inflated rate card figures and the actual ones is lower than reported due to deals and packages offered by media networks, where two or three more spots are offered free with each purchase.[466]

Nevertheless, the $100-180 million a year, of which half goes to the TV industry, is further slashed by agency and representative fees, making the total realized advertising revenue inadequate to sustain the country's media operations particularly the eight television networks, which typically require at least $10-15 million per year to run. While some TV

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[464] Author's interview with Joseph Semaan, *El-Nashra* online, editor-in-chief, conducted on 9.6.2011. *El-Nashra* is an online news platform, which allegedly boasts between one hundred and one hundred forty thousand unique visitors a day.

[465] This figure includes outdoor advertising as well as advertising online, newspapers and magazines, TV and radio expenditures. In 2009, "the real" expenditure was $156 million whereas the monitored expenditure was $1006.6 million. The real expenditure is an estimate however, and takes into consideration the discounts, inflated rate cards and the barter deals that take place. Aoun, E. (2010, February). Cover story: A year in numbers, *Arab Ad,* 20(2), 8-12.

[466] "The advertising game" as Ghaleb Kandil, an interviewee, dubbed it, was cited by many including Ipsos which publishes regional statistics in cooperation with Arab Ad on a yearly basis. Aoun, E. (2010, February). Cover story: A year in numbers, *Arab Ad,* 20(2), 8-12.

networks, such as MTV, and previously LBCI until 2012,[467] have sister production companies which produce content for local and regional stations thus generating some profit, other audio-visual broadcasters as well as newspapers have limited legitimate sources of revenue other than advertising and subscription rates.

In addition to the limited size of the advertising market, stakeholders cited the monopoly on the advertising market as another obstacle. This is particularly the case for the Choueiri Media Group (CMG), which is responsible for the advertising of 23 satellite Arab TV stations,[468] including "8 of the most-watched pan-Arab channels" (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, pp. 116-121). These include amongst others the Saudi-owned network MBC, its news channel *Al-Arabiyyah* and Dubai TV. It also briefly represented the leading Pan-Arab news channel *Al-Jazeera*, but had to relinquish this due to political pressures relating to tense Qatari-Saudi relations (Sakr, 2007, p. 185). The Choueiri Media Group is said to claim 60%-70% percent of the television advertising market in Lebanon.[469] The CMG represents LBCI and represented LBC Sat until 2008, when Saudi Prince Al-Waleed Bin Talal opted for in-house advertising. The CMG also represents *As-Safir*, *An-Nahar* and *L'Orient-le-Jour* dailies in Lebanon. The founder of CMG, Antoine Choueiri, made a name for himself as an "advertising emperor"[470] with the success of LBCI. His political affinity to the Lebanese Forces, which founded the channel, helped secure it the largest share of the advertising

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[467] In an interview with the author, Pierre Daher said revenues from "consulting plus production to third parties plus sales reached 35%, in other years it was down to 5%, it depends". On April 11, 2012, Lebanese Media Holding, owned by Saudi-Lebanese Prince Al-Waleed Bin Talal who purchased LBCSat and PAC from Daher, announced it was liquidating PAC for financial reasons following a dispute with Daher.

[468] Choueiri Group Website, "Represented Media", retrieved from: http://www.choueirigroup.com/brands.aspx?media=1218 (last accessed on 20 October 2014).

[469] According to an interview with CMG, conducted on 6.6.2011, their share on the advertising market for television, LBC's share is 60-70%. In an interview with Khaled Saghieh, then-Editor of *Al-Akhbar* conducted on 19.10.2010, Saghieh cited the figure 60% of the entire advertising market whereas Ali Hamadeh, columnist and manager at *An-Nahar* cited a slightly higher percentage where he said *An-Nahar* and LBCI claim 80%.

[470] Saoud, G. (2010, 10 March). Antoine Chouieri: ḥikāyat imbrāṭūr (Arabic for "An emperor's tale"), *Al-Akhbar*. Retrieved from: http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/55459 (last accessed on 19 October 2014).

market. Choueiri would later testify in favour of the Lebanese Forces in their battle with its disputed owner Pierre Daher over the channel's ownership. Still, as LBCI's star talk-show host Ghanem put it, "had they [CMG] thought their *cheval de bataille* was not leading" they would have opted for another.[471] Following Choueiri's death his son Pierre took the helm of the company. When asked about the alleged 80 percent of market share their channels have, he retorted: "Should I resign the contract because they are number one?...Talk of muscle, imposing, monopoly, this is nonsense. It does not exist. The media that I represent deserve whatever they deserve".[472]

A conflict of interest is that the official audience polling company is funded primarily by LBCI. In turn, the other TVs are displeased with its "inaccurate ratings", which, as one director of news lamented, is "a crime against us"[473] and a "marvel".[474] Although LBCI remains the overall leading TV according to IPSOS statistics,[475] sometimes it appears to lead with "an illogically vast difference",[476] a matter sometimes resulting with threats of taking legal action.[477] Despite LBCI's pole position in Lebanon, it has faced fierce competition in recent years from MTV and *Al-Jadeed*, with the latter overtaking it at some points particularly in terms of the prime time news.[478]

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[471] Author's interview with Marcel Ghanem, talk show host, *LBCI,* conducted on 27.5.2011.
[472] Schellen, T. (2011, 10 March). Q&A: Pierre Choueiri: Words from the ad industry's regional ringleader. *Executive Magazine*. Retrieved from: http://www.executive-magazine.com/getarticle.php?article=14021 (last accessed on 08 June 2012).
[473] Author's interview with Ghayath Yazbeck, Director of News and Political Programming, *MTV*, conducted on 31.1.2011.
[474] Author's interview with Karma Khayyat, Deputy Director of News and Political Programming at *Al-Jadeed* TV and daughter of owner Tahsin Khayyat, conducted on 28.10.2010.
[475] According to IPSOS' 2013 ratings, LBCI was in first place with 34.2% average reach closely followed by *Al-Jadeed* with 31.8% and then MTV with 28.7% average reach.
[476] Author's interview with Serge Dagher, Kata'eb media spokesperson and General Manager of Rizk Group ad agency, conducted on 22.1.2011.
[477] Future TV sued Ipsos for reporting higher audiences for Star Academy (LBC) than its Super Star (Sakr, 2007, p. 186). Similarly, *Al-Jadeed's* deputy director of news and political programming said they have threatened to take Ipsos to court for its statistics in an interview with the author conducted on 28.10.2010. In an e-mail correspondence with the author on January 1, 2014, an IPSOS managing director denied that there is a conflict with *Al-Jadeed.*
[478] Haddad, Z. (2012, 17 September). *Al-ǧadīd – mā zālt al-ūla* (Arabic for "*Al-Jadeed* is still the first"), *Al-Akhbar.*

The unreliability of the figures is largely due to the limited number of Television Audience Measurement (TAM) people-meters in Lebanon, a problem exacerbated by the fact that these decoders, primarily for security reasons, are absent from the densely populated Southern suburbs of Beirut as well as the South of Lebanon, thereby neglecting a large group of the population.[479] Furthermore, the distribution of the mere 600-800 panels in the entire country also failed to take into account demographic changes and is seen largely not to offer a representative sample. An audit report assessing IPSOS blames this on the limited national population statistics (the last official census in Lebanon was conducted in 1932) as well as on population distribution, in addition to the existence of "no go areas" such as the Palestinian camps and the Hezbollah strongholds.[480] In addition to the very limited advertising market in Lebanon, the limited credibility of rankings and ratings, where some get more advertising due to relations and political considerations further exacerbates matters.[481] Although many domestic advertising agencies and clients who "do not really trust the ratings" use a lot of "gut feeling and belief in the way they prepare their budget",[482] international advertisers who judge from afar often follow the official numbers uncritically and grant LBCI the lion's share of their advertising.[483]

Retrieved from:
http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/167293 (last accessed on 19 October 2014). However, according to 2013 IPSOS ratings, LBCI's prime time newscast was back in first place with 13.2% average reach followed by *Al-Jadeed's* 11.6%.

[479] The largely Shiite audience, which constitutes approximately a quarter of the population, resides mainly in the populous southern suburb of Beirut and the South of the country.

[480] An audit report Summary by Toby Sryvet regarding the representativeness, accuracy and reliability of the AGB IPSOS TAM system was conducted on 5.10.2006 after "several leading channels refused to participate accusing the system of producing grossly inaccurate and biased channel viewing figures." The report concluded that despite the "no go areas", the lack of updates regarding population estimates, there was an underrepresentation of homes with no telephones as well as homes with more than one TV set, there was no bias or inaccuracy recorded.

[481] Author's interview with Khalil Khoury, editor-in-chief, *El-Sharq*, conducted on 27.10.2010.

[482] Author's interview with Serge Dagher, Kata'eb media spokesperson and General Manager of Rizk Group ad agency conducted on 22.1.2011.

[483] Author's interview with Ghayath Yazbeck, Director of News and Political programmes, MTV, conducted on 31.1.2011.

The monopoly on statistics by IPSOS, however, has been broken by the introduction of the German market research firm GFK Media Research Middle East in 2013.[484] In October 2014, five out of the eight Lebanese TV stations (MTV, Future TV, NBN, *Al-Jadeed*, TL) announced "the battle to depose the triple alliance of LBCI-IPSOS-Choueiri Media Group".[485] The five stations withdrew from IPSOS' surveys due to what they described as the company's "opaque, unprofessional measures and the problematic relationship between IPSOS and LBCI" which has always given the latter inflated audience rates.[486]

In addition to receiving low ratings due to the "methodology" used, an *Al-Manar* executive reiterated the political factor and its impact on the Lebanese advertising market. Those who control the advertising market, he argued, have a different political inclination thereby limiting their advertising. In addition to the political factor, social and religious factors also having a significant impact on the advertising revenues a media corporation receives. *Al-Manar*, for instance, does not broadcast advertisements promulgating liquor or cigarettes as well as ads promising "incredulous things", so as not to hurt their credibility.[487]

While it may appear erroneous to lament small markets in the age of satellite broadcasting particularly in regions with a common language, the reality is that satellite broadcasting has

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[484] Hawi, Z. (2013, 22 October), *GFK tuksir iḥtikār "IPSOS": lā qanāt ūlā fī lubnān?* (Arab for: GFK breaks IPSOS' monopoly: no number one station in Lebanon?). *Al-Akhbar*. Retrieved from: http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/195514 (last accessed on 19 October 2014).

[485] Hawi, Z. (2014, 13 October), *Intifāḍat at-telfizīūnāt al-lubnānīya – hal tuṭwa ṣafḥat IPSOS?* (Arabic for "Lebanese TVs' intifada, will it turn the page on IPSOS"), Al-Akhbar. Retrieved from: http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/217451 (last accessed on 19 October 2014).

[486] (2014, 10 October). *Laylat al-inqilāb ʿala IPSOS: 5 telfizīūnāt taḫruǧ min al-iḥṣāʾ* (Arabic for "The evening of the Coup on Ipsos: 5 televisions leave their survey"). *Al-Jadeed.* Retrieved from: http://www.aljadeed.tv/MenuAr/news/DetailNews/DetailNews.html?Id=144571#!prettyPhoto/0/ (last accessed on 19 September 2014). In light of this kerfuffle, the Advertising Syndicate's president called for calm on behalf of 17 advertising firms and proposed the invitation of external auditors on a bi-yearly basis. (2014, 24 October) *siǧāl ḥawla nisab almušāhada ʿala alšāšāt almaḥalīya…wa šarakāt aliʿalān tadʿū liltahadʾa (*Arabic for "Debate regarding audience ratings on local channels...advertising companies appeal for calm"). LBCI. Retrieved from: http://www.lbcgroup.tv/news/184557/1410240518-lbci-news (last accessed on 26 October 2014).

[487] Author's interview with Hajj Ahmad Houmani, assistant to the General Manager, *Al-Manar*, conducted on 29.10.2010.

led to the migration and fragmentation of audiences. While there are more than 500 free-to-air Arab channels, the competition and the relatively small market has also lead to consolidation in the broadcasting industry (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, 43-44). Furthermore, with the exception of transnationally seductive entertainment programming, most Lebanese programming, particularly political communication addresses, the Lebanese, both at home and in the diaspora. Therefore, transnational broadcasting has not succeeded in covering all the losses facing the Lebanese media, leaving the door open for instrumentalisation (Kraidy, 2012, p. 182).

Even LBCI which has proven to be successful in yielding profit from the Saudi and Gulf market in particular due to its connections as well as well-packaged entertainment projects,[488] has admitted that while they "were able to have sustainability between outside and inside", the global financial downturn also had an impact on the market in the Gulf.[489] Meanwhile, other channels, particularly Future News and OTV, which only broadcast on satellite, have struggled to yield a considerable market share from their satellite operations in the face of stiff competition from large conglomerates such as the MBC and Rotana channels. There is also often unwillingness, or restriction on the local agents of a company to spend their advertising budget meant for Lebanon on regional channels aiming for an audience in the Gulf and vice versa.[490] Similarly, the penetration of these channels is relatively low and primarily target Lebanese expatriates residing in the Gulf and therefore fail to attract more financially potent regional advertisers.

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[488] Most channels aim to tailor productions to the Saudi market due to the Kingdom's demographic size, its population's disposable income as well as the possibility of accessing "petro-dollars for TV production" in case of success with Saudi viewers (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, pp. 149-151).
[489] Author's interview with Pierre Daher, owner and general manager, *LBC*, conducted on 14.9.2011.
[490] Author's interviews with MTV, Future News and OTV executives.

The fierce battle over limited funding has also led to the proliferation of bawdy joke shows, where participants compete at recounting crude jokes.[491] The head of the Catholic Information Centre, infamous for 'advising' the General Security on which films to ban or censor, lamented the televisions' disregard of their advice because these shows attract viewers and therefore advertisements. "To get advertisements we spoil the society, what an equation", he said.[492] LBCI, amongst the most successful channels to penetrate regionally, managed to succeed thanks to shows, with "a lot of good looking girls in revealing clothes, which our Arab brothers appreciate".[493] The morning aerobics show *Mā illak illa Haifa* (You've only got Haifa) is a case in point (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, p. 42), which one cynical commentator referred to as "almost pornographic as the sleazy camera has no interest in athletics".[494]

Nevertheless, the power of entertainment to overcome sectarian, ethnic or the national balkanization of audiences and to yield profits as opposed to political communication perhaps fuelled LBC Sat, owned by Saudi Prince Al-Waleed Ben Talal, to remove all news and political talk-shows from its satellite operation in 2012, as Ben Talal prepares to launch his 24 hour transnational news channel.[495] This was also a harbinger of the break in relations between LBCSat and LBCI,[496] which forced LBCI to launch a new satellite operation, LDC.[497]

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[491] OTV was the first to air "LOL", a low-budget show, which yielded success and increased advertising; MTV was quick to follow with a very similar format called *ahdam shi* (Leb. coll. Arabic for "The cutest thing").

[492] Author's interview with Father Abdo Abu Kassam, Catholic Information Centre, conducted on 10.6.2011.

[493] Author's interview with Arafat Hijazi, board member, Journalists Syndicate, conducted on 25.1.2011.

[494] AbuKhalil, A. (2005, 19 February). Angry Arab Guide to Middle East Media (Part I, TV), *Angry Arab News Service* [Web log post]. Retrieved from: http://angryarab.blogspot.com/2005/02/angry-arab-guide-to-middle-east-media_19.html?spref=tw (last accessed on 26 October 2014).

[495] Greenslade, R. (2010). News Corp to partner new Arabian news channel. Retrieved from: http://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2010/jul/08/tv-news-saudiarabia (last accessed on 31 October 2014).

[496] In April 2012, Daher's fallout with Al-Waleed ben Talal reached its height, with the latter liquidating PAC and replacing LBC Europe with Rotana Films. LBCI issued a statement "LBCI sets the record straight on PAC feud" on April 25, 2012 www.lbcgroup.tv/news/27811/lbci-sets-the-record-straight-on-pac-feud where they reject the

It is also worth noting that just as there is a monopoly in Lebanon there also exists a similar structure on the regional scale. There are eight leading free to air channels claiming the lion's share in the Arab world. According to a Booz Allen Hamilton, the eight channels report to claim $330 million of a limited market estimated at approximately $2 billion,[498] with $410 million as actual net revenues in the free-to-air satellite sector in 2004 (Sakr, 2007, p. 183). As in Lebanon, there is a difference between the rate cards, or the official prices for advertising slots and the actual amounts paid due to discounts and commissions (Ibid.). One reason the Arab market remains limited is the inaccuracy of the statistics, which means that advertisers are more reluctant to spend "blindly" (Sakr, 2008, p. 193). The questionable credibility of audience research is due to a variety of reasons including governments' reluctance to install people-meters for security and privacy concerns, as well as TV executives' reluctance, perceived by some as being "in denial"[499] (Sakr, 2007, p. 187), to invest in proper audience research which may reveal the extent of audience in a crowded TV landscape. Furthermore, as discussed above in relation to IPSOS and its relations to LBCI and Chouieri Media Group, there are legitimate concerns that some audience-research "companies fudge results to favour companies with which they have business links" (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, pp. 116-121).

"falsehoods" claimed by Lebanese Media Holding (LMH) in its April 11, 2012 statement. The LMH statement claimed that LBCI's "failure to pay for programming produced by PAC and the ensuing disputed with the head of LBCI and former-head of PAC and Rotana TV, Mr. Pierre El Daher, have resulted in the inability of PAC to pay the salaries of its employees, and continue to sustain the ongoing costs of production and operations." The LMH, which is a part of Rotana, included PAC, LBC Sat, LBC American and LBC Europe.

[497] Cf. El-Richani, 2015 for more information on LBCI's CEO and his wheeling's and dealings with Prince Walid Ben Talal and other political and economical allies and foes.

[498] These are estimate figures citing Antoine Choueiri who in 2005 provided the figure at the Gulf Marketing Forum in Dubai (Sakr, 2007, p. 183).

[499] "Elie Aoun of Ipsos-Stat vouched for the data produced by computer aided telephone interviews in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, saying that any doubts about their validity were caused only by 'politics' because 'everyone wants to be number one'" (Sakr, 2007, p. 187).

Particularly with regards to political communication, which "can be domesticated almost at will, because they are created for a very limited, usually national group of consumers typified by national interests, reservations, stereotypes and cultural expectations" (Hafez, 2007, pp. 168-173), the market cannot be seen to have expanded greatly. Instead, it is the entertainment shows that one can really speak of having a substantial transnational audience. Indeed, according to Lebanese TV news directors and executives, with the exception of *Al-Manar's* popular coverage during armed conflict with Israel where it is amongst "the top ten in the pan-Arab ratings" (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, p. 141), their political programmes have attracted a mainly Lebanese audience.

To diversify revenue, the creation of "synergies" between channel owners, businesses and their media is commonplace. While Future TV frequently carries ads for the Hariri-owned Bank Med, LBC uses the same pool of employees for both the satellite and terrestrial channel. Another profit-yielding endeavour was the use of voting by SMS by some programmes including Star Academy and Superstar. Revenues from the votes for the Superstar final in 2004 are said to have reached $4 million. Star Academy also incorporated product placement in their reality programmes, where candidates were often filmed drinking and eating products provided by sponsors and advertisers (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, pp. 116-121).

Arguably though, the Lebanese press never transformed into institutions able to sustain themselves by advertisement. With the advent of the internet, dailies, which were previously able to reach the Syrian market, despite the regime's occasional ban on several newspapers and issues, could now tap into a wider Arab market. Advertising on the internet, however, remains relatively limited and unable to close the large deficits facing

these companies with the yearly advertising revenues for online media in 2013 reaching $5.5 million.[500] Some new news sites have opted to be entirely online such as El-*Nashra*, *Lebanon Files*, *Al-Akhbar* English and *Now Lebanon* part of the larger Quantum Communications, which is regarded to have received substantial funding from the US-non-profit, government-funded Middle East Broadcasting Networks.[501] While *Now Lebanon* carries no advertising "to avoid clutter",[502] others like *El-Nashra*, and *Lebanon Files* have bemoaned the limited and inadequate online advertising. One reason for that is according to one poll, the most popular daily internet activity for most Lebanese respondents was "instant messaging" and e-mail checking (Dennis, Martin & Wood, 2013, p. 68). Only 34% of respondents reported that they use the internet daily for checking news and current events (Dennis, Martin & Wood, 2013, p. 69). Whereas, a mere 37.1 percent of the population were internet users in 2009 (Leckner & Facht, 2010, p. 114), according to the World Bank, in 2013, the number of users reached 70.5 percent of the population.[503]

Al-Balad daily, which is a part of a larger publications conglomerate including a "classified" newspaper with access to markets in the Gulf, attempted to shake the market and emerge as a liberal newspaper with a centrist take on political affairs. As discussed above the attempt was largely unsuccessful, despite its reasonable numbers of subscribers lured by its low cost and lucrative gifts supported by its sister publications in the Gulf. The closure of *Al-Balad's* French daily and the dismissal of staff can therefore be regarded as another nail in the coffin of commercialism in Lebanon, where, due to the sharp political and sectarian

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[500] Rahme, S. (2014, February). Special Report: Lebanon. *Arab Ad,* 24(2), 12.

[501] Levnine, A. (2005, 9 November). US: Bad Reception. *American Prospect.* Retrieved from: http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=12771&printsafe=1 (last accessed on 19 October 2014).

[502] Author's interview with Hanin Ghaddar, Editor-in-Chief, Now Lebanon, conducted on 5.10.2010.

[503] Internet users (per 100 people). *The World Bank.* Retrieved from: http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/tableview.aspxhttp://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P 2?cid=GPD_44 (last accessed on 26 October 2014).

divisions, political subsidies of media are integral to the media's survival. The political culture characterised by a voracious appetite for political debates, analysis and commentary may have expedited the failure of a largely "insipid" catch-all newspaper.

Furthermore, the option for newspapers of tapping into the Gulf market has remained an aspiration. While a former editor cited a plan for *Al-Akhbar* to start a regional edition in Kuwait which could secure more advertising revenues,[504] another newspaper manager, who has also considered the idea, cited the "potential collision with the tyrant", which hinders such possibilities.[505] An *As-Safir* executive underlined the difficulty of publishing in the Gulf States, where to be able to get a license to print one needs to have relations with the Princes. *Al-Hayat* daily owned by Saudi Prince Khaled Bin Sultan managed to obtain a license to print in Dubai, however even these relations did not prevent the withdrawal of the license.[506]

The relation to the audience is also a criterion cited by Hallin and Mancini with regards to the press, where they differentiate between the "*vertical* process of communication, mediating between political elites and the ordinary citizen" and the "*horizontal*" process, which Hallin and Mancini claim is the case in the Polarised Pluralist Model (2004, p. 22).

A study conducted by Nabil Dajani found that the "elite" were more "print-oriented and the workers broadcast-oriented", thereby corroborating the claim that the mass circulation press never fully took root in Lebanon (Dajani, 1992, p. 167). It is noteworthy however that the two newspapers which claim the highest advertising revenues do so due to the monopoly that their media sales representative (the Choueiri Media Group) commands on

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[504] Author's interview with Khaled Saghieh, *Al-Akhbar*, then-Editor in Chief, conducted on 19.10.2010.
[505] Author's interview with Ahmad Talal Salman, Assistant General Manager of *As-Safir*, and son of the owner/founder conducted on 26.1.2011, who "lost hope" in expanding into the Gulf, as he put it.
[506] Ibid.

the market as well as the fact that their audience are thought to enjoy a high level of purchase power. *As-Safir*[507] is the third of the dailies represented by the Choueiri Media Group and targets the left-oriented and a predominantly Shiite audience. An *As-Safir* executive regretted the difficulty in attracting luxury advertisements due to the slogan of "a voice for the voiceless". Despite the newspaper's slogan, its executive argued they have many influential and wealthy opinion leaders and the "stereotyping" has cost them advertising which could otherwise have reduced their deficit.[508] However, in an effort to draw in a more upscale audience in order to secure this portion of advertising, *As-Safir* must be wary not to "author its own irrelevance". As Ben Bagdikian observed, this was the case with American newspapers in the city who – in order to attract advertisers and "upscale audiences" – produced content that is less relevant to the "blue-collar citizens who were once reliable newspaper subscribers" (as cited in Schudson, 2002b, pp. 181-182).

Yet with the dismally low circulation rate, it can be argued that the Lebanese newspaper and those in charge have already done just that. According to one scholar, no newspaper in Lebanon sells more than 8-9000 copies. As a direct result of that, they do not have enough advertising to pay for their employees, headquarters and expenses thereby attesting to subsidies in exchange for favourable reporting.[509] The "arithmetic formula" cited by several stakeholders[510], proves that the $100-180 million advertising market[511] cannot possibly

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[507] *As-Safir* launched in 1974, one year prior to the start of the civil war. Due to the divisions in the country, *As-Safir* was not allowed to distribute in East Lebanon and therefore took the "hue" of predominantly Muslim West Beirut. According to the Assistant General Manager and publisher's son, in an interview with the author, the limit on the advertising particularly for luxury products is due to a limited sectarian and psychological mindset. According to Salman, historically, the "capitalists" and the big companies were Christians and the "advertising cartel" were linked to these and therefore prefer to place advertisements in the newspapers which target their audience.

[508] Author's interview with Ahmad Talal Salman, Assistant General Manager of *As-Safir*, and son of the owner/founder conducted on 26.1.2011.

[509] Author's interview with Nabil Dajani, American University of Beirut, Professor of Media Studies, conducted on January 26.1.2011.

[510] Author's interview with Jean Aziz, Director of News and Political programmes, OTV, conducted on 29.10.2010.

[511] Exact figures regarding advertising spending in Lebanon do not exist. The figures according to the rate cards are

sustain the national media available. This confirms the existence of "political money" that has also taken its toll on the TV and its audience.

However, the failure of commercialism to fully take root – due to the limited local advertising market and the market fragmentation on the regional level – is not necessarily unfavourable in and of itself. Particularly in diverse nations, liberal markets may sideline diversity in favour of the monopoly of the "mainstream" and the dominance of "consumer demand" (Nerone, 1994, p. 7). Free markets also strengthen commercial influences where "advertisers favour certain types of content and certain types of audiences over others" (Sakr, 2006, pp. 63-65 quoted in Sakr, 2008, p. 187).[512] Indeed, equating "free markets with free communications...is mythical" (Curran, 2000a, pp. 53-54) as "it is not true that the market is the best means of providing that plurality" (Curran, 1991, Keane, 1991).

This, however, also does not mean that the external pluralism that characterizes the Lebanese media system serves plurality either due to the amalgam of narrow elite interests and commercialism that dominate. While the licenses were allocated in a manner that would appear as representative of the religious groups in the country, "a key democratic function of the media in liberal theory" (Curran, 2000b, p. 129), the reality is that the TVs often serve as "tools of mega-rich would-be politicos and influence peddlers...or bully pulpits for political parties and preachers of every stripe" (Pintak, 2011, p. 76).

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inflated and there is a large discrepancy between the recorded and the actual figures "due to big client discounts, inflated rate cards and/or big barter deals estimation" so while TV expenditure in 2009 was $756 million the actual expenditure is at $54 million. The circulated number for 2010 is $180 million. Retrieved from: http://www.iloubnan.info/technology/actualite/id/57701/theme/1078/titre/Advertising-spending-in-Lebanon-up-15-to-$180m-in-2010 (last accessed on 05 September 2014).

[512] The Saudi Arabian audience due to its size, purchase power and the subsequent possibility of gaining "Saudi petro-dollars for TV production", has made it a priority for most broadcasting companies to tailor their work "to the proclivities of Saudi viewers and media moguls alike" (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, pp. 116-121).

In conclusion, the *panpoliticismo*[513] in which the Lebanese media are situated, coupled with the limited local and regional media market and the weak state has rendered the media captive to those who guarantee their subsistence. Dajani has linked the historical and rampant willingness to accept bribes to the economic role of Lebanon as "a country of services...a middle-man who transports consumer goods from the West to Arab markets and participates in exploiting these markets" (Dajani, 1992, p. 48). Despite a few isolated examples discussed above, the politicization of the culture and the nature of the Lebanese and regional market has rendered the "media" "a part of the political life" akin to political parties.[514] *Marketization* has therefore been kept in check by the more influential force of political parallelism. The sectarian and political casing around the media outlet, for all intents and purposes, remains intact.[515]

This chapter has used the Hallin and Mancini theoretical framework as a launching pad from which the Lebanese media system was assessed. This included the critical application of their four main indicators: state role, political parallelism, professionalism and media markets. The amendments to these dimensions as well as the sub-indicators alluded to in this chapter shall be further explored in the following Chapter 5. The next chapter shall also draw the contours of an adapted model that would better suit the Lebanese system based on the discussion above.

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[513] This refers to a situation where politics permeates and impacts the entire system including society, the economy, the judiciary, amongst others (Jakubowicz, p. 45, see also Mancini, 2000).

[514] Author's interview with Ali Hamadeh, columnist and manager, *An-Nahar*, conducted on 12.10.2010.

[515] Author's interview with Ali Rammal, Lebanese University, Media and Communications Department, Professor, conducted on 27.10.2010.

5. Moving beyond: amended dimensions, salient factors – an emerging model

5.1 Amended dimensions

Hallin and Mancini's models are not, nor claim to be, universal. Instead, they attempt to categorise the media systems in the "West". What then for the rest of the world's media systems? Despite calls to remodel and adapt, some researchers have attempted to "fit" their media systems under one of the three models. In particular, the Polarised Pluralist Model with its low circulation rates, influential state role, high political parallelism and low professionalism has appealed to many researchers, prompting Barbie Zelizer to label it "dustbin of the world" (as cited in El-Richani, 2012, p. 3). Hallin himself has suggested that though many considerations may come into play in "other" contexts, most of the world's media systems may fall between the Mediterranean/Polarised Pluralist and the Liberal Model. [516] Indeed, a myriad of publications particularly on Central and Eastern Europe have referred to the "Italianisation" of the media in those nations (Wyka, 2008). The media systems of Central and Eastern Europe have also been described these as "the Liberal Model mixed with the Polarised Pluralist Model" (Skolkay, 2008, pp. 37-38). Similarly, Boguslawa Dobek-Ostrowska, in Hallin and Mancini's follow-up edited volume, agrees that while the media systems in the region could have been categorised under the Polarised Pluralist model, they currently lie between the two aforementioned types (2011, pp. 26-50). Elena Vartanova, meanwhile, contends that although the Russian media system also shares several characteristics with the Polarised Pluralist Model and some of the Liberal Model's features, this unique Eurasian model, as de Smaele labelled it (1999, p. 174), can be

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[516] ACTV. (Producer). (2010, 15 March). Encounters: Interview with Prof. Daniel Hallin hosted by Jan Servaes. *The CSSC Encounters series*. Video retrieved from:
http://204.213.244.104/Cablecast/Public/Show.aspx?ChannelID=1&ShowID=5550 (last accessed on 23 March 2013).

described as "statist commercialised" (2011). According to Vartanova, this is because in addition to the paternal character of the media-state relationship, growing commercialisation has to some degree challenged the state's influence (2011, pp. 141-142). The Baltic countries' media systems, on the other hand, are structured along the lines of yet another hybrid – liberal corporatism (Balčytienė, 2009, pp. 41-42). While the state's role in the media systems in Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia is limited with ownership regulation deemed as liberal, consensus amongst societal groups in media-regulating institutions is also sought (Ibid.).

Meanwhile, similar studies from other parts of the world also critically assess the sets of variables as well as the models. Although a study on the Egyptian transformation media system acknowledges an "overlap" with some features of the Polarised Pluralist Model and appreciates the normative value of the three models, the work concludes that the Egyptian media system is in fact divergent (Khamis, 2008, p. 274). The researcher also astutely calls for caution in applying the models and for adapting the model to the local context (Ibid.). Similarly, a chapter on the Brazilian media system in Hallin and Mancini's edited sequel also disagrees with previous studies classifying Brazil as part of the Polarised Pluralist category and points to important differences such as the systems of government (de Albuquerque, 2012, pp. 93-94).

Indeed, the risks of using dimensions rooted in a different socio-cultural context and models which are "inevitably incomplete, oversimplified and involve some concealed assumptions" are considerable (McQuail & Windahl, 2006, pp. 2-3). However, despite this caveat and the qualifications made to the indicators and the suggested amendments, the table below considers the Lebanese model vis-à-vis the Hallin and Mancini models. After all,

new concepts and knowledge often uses existing theories and concepts as a springboard (Karppinen, 2013).

Table 4: Representation of the patterns of variation of the four dimensions in the three Hallin and Mancini models including the Lebanese media system

Model \\ Dimension	Polarised Pluralist	Democratic Corporatist	Liberal	Lebanon
Development of Mass Press	Low	High	High	Low
Political Parallelism	High	High	Low	High
Professionalization	Low	High	High	Low
State Intervention	High	High	Low	Low

Source: Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 299. The author has added the Lebanese media system to this table.

On first view it may appear that the Lebanese case also falls betwixt the three models or can even be subsumed under the Mediterranean ideal type. For, as discussed in Chapter 4, the Lebanese system is characterised by high political parallelism, generally low professionalism and low newspaper circulation. One divergence, however, is on the issue of state-media relations. Although the once liberal Lebanese media have counter-converged in 1952, when a decree was issued withholding further licenses till the number of political publications drops to 25, and again in the post-war years when Audio-Visual Media Law 382/94 was used to grant licenses to key confessional patrons, the reality is slightly more nuanced. Indeed, in spite of the seemingly strong role of the state, de-facto, on most other levels, "aspiration... [has] outrun capability" (Halliday, 2005, p. 59) with the weakness of the Lebanese state manifesting itself on the media scene as well. This evokes the then-Minister

of Information's lament that the "genteel anarchy"[517] in the country is effectively preventing regulation.[518] However, the system, which also features a weakened state television, suspended legal clauses and powerful non-state actors who have seized the licenses and overridden laws cannot also be deemed as liberal. Instead, the de-facto quasi-liberalism that exists is an incidental by-product of the weak state rather than the outcome of deliberate, liberally-inspired policies.[519] Still, it should be noted that Hallin and Mancini have also conceded that while the state's role in Mediterranean media systems is usually significant, "the state's grasp often exceeds its reach" (2004, p. 119). Therefore, the state's ability to intervene is commonly limited by the "lack of resources, lack of political consensus, and clientelist relationships" (Ibid.).

However, as discussed in the previous chapter, due to fundamental historical, political and structural differences in countries from non-Western contexts, the case of Lebanon reveals that it would be inappropriate to yield to the "temptation of overgeneralising" (Khamis, 2008, p. 271). Therefore, rather than "categorizing" systems from other parts of the world under one of Hallin and Mancini's three models with the usual caveats, a more useful exercise would be to "understand" the systems of study (Khamis, 2008, p. 273). Hallin and Mancini themselves concede in *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World,* that the Polarised Pluralist model "cannot be treated as a catch-all model" (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 279).

The dimensions they put forth, however, with some context-specific amendments, have shown that they are more likely to travel. This is because they are drawn from the main

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[517] The politics of Lebanon: The state that didn't fail – yet. *The Economist*, 11 October 2014.
[518] Author's interview with the then-Minister of Information Tarek Mitri, conducted on 21.5.2011.
[519] "The Lebanese media are free from the government because there is no government, but the Lebanese media are very much under the authority of the different groups; sectarian or political groups and funded [by them]." Author's interview with Nabil Dajani, American University of Beirut, Professor of Media Studies, conducted on 26.1.2011.

components that are at play in any media system; media organisations and professionals, political institutions, parties and advocates, audience members at the receiving end and the surrounding socio-political environment (Blumler & Gurevitch, 2000, p. 157). Still, there are additional influential criteria that emerge as key and "supplement" the dimensions proposed when examining media systems beyond the West (Hafez, 2010, p. 10).

Before discussing these other salient factors that have impacted the Lebanese media system and potentially other similar systems, it is worth recapping the key features of the sometimes-rambunctious Lebanese media system vis-à-vis the Hallin and Mancini indicators discussed at length in the preceding chapter.

William Rugh has argued that the most pivotal factor influencing "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" (2007, p. 3). With this in mind, state weakness has been identified as a characteristic of the Lebanese political reality. State weakness is also a hurdle limiting state intervention in the media as envisaged by Hallin and Mancini, due to the state's inability to always enforce the "de jure", except in cases when the interests of powerful non-state actors converge. Therefore, while some states like Lebanon may have enacted laws regulating issues such as ownership, political funding and media concentration, it is also vital to consider the implementation of such laws and, in cases where the application of these laws is obstructed, the reasons preventing the state from fully performing its role.

In addition to its difficulties in implementing policy and legislation, a weak state means that the state's institutions – including the public broadcaster – tend to reflect this reality. In pluralistic consociational societies, public institutions are often subject to *lottizzazione-*

nepotism in the allocation of positions and benefits (Mancini, 2000, p. 320). Another sub-dimension of the state role indicator identified by Hallin and Mancini is that the state is the "primary definer of news". As several content analyses have empirically confirmed, most newscasts in Lebanon begin their newscasts reporting on the activities of their political backer or owner. The public broadcaster, meanwhile, as described in the previous chapter, is often obliged to report on the President, PM and the Parliament Speakers' news, in that order, unless there was an extraordinary event. The Lebanese state therefore neither sets the agenda nor dominates it.

Therefore, as briefly reiterated above, most indicators attributed to the dimension of state role (newspaper subsidies, media regulation and policy-making, public service broadcasting, and serving as the main definer of news) are in such a system better-attributed to the network of non-state actors. As the case of Lebanon exhibits, the non-state actors have worked to effectively sideline the public broadcaster in order to better serve their own interests. They are heavily involved in passing laws but also in preventing their implementation, and often provide subsidies to the media corporations of their choice.

However, this does not entirely diminish the role of what Philip Abrams calls the "state system"[520] as the Lebanese state and its structures physically exist and function, particularly when there is consensus and when there is no direct opposition from powerful actors. As described in Section 2.3 on the nature of the Lebanese state and political system, some may deem the Lebanese state to be a quasi-state or even consisting of states within states as power is decentralised and each state or group functions as a state in and of itself. Yet, this is mere hyperbole, exaggerating the weakness of the state and aggrandising the

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[520] Philip Abrams differentiates between the state system, which refers to a system of institutionalised practice, and the state idea, which takes on "an overt symbolic identity progressively divorced from practice as an illusory account of practice" (as cited in Mitchell, 2007, p. 169).

strength of the non-state actors. Indeed, it is the state and only the state that continues to tax and regulate, albeit with some resistance. Robert Rotberg's well-founded argument that state weakness should be seen as a continuum (with collapsed states on the one end and strong states on the other) as opposed to a simplistic either/or is useful in assessing the state of the Lebanese state (2003, p. 4).

Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to also consider the role of these very actors as a few of those are often supra-structural to the frail state and its institutions and play a role in influencing the media as well as media law and policy, in both theoretical and practical terms. Particularly in states characterized by deep political, religious or ethnic schisms, the non-state actors tend to take on some of the state's roles by hampering the rule of law and subsidizing the media for obvious political gains. Crises, be they "rhetorical" or "military" (Kraidy, 2012, p. 189), can also hamper the state's efforts. This significant factor shall be discussed in Subchapter 5.2.

Therefore, the dimension of state intervention hinges on the nature of the state in which the media system is situated. While some new democracies' state apparatuses may still play a strong role, others like those of Lebanon are weak and unable to always intervene decisively or in some cases, only intervene at the behest of non-state actors.[521] After all, most states are "aggregations of competing bureaucratic, political and private interests" (McCargo, 2012, p. 214) and are often closer to the "neo-patrimonial" model of statehood than they are to the Lockean or Weberian ideal type of the modern state (Eriksen, 2010,

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[521] This is best illustrated in the following statement made by senior editor Khaled Saghieh in an interview with the author conducted on 19.10.2010. "In Lebanon the many red lines don't come from the state. Most come from the society... so in some places the General Security apparatus has extraordinary powers but in many instances it does not practice this power, only if it feels that this religious institution or that is annoyed by this film or TV programme."

p. 40). Understanding the political system and context in which the media is situated is thus integral to understanding the complex relationship between the state and the media.

This brings to the fore the second dimension of political parallelism, which with some amendments can be used to clarify the role of the aforementioned non-state actors. In the large number of countries where political parties have not taken root,[522] other non-state actors, have emerged to fill this lacuna. These counterbalance the state as an institution or resist its efforts and include feudal-like patrons, a network of elites and oligarchs or even "supra-national forces" which may interact with national forces to influence a media system (Kraidy, 2012, p. 180).

Indeed, as clarified earlier in the Lebanese case, these non-state actors can at times use their clout to obstruct the state's efforts. The role of these actors in weakening the public broadcaster in Lebanon is a case in point. While the indicator of political parallelism can be used to consider the role of these actors, some additional dimensions ought to be added and its scope expanded to include not only political parties, but also patrons, elites, religious organizations, and wealthy business owners.

The variable of political parallelism, which gauges the relationship between politics and the media and the advertising market, is supreme in the case of Lebanon, not only in terms of ownership, but also in terms of funding, supporting and protecting the media corporations. In a deeply polarised and politicised small state, where audiences and revenue are limited, there is the need for additional funding or political money. In addition to these subsidies,

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[522] In many countries around the world, "European-style parties never took root". The so-called "new democracies" in Asia have developed from "authoritarian or personalised forms of governance to hybridised forms of rule, based on electoral politics that combines elements of political marketing and electoral professionalism with the persistence of some patrimonial and instrumental political practices (vote buying and electoral manipulation)" (McCargo, 2012, pp. 218-219).

there are those corporations, which are indirectly set up by such actors and are funded directly by them rendering them platforms for their respective sects and patrons.

As critiqued earlier, Hallin and Mancini chose to limit the dimension of the media market to the relation between the historical development of the mass circulation press and its effect on circulation rates. In countries where mass circulation press never developed and circulation is low be it due to socio-economic factors, cultural differences or the prominence of electronic broadcasting, this indicator would fail to account for other important patterns or idiosyncrasies in media markets. According to a survey conducted in eight Arab countries, 98% of respondents said they watch television whereas only 54% read newspapers (Dennis, Martin & Wood, 2013, p. 15). In Lebanon, according to statistics conducted in 2009, 952 out of 1000 have TVs (Leckner & Facht, 2010, p. 229). The media market dimension therefore needs to be approached differently. Depending on the context, audiences, fragmentation as well as the size and nature of local and regional markets should all be considered. Furthermore, the impact of technological developments in circumventing limited "local" markets is a factor that can shed some more light on media systems.

In Lebanon, as the previous chapter delineates, the limited size of the local market and the saturation of both the local and regional media market coupled with deep politicisation extant, has limited the spread of commercialisation. As shown in Chapter 4, while entertainment programmes and – to a certain extent – some political programming has managed to reach neighbouring Arab markets, Lebanese political programming has to a large extent remained local. Therefore, on the national stage, the media have become influential political tools, which reflect the views of the key political players and in return are propped up by their subsidies. In addition to generally not operating as "conventional

businesses" some media can also be regarded as "vanity projects operated on behalf of powerful or influential individuals or interests for instrumental or prestige purposes" (McCargo, 2012, p. 215).

Finally, the dimension of professionalism with the sub-dimensions of autonomy, instrumentalisation, "devotion to public good" and existence of distinctive norms (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 35-36) emerges as normative and difficult to empirically gauge. The differences within the same system with regards to professionalization, such as between quality press and tabloids, presents a formidable challenge to classifying a given system as having high or low levels of professionalization. Furthermore, the "wide gap between theory and practice", which is universally pervasive, means that despite claims of public service, autonomy and the existence of professional norms, the reality can be much different (Voltmer, 2008, p. 27). This warrants the introduction of other dimensions to better measure this veritable minefield of a dimension. For one, media content can empirically ascertain the degree of political, economical or sectarian instrumentalisation in a given system. Other sub-dimensions which could gauge professionalization are skills and the levels of journalist education in addition to the credibility of the media organisations. In the Lebanese case, and despite renowned technical skills and the existence of professional organisations, reality reveals questionable ethics. Furthermore, according to one survey, 40% of respondents deemed the news media not credible and 56% thought the news media lack independence (Dennis, Martin & Wood, 2013, pp. 30-31).

Although the indicators put forth by Hallin and Mancini are travel-friendly, Chapter 4 has elucidated how when used to asses a media system from a wholly different context than the

ones considered in their study, other sub-indicators and factors come into play. These salient factors shall be discussed in the following section.

5.2 Salient factors

Having assessed the Lebanese model vis-à-vis the Hallin and Mancini framework and having identified gaps and weaknesses in applying their dimensions to the Lebanese system, this subchapter shall discuss a series of factors that have emerged as salient. The subchapter will culminate in the description of a model that would better suit the small republic and conclude with extrapolations about potential similar media systems on which these dimensions prove useful.

5.2.1 State size

In addition to the nature of the state, the size of the state has been deemed an important variable. Hallin himself acknowledged that "state size clearly does matter...and can affect the character of media systems" (Hallin, 2009, p. 101). As described in Section 2.3, this concept has a definitional problem as there is no consensus on what constitutes a small state. Yet, the general formula of small population, geographical size and low GNP are appropriate gauges. It is worth noting, however, that the size of the state should be considered in tandem with the economic conditions. This is because newspaper markets of the small Northern European states, when measured in terms of revenue and circulation rates, are larger than the newspaper markets in much larger and poorer nations in Africa and Latin America (Hallin, 2009, p. 101). Furthermore, wealthy and stable small nations such as the United Arab Emirates' advertising expenditure in 2014 surpassed larger

countries such as Jordan, Iraq and even Saudi Arabia.[523] Meanwhile, Lebanon's small local market and its dire economic straits, as is the case with several other Arab countries which "do not have the combination of purchasing power and population size to make them, individually, viable markets", has meant that advertising could not sustain the amount of media extant (Kraidy, 2012, p. 180). The size of the market and the domestic and regional "economic forces" have therefore served as "powerful catalyst[s] of transnationalisation" (Ibid.). However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the revenue gleaned has been limited to entertainment programmes and occasional consulting projects. Political communication has indeed remained local with citizens preferring domestic news.[524] When regional news is preferred, for instance during "the concatenation of political upheavals" in the Arab countries (Anderson, 2011), the two dominant transnational news channels, *Al-Arabiya* and *Al-Jazeera*, which have substantial and undisclosed budgets covered by the wealthy oil- and gas-states of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, have attracted the Arab audience.

As described above, entertainment programmes, be it drama series, game shows or talk shows, is the area where some channels can penetrate the wider Arab market and in particular the Gulf region, where audiences are known to have higher purchase power. Still, this penetration be it for the newspapers or televisions, has been limited due to "pervasive trend" of market fragmentation in the Arab market[525] and the powerful conglomerates on

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[523] Aoun, E. (2014, February). 2013: A challenging year. *Arab Ad,* 24(2), 6-7.

[524] Audience research that was commissioned by *Al-Jazeera* in 2009 revealed that the station does not have much impact on audiences in Egypt and Lebanon (Hijjawi, 2011, p. 70). Furthermore, a survey conducted in 2013 revealed that 72% of Lebanese prefer national news, 66% prefer local news and 49% regional news (Dennis, Martin & Wood, 2013, p. 34). Moreover, the top five sources for news named by Lebanese respondents were all Lebanese stations with LBCI named by 55% of the respondents, *Al-Jadeed* by 44% and MTV by 38% (Dennis, Martin & Wood, 2013, p. 33).

[525] Marwan Kraidy and Joe Khalil attribute market fragmentation in the Arab television industries to demographic differentiation, the rise of niche channels and the consolidation of Arab TV industries into multiplatform TV operations such as MBC and Rotana Media Groups and the *Al-Jazeera* network (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, pp. 149-151).

the regional media landscape. Connections and friendships with the advertising cartels or strong financial backers have also proven necessary to guarantee solid advertising revenues in the Gulf. It is for this reason that political communication, at least in the Lebanese case, has been limited to its small local market. The size of the state is therefore an influential factor and has a direct impact on the media system. However, as stated above, it should be assessed together with the economic context in a given nation.

5.2.2 Crises

Yet another variable emerging as salient and exerting influence on the media system is crises. Conflicts and crises impact the dimensions of political, ethnic and sectarian parallelism, the size and nature of the advertising market, the professionalization of the journalistic body as well as state role. In times of internal crisis, particularly, commercial logic is suspended and the media falls back into its particularistic and political trenches thus showing again the vulnerability of "liberalism".

In Hallin and Mancini's edited follow-up *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*, Yoram Peri cites "protracted conflict" as a factor stymieing the convergence of the Israeli media system towards the Liberal Model. Crises, he argues, produce "a pro-administration bias" and a "rallying around the flag" phenomenon (Peri, 2012, p. 21). Had it not been for conflict with external forces and "the rise of the national security state", the Israeli media would be closer to the world of business than it is to the world of politics (Ibid.). The rallying around the flag phenomenon evokes Hannah Arendt's insightful observation that an identity is often embraced when it is under attack (1968, pp. 17-18). According to a poll conducted by a leading Lebanese polling firm *Information International* in August 2006, 50.8% of respondents believed there was "honest national cooperation"

between Lebanese during the 2006 Israeli-Lebanese war.[526] Another poll conducted in the same year revealed that while 34% Lebanese identify themselves as Lebanese first, 37.3% selected their respective confessions as the "primary identity". [527] This figure increased considerably (to 48.8%) when asked to choose their primary identity in the context of an internal conflict (Ibid.). The survey results point to both the rallying around the flag phenomenon when an external foe is involved and the strength of the primordial ties and weakness of the Leviathan in the face of the domestic "enduring conflict, which lingers in the shadow of fragile peace" (Kosmatopoulos, 2011, p. 116; Khashan, 2000, p. 46). John E. Mueller, who discusses the rally around the flag phenomenon also points to how international crises results in this effect, whereas domestic crises "exacerbate internal divisions" (1970, p. 21). In Lebanon, Kraft et al. have also noted how in times of "relative stability" sectarianism appears latent only to be roused as soon as there is "political or inter-elite conflict" (2008, p. 20). Also the blogosphere, which is characterised by a "robust attention to national politics", is impacted by crises (Etling et al., 2010, p. 1234). The months following the Hariri assassination in February 2005, witnessed a sharp increase in the number of blogs (Taki, 2010, p. 131).

In addition to the political impact of internal and external crises, conflict can also affect the fragmentation and size of the market. The political and social fragmentation, as discussed in Chapter 4, has made the Lebanese media vulnerable to instrumentalisation by local and foreign forces (Kraidy, 2012, pp. 181-182). Furthermore, during conflicts, markets tend to

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526 Anon. (2006). Opinion poll: Lebanese Divided Behind their leaders over critical matters. *The Monthly*, 52, 4-9. Retrieved from: http://information-international.com/pdf/iipolls/lebanese%20divided/Pages%20from%20Sep06-issue51-en.pdf (last accessed on 20 October 2014).
[527] Adra, J. (2006). Crisis of Identity and the Role of the Zuama. *The Monthly*, 5 (47).

contract. Despite a rise in news audiences during wars,[528] which provide news stations with

the "hypnotic attention"[529] they need (Seaton, 2005, p. 248) Syria's crisis has dealt a

sizeable blow to the advertising expenditure in 2012 and 2013. According to IPSOS, it has

declined by around 75-80 percent per year since 2011 to reach a mere $3 million in

2013.[530] Moreover, due to the importance of the media in political battles, particularly in

countries where the political culture is contentious and where the size of the market is

limited, instrumentalisation of the media is likely to follow. After all, "the mobilisation of

media is one crucial means by which competing political forces and rival power groups seek

to act out their differences and to advance their causes" (McCargo, 2012, p. 215). This has

often led to increased "political sensationalism", where political conflict is exaggerated

(Mancini, 2000, p. 322), in part because news media require thrilling uncertainty (Seaton,

2005, p. 143) but also because the media need to pay their dues to those who subsidise

them. Political money, as the Lebanese case demonstrates, is used to prop up some media

corporations that are otherwise unsustainable if market logic was allowed free rein.

Countries like Iraq, which are by no means small in terms of population, size or other

variables, indeed have a crisis-induced small and inadequate media market (Sakr, 2007, p.

143). The media market cannot sustain the proliferation of media, with 62 TV and radio

stations in northern Iraq alone (Al-Mijawi, 2009, p. 20). While the broadcasters reflect the

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[528] In addition to *Al-Manar's* Assistant to the Director's comment to that effect (as discussed in Footnote 310), a study conducted by the Dubai-based Pan-Arab Research Centre (PARC) in 2005 and 2006 in Saudi Arabia revealed that the total average day viewing times rose by 11% during the July War of 2006 (PARC, 2007).

[529] In *Carnage and the Media*, Seaton argues that mass media is thoroughly influenced by a relationship to crises as "news needs public fear" citing, amongst others, the "fortunes" of CNN and *Al-Jazeera* as a result of the first Gulf war and the Iraqi invasion respectively (Seaton, 2005, p. 248).

[530] IPSOS Media, Content and Technology Research Specialists' (MediaCT) yearly records of advertising expenditure in the Pan Arab and local Arab markets published in *Arab Ad* magazine in February 2013 and 2014 document the annual advertising expenditures for the years 2012 and 2013 respectively.
Aoun, E. (2014, February). 2013: A challenging year. *Arab Ad*, 24(2), 6-7. Rahme, S. (2013, February). Special Report: Syria. *Arab Ad*, 23(2), 18-19.

political and religious reality, they also tend to serve their political backers' sectarian or ideological agenda (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, pp. 25-30). Conflict is therefore an important variable to note. In nations beset by "omnipresent crises" (Kosmatopoulos, 2011, p. 134), such as the beleaguered Levant, which has been historically susceptible to turmoil (Halliday, 2005, p. 14), this factor becomes too significant to overlook.

5.2.3 Political culture, economy and technological developments

It is also worth considering the notion of political culture, which has an important bearing on the nature of the media system and journalistic cultures.[531] The concept of "political culture" refers to "cultural norms and values that specifically govern state-society interactions" (Kamrava, 2008, pp. 53-54). These beliefs, sentiments and perception of how power operates in a particular system could be "informal and unwritten ground rules as to how the political process is to be performed" (Gurevitch & Blumler, 2004, p. 335). The censorial political culture in the Arab world could very well influence the content as well as the media organisation (Amin, 2002, p. 128). Yet another influence political culture has on the media system relates to "habits of use" with regards to the favoured medium, audience preferences and fragmentation (McQuail, 2005c, p. 3).

Whilst the Hallin and Mancini sub-dimension of "horizontal vs. vertical process of debate" as well as the partisanship of media audiences might capture the variation imposed by political culture, more attention needs to be given to this dimension. In addition to the influencing journalism culture, Gurevitch and Blumler (2004) as well as Esser and Pfetsch

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[531] Cultural specificity and political culture have an effect on professionalism (cf. Gurevitch & Blumler, 2004, pp. 335-339; Fenton, 2011, p. 11). Using ethnographic research, Schudson, shows that "organisational routines and pressure" rather than ideological influences results in media bias (2002, pp. 9-12). While this may well be true in some cases, the influence of social and political factors on journalistic culture should not be overlooked. In Lebanon, a study on professionalism revealed that stakeholders link "the unbalanced journalistic culture" to the fragmented society and political tension (Pies, 2008, p. 174).

(2004), have also recognised the importance of political culture in "encoding political messages". Political culture can impact the decoding of political messages, as well as impact the relationship between media and the political system and the expected societal roles and functions of the media[532] (Gurevitch & Blumler, 2004, pp. 336-339). In fact, Hallin and Mancini refer to political and journalistic culture in relation to the political systems and the dimension of political parallelism. They argue that advocacy journalism is linked to a divisive political culture. This is corroborated by Michael Schudson who cites the decrease in partisan politics and increase in the neutral approach in the late 19th and early 20th century (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 220). Furthermore, citing the cases of Ireland and Canada, Hallin and Mancini refer to the effect national cultural sensitivity has on "modifying the logic of the liberal model" in so far that the two states rigorously support the local media[533] (2004, pp. 232-233).

With regards to professionalism, more prominence should also be given to press histories and traditions which no doubt impact journalistic role orientation (Donsbach & Patterson, 2004, pp. 251-252). The tradition of freedom and the sometimes self-aggrandised perception of the role of journalists in Lebanon has been cited in Chapter 4 as a reason for the rejection of media accountability systems proposed by the state as well as any criticism – be it justified or not – of the media's performance. Furthermore, the confessionalism and clientelism that characterises the Lebanese political and social system also permeates the

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[532] This relates to the political cultures prescribing "norms" regarding their expectations of the media, be it the watchdog or the nation-building role for instance (Gurevitch & Blumler, 2004, pp. 338-339).

[533] Then-Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's quip likening the US to an even-tempered beast (O'Malley & Thompson, 2003), points to the fear smaller states with larger neighbours using the same language, have of being dominated. Ireland's nationalism and the fact that it is a "post-colonial state" is therefore linked to policies and laws introduced to protect its national media, which in a free market would be dominated by US or UK media. In both countries, public service television is dominant. Canada has even protected its print media (Hallin, 2004, pp. 232-233).

media system. Finally, the divisive political culture, further aggravated in times of conflict, could also be linked to the partisanship of audience, as discussed above.

In addition to the political culture, political economy of the media and the media market considered in relation to state size and conflict, the general economic situation has a key bearing on the media landscape. The Lebanese economic system is a free market post-conflict liberal economy focusing on services. Inequalities are rampant as the system has allowed anti-statist oligarchs to monopolise the market. This ties into the larger debate on "free markets" and the possibility of neutral markets. Critics argue "market configurations are always regulated by political decisions" and that the question that should be posed is not "should the state intervene?" but rather "what kind of state intervention is necessary?" (Žižek, 2009, p. 16). In terms of media economics, the Lebanese case shows how "politics enslaves economics to redefine the rules of the market" (Napoleoni, 2008, p. 7). Despite the seemingly laissez-faire approach to the market, the Lebanese media system has more recently counter-converged "savagely" regulating the media in a manner that would suit the confessional patrons and their cronies.

A further aspect identified in Chapter 4 and overlooked by Hallin and Mancini is the issue of technological developments, be it satellite technology or the internet. In addition to impacting newspaper circulation, the internet has circumvented licensing restrictions in Lebanon. Despite the internet's high cost and its lagging internet speed in Lebanon,[534] the still limited online advertising has grown by circa 29 percent in 2012 to reach $4.5

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[534] Lebanon is ranked as 161st slowest out of 174 countries. Battah, H. (2012, 29 April). Web of deceit: how Lebanon's internet failed business [Web log post]. Retrieved from: http://www.beirutreport.com/2012/04/investigating-lebanons-internet.html (last accessed on 30 October 2014).
In 2013, Lebanon climbed 10 places in the ranking. El-Amin, M. (2013, 3 April). Lebanon internet speed to rise to 20 megabits per second. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from: http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Business/Lebanon/2013/Apr-03/212359-lebanon-internet-speed-to-rise-to-20-megabits-per-second.ashx (last accessed on 20 October 2014).

million.[535] However, as the role of technology in Lebanon and other countries develops, the "agora" will be reconstituted, with monopolies and media concentration challenged and national barriers circumvented, allowing newspapers to overcome the small national market (Curran, 2000a, pp. 30-32). Meanwhile citing the 2008 presidential elections, Duncan McCargo questions the sustainability of the Hallin and Mancini dimensions considering that the new media outlets' huge audiences helped the campaign engage directly with voters. Although their media were "not conventional business models…inherently unprofessional (some have no paid staff), and are largely beyond the reach of conventional state intervention" (McCargo, 2012, p. 222). While this may be true, with the exception of a few alternative voices, the Lebanese internet landscape with its reveals that "concentration of ownership is likely to filter ever outwards to the internet" (Fenton, 2011, p. 13). The difficulty in making profit online has thus far made it easier for the larger, more established news providers to sustainably dominate the voices (Ibid.) in the "tower of Babel" that is the internet (Lee-Wright, 2011, p. 85) .

5.3 CriSPP – an emergent model

As previously argued, despite some similarities, it would be defeating to subsume the Lebanese media system under one of the Hallin and Mancini models due to the contextual differences and the need to consider other media sectors, factors, and sub-dimensions. This subchapter, therefore, sets out to propose a model taking into consideration the salient factors described in the previous section as well as the contextually amended dimensions.

A model is a useful culmination of the previous discussion as it will assist in capturing the key components and relationships defining media system structure. Models are a

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[535] Rahme, S. (2013, February). Special Report: Syria. *Arab Ad,* 23(2), 18-19.

"consciously simplified description...of a piece of reality", which can serve a heuristic purpose (McQuail & Windahl, 2006, pp. 2-3). Furthermore, models can possess an "organising function...by ordering and relating systems to each other and by providing...images of wholes that we might not otherwise perceive" as well as assist in the formulation of hypotheses (Ibid.).

Based on the Hallin and Mancini dimensions and the salient factors presented in the previous section, a variation on the Polarised Pluralist Model shall be outlined. This hybrid model is to be labelled the CriSPP Model in reference to its crisis-prone and small nature in addition to the attributes it shares with the Polarised Pluralist Model. The Lebanese media system and similar systems characterised by a divisive political culture that is prone to conflict, could be classified under this model. Conflict, as described above, has a key impact on the advertising market as well as media content. A polarised and pluralistic polity adds to market fragmentation particularly with regards to political communication and in systems where groups are represented on the level of the media system.[536] While in the case of Lebanon the polarisation is linked to confessionalism, this could also encompass ethnic, racial or linguistic divides. Finally, the power-sharing/consociational model, which has a direct influence on the distribution of licenses as well as the obstruction of rule of law, is also a key trait of the model. This approach to governance has been repeatedly and uncritically prescribed as a solution in post-conflict nations characterised by deep sectarian, ethnic, linguistic or racial divides (Fakhoury Mühlbacher, 2009, p. 74). While the Lijphartian model discussed in Section 2.3, differs to what exists in practice in Lebanon and indeed elsewhere, the concept does capture the spirit of the system, which has been taken

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[536] This is meant in a manner akin to the pillarised system of Holland in the early to mid-20th century. The pillarised system that characterised the Netherlands in that period is discussed in Subchapter 2.2.

advantage of by nepotistic and clientelist leaders who have used the system as a "smokescreen" (Muhanna, 2010). Such a system leads to the politicisation of the media and effectively its instrumentalisation. This is further augmented by the small size of the state and its limited market. In addition to structural flaws, conflict may also hinder a state's efficacy. As discussed above, a weak state impedes the implementation of media policy and regulation. Furthermore, the proposed hybrid model can be characterised as de-facto liberal due to the weakness of the state and its limited role in the media system. However, it must be noted that it is actually quasi-liberal because any liberalism that exists is incidental due to the state's inability to regulate or adequately support the public broadcaster.

The contentious political culture also means that market logic does not reign supreme and that non-state actors' influence may interfere to subsidise media and override the state's role.[537] This is often reflected in the media system, where a substantial discrepancy exists between the "de jure" and the "de facto". Public broadcasting in these countries also tends to be weak in relation to its commercial competitors. The weakness of state structures may also mean that the insulation of state institutions from the wider political atmosphere is difficult to achieve. As a consequence, in cases where the public broadcasting may be strong, it is likely that these broadcasters would be politicized and working to the advantage of the leading political group and not the public. The inadvertent quasi-liberalism that exists is also further restricted by the political elites and conflict, which hinder the invisible hand of the market. Rather than sustaining themselves by advertising

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[537] The dominance of the non-state actors over the state and its apparatus has been discussed at various points above. As one interviewee put it, "in Lebanon the many red lines don't come from the state. Most come from the society more so than from the state so in some places the General Security apparatus has amazing powers but in many times it does not practice this power only if it feels that this religious institution or the other is annoyed by this film or TV programme...[or] in order to protect the prestige/status of the political *Zuʿamāʾ* and sect leaders". Author's interview with Khaled Saghieh, *Al-Akhbar,* then-editor-in-chief, conducted on 19.10.2010.

or production, most media outlets in these saturated and small markets resort to accepting subsidies from individuals or even other states harbouring political interests.

In Hallin and Mancini's edited follow-up to "Comparing Media Systems", Kraidy argues that the concept of the state does not apply to the Mid-East region and then sets out to show this by focusing on the "Saudi-Lebanese connection" (2012, p. 178). While the validity of using the nation-state as a unit of comparative analysis has been discussed in Section 2.3, it is worth reiterating that even in the Middle East the nation-state continues to play a fundamental role in the structure of the local media system. It is indeed true that petro- and gas-dollars finance Arab media outlets from "the Ocean to the Gulf".[538] However, this funding, not exclusive to regional players nor Saudi media moguls and princes, often tends to support local political or confessional actors. Also, acknowledging the saliency of the nation-state does not exclude the consideration of the transnational, "extra-national or sub-national" entities and their influences (Iskandar, 2007, p. 33). Particularly in small nations which share a regional language and culture, recognising the transnational is important however this "needs to be balanced by some scepticism about the absence of state control" (Halliday, 2005, p. 236).

The limited size of small markets have also impelled media outlets to try and penetrate neighbouring markets taking advantage of the common language and culture. The need to reach to a wider audience for financial reasons has pushed those media to pluralise internally and commercialise in some respects. However, as discussed above, in times of crisis and particularly in the field of political communication, these often revert to their traditional trenches and serve the main backer, who props up the outlet and defends it.

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[538] This expression is often used to refer to the Arab world stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian/Persian Gulf.

After delineating the key characteristics of the CriSPP model, the dissertation culminates in Chapter 6, which will suggest potential "most similar systems" that may suit this model as areas for further research. This lives up to Weber's argument that the purpose of constructing *Gedankenbilder* (Weber, 1985) is not the objective of social science, but is "both the outcome of empirical research and a means for guiding further research" [thereby allowing]...the theoretical concepts and cases to be assessed and reassessed" (Eriksen, 2010, p. 34).

6. Conclusions, contributions to the field and recommendations for further research

6.1 Conclusions and contribution to the field

This dissertation has striven to examine the Lebanese media system from a comparative perspective by applying the Hallin and Mancini theoretical framework, with considerable contextual adaptation. The work concludes with the suggestion of the CriSPP model, which primarily serves to incite further comparative research, as put forth in the final section of this concluding chapter.

The work began with a critical discussion of theories relating to the concept of the state. State size, its nature and system of government informed the assessment of the Lebanese media system. These factors were also recognised as instrumental to the model that was developed in Chapter 5. The theoretical framework of the dissertation also considered relevant comparative studies approaches including the Hallin and Mancini framework, which this thesis uses as a springboard. The Hallin and Mancini framework – particularly the set of four dimensions – are especially useful as they are more itinerant than their three models. However, the discussion concluded that there is also a pressing need to amend and adapt the framework to the specific cultural, historical, political and social contexts.

The following Chapter 3 delineated the dissertation's methodology. In addition to gathering and assessing data and statistics from studies conducted by the state, polling institutes, non-governmental institutions, individual researchers and audience measurement companies, 63 interviews were conducted. The qualitative research consisting of semi-structured stakeholder interviews and the case study on Lebanon were presented, as well as the manner in which the interviews and the coding of the data was carried out.

Chapter 4 constitutes a fundamental part of the dissertation as it features the theoretical and empirical examination of the Lebanese case vis-à-vis the Hallin and Mancini framework. The empirical data gleaned is represented in a structured manner in line with the key dimensions explicated in the theoretical framework of the dissertation. Already in this chapter, and as the corpus of data is analysed, the contours of the adaptations and salient factors are outlined. The importance of assessing both the "de facto" state of affairs and the "de jure" regime is emphasised, as well as the paradoxical levels of liberalism state weakness allows. Furthermore, the role of non-state actors and their interaction with the resilient state is also identified. Other considerations regarding the indicator of professionalism are also widened to include such factors as the credibility of journalists and journalistic culture. Finally, the media market is reconfigured linking it to state size and the political culture.

The penultimate section, Chapter 5, is the crest of this endeavour offering a theoretical contribution to the field of comparative media studies. This chapter delineates the amended dimensions and sub-dimensions as well as the salient factors culminating in the suggestion of a new model, which better suits the Lebanese case. The model suggested, a variant of the Polarised Pluralist Model, captures the impact of conflict on the political and media system including a contentious political arena and culture. The impact of conflict on the media market and the subsequent instrumentalisation of the media in the political battle, where power is shared, are all interrelated realities that are characteristic of the model. Furthermore, state size and nature are also accentuated as influencing factors on the media system.

In addition to critically examining the Lebanese media system, the dissertation has responded to resounding calls to take the Hallin and Mancini framework beyond the West. As discussed thoroughly above, despite attempts to "fit" media systems from around the world under one of the three models put forth by the two scholars, there is a pressing need to engage the dimensions and sub-dimensions set forth, adapt and amend them to suit other non-western systems. This is precisely what the study at hand has endeavoured to do drawing on the empirical findings in Chapter 4 and resulting in the introduction of the CriSPP Model.

6.2 Recommendations for further research

As discussed above, this model should be perceived as both an outcome of the empirical work as well as a means to guide further research. The political systems that may be classified under this variant of the Mediterranean or Polarised Pluralist Model include new or precarious democracies with a power-sharing system of government in place to manage the deep divisions within a given state. The impact of conflict on markets or the size and nature of these markets coupled with the divisive political culture and a weak state are all key features that need to be regarded as relevant to other systems around the world.

Based on a synthesis of available research and the Lijphartian "most similar systems" design (1971), the study suggests media systems that potentially fit this model and the dimensions delineated.

Firstly, the Western Balkan states including the small states of Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, are all characterised by deep ethnic cleavages and their governments are based on power sharing principles (Bieber, 2011, 1784).[539]

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[539] Freedom House Country Reports for the year 2012 offer a summative overview of the media systems in the

Their small markets, ethnic schisms and the instrumentalisation of the media at the hands of political actors also seem to meet the criteria of the proposed model (Stetka, 2012, p. 448). The markets in the three media systems named are all too small to sustain the extant media. Public television also faces stiff competition from private networks and media outlets, which are supported by politicians and businesses (Radulović, 2011, p. 82; Ordanoski, 2011, p. 98). Evidently, these factors contribute to the "ethnification" of communications (Cohen & Lampe, 2011, p. 213). However, what is more "destructive" is that the media in the former Yugoslavian countries are serving as a platform for "ethnic defamation" (Kleinsteuber, 2004, p. 81). It is worth noting that there have been a number of studies that compared the multi-ethnic/religious states of Yugoslavia and Lebanon (Arfi, 2005) and Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lebanon (Bieber, 2000), to name but a few. Further research on the Western Balkan media and the transferability of the suggested variant model and its features to the media systems mentioned may prove useful to the field of comparative media studies.

Another media system that may fit the model described in Subchapter 5.3 is the Iraqi national media system. Years of occupation and civil strife has left Iraq, the so-called "Citadel of the Arab world",[540] scarred by deep ethno-sectarian trenches. The significant cleavages coupled with the weak state have resulted in the uncontrolled proliferation of media in what is already a saturated and balkanised market. While the external pluralism and diversity that currently exists on the Iraqi media spectrum is in a sense democratic, the fact that there are little or no "stable commercially viable ad-supported channels" (Kraidy &

Balkan states mentioned. Retrieved from: http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/freedom-press-2012, (last accessed on 04 April 2013). Another report entitled "Ten Years of Media Support to the Balkans" also provides some insight into the Balkan media (Rhodes, 2007).

[540] Saddam Hussein proclaimed Iraq the "Citadel' of the Arab Revolution and the Arab world challenging Egypt and Syria in the late 1970s (Halliday, 2005, p. 243).

Khalil, 2009, p. 30) and that these outlets are seen to entrench the ethno-sectarian identities at the expense of a national one (Price, 2007, p. 18) has been deemed worrying. Indeed, the media in Iraq are either state-owned or party-owned with also a few independent endeavours facing stiff competition and serious financial problems due to limited advertising (Hun Shik Kim & Hama-Saeed, 2008, pp. 581, 588). The advertising market is expected to remain limited in light of the ongoing conflict. Furthermore, the state's weakness as well as the "difficult security and political situation" has meant that the codes of practice as well as the 2004 broadcasting regulation act, endorsed by Iraq's National Communication and Media Commission (NCMC) "spelling out criteria for licensing, permissible programme content and sanctioning" has been difficult to implement. Moreover, "ethno-sectarian media empires" (Al-Marashi, 2007, p. 14) shut down by the government such as *Al-Zawra*, a platform for the insurgency, have been able to circumvent these decrees by broadcasting via satellite from undisclosed locations. In addition to the privately-owned channels which are at the mercy of their owners and their ambitions, the national broadcaster *Al-Iraqiya* is also seen to have "become a propaganda tool in the hands of Iraq's new rulers" (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, p. 30). While many have warned of the Lebanonisation of Iraq[541] with a bloody civil war followed by the introduction of a power-sharing mode of government, what is sure is that the Lebanonisation of its media landscape or the division along "ethno-sectarian" lines has already taken place (Al-Rawi, 2012, p. 63). Generally, therefore, Iraqi TV mirrors the segmentation on the socio-political landscape with the public channel representing the government and the privately owned channels exist to serve their owners (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, pp. 25-30). Furthermore, due to the

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[541] This term was commonly used in the Arab media. Paul Cochrane who is sometimes credited to coined the term in his "The "Lebanonisation" of the Iraqi Media: An overview of Iraq's Television Landscape", *Transnational Broadcasting Studies,* 16, places the term between quotation marks.

limited and saturated market, subsidies from alternative sources have trickled in from political players including allegedly from Iran and Saudi Arabia (Al-Rawi, 2012, p. 65). Indeed the ongoing tribulations and security woes pose not only a threat to Iraqi media and journalists but also to the nation itself (Hun Shik Kim & Hama-Saeed, 2008, p. 586).[542]

The above-mentioned suggestions are by no means the only systems that may fit the suggested model. Indeed, the model should be regarded as a by-product of a series of features and patterns that have been identified in the Lebanese case and are likely to exist in similar systems. As the Arab world sets out on a transformation process it is also likely that the patterns identified in the variant model may also appear in the media systems of other pluralistic and divided countries. In particular Syria, a (once-) pluralistic country, which has a large number of consumers but low advertising market due to limited purchase power, the ongoing war and other financial circumstances may indeed go down the Libano-Iraqi route – if and when the dust settles.

In conclusion, it is worth reiterating that while ideal types and typologies are vital in grasping the nature of complex media systems, these models remain simple representations of dynamic and variegated systems. Still the "empirical generalisation" or the application of findings from qualitative research studies to other settings –as suggested above – is useful in propelling the field of comparative media studies in contexts beyond the West (Lewis & Ritchie, 2007, pp. 263-264).

Finally, examining the Lebanese case using the Hallin and Mancini framework has revealed the shortcomings of applying a framework drawn from a very specific political and socio-cultural experience on entirely different contexts. While the pillars in national media

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[542] At the time of writing, the impact of the "Islamic State" on the Iraqi media landscape is not yet clearly visible, but is likely to be substantive.

systems are similar in most nations, political and socio-economic factors, which need not be regionally specific,[543] also impact the media in practice and not only in theory. Therefore, despite appearances and in spite of common "templates", understanding media systems hinges on examining context-specific and distinct political and socio-economic factors (Hafez, 2007, p. 8). While "inferential" or "theoretical" generalisations can be helpful, what is more useful is validating these generalisations by way of empirical research (Lewis & Ritchie, 2007, pp. 285-286). For, just as Voltaire's Candide states "*Cela est bien dit...mais il faut cultiver notre jardin*" (Voltaire, 2001, p. 47).[544] This dissertation has endeavoured to do just that.

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[543] There are several examples where media development and even political systems differ greatly across the same region due to exogenous or endogenous factors. Some examples are the differences in the media systems in Eastern Europe as well as across the Middle East.

[544] French for "All that is very well, but let us cultivate our garden".

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Appendix

Topic guide

1- State role

    a.   How would you assess the legal and regulatory framework and its impact on your work and institution?

    b.   Are you or any of your journalists facing law suits? If so, how many and what is the nature of these cases? Do they take their judicial course or an out of court settlement?

    c.   How would you assess the ongoing campaign to amend the media laws? Are the amendments necessary? Is it a serious attempt? Will it be successful? View on campaign to amend media laws.

    d.   How would you assess the role of the Ministry of Information? How about its initiatives (revamping Télé Liban, penning a national code of ethics and its support of the National News Agency)?

    e.   How would you assess the performance of Télé Liban as a national broadcaster and the National News Agency?

    f.   How would you assess the role of non-state actors?

    g.   Would you say the system is liberal to some extent?

2- Political Parallelism

    a.   What is the nature of your outlet's relationship with its owner and political backer? Do you count on them for financial support? What about politically?

    b.   What are the "red lines" your outlet adheres to? Is there intervention either encouraging some content or lamenting others?

    c.   Who in your view is your audience? Can we speak of a partisanship of audiences?

        i.   Internal pluralism: How diverse is your organization, in terms of staff? How about in terms of voices given access either as invited as guests hosted on programmes or in terms of news coverage.

ii.   External pluralism: Are all Lebanese groups and factions in your view represented on the level of the media system?

3-   Professionalisation

a.   How would you rate the role of the Press Union and the Journalists' Syndicate?

     i.   Are you or your staff members of the Journalists' Syndicate? If not why?

b.   How would you rate the other associations, organizations and clubs set up by journalists and for journalists?

c.   What is your position on the campaign(s) to launch a syndicate for Audio-visual broadcast staff?

d.   What is the role of the journalist in your view and to what extent is this achievable in practice?

e.   Ethics

     i.   What is your view on the code of ethics campaign in Lebanon? Does your outlet have measures on that front (code, clear policy, editorial discussions)?

     ii.   How would you rate the autonomy of journalists?

f.   How would you rate fresh graduates starting their careers in the media? Are they equipped with the necessary skills? Does your outlet offer staff training courses? What are the skills that they need training on?

4-   Media market

a.   What is the circulation rate/audience rating of your media outlet? How does this compare with the official ratings issued by Ipsos?

b.   What is your view on the performance of Ipsos?

c.   Is advertising revenue adequate for your media outlet? If not how are you closing the deficit?

d.   How do you envisage your audience?

List of Interviewees (in alphabetical order)

1. Dr. Magda Abu-Fadil, Director of the Journalist Training Programme, American University of Beirut
2. Father Abdo Abu Kassam, Director, Catholic Information Centre
3. Mariam Al-Bassam, Director of News and Political Programmes, Al-Jadeed TV
4. Ralph Bacha, Audio-visual media executive from the Antoine Choueiri Group
5. Anonymous executive from the Antoine Choueiri Group
6. George Awad, Information and Communications Officer, UNESCO Beirut
7. Wassef Awada, Assistant to the General Director, Télé Liban
8. Jean Aziz, Director of News and Political Programmes, OTV
9. May Chidiac, former LBCI Anchor and Political Talk Show Host; Director, May Chidiac Foundation
10. Fouad Daabboul, Editor in Chief, Al-Anwar; Member, NAVC
11. Serge Dagher, Media Spokesperson, Kata'eb; General Manager, Rizk Group Ad Agency
12. Abbas Daher, Director of News and Political Programmes, NBN
13. Pierre Daher, CEO and General Manager, LBCI
14. Nabil Dajani, Media and Communications Professor, American University of Beirut
15. Joseph El Kosseify, Administrative Council Member, Lebanese Journalists' Syndicate
16. Anthony Geagea, Editor in Chief, Al-Jumhouriya
17. George Gebara, Manging Editor, Al-Balad
18. Hanin Ghaddar, Editor in Chief, Now Lebanon
19. Marcel Ghanem, Political Talk Show Host, LBCI
20. Michel Hajji-Georgiou, Columnist, L'Orient-le-Jour
21. Rabih Haber, CEO and Editor, Lebanon Files
22. Ali Hamadeh, Editor and Columnist, An-Nahar
23. Fouad Harakeh, Board Member, Press Union
24. Omar Harkous, Reporter, Future Media
25. Wassim Henoud, Media Director, Free Patriotic Movement
26. Arafat Hijazi, Board Member, Journalist Syndicate; Former Anchor, Télé Liban
27. Mirella Hodeib, Lebanon Desk Editor, The Daily Star
28. Hajj Ahmad Houmani, Assistant to the Secretary General, Al-Manar
29. Youssef Howayek, Responsible Director, Ad-Diyar; President, Press Club
30. Ayman Itani, Digital Strategist, Lecturer, Lebanese American University
31. Charles Jabbour, Director, Journalists Against Violence
32. Ramzi Jubayli, Director, Future TV
33. Ghaleb Kandil, Member, NAVC
34. Kamil Khalil, Editor in Chief, Al-Bina'
35. Karma Khayyat, Deputy Director of News and Political Programmes, Al-Jadeed TV
36. Khalil Khoury, Editor in Chief, El-Sharq
37. Saad Kiwan, Director, SKeyes
38. Roula Mkhaiel, Director, Maharat Foundation
39. Tony Mkhaiel, Media Lawyer, Maharat Foundation
40. Layal Bahnam, Programme Officer, Maharat Foundation
41. Abdul-Hadi Mahfouz, Director, NAVC
42. Ziad Majed, Political Analyst, Lecturer, American University of Paris
43. Dr. Amer Mashmousheh, Editor in Chief, Al-Liwa'; Professor, Lebanese University; President, Association of Lebanese media graduates
44. Tania Mehanna, Reporter, LBCI
45. Jad Melki, Media and Communications Professor, American University of Beirut

46. Tarek Mitri, then-Lebanese Minister of Information
47. Jamil Mroueh, Former Publisher and owner, The Daily Star
48. Michel Murr, Owner and General Manager, MTV
49. Octavia Nasr, Columnist, Media Consultant, former CNN Anchor
50. Dr. Ali Rammal, Professor, Lebanese University
51. Rami Rayyes, Media Director, Progressive Socialist Party
52. Media source from the Lebanese Forces
53. Hazem Saghieh, Columnist, Al-Hayat
54. Khaled Saghieh, Editor-in-Chief, Al-Akhbar
55. Ahmad Talal Salman, Assistant General Manager, As-Safir
56. Joseph Semaan, Editor-in-Chief, El-Nashra
57. Najat Sharafeddine, News Anchor and Media Show Host, Future TV
58. Georges Skaff, Deputy President, Press Union; Publisher
59. Laure Sleiman-Saab, Director, National News Agency,
60. Asaad Thebian, Blogger, Journalist and Media Consultant
61. Hussein Wajeh, Director of News and Political Programmes, Future TV
62. Ghayath Yazbeck, Director of News and Political Programmes, MTV
63. Michael Young, Opinion Page Editor, The Daily Star