

Egypt - Media Landscape

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Overview

Egypt is one of the most densely populated countries in the Middle East with an estimated population of 97 million citizens, and boasts a young population, 49 percent of which ranges between 0 and 24 years of age. The country has gone through a

fierce economic reform program that has had its influence on all fields including the media industry. However, according to the IMF, the gross domestic product (GDP) growth has started to slightly improve and inflation is declining after more than a year since the launch of the economic reform program. Although it has a low per capita GDP, Egypt is the third largest media market after Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Classified as a transitional democracy, Egypt features a media landscape which has witnessed many changes and challenges since the January 25 revolution in 2011.

There are limited critical voices in the mainstream media. Those existing are able to voice out their opinions mainly on social media networks, especially Twitter. Although the constitution guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of the press, there are laws that hurdle these freedoms. These laws should be revisited to ensure enabling an environment that encourages the free flow of information. An Access to Information law is not developed yet, although there has been a demand to issue such a law for way too many years.

Audiences' usages and preferences have changed. Television is still the main popular medium which reaches almost all Egyptians; digital media have witnessed a remarkable growth, and many media entities started to modify their traditional business models and adapt digital services to gain higher reach.

The development of the three media regulatory bodies in 2016 is considered a positive move in the Egyptian media industry. Yet, they are still in the institutional developing stage. The print media is facing a real challenge with a sharp drop in the number of papers' circulation and advertisements' expenditure, and a migration to the digital platforms. Yet sales from the printing copies still dominate the revenue sources (80-85 percent). The private newspapers have an edge through their presence on the digital media which attract a good number of readers. National press institutions suffer from overstaffing, in addition to the recent reduction of the government subsidy and advertising expenditure. Although the NPC is trying to implement some reforms, actual modifications in their business model are not implemented.

Although issuing newspapers became easier in the last few years, the Central Agency of Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS) issued a press release on 2 May, 2017 that coincided with the International Day of Press Freedom, stating that the number of newspaper titles went down from 102 titles in 2011, to 75 titles in 2015, and the decline reached 40 percent by 2017 because of high expenses.

The television market is quite robust, and TV is still the most popular medium in Egypt. The national television has not seen actual change in terms of conversion from being the mouthpiece of the government to an actual public service broadcaster. Some attempts to regain its position in the scene are currently taking place through new programs, which, however, still lack the remits and principles of public service providers that would make them distinctive. Private satellite stations aren't operating away from government or economic pressures, yet they are considered the most attractive platforms to the audiences. Although there is no specific data about audiences' viewership preferences, entertainment and social programs seem to be the most appealing.

Several media entities are aware of the importance of digital platforms. Although the profit from digital platforms does not currently exceed 15-20 percent of the total revenue, figures of digital penetration and usage indicate a change in the future. According to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) indicators, there are 99.82 million mobile subscriptions, which means that mobile penetration counts for 110.37 percent. Egypt has 33.7 million Internet users, with an Internet penetration that reaches 41.2 percent. Statistics show that mobile Internet users are 32.76 million, with an annual growth of 25.15 percent; ADSL subscribers are 4.95 million with an annual growth of 12.4 percent. International Internet Bandwidth reaches 1.4 million with an annual growth of 36.15 percent.

A dual system of public and private broadcasters is in place. The government has an absolute monopoly over the terrestrial broadcasting system which is represented in the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU). Egypt has a centralised model of public broadcasting system that was introduced after the 1952 Revolution and is located in Cairo, the capital city. The predominant reason for the centralised broadcasting in Egypt is the desire of the government to use the broadcasting sector as an arm to guide and mobilise the public, and keep it out of hostile hands, since radio and television have the ability to overcome or bypass the problem of illiteracy. Although defined as a public broadcaster, yet it operates as a state broadcaster. Although the ERTU charter reflects the remit of a public broadcaster, yet in practice it they are not. Licenses for private radio stations are given on exceptional basis and the private television stations are only operating on the satellite platform.

The influence of partisan media is remarkably decreasing. Since their introduction, the partisan media were not fully independent from the government. Although they used to direct harsh criticism to the Egyptian cabinet, they were sometimes vulnerable to government pressure if they overstepped certain boundaries. They also depended on the government for newsprint and distribution due to their poor facilities and limited financial sources. Currently, the presence of political parties is very weak, which is reflected on the media. It is only limited to the print media with very limited circulation.

During the past 10 years, the media have been witnessing several violations of the professional practices, but recently at the end of 2016, the regulatory media councils were established and the development of the broadcast code of ethics was developed to set the basic standards and policies for media professionals. Being in a transitional period, one can witness the government attempts to continue imposing its control and the media entities who strive to protect the level of freedom that they reached. To limit state intervention, many laws need to be revisited to enable the environment for an independent media system, and limit the grasp of power on the media performance.

Media

Print

Government press

The government owns controlling stocks in the three main daily national newspapers in Egypt, *Al Ahrām*, *Al Akhbar* and *Al Gomhuriya*. The editors of these dailies are appointed by the head of the National Council for Print Media (NCPM), the newly established regulatory body for print media. The task was formerly a competence of the Supreme Council of the Press. The regime still counts on the government print media as a tool for public mobilisation of popular support for its political programs and for delivering the official line for creating a favorable public opinion.

National newspapers depend on government subsidy and advertisements as funding mechanisms. Both started to decrease in the past few years due to the political and economic circumstances, in addition to their unsustainable business models.

Al Ahrām and *Al Akhbar* used to have the largest circulation figures. Yet private newspapers are becoming increasingly important since the revolution in 2011 in terms of figures and circulation. According to the head of the NCPM, government subsidy went down by 40 percent, and advertising expenditures by 60 percent in 2017.

News media entities depend mainly on advertisements as a source of revenue. National newspapers have additional

sources, such as government subsidy and the subscription of other newspapers (80 percent) on *Al Ahrām* on print and distribution services.

The main problem of the governmental papers is that there is no competition between newspaper organisations or between reporters. Newspaper organisations use the same and often only source to gather information: the government. This resulted in a status quo position in organisations, and put the national media in real crisis.

Private press

Private newspapers were introduced into the market in 2004 with *Al Masry Al Youm* and *Nahdet Masr* newspapers. *Al Masry Al Youm* has been able to compete with *Al Ahrām* newspaper and get almost similar circulation rates due to its news agenda that was different from the protocol news format of the national newspapers. Currently, the main three private newspapers in the market are *Al Masry Al youm* (2004), *Al Youm7* (2008), *Al Watan* (2012).

The political unrest in 2011 followed by the economic recession and the Central Bank decision of floatation of the Egyptian pound have dramatically affected the printing and circulation rates of the national and private newspapers. Circulation of the national newspapers went down to by 60 percent since 2011. Private newspapers were not fenced from the harsh economic situation, the major shake for the private sector was after the floatation decision when state-run *Al Ahrām* announced an increase in the printing costs by 80 percent due to the increasing value of the US dollar against the Egyptian pound.

Opposition press

The opposition press used to have an impact in earlier times when it used to hammer at government corruption and against government officials. Before the private newspapers introduction, the only competitors of government-owned media were the party presses who enjoyed limited censorship from the government; however, they were sometimes vulnerable to government pressure if they overstepped certain boundaries. According to law, all Egyptian opposition parties have the right to publish their own newspaper, yet only few are capable, and some of them are subsidised by the government to keep operating. The opposition press has restricted access to government information sources which erodes their credibility among the public. They also depend on the government for newsprint and distribution due to their poor facilities and limited financial sources.

Many political parties were formed after the revolution in 2011, however, according to the head of the NCPM their impact on the ground right now is very weak, and this weakness is reflected on the publications. Most party newspapers are weeklies, although the main opposition, parties *Al-Wafd* and *Al-Ahrar*, maintain dailies. *Al Shaab*, the newspaper of the Islamic-oriented Socialist Labor party, used to maintain a semi-weekly publication, yet currently it is publishing the paper over its website only.

Radio

Egypt has the most extensive and powerful radio broadcasting system in the Arab region. Radio broadcasting started in the early 1920s, but did not officially begin until May 1934. The system is under direct control of the government and operates under the mobilisation type of broadcasting. Radio as a medium comes second in terms of popularity after television. There are an estimated 18m radio sets in the country. Egyptian radio operates under short- and medium-wave transmitters scattered throughout the country, providing broadcasted programs by means of cable and a microwave network system.

According to the CAPMAS, 2017, the total daily average of broadcasting hours by Egyptian radio stations dropped from 482.9 hours in 2011, to 272 hours in 2016.

As of 2016, the primary form of programming in the radio stations is entertainment broadcasting (87.21 percent) followed by

cultural (75.8 percent), religious (71.15 percent), political (66.14 percent) and educational (10.11 percent); the lowest are for touristic (3.5 percent), historical heritage (4.24 percent) and health programming (5.48 percent). The most common language used on Egyptian Radio is Arabic, which counts for 86 percent of the broadcast content, where English counts for 17 percent, and French counts for 4 percent. (Mena Media Guide, 2015).

Radio broadcasts have been traditionally more conservative in expressing views than the print media. In the mid-1990s, a critical stage of development in Egypt was the signing of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the application of the free market policy, to be considered the first phase of specialisation, and also a new turning point in radio broadcasting. Instead of presenting an intensive dose of government propaganda, a balanced equation of views and counter-views was promoted, but, as also was the case of economic reform in the 1990s, it was a gradual process.

The most popular International radio networks are: the *BBC Arabic* radio service, the *Voice of America Arabic* service, and the *Monte Carlo Arabic* service.

Other projects allowing an international and regional role in the media, included the development of the Egyptian Media Production City. The government's objective in this project was to attract international investors and media companies to its "Media Free Zone," a fact that fits the state's focus on investments after the signing of the GATT agreement in the '90s. The Media Production City has a host of studios for the use of private-sector radio stations and professionals.

Radio broadcasting, as part of the state-run media, has begun the process of privatisation through the launch of the Nilesat and the introduction of private radio as part of the overall transnational body of media in Egypt. The second phase of privatisation took place in 2003 with the introduction of terrestrial private FM radio stations, namely *Nejoum FM*, an all-Arabic music format, and *Nile 104.2 FM*, an all-Western music station broadcasting in English 24 hours a day. Both popular stations actively seek advertising and have given a tremendous boost to the radio advertising industry. Other stations were launched later such as *Radio 9090* (2011), *Radio NRJ* and *Radio DRN* (2017).

Overview on main radio networks at the ERTU

Egyptian radio is organised around a network concept; each of the networks include several services and each service consists of a number of programs.

Al Bernameg El 'Aam (the General Program) is the first and most important network. The broadcasting hours of the General Program were extended to a 24-hour broadcast format to provide round-the-clock programming. Many of the later networks were spin-offs from the main network.

Al Mahaleya, (the Local Network) is composed of 11 stations and focuses on the communities in the different Egyptian governorates. The network began on July 26, 1953, with broadcasts for Alexandria; the most recent station was established in 1995 for Halayeb. All eleven services focus on promoting the developmental goals of the state. The network is designed to promote political awareness, discover and sponsor local talent, and provide entertainment and educational services.

Al Shabaka Al Thaqafeya (the Cultural Network) was established in May 31, 1934, and it includes the European Local Service, *Al Bernameg Al Mussiqi* (the Music Program) and *Al Bernameg Al Thaqafi* (the Cultural Program). It is broadcast in Egypt only, with Egyptians and foreign residents as the target audience. It also presents discussions on both Egyptian and foreign literature.

Shabaket Al Eza'at Al Mowagaha (the Overseas Broadcasting Network) began broadcasting to eight main areas, in 1953, under the slogan "Peace and Independence for All." The network supported the independence of several African countries. The Overseas Broadcasting Network was strong in Africa to the extent that other world services increased their transmission

to Africa to compete with Egypt's broadcast. The 1952-62 decade was the boom period of the overseas programs not only in Egypt but in the West in general as a major tool of political propaganda. The Overseas Network is composed of the European Service, the Voice of Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and the Hebrew Service.

Shabaket El Shabab Wel Reyadah (the Youth and Sports Network) was established on October 6, 1975. Its coverage is of youth and sports interests. It deals with the different social, psychological, family and health issues related to youth, and is still among the very popular networks.

Shabaket Radio El Nile (The Nile Radio Network) is part of the ERTU and includes *Nagahma FM* (105.3), *Mega FM* (92.7), *Hits* (88.2), *Sha'abi* (95.0) and *Radio Masr* (88.7). The network is adapting the format of the private radio stations to attract the new generations, and provides a 24-hour mix of several genres and styles of programs (sports, music, news, talk and podcasts), as well as online live streaming. Although it operates under the umbrella of the ERTU, yet it is supervised by a private company called *Eaalam El Masreyeen*, a private company that supervises many private media platforms.

Television

Television is the most popular media platform in Egypt. The state owns two national terrestrial channels, six local channels, and a network of satellite channels, known as the thematic channels. The television sector operates under Law 92 of 2016 that states the establishment of the Supreme Council for Media Regulation (SCMR) to regulate the public and private media sectors. The National Media Council (NMC) is responsible for all state radio and television broadcasting (ERTU). The National Press Council is responsible of national newspapers and magazines.

The terrestrial television system operates under complete government supervision, leaving the private stations able to operate only via satellite. Licenses are issued and frequencies are assigned through the General Authority for Investment (GAFI) which is affiliated to the Ministry of Investment, and therefore is still part of the government. According to Law 92 of 2016, the SCMR should be responsible for issuing broadcasting licenses. The satellite channels usually enjoy more freedom than the terrestrial channels to criticise government decisions or policies. Ironically, these satellite channels, which are not monitored or governed by any charters or regulations, are the most favored platform by viewers.

According to the CAPMAS report, on a daily average the main and local terrestrial channels transmit mainly political programs (22.65 percent), followed by entertainment programs (16.3 percent), then by cultural programs (15.31 percent), religious (15.30 percent), public service announcements (11.3 percent), sports (7.24 percent); the touristic broadcasts (1.57 percent), historical heritage (2.20 percent) and educational (6.16 percent), score the lowest.

The thematic channels are a group of 10 specialised channels (*Nile News, Nile Drama, Nile Cultural, Nile Sport, Nile Life, Nile Cinema, Nile Educational, Nile Family and Child, Nile Higher Education*) which broadcast 24 hours a day, except t for the higher education channel which broadcasts 14.5 hours per day.

Al Masreya Channel is the first Arabic satellite channel that was launched in 1990; formerly known as the Egyptian space channel, it operates under the ERTU.

Although Egyptian terrestrial broadcasting is owned and controlled by the government, it relies heavily on advertising revenues from national and international product commercials aired on the Egyptian channels.

The Egyptian national television has lost some of its credibility, especially after the misleading coverage of the January 25 revolution. Although some attempts were made to provide a daily talk show that would compete with the private sector, most of these were not successful in regaining the audiences or the popularity of the national television. Yet, in February 2018, and

under the supervision of the new regulatory bodies, *Channel One* has been introduced in a new format. Although it is still a replica of the known formats that depends on a morning show, an evening talk show, a religious program and a sports program, it promises the adherence to public service remits; yet it is too early to measure the success of the initiative.

Nearly all Egyptians (98.8 percent) have television sets in their home. Television is by far the most common source of news as nearly all Egyptians (94.1 percent) use the TV to get news at least once a week, and 84.2 percent use it daily or most days a week.

Egypt launched its new Nilesat satellite on April 28, 1998, realizing the importance of transnational broadcasting and the utilisation of digital satellite broadcasting technology in the new millennium. Nilesat-101 is a state of the art digital satellite; it carries 12 transponders, each with a capability of transmitting a minimum of eight television channels. Transmitting across North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, Nilesat 101 and Nilesat 102, which was launched in August 2000, are the two hot birds in the Middle East carrying around 203 television stations and more than 60 radio stations. Among the most popular transnational channels in the Arab world are *BBC Arabic*, *Russia Today* and *Deutsche Welle Arabic*. Nilesat is a successful project that is playing a major role in Arab broadcasting in general and Egyptian broadcasting in particular, as a free platform providing satellite households with a variety of choices.

Private satellite television is very popular and a major player in the broadcasting sector in the Arab world and it has achieved high percentages of reach. *Dream TV* and *Ei Mehwar* are the first two Egyptian privately owned satellite television stations. They were launched on November 2001 and February 2002 respectively. Both offer a wide variety of programs including political programming that deals with sometimes controversial subjects. Other private satellite stations that were launched few years later are *Sada El Balad* and *Al Hayat TV*, and they apply almost the same programming format.

After the Jan 25 revolution, many private channels were launched, such as *Cairo Broadcasting Corporation - CBC* (2011), *On E* (2016) and the *DMC* network (2017). Most of those networks include specialised TV channels for news, drama, sports, and cooking. All the Egyptian private networks are almost a replica of each other, with a generalist station and specialised ones for niche audiences; the generalist channel usually broadcasts the main evening talk show. Almost all private stations provide a news bulletin, which was not allowed before 2011 and was limited to the state radios and televisions to give the government power to manage the news agenda; all private stations claim the adoption of a political liberal stance, yet the government has its own direct and indirect interference.

Television revenue is derived mainly from advertisements. State-owned stations have an edge as they depend on the government's subsidy as an extra funding tool, even if it suffers from a budget deficit of US\$1.6bn. The competition between channels on the advertising pie is very strong. Media experts claim that all private satellite channels are spending incredible amounts of money to get the highest percentage of audiences' shares yet the advertisements expenditure never covers the costs. The holy month of Ramadan is an indicator of the imbalanced market. During the Ramadan of 2017, private stations have spent around LE2bn and LE50m to buy and produce exclusive content, yet the whole advertisements revenue did not exceed LE800m.

Pay TV is growing slowly in the Egyptian market and is expected to attract more people. OSN network introduced the Video on Demand (VOD) and the Digital Video Recording (DVR) services in 2014 and is reporting an expansion to its retail presence across the country.

Digital Media

The rates of Internet users and mobile penetration have increased remarkably since 2011. The Internet penetration in Egypt reaches up to 38 million; and the mobile broadband subscriptions reaches 31 percent. Internet is accessed through mobile

phones by 32 million subscribers. The percentage of families who have access to Internet at home counts for 46.5 percent of the population. Social media users (Facebook & Twitter) count for 30.5 percent of the population.

The average time spent online per week in Egypt has increased from 18 hours in 2013, and 23 hours in 2015, to 26 hours in 2017. Using smartphones to connect to the Internet is rising and computer use is declining. The usage of smartphones increased from 32 percent in 2015 to 47 percent in 2017, and computers went down from 34 percent in 2015 to 20 percent in 2017.

The revolution was named the “Internet Revolution” or the “Digital Revolution” as Egyptians were mobilised through the Internet and the social media platforms to voice out their anger, and since then the dependency on the digital platforms increased. News organisations at that time realised the need for online platforms that offer timely news, which urged a re-structuring for their business models.

Most of the newspapers have a print and a digital version, yet the private media have more presence on the digital platform than the public media because of the developed infrastructure that helps attracting a good number of visitors, and a high level of audiences’ engagement. Public newspaper websites suffer from slow browsing and complicated and almost static websites. For example, although *Al Ahrām* is considered the first media entity, not only in Egypt, but also in the Arab Region to have developed online content since 1997, yet its reach and impact are currently weak compared to other newly launched private newspapers.

The revenues of the digital platforms are not enough to compensate the losses that the newspaper sector faced after the political unrest, and the Central Bank decision of Egyptian pound floatation. According to newspaper media managers, revenues from the digital platform represents 10 to 15 percent only of the revenue.

The digital versions of Egyptian newspapers are available for free on the Internet. Yet, the percentage of reach and degree of interactivity varies between public and private media. It is estimated that 85 percent of the website visitors come from smartphones.

Private newspapers, such as *Al Masry Al Youm* and *Al Watan* have an average of 60 million views per month on their websites. The unique number of views for *Al Masry Al Youm* increased from 900,000 in 2013 and reached 1.2m in 2017. On the other side, *Al Ahrām* website dropped from 850,000 in 2005, to 71,000 in 2017. Below are some figures that would explain the level of interaction:

- *AL Youm7* (private): Facebook page with 13.7 million followers, and 7.2 million followers on twitter.
- *Al Masry Al Ayoun* (private): Facebook page with 10.6 million followers, and 2.9 million followers on twitter.
- *Al Watan* (private): Facebook page with 9.5 million followers, and 2.8 million followers on twitter.
- *Al Ahrām* (state-owned): Facebook page with a total of 412,000 followers, and 14,300 followers on Twitter.

As for the broadcasting sector, although the capacity of revenues that is derived from the digital services is still limited, many radio stations have developed websites and online streaming services like the television stations that have developed websites, where any user can watch a program through live streaming option, in addition to a YouTube channel. None of these Egyptian digital services are paid for.

State owned television is a bit behind in both the development of a strong digital website, and in the impact of the digitisation process on the reach of the signal to the users.

Nogoum FM and *Nile FM* have developed strong mobile applications in 2015 on Android and IOS. A senior executive at Nile Radio Network confirmed in an interview that the networks will announce the launching of their mobile applications soon.

Social Networks

Egyptians increasingly embrace social media as the use of Facebook increased by 8 points, WhatsApp by 12 points, YouTube by 13 points, and Instagram by 17 points (2017: 47 percent Facebook, 38 percent WhatsApp, 35 percent YouTube, 21 percent Instagram). Twitter is at only 11 percent in 2017.

There are no audience measurement organisations to bring out accurate data about audience behavior, yet according to interviews with senior level managers of public and private newspapers, social media networks come second after search engines for the users to access content. Facebook is the most used social network. According to the Arab Social Media Report published in March 2017, about 30 million Egyptians are using Facebook, 1.7 million users are using Twitter (second in the Arab World after Saudi Arabia), and around 800,000 users are on Instagram (third in the Arab World after Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates).

Most of the newspaper entities have social media teams to monitor the level of interactivity on the social media platforms, especially audience comments (as the commenting option is closed on the official websites), and to monitor the stories that have the highest share on the social media platforms to measure audiences' feedback. Some newspapers allocate certain budgets for the audiences' analytics, to measure if the users are coming directly from the website or social media platforms, and understand their behavior on the website in terms of the pages that are browsed and stories that attract them.

It is worth mentioning that the popularity and the impact of the digital media in general and of social networks specifically, allow the government to have a strong presence on the platform. The Egyptian cabinet has a dynamic Facebook page where all the activities of the cabinet are posted; it also developed a section where it posts corrections on any spreading rumors on its Facebook page to ensure that the posts reach the target audience.

Opinion Makers

Unlike the mainstream media, social media platforms offer more opportunities for criticism and opposition. Among the popular journalists of the mainstream media are veteran journalists, such as Abdel Moneim Saeed, former editor in chief of *Al-Ahram* newspaper, Makram Mohamed Ahmed, head of the Supreme Council of Media Regulations, Salah Montasser, Egyptian columnist, Mofeed Fawzi, TV presenter and writer, Yasser Rizk, former editor in chief of *Al-Akhbar* newspaper, who have all witnessed different presidencies and are also among the opinion makers.

Sources

Newspapers

- [Al-Ahram](#)
- [Al-Akhbar Akhbarelyom](#)
- [Al-Goumhureya](#)
- [Al-Masry Al-youm](#)
- [Al-Wafd](#)
- [Al-Watan](#)
- [Al-Youm7](#)

Publishers

- [Al Ahram](#)

Radio

- [DRN](#)
- [HITS](#)
- [Mega FM](#)
- [Nagham](#)
- [Negoum FM](#)
- [Nile FM](#)
- [Radio 9090](#)
- [Radio Masr](#)

Television

- [Al Hayat](#)
- [CBC](#)
- [DMC](#)
- [Dream TV](#)
- [El Mehwar](#)
- [ERTU](#)
- [ON E](#)
- [Sada El Balad](#)

Digital media

- [Al Youm7](#)
- [Al Masry Al Ayoum](#)
- [Al Watan](#) (private)
- [Al Ahram](#) (state-owned)

Organisations

Trade Unions

The body that embraces all the workers and the technicians in the media field is known as the Egyptian Syndicate of Workers, and it falls under the umbrella of the General Egyptian Trade Union.

Journalist Associations

The Egyptian Press Syndicate is the official body governing anyone working in print media. It was established in 1963 and is controlled by the Egyptian government. According to latest figures, there are 8,951 registered members of which 6,127 are

males and 2,824 females. Around 642 members are under training and have the right to apply for membership (after one year of training if the journalist is a Journalism school graduate, and after two years if he/she is a non-journalism school graduate).

The Egyptian Press Syndicate does not operate independent of the government. Many journalists agree that the syndicate still lacks convenient services for members, and that there is a decline in the syndicate work. Yet others state that its role is now stronger than at the beginning of its association. Although the syndicate's role is to protect journalists' rights, it only takes action when the journalist is a member of the syndicate; non members are not given full support from the syndicate, which always brings hot debate.

As for the Egyptian Broadcast Syndicate, it was established in 2017 after many calls of professionals who are working at the broadcasting sector to have syndicate that would preserve their rights. The syndicate states that only Egyptian media professional will have the right of membership. The Union defines the broadcaster as "the contact person who carries out the communication process and creates the content of the media message and works in an organisation that publishes these messages to the public." Included under the definition are: media practitioners, translators, illustrators, debuggers, collectors, archivists, reporters, delegates (on the condition of their high qualification and fixed contracts with public, private or cooperative entities). Depending on the professional development, the General Assembly may add other professions related to the field of work to the media professions. A broadcast code of ethics was also developed which Ethics is consistent with many of the charters adopted by media groups and/or media syndicate in many countries around the world. There are, however, certain items that need to be addressed and reviewed for the purpose of amending them so that the Code of Ethics is more consistent with international standards of public information practice.

News Agencies

Wakalet Inbaa alSharq alAwasat (Middle East News Agency - MENA), was founded in 1956 and is the main source of bulletins and reports on Middle East news, including politics, business, culture and sports. It operates under the ownership of the Egyptian government and is presented in Arabic, English and French.

The MENA provides six services to cover the main news:

- Local Arabic news bulletin: Targets subscribers living in Egypt. It covers political, social, economic, cultural and sports news. It covers the main news happening in the Arab world, Middle East and internationally.
- Press services: Provides a variety of features, news analysis and photo services. It covers international sectors such as culture, art, science, sports and history.
- Publications in Print: Bulletins printed daily, biweekly and weekly.
- Cairo Press Review (CPR): Daily English-language publication covering main news published in the Egyptian newspapers.
- Party Press Review (PPR) news: Biweekly publication in English covering the main news published in the party newspapers in Egypt.
- The MEN (Economic Magazine): Weekly English publication provides the main economic news concerning those working in the Egyptian economy.

Other foreign news agencies operate in Egypt as well, including The Associated Press, Reuters and the French news agency AFP. Reuters and AFP have [Arabic websites](#) with translated articles about the main international news of the day and news of the Arab region.

Audience measurement organisations

The Egyptian media market lacks independent and consistent market research about audience behavior with accurate statistical information. Some media entities do it every now and then to measure audiences' preferences through commissioning some international companies. Yet, it is very expensive to conduct in a regular basis.

Communications research in Egypt is also hampered by restrictions on survey and audience research. Government regulations state that no entity in the government, nor in the public or private sector, shall be allowed to conduct any surveys except after obtaining a written authorisation from the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics.

The ERTU has a department that measures audiences' behavior on the government-owned radio and television stations, yet research results are always questionable because the research department is not independent from the ERTU.

Before 2011, Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS) and IPSOS were among the leading private market research companies in Egypt. They, and others, conduct audience-related research on national and private radio and television stations involving ratings, advertising and other issues.

IPSOS was the main company to carry audience research in Egypt. IPSOS is defined as an independent market research company managed by research professionals. It was founded in France in 1975 and is listed on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1999. It is ranked as the third global research industry. However, on July 2017, Egypt's Ministry of Manpower has ordered the closure of the Cairo office of IPSOS, citing workplace health and safety violations, as a ministry decree dated 20 June shows. Since then, no companies are legitimised for conducting audience research in Egypt.

Sources

Journalists Associations

- [Egyptian Press Syndicate](#)

News Agencies

- [Agence France Press](#) (AFP)
- [Associated Press](#) (AP)
- [Middle East News Agency](#) (MENA)
- [Reuters](#)

Audience Measurement Organisations

- [Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics](#) (CAPMAS)
- [IPSOS](#)
- [TNS](#)

Policies

Media legislation

On December 26, 2016, Egyptian President, Abdel Fatah Al Sisi ratified a new media law, creating three new bodies that would regulate Egyptian print, broadcast and electronic media.

The new law, which was approved by parliament, introduces three main articles in the Egyptian Constitution:

- 211 - The establishment of the Supreme Council for Media Regulation (SCMR).
- 212 - The National Press Council (NPC).
- 213 - The National Media Council (NMC).

This law repeals law No 13 of 1979, and its modification of law No 223 in 1989 of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union that used to regulate the broadcasting sector in Egypt, which was challenging in many ways. The law repeals as well Part IV of Law No 96 of 1996 regulating the press, and any provision contrary to the provisions of the accompanying law shall be repealed.

Among the responsibilities of the SCMR are the approval of the received notifications for establishing newspapers and granting the necessary licenses for the establishment and operation of the audio, visual and digital media. The SCMR is also to develop and apply the necessary controls and standards to ensure that the means and institutions of the media and journalists adhere to the principles and ethics of the profession.

The new law stipulates the independence of the national newspapers and their non-subordination to the government, and the provision of its public mandate through the representation of different ideologies and opinions that serve the public interest. These will operate within the National Press Council (NPC) stated in the new law. Yet, independency from the government is not going to happen at once as national newspapers suffer from several managerial and financial problems and they still depend on the government subsidy to maintain their sustainability.

As for the broadcast sector, the law states that new procedures should be applied to the broadcasters regarding the issuance of a broadcasting license. The SCMR is the new body to grant the necessary licenses for the establishment and operation of the audio, visual and digital media. Before the issuance of the new law, the private stations who could operate only through satellite used to the General Authority for Investment (GAFI) and arranged with the Nile Sat and National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (NTRA) to get their license issued and frequencies assigned. Yet, the GAFI as a licence-issuing body is irrelevant to the process, as it does not have committees to look into content or examine its impact or enforce penalties.

Under the new law, the public and private media will be supervised by the Supreme Council for Media Regulation, thus allowing the state-owned media to be converted into a real public service broadcasting system, and enabling the private media to flourish within policies that guarantee fair competition. However, the conversion of the NMC into a public service broadcasting requires a set of policies such as: an independent board representing the public; accountability to the legislature rather than government; clear terms of reference for the board which are set out in law; transparent mechanisms for appointing members of the board that are neither controlled by government nor a political party; a clear public service mandate.

Print media falls within the restructuring as well. Since the introduction of national newspapers, the government has exerted control over their shares and the appointment of the editors-in-chiefs, and uses them as a tool for propagating its agenda and for public mobilisation.

According to Salah Eissa, a veteran Egyptian journalist, the new law stipulates the independence of the national newspapers

and their non-subordination to the government, and the provision of its public mandate through the representation of different ideologies and opinions that serve the public interest. This will operate within the National Press Council (NPC) stated in the new law. Yet, being independent from the government requires a visit to the funding mechanisms which still depend on the government subsidy and advertising expenditure as main tools for funding their papers.

In 2014, the new constitution eased the process of obtaining a license to issue a newspaper; according to Article 70, any citizen has the right to issue a newspaper and this is issued through notification within a maximum of 40 days (Egyptian constitution, 2014). Before then it was legally difficult to obtain a license to own and to operate a private newspaper, and one could only have obtained it through a private shareholder company with many restrictions.

Legislation that directly and indirectly deals with freedom of expression and of the press should be revisited by the NPC, especially laws that were issued 80 years ago, such as the Publication Law (enacted in 1936), and the Penal Code of 1937, among others. The issuance of an Access to Information law is among the main demands of all journalist and media professionals.

Censorship in the mainstream media is tolerated as a form of responsibility. It is quite difficult to publish or broadcast criticism of the system or to direct criticism to officers of the state, military and security forces.

In a transitional period, there is always an indirect struggle between the media people who want to maintain the freedom they have achieved, and between the state that wants to retain its power over the media. Reports like Reporters without Borders ranked Egypt as 161 out of 185 countries in terms of freedom of the press, and pointed to a number of blocked websites and detained journalists. On the other hand, the Minister of Interior states that the blocked websites are committing crimes, such as using hate speech to incite violence among segments of society. The Egyptian Amnesty Committee that was established by the president states that the names in some of the records at the international institutions are not updated as many of the journalists who were jailed, have since been freed by a presidential decree. Some of its members said that they communicated with the Reporters without Borders organisations and they referred that there might be a lack of communication between both sides.

Theoretically the constitution guarantees freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of the press and freedom of publication. However, there are laws that affect these freedoms and are used to discipline journalists whose reporting is critical.

For example, although Egypt signed the UN covenant on Civil and Political Rights CCPR, where article 18 and 19 emphasise the freedom of opinion and expression, there are laws that restrict freedom of publishing and of the press.

According to the imprints law no 20/1936, the Ministerial Council can ban any publication issued abroad from being sold inside Egypt. According to the same law, a newspaper can be closed if it wasn't published in three successive months or in the case of any irregularity.

The penal code also includes many articles that hinder the free flow of information, in addition to the vague terms which makes it difficult for journalists to report on hard news. The code itself contains many jail penalties under the press crime sections, such as "encouraging or tempting on coup against regime or on changing the fundamental principles of the constitution (art 174), discrimination against a certain sect of the people and disturbing the public peace (art 176), harming the social decorum (art178)."

Accountability systems

Public print media is accountable to the National Council for Print Media, Public broadcasters are accountable to the National

Council for Broadcast Media, and all the Supreme Council for Media Regulations monitor the performance of both public and private media. The three regulatory bodies are accountable to the parliament.

Regulatory authorities

As mentioned above, law 92 of 2016 on The Institutional Regulation of the Egyptian Media, states the creation of three new bodies that would regulate Egyptian print, broadcast and electronic media: The establishment of the Supreme Council for Media Regulation (SCMR), The National Council for Print Media (NCPM), The National Council for Broadcast Media (NCBM).

Following the January 25 and June 30 revolutions, there had been public demand for safeguarding the independence of the media by curbing direct and indirect government interference, and establishing a regulatory system for media outlets.

Before 2016, the media was under the supervision of the Ministry of Information that was abolished in 2014 as it was one of the main demands of the January 25 Revolution. The ERTU used to work in affiliation with the Ministry of Information under Law 13 of 1979, and the Print sector used to work under the Higher Council of the Press, that is replaced now by the National council for Print Media.

The new regulatory bodies are still in their infant stage of institutional development to set the responsibilities of different bodies and departments and to make sure that there is a demarcation of tasks to avoid overlaps and confusion.

In addition, the National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (NTRA) oversees the telecommunications sector in Egypt, improves the service and expands usage. It works with the SCMR in the assigning of broadcast frequencies.

Sources

- [Law 92/2016](#) (Arabic)
- [Law 13/1979](#)
- [Law 96/1996](#) (Arabic)
- [Publication law 1936](#) (Arabic)
- [Penal code 1937](#) (Arabic)
- [National Telecom Regulatory Authority](#) (NTRA)
- [Supreme Council for Media Regulations](#) (SCMR)

Education

Universities and schools

Journalism and Mass Communication academic programs began in the 1930s at the American University in Cairo (AUC). Five years later, Cairo University (CU) established an institution that was responsible for editing, translations, and journalism. CU's Faculty of Mass Communication and the AUC's Department of Journalism and Mass Communication are considered among the most important communication institutions in the Arab World. Al Azhar University's Department of Communication was converted into a School of Mass Communication with three departments: Journalism, Radio and Television, and Advertising and Public Relations.

The curriculum of the journalism and mass communication department at AUC is quite distinctive from other programs in Egypt and considered one of the few in the region that is based on liberal arts. Its English-language program integrates theory with practical training in three majors: Multimedia Journalism, Communication and Media Arts, and Integrated Marketing Communication. Its program emphasizes critical thinking, ethics, lifelong learning, effective citizenship and professional skills. National, regional, and transnational media organisations heavily recruit its graduates. Other schools, especially the ones in the rural areas, are stemmed from CU's Faculty of Mass Communication curriculum, and it is more of a theoretical type of curriculum. AUC and CU are also the only universities that have student-produced weekly newspapers.

It is estimated that at least 15 of the public and private universities in Egypt offer journalism related courses, with specialised departments in: broadcasting (radio and television), public relations and advertising. Ain Shams University (ASU), like CU, is another public university offering communications specialisations.

The Journalism and mass Communication department at AUC also offers master's programs in Journalism and Mass Communication and Television and Digital Journalism. Other leading private universities offering journalism programs include the Modern Science and Arts University (MSA), Ahrum Canadian University (ACU), and the Modern University for Technology and Information (MTI), all of which offer three journalism majors similar to the universities listed above.

Some programs face difficulties with obtaining the accreditation form the Supreme Council for National Universities (SCNU), which evaluates programs based on curricula and CU's model. Egypt recently launched an initiative to provide national accreditation of academic programs using a model that aligns more closely with international accrediting agencies. Egypt's National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAEE), an independent authority reporting to Egypt's prime minister, is responsible for evaluating more than 50,000 institutes of higher education (including pre-university and technical education).

Professional development

Egypt has major print in-house training centers, some of them quite large, such as the Al Ahrum Regional Press Institute. The Press Syndicate, the Middle East News Agency and the state's national news agency are among the popular government training centers. The National Council for Broadcast Media (NCBM), the governing body of Egyptian broadcasting, hosts an additional training center. There is some disagreement, however, as to whether these programs are of sufficient quality to supply the Egyptian media market with journalists able to operate effectively in today's media environment.

Sources

Universities/Schools of Journalism

- [Cairo University](#) (CU)
- [Modern Sciences and Arts](#) (MSA)
- [Modern University for Technology and Information](#) (MTI)

- [National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education](#) (NAQAEE)
- [Supreme Council of Universities](#) (SCU)
- [The American University in Cairo](#) (AUC)

Professional Development

- [Al Ahram Regional Press Institute](#)
- [Egypt Press Syndicate](#)
- [Middle East News Agency](#) (MENA)

Conclusions

Conclusion

The Egyptian media landscape has witnessed changes during the past decade and so has the consumption behavior of the audiences. Digital developments enforce a revisit to the business model of the traditional media for them to catch up with the different needs of the audience. Print and broadcast national media are trying different restructuring plans, yet they have deep managerial challenges that make them lag behind.

Digital media have opened new opportunities for the content providers and advertisers to tailor content that meets audiences' preference and place advertisement for the designated targeted audiences. Revenues from digital media still represent a small percentage of the total revenue, however many media entities started to have a strong presence on the online platforms because Internet penetration and broadband subscriptions predict the potential growth of the Egyptian digital media market.

Investment in producing distinctive content is a key issue for all media entities to have sustainable business models and attract readers.

Although the constitution guarantees and ensures a free press, banning of censorship and freedom of expression, there are laws that stifle this freedom, instead of protecting it. The newly established regulatory bodies are to set clear, defined rules to ensure appropriate implementation of policies. Laws that deal directly with press freedom and freedom of expression should be revisited to promote diversified independent and accountable media systems.

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