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Research Article

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## The Audiovisual Media Services Directive in Algeria: A Survey on Media Legislations and Regulations

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims at examining and analyzing the development of media regulations and legislations since Algeria's independence, particularly in the audiovisual sector. The main purpose of the present article is to reveal the legal framework that established the fundamental principles and general policy of the audiovisual media landscape in Algeria. Algerian society desperately needs media freedom and diversity, especially in the light of socio-political changes that the country has been witnessing in the recent years. As a result, we brought to light many defects and gaps in Algeria's audiovisual landscape. Thus, we proposed several recommendations, such as the independence of the audiovisual control authority. The latter should adopt the regulations and legislation to support media ownership and transparency, strengthening the audiovisual media's financial policy, with needs to enact information law to facilitate professional journalism practice and comfortable access to information in Algeria.

**KEYWORDS:** Media freedom, Mass Media development, Media regulations.

## Директива про аудіовізуальні медіа-сервіси в Алжирі: опитування щодо медійного законодавства

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### Резюме

Це дослідження спрямоване на вивчення та аналіз розвитку регулювань та законодавства щодо мас-медіа після здобуття Алжиром незалежності, особливо в аудіовізуальному сегменті. Основна мета цієї статті – розкрити правову базу, яка закріпила фундаментальні принципи та загальну політику аудіовізуального медіаландшафту в Алжирі. Алжирське суспільство відчайдушно потребує свободи та різноманітності ЗМІ, особливо у світлі соціально-політичних змін, свідком яких країна стала останніми роками. В результаті, ми виявили багато недоліків і прогалин в аудіовізуальному ландшафті Алжиру. Таким чином, було запропоновано декілька рекомендацій, як-от необхідність набуття незалежності органом аудіовізуального контролю. Останньому слід прийняти нормативно-правові акти для підтримки власності та прозорості мас-медіа, посилення фінансової політики аудіовізуальних ЗМІ, а також слід ухвалити інформаційний закон для полегшення професійної журналістської практики та комфортного доступу до інформації в Алжирі.

**Ключові слова:** свобода медіа, розвиток мас-медіа, регулювання ЗМІ.

### Introduction

Media plays essential role in contemporary democracies through the ability to form public opinion and facilitate the spread of new ideas and political thoughts among individuals in any society, but this role must adhere to a set of values and ethical standards to meet the conditions of professional practice, any transgression means totally violating and exceeding the professional journalistic practice. Therefore, academic researchers and media lawmakers in each regime have worked heavily on the media regulatory policy, both formally and informally, by providing media legislation, public broadcasting, ethics rules, media councils, and complaints commissions, to provide the principal platforms for public expressions, which can support democracy and good

governance, however, in some environments, government authorities and political systems impose such legal and regulatory constraints on media freedom and expression, which may have a massive effect on journalistic practice. In this vein, media landscape in Algeria has experienced numerous revisions in order to improve media freedom and pluralism, whether to ensure the preservation of the public interest and to limit potential harm in Algerian society or assuring pluralistic and democratic representation in the media outlets, the audiovisual sector evolved through many significant periods, each with own set of traits and advantages. Whether from media independence and openness, or the range of strategies that sought to regulate the journalist's rights and duties, suppliers of on-demand audiovisual media services and operators of public media communication networks that transmit or retransmit broadcasters' programs in Algeria; in this regard, this paper attempts to highlight whether and how the audiovisual landscape in Algeria promote media freedom and journalistic practice? And how the Algerian system might influence media diversity in the audiovisual landscape?

#### *Literature review*

##### *1. The Abandonment of French Media Regulations 1962-1975*

During Algeria's independence in 1962, which witnessed an important and pivotal transitional in Algerian history. However, the French audiovisual regulation coexisted hardly with the modern socialist system, all efforts by the Algerian system were to liberate the legal and regulatory framework from French control and supervision (Shatah, 2006). The Evian agreements between Algeria and France stated that the Algerian television institution would remain under colonial Guardianship and France regulation; but the Algerian army regained national sovereignty on October 28th, 1962. Even the existence of socialist political philosophy's, the audiovisual legislation, remained liberal in accordance with the French statute of 1881, which was enlarged pursuant to decree 62/157 enacted in December 1962 that led to temporary openness benefiting only for the written press, in contrast to the absence of television channels, which require enormous financial resources to establish it in parallel with the exhausted country's precarious economic state (Shtiwi and Buhneah, 2018). On August 1, 1963, the first initiative has been taken to monopolize radio activities, as specified in the 1963 edict "Radio and television are state-owned public institutions with a commercial and industrial focus that monopolize radio and television publishing". Although the fact that Article 19 of the 1963 constitution declared that the Algerian system provides complete freedom for media practice, as stated: "The Algerian republic provides freedom of the press and other forms of communication, as well as freedom of association, speech, participation in public debate, and assembling". Nonetheless, there is a provision in the constitution that allows for the restriction of those rights behind the argument of jeopardizing the national interest as asserted: "No one can utilize mass media to destroy the republic's institution, the people's socialist objectives, or the unity of the National Liberation Front Party's" (Ali Mheni, 2020). This stage marks the first attempt to build a national media entity free from French administration, ownership, and regulatory constraints. Simultaneously, the Algerian system chose the route of social and economic development, making the media one of the most essential contributors to this process. Algeria made the task of decolonizing the media sector from French hegemony a major priority to get sustainable development on all sides.

##### *2. A regulatory and legislative Media vacuum 1975-1976*

This phase in the history of media development in Algeria witnessed the coup or so-called in Algeria the Corrective Revolution by the President Houari Bumedian against President Ahmed Ben Bella. This time is referred to the eradication of French legislation and the entire control of the state over the media sector in Algeria (Taher, 2012). Algeria's system attempted to achieve socialist goals during that time by using state media that led to establish a presidential decree N° 65-203 to regulate the central administration of the Ministry of Information. As a step responding to the political philosophy that was existing at that time (Ali Mheni, 2020). Due to this circumstance, the Algerian media fell into a regulatory, legal, and legislative vacuum, allowing the Algerian state to exert complete control over the media sector by putting the media at the service of

Algerian politics and orientation, and bolstering socialist principles at the expense of plurality and media freedom, as the Algerian constitution mandated.

### 3. *State media Monopoly 1976-1988*

This time was distinguished by the 1976 constitution proclamation, which avoided expressly referencing media freedom, instead of that, this constitution referred widely to freedom of expression and the right of opinion as stated “opinion, expression, and assembly guaranteed within the framework defined by law and were not utilized as an excuse to harm or undermine the socialist revolution” but, those rights will be withdrawn in the event of any threats to the nation’s interests as mentioned in article 73 “These rights are revoked for anyone who exploits them to undermine the nation's interests”. This phase witnessed the issuance of the National Charter in 1976 which pointed out the strategic role of the media in serving the goals of development and also called for the needs to establish such legislations that would define the role of the journalism and the various mass media function in Algeria. This Charter has stressed the importance of preparation and journalist education in the media sector in order to support the mass media in meeting development goals and ensuring an impartial and objective journalism in response to the Algerian public's needs (The Algerian constitution, 1976). This phase saw the adoption of the first media legislation in the independence of Algeria's history in 1982, following two decades of void and legal vacuum in the media sector. However, this new legislation did not promote journalistic practice or media freedom based on diversity and pluralism, but it established a complete monopoly over mass media to accommodate the country's requirements according to the first article: “The media is a component of national sovereignty. The media, under the leadership of the National Liberation Front Party and within the framework of the Charter's socialist policies... The media works to motivate and organize various sectors in order to accomplish national goals”. This demonstrates that the Algerian system viewed the mass media as a servant to its purposes and interests, and it is incapable to correspond to the ideals and policies of the national front party. Additionally, the Algerian system regarded the right to information as a fundamental right for the Algerian people, but this right was constantly limited based on the nation's ethical ideals and ideological doctrine, as mentioned in articles 02 and 03 “The right to information shall be freely exercised within the confines of the country's ideological choices, ethical principles, and the instructions of the political leadership as set forth in the National Charter...” (Media law, 1982). So, this new legislation did not bring up the improvements that were anticipated, and it was unable to offer the actual incentive for media activity that was so needed.

This stage characterised by the establishment of many media structures, the most significant was the Supreme Council of Media, which appeared on November 26, 1984, this council had a variety of responsibilities such as ensuring equal access to media for all Algerian citizens and promoting the dissemination of accurate information that supports national unity and identity, as well as the Ministerial Committee for Audiovisual Media, which was established in January 1985 this committee is overseen by the Supreme Council of Media. It has been charged with the responsibility of directing, planning, coordinating, and establishing controls for both private and public productions in the sphere of audiovisual media (Maizi, 2015).

In 1986, and pursuant to Decrees 86-146 and 86-147, a separation between radio and television institutions was established, each institution become an organizational, management, and financial independence from the others. In this vein, article 04 from two decrees stated that the National Radio institution would monopolize public service in the field of radio broadcasting, the National Television institution also would monopolize public service in television broadcasting. As a result, four institutions were founded, each with a distinct specialty: National Institution of Algerian Television, (NIAT), National Institution of Radio Broadcasting, (NIRB), National Institution of Television Broadcasting, (NITB), National Institution of Audiovisual Production (NIAP) (Ben Buza, 1996).

The first legal framework for the journalism sector in Algeria shed light on several issues, including the requirement of using and generalizing the Arabic language in all mass media, as

stated in article (Supreme Media Council, 1990). Despite the significant costs allotted to the audiovisual industry for training and network expansion by Algerian system, this legislation regulated and focused basically on the press media more than the audiovisual sector; and any articles relating to audiovisual were just integrated straight into the press articles. Hence, this legislation reflected the Algerian system's political philosophy at that time, owing to the difficulties of state structural transformation and the sensitivity of subjective criticism toward the system, which would be exacerbated if the audiovisual sector was allowed to compete freely.

#### *4. Strengthening state media Monopoly 1990-2003*

In October 1989, violent protests facilitated the establishment of a new constitution on February 23, 1989, followed by the enactment of a new media legislation on April 3, 1990, reflecting the political movements and changes in Algeria's government structure and social-cultural ideology. However, among many articles, article 02 guaranteed the Algerian citizen the complete range of civil and political liberties, including media freedom and the full access to information for Algerian people as stated "... Algerian citizens have the right to be fully and objectively informed about facts and opinions of social interest at the national and international levels, with the right to participate in the media by exercising basic thought and expression rights freely..." (Media law, 1982). In general, this period is defined by the preference of supporting the print media over audiovisual mass media with an unwillingness to liberalize the audiovisual sector whatsoever. As a result, audiovisual activity has been subjected to system licenses and terms books that restricted the establishment of new channels.

#### *5. Financial and legislative restrictions in Media Law 2002*

Algeria's Supreme Council of Media, which had only operated for a brief period, was abolished on October 26th, 1993, by Decree 93-13, at time when the Higher Media Councils began to regulate licenses and compiling books of terms and conditions for the use of frequencies in this sector. That led to the establishment of a new legal framework which was represented in the 2002 Media Law. However, the policy of this new initiative is based on the principle of media freedom within the framework of respecting the constitutional foundations and regulations, the dignity, honor, and admiration of the Algerian people. In terms of the audiovisual sector, this legislation's provisions allowed to liberalize and open the private sector, as indicated by Article 35, which stipulates the entities that may participate in audiovisual activities as follows:

- Public sector institutions.
- Institutions and companies that are subjected to the Algerian special law within the context of the technological limitations associated with electro radio waves (Bekhuch, 2016).

This time witnessed the creation of an audiovisual council which was responsible for regulating the audiovisual activities, but this body did not clarify its operation or the method for appointing its members. Meanwhile, this body was defined in article 42 as "An autonomous regulatory authority, it is administratively and financially self-sufficient, and it works to maintain media plurality and freedom in audiovisual communication". This policy underlined that the process of establishing any audiovisual channel is tied to obtaining a permit license, as mentioned in article 38 "any practice in the private audiovisual sector is subjected to the authorization process by the audiovisual council". Indeed, this time saw the establishment of the National Committee for the Professional Journalist Card, which is chaired by a representative of the Ministry of Information and Communications (Lelawi, 2011). This period has seen the appointment of a representative of the guardian ministry to the leadership of the National Committee for Professional Journalists to oversight and maintain indirect pressure on the audiovisual sector's liberalization strategy. As well, this law was enacted in response to the harsh penalties imposed by the penal code of 2001, which attempted to mitigate the severity of the sanctions, particularly against publishers on the grounds of extrusion and defamation. While the process of liberalizing the private sector faced several problems, especially financial issue, however, this legislation obliged public companies in Algeria to submit their advertising to the National Agency for Publishing and Distribution, which has complete monopoly distribution rights to all Algerian media outlets. As a result, advertising becomes

a means of monopolizing media activities and impeding any efforts to establish private channels and liberate the media sector.

#### *6. Attempts to introduce audiovisual monopoly in 2012*

This period is regarded as the most critical in the audiovisual media sector in Algeria, Due to the Arab Spring and the social political upheavals in neighboring countries with the increasing pressure and tensions by Algerian opposition and academics to achieve media openness and promote the professionalism in the audiovisual sector that led Algerian system to draft the 2012 and 2016 laws with the goal to entirely regulate the audiovisual sector.

To begin, this law defines media activities in various Algerian mass media outlets, as mentioned in article 03 “Each publication or broadcast of events, messages, opinions, ideas, or knowledge, whether written, audiovisual, or electronic medium, is directed to the public or a group of it”. These media activities were confined only to entities which are subjected to Algerian law mostly state media and political parties. In this vein, article 04 stated: “Media activities related to those who are belongs to the public sector, those are established by public institutions owned or established by political parties, accredited associations, or moral persons subjected to Algerian law, and whose capital is owned by natural persons of Algerian nationality...” (Quiby, 2015). The Supreme Council of Media was replaced with commissions or bodies to oversee the written and audiovisual media sectors under this new rule 12-05, the audiovisual control authority as specified in article 64, is “... an independent body that endows with a moral personality and financial independence”. This body's function has been defined as regulating and supervising audiovisual operations, including all administrative matters in accordance with the law of audiovisual activity as stated in article 65 (Media law, 2012).

To regulate the journalistic practice and media activities whether, in audiovisual or online journalism, Algerian system constrained this privilege with numerous conditions under the excuse of maintaining the basics and interests of the Algerian state, however, article 71 states: “The activity of electronic and audiovisual journalism shall be exercised with the respect of the Article 2 provisions of this organic law”. As well, this law grants Algerian journalists the right to gather and obtain information, but there are several issues that cannot be handled, as stated in article 84: “A professional journalist has the right to access the source of the information, except the following cases: When the information is related to the national defence secret as it is specified in the applicable legislation, the news affects the security of the state or national sovereignty directly, information related to the secret of judicial research and investigation, strategic economic secret, foreign policy and economic interests” (Media law, 2012). These predetermined prerequisites in journalistic activities would set self-censorship on Algerian journalists that prevent the achievement and the development of free and objective journalistic practice in Algeria. Additionally, this law has other impediments, such as the heavy penalties that referenced numerous times in Chapter 9, where the word punishable forward Algerian journalists was repeated 8 times in 10 articles, as well as the high fines that can be imposed on journalists if they may violate any of these articles or rules. Nonetheless, this regulatory initiative is regarded as a significant advance in terms of audiovisual sector policy, as it enables for private sector to participate and partially de-monopolizes this sector.

#### *7. Strengthening the path of reforms 2014 -2016*

Following the enactment of a media legislation in 2012, the Algerian system continued to move towards liberalization in the audiovisual sector with the adoption of a new bill in 2014. To begin, the mechanism of establishing any audiovisual service was specifically defined in this new legislation; however, the Algerian system emphasized the freedom to create the audiovisual channels exclusively for certain individuals or entities under the conditions expressed in article 03: “The audiovisual activity shall be exercised by Moral persons who utilize a public sector audiovisual communication service, Authorized public sector institutions, Institutions and companies subjected to Algerian law” (Media Legislation, 2014). This underlined that the Algerian regime's unwillingness to provide Algerian public accessibility to media discourse based on media diversity and pluralism, which would have a huge impact on the prevailing system at the time. As a result, the

content of these channels, including programs, news, and exploitation time, were restricted as stated in article 18 in the same bill.

Interestingly, the same rules and conditions have been set for audiovisual practitioners, who must comply to the aspects described before in article 02 of Organic Law 12-05, in contrast, this bill stressed that Algeria's system grants subsidies to mass media to support media freedom and free expression and rehabilitate the audiovisual sector to bolster professionalism in journalistic activity (Media Legislation, 2014). In accordance with the financial problems which Algerian mass media suffer from, the Algerian system established a financial fund under the degree N°12-411 of December 08, 2012, titled Fund to support press, audiovisual, and electronic media to form and enhance the level of journalists and those in the communication professions. This fund was established to assist the mass media to reaching out the remote and inaccessible communities in Algeria as indicated in Article 03. In addition, another decision was made in 2013 to support the financial supplies for Algerian mass media under degree 093-302. These funds are directed to enhance the professional and training levels of media professionals as well as promote Algerian audiovisual development, but these grants should contribute to: supporting public-interest media and institutional communication; promoting private investment in the audiovisual sector and developing the audiovisual production industry; and preserving the cultural heritage, richness, and diversity of the Algerian nation. Meanwhile this bill witnessed the several attempts to promote journalistic practice, however, Article 95 for instance provided a considerable assurance for Algerian journalists to enhance and upgrade their careers and skills by providing them with formations and training institutions as specified "the state will contribute to enhancing the professional level of audiovisual practitioners by establishing and funding centers for training and rehabilitation (Media Legislation, 2014). Indeed, Algerian system obligated media and channels to set aside 2% of their income and revenue to promote professional media performance through regular journalist formation and training as stated in article 53 of Executive Decree 16-222, includes the general conditions book "The directors of audiovisual communication services shall ensure the courses of formation, renewal of knowledge and improvement of the level for their employees, according to valid legislation and regulation, by specifying 2% annually of their profit to this purpose" (The Official News Paper, 2013).

## Methods

One of the primary objectives of this research is to determine the shortcomings that have impacted the development of the audiovisual sector in Algeria. For this reason, we conducted an online survey (spread via internet) to several academics and professional journalists in Algeria, regarding how they evaluate the audiovisual legislation and regulations and identify the most gaps in the Algerian media landscape.

The style of e-surveying was a web-based survey "*generally described as those survey mechanisms that physically reside on a network server*". The electronic surveying method was chosen because of its key advantages such As

- Google Forms templates were utilized to develop a questionnaire for convenience of data collection.

- Design flexibility, data input and handling automation, the answers are saved automatically in a survey system, resulting in easier data processing and a lower risk of data mistakes.

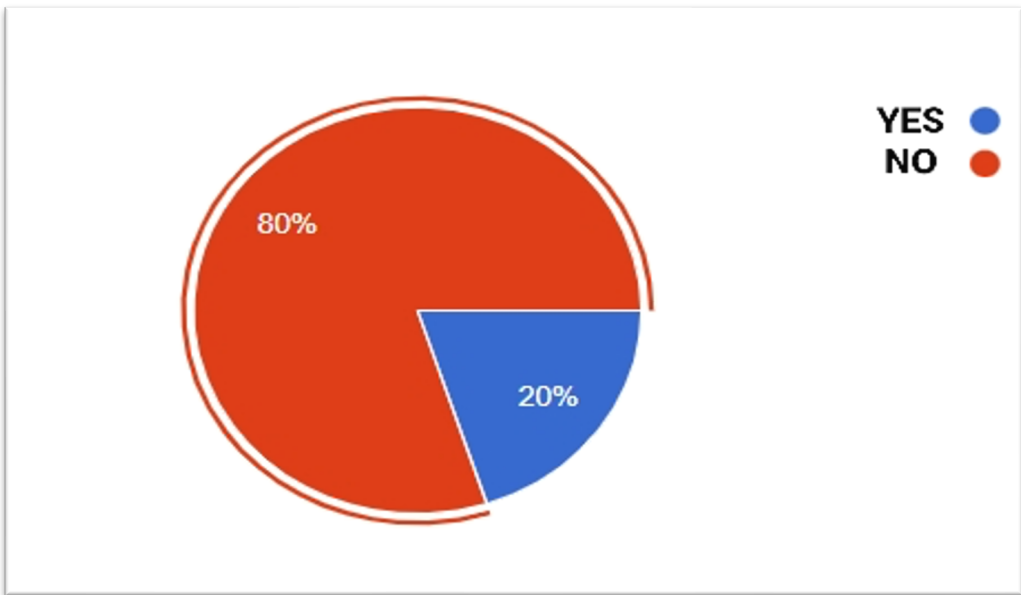
- Data integrity, accuracy, and generalizability, as well as respondents' privacy and anonymity (Jansen and Corley, 2006).

In this way the researcher utilized a purposeful sampling technique (purposive sampling) to target professor's academics and journalists in Algeria. The survey was available online and could be completed from any computer with Internet access; participation was confidential and posed no threat to the participants.

The survey was conducted online using Google Forms. Anomalies and instances with incomplete data were not discovered, resulting in a final sample of 20 individuals for the study. Their age ranges from 30 to 50 years old, indeed no gender's information was gathered during the analysis.

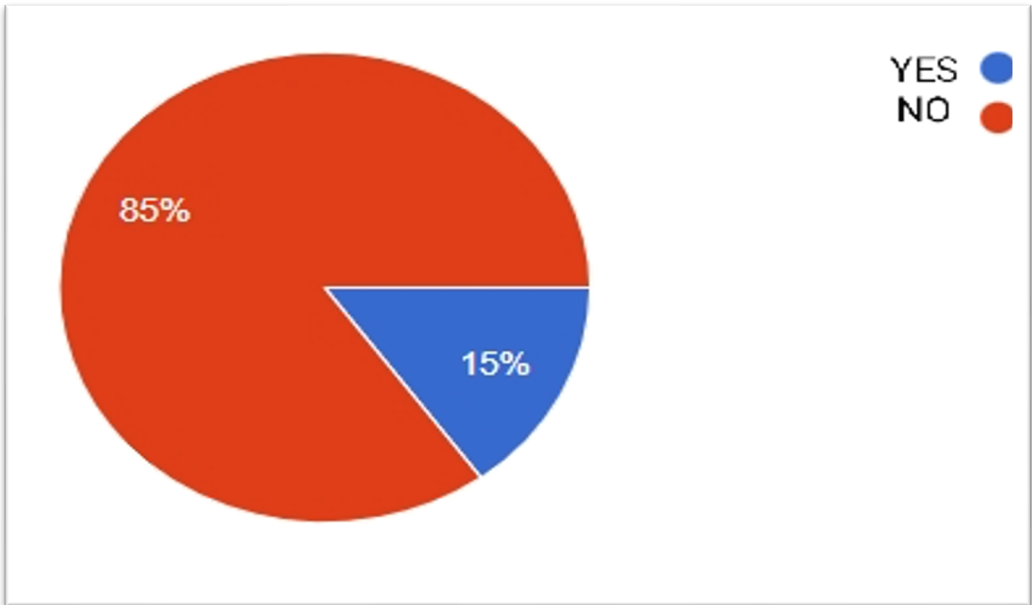
## Results and Discussion

The main hypothesis is that Algeria's audiovisual landscape is hampered by a number of legal framework and media legislation and regulation limits, which have impeded the sector's development. To explore this hypothesis, we designed the following research questions: **RQ 1**. Does the level of media freedom in Algeria enhanced, particularly since the adoption of the media law in 2014, **RQ 2** Does the 2014 Audiovisual Activity Act guaranteed the freedom to establish private radio and television channels in Algeria, **RQ 3** Is Algeria's audiovisual control authority fully supportive for professional journalism practice. **RQ 4** What are the most significant impediments and constraints to media freedom in Algeria, especially through the 2014 Audiovisual Law. **RQ 5** does the Algerian audiovisual landscape reflected the political systems willingness toward promote freedoms in this sector.



**Figure 1.** Has the level of media freedom in Algeria improved or not, especially after the adoption of the media law in 2014?

According to survey respondents, the level of media freedom in Algeria has not increased and did not reach a professional level, especially in the audiovisual landscape.



**Figure 2.** Respondent survey on the guarantees to establish broadcasting channels in Algeria by the 2014 Audiovisual Activity Law.

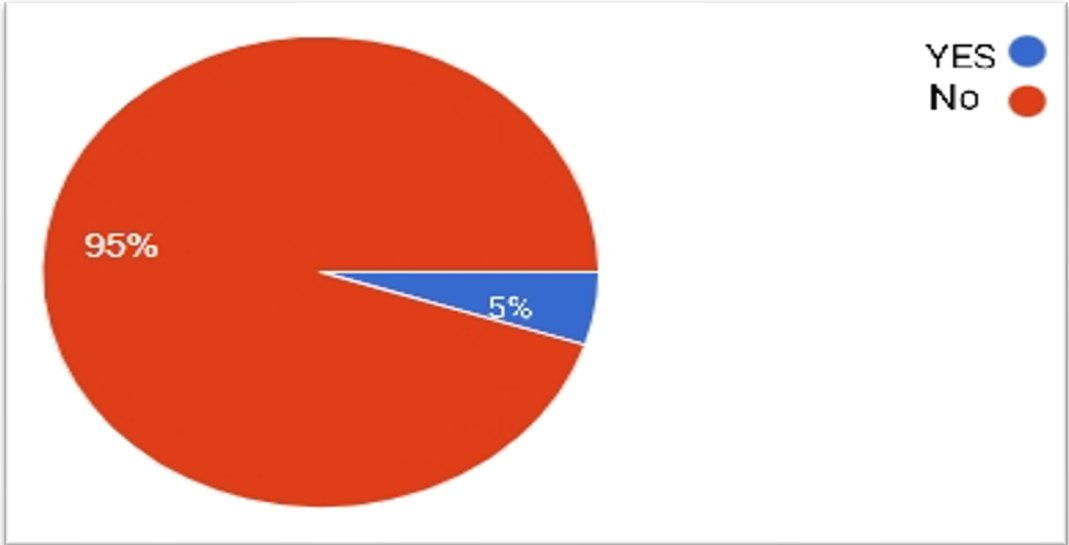
According to most respondents (85 %), the 2014 Audiovisual Activity Law does not guarantee and is not effective to establish broadcasting channels in Algeria, that demonstrates the inconsistency between regulatory bodies, the legal framework, and Algeria's pledges to develop this sector for professional practice. As Algeria which witnessed significant internal and external pressures in the last decade due to political movement in the region and Arab spring that's led to open the audiovisual sector for private channels rapidly with numerous shortcomings. In this vein, most respondents explained those flaws as follows:



**Figure 3.** Explanations of the legislation flaws.

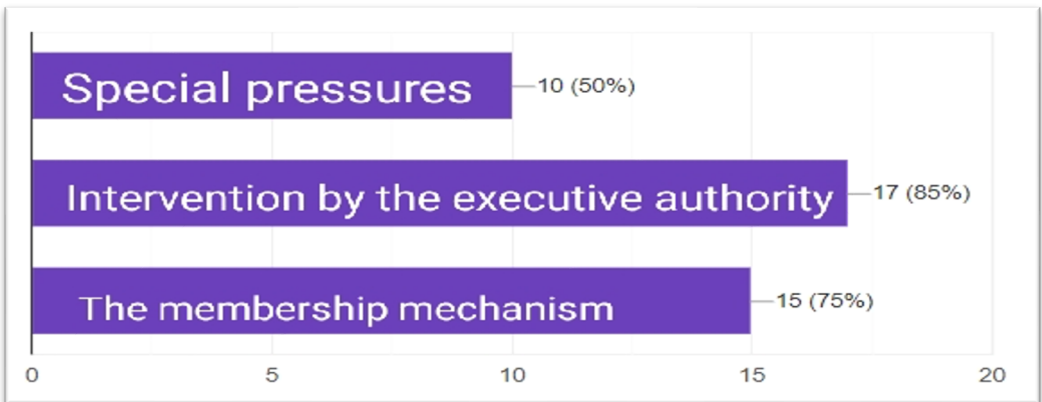
The respondents have convergent interpretations. However, 80 percent emphasized the limits to establish news channels. The Algerian legislator has deliberately restricted the private media sector to thematic channels in laws in 2012 and 2014 that shows the system direction and willingness, due to the importance of these type channels as a method of change and promote public awareness in Algerian society. While 70 percent of respondents identified administrative barriers as a significant impediment, this was made clear by Article 22 of Executive Decree No. 16-220 2016, which gave the Minister in charge of communication the authority to revoke or grant a licensing permit of broadcasting channel at any time. The third reason was the financial condition imposed by the Algerian legislator, which set a limit of 100 million dinars (5000 euros) for

establishing a television audiovisual communication service and 30 million dinars for establishing a radio audiovisual communication service, both of which were excessively high and exaggerated sums.



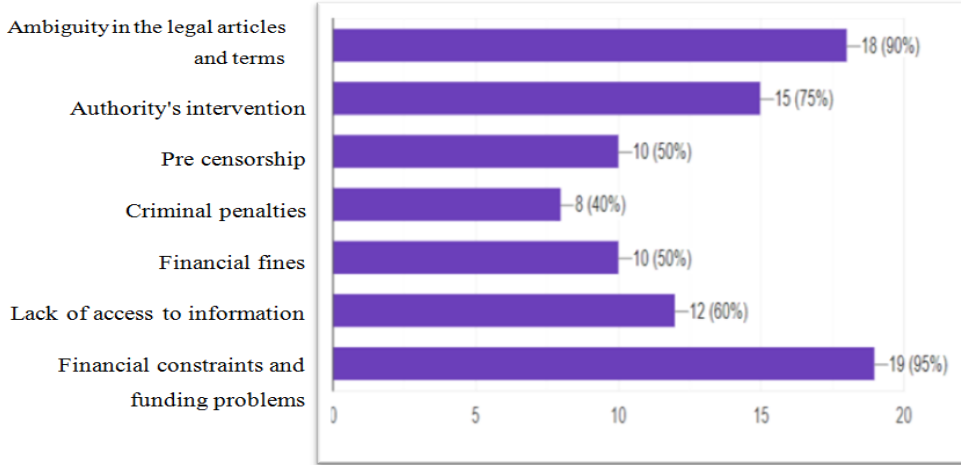
**Figure 4.** RQ 3. Overview of responses regarding the effectiveness of the audiovisual control authority in Algeria to strengthen professional journalism practice.

Most participants (95%) responded (NO), and they explained the shortcomings as follows:



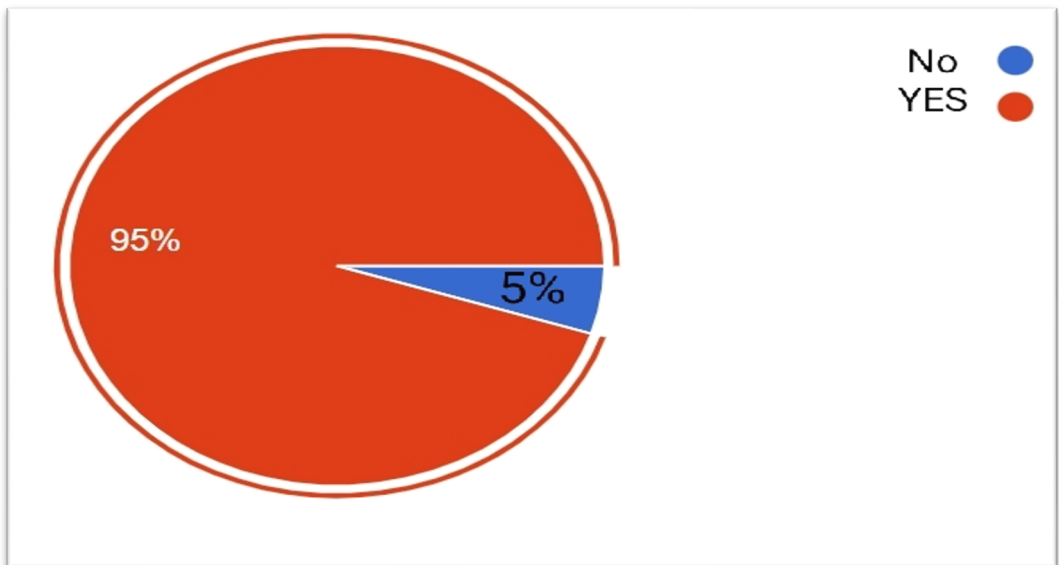
**Figure 5.** Explanations to the legislation shortcomings.

Most participants (85 %) responded that the audiovisual control authority in Algeria is not effective because the high intervention of the executive authority through financial funds or by its subordination to the guardianship ministry. The sample's second explanation represented the process of membership appointments which is appointed from the executive authority rather than electing their membership democratically. The third idea, which is symbolized by particular pressures, was chosen by (50%) of the respondents which relates to the general climate of unwillingness to change, the regime's position on liberalizing the audiovisual sector.



**Figure 6.** RQ 4. A summary of Algeria's responses to the most significant impediments and constraints to media freedom, as outlined in the 2014 Audiovisual Law.

According to (90%) of respondents, ambiguity in the legal articles and terminology is a phenomenon that allows invention and manipulation of bureaucratic procedures, that would stifle any important decision related to journalistic practice. As well as financial pressures and constructions were another barrier to the development of Algeria's audiovisual landscape as (95%) of respondents outlined, owing to the weakness of advertising mechanisms, the dominance on the public economic sector, and advertising monopolization by The National Agency for Advertising and Distribution, which forces these media institutions to choose between loyalty to the system or falling into the hands of oligarch groups. Financial fines and penal sanctions are other impediments to respondents that may make Algerian journalists vulnerable to self-censorship. Meanwhile, many respondents mentioned difficulties in accessing information sources on the pretext of public interest and state security, both of which severely hinder journalistic practice in Algeria.



**Figure 7.** RQ 5. Responses regarding the willingness of the political system to promote freedoms in Algeria based on the audiovisual landscape.

The majority of participants (95 %) emphasized that the audiovisual sector in Algeria does not reflect the political system's stand in supporting and promoting freedom of media and expression, particularly with the deep reforms that has been improved in the last amendment in the 2020 constitution which reflects the regime's desire to gradually liberalize the audiovisual sector, in order to achieve diversity and media pluralism. This would compel the Algerian state to pursue development on all fronts.

## Recommendations

The authors' first idea was that providing autonomy for the audiovisual control authority would safeguard the fundamental right to freedom of Algerian broadcasting services, as well as media diversity based on a professional licensing system. The independence of this body from executive authority is necessary and inevitable to guarantee the credibility of current media policies and to achieve key aims of media legislation by preventing any interest group or party from exerting excessive pressure or affect decisions on this authority in Algeria. As a result, the members of this body must be unable to perform any activities or owning interests in such political organizations or parties that potentially result in conflicts of interest.

- *The independence of audiovisual editorial offices.* Algerian authorities should enact regulations to protect the editorial independence of Algeria's audiovisual channels from extremely uncomfortable pressure and expectations. This regulatory framework should safeguard the editorial independence and operational autonomy of audiovisual channels; these frameworks should be designed and executed in a way that prevents the state or other powerful political, economic, or other entities from obtaining control of Algerian media and from exerting pressure on it.

- *Media Ownership Transparency.* Algerian authorities must enact regulations requiring various television channels to reveal the identities of their owners. However, recognizing the identities of mass media owners that allows atrocities perpetrated by political media manipulation to be explored, made public and discussed freely, with the possibility of averting them. A democratic media system necessitates the public access to trustworthy, comprehensive, and up-to-date statistics and information on all mass media including the audiovisual channels. Though, in Algeria, the lack of ownership data makes it easy to exert pressure on and affect editorial autonomy and even media content. Hence, the transparency in media ownership in Algeria is critical for preventing concentrations of media power that may unjustly affect public opinion and political discussion.

- *The adoption of Information law.* Algerian journalists including those who work in the audiovisual sector should have a right to request information about the activities of public authorities or figures, in case of adoption of Information law that will allow Algerian citizens to access official information and disseminate it without restriction. Under the Information law, Algerian journalists have the right to access and disclose any records maintained by a public entity, government department, local council, or state school. Requests for information may also be submitted to certain non-public organizations that provide a public role. This law enables the Algerian public to hold public officials accountable and responsible, as well as to engage in more informed and productive public discourse.

Finally, to *strengthen the financial policy* of the audiovisual media, Algeria's National Agency for Advertising and Distribution should be granted broad discretion within the confines of its work by ensuring complete autonomy and transparency in the distribution of public advertisements through the establishment of an overarching organizational construction and distribution mechanisms capable for preventing and holding accountable any internal or external intervention on it, with the necessity to provide technical support to develop non-governmental advertising.

## Conclusions

The Algerian regime needs a strong political willingness to open the audiovisual sector and improve media freedom in various media outlets by strengthening and updating various media legislation and regulatory policies based on professional journalistic practice without any legislative constraints or legal voids that could affect the diversity and media pluralism in Algeria. Thus, the attempts that Algeria has gone through to achieve and upgrade media freedom still remain insufficient and ineffective due to the previously mentioned shortcomings and defects, which support the continuity of authoritarian regimes at the expense of democracy and sustainable development, which the current political system strives to embody, to correct previous mistakes, and set all necessary legal and regulatory conditions required for professional journalistic practice.

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