
Mapping



Arab sprouts: new actors in a new political landscape

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INTRODUCTION

The events and aftermath of 2011 have transformed the Arab world: not only have they changed regimes and regional relationships, but they have also altered the often sclerotic political landscape in the respective countries. Under authoritarian regimes that had been in power for decades, political parties were often declared illegal or were severely circumscribed in their activities, media outlets were subject to state control and censorship, and research institutes were either entirely funded and controlled by the government or limited to non-political subjects. As the regimes fell, these restrictions vanished, making way for new actors in a highly politicised environment.

This study attempts to map these new actors in a political landscape that is still extremely volatile and fluctuating. Taking stock of developments so far, it focuses on three Arab countries (Egypt, Libya and Tunisia) which experienced regime change in 2011. It surveys the Arab Spring's fallout in institutional terms: beyond the headline-grabbing events, what are the lasting effects of the uprisings and how can these be measured concretely? To this end, it identifies three main categories of institutions where changes have been significant (in both a positive and negative sense): (i) the media, (ii) political parties and (iii) think tanks. NGOs and the blogosphere have been excluded due to their *de facto* still limited influence and their highly fragmented approach to the new political order.

Although the three countries in question have each undergone different developments since the uprisings of spring 2011, they have followed similar trajectories, successively opening up and then restricting those very political freedoms that would allow the emergence of new political actors, and thus offering insights into the tangible results of a profound change in government.

POLITICAL PARTIES

The status quo ante

Although parties are today considered a salient feature of most political systems, they have in fact emerged only in modern times. The existence of political parties indicates, first and foremost, that the population needs to be involved in an increasingly complex political process. Depending on the system in which they operate, parties channel public opinion and communicate demands to the centres of power; they have a role in the selection of the political leadership of a country; they field candidates for elections, disseminate political information and play a constructive opposition role when not in power. In authoritarian systems they act as legitimising agents for the ruling regime and provide fora for civil engagement. Political parties can therefore either be created top-down or emerge from the bottom up, but in both cases their purpose is the political integration of the people.

Where parties emerge from the bottom up they usually do so in crisis contexts, most notably in crises of participation or crises of legitimacy. The two are often conflated, but denote respectively a political system in which a portion of society seeks more participation, or one that is rejected in its entirety. The parties which emerged in Egypt and Tunisia before World War I and which had a strong anticolonial agenda are examples of parties born out of crises of legitimacy which rejected the political system altogether. Those that emerged in Egypt in the early 2000s sought integration into the system rather than its abolition.

All three of the countries studied here also went through a period in which the regime created a single party designed to control and co-opt the people. In Egypt, this was the Arab Socialist Union (1962-1978), which was replicated in Libya (1971-1977); in Tunisia, the regime party changed its name twice (from *Néo-Destour* to *Parti socialiste destourien* in 1964 and later to *Rassemblement constitutionnel démocratique* [RCD] in 1988) without changing its function.

Although Egypt and Tunisia underwent a degree of political liberalisation in 1977 and 1981 respectively (Libya declared party membership punishable by death in 1973), neither provided an environment in which parties were allowed to operate freely. Egyptian parties had to obtain approval from the Political Parties Committee, whose nine members were appointed by the President. It had the power to refuse new parties, suspend or dissolve existing ones, seize their assets and close their newspapers. Between 1977 and 2007, the committee rejected 63 applications and approved only three, one of which it later suspended. Although around 20 parties existed legally, most of them were not able to act credibly as opposition parties. As a result, the National Democratic Party (NDP),

founded by President Sadat, held on average 80% of parliamentary seats while the opposition held 20%, shared by about five parties. In Tunisia, the regime party continued to concentrate between 80% and 95% of the votes in parliamentary elections.

Although all three cases imposed restrictive measures on political party activity, this did not stifle opposition activity altogether. Some parties were co-opted into the system while others operated underground; none had the opportunity to develop full party features (including competing for ideas in an open market, developing policies beyond opposition to the regime etc.).

Post-2011 developments

The fall of the regimes in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya had an immediate impact on the political party landscape. The ‘regime parties’ in Egypt and Tunisia were dissolved by court order – Tunisia’s RCD in March, and Egypt’s NDP in April 2011 – the former accused of having violated the constitution by seeking to establish a one-party system, the latter of corruption. More importantly, the legal conditions governing the registration of new parties changed radically, leading to a proliferation of parties.

These can be classified in three categories: those parties that had been partially co-opted into the system, those that were banned, and new parties that were founded following regime change. Since Libya had no political parties co-opted into its system, its post-2011 landscape contains only entirely new parties or those that had previously been banned.

All three cases show that the lifting of restrictions and rapid move towards the holding of elections has worked to the advantage of those political parties and movements which already disposed of substantial political and financial capital. Since voter turnout was modest – 62% in Libya and Egypt, 52% in Tunisia – those parties which were able to mobilise popular support were at a clear advantage. New parties had difficulties not only in articulating a convincing party programme but were also handicapped in terms of resources.

As time has passed since the fall of the respective regimes, parties have begun to define themselves less in terms of their past and more in terms of their programmes. By and large, the landscape is divided along two axes: the Islamist/secular divide as well as the classical left/right spectrum. In Libya, a strong regional dimension is also a prominent feature of party politics. **Egypt’s** current political party landscape is certainly one of the most dynamic in the region; shaken by two waves of mobilisation, first in 2001 and then in 2007, a large number of parties in Egypt either existed illegally, or evolved from co-opted parties to protest parties. The change in political climate following 2011 fostered the proliferation of new legally registered parties. Only two months after Mubarak’s departure, Law 12 of 2011 amended the original 1977 party law, easing

certain restrictions while maintaining others. Most notably, parties are not allowed to be based on any discriminatory criteria such as religion, race, class, gender or region.

The 2011 elections favoured political parties over individuals not only because half of the parliamentary seats were reserved for party lists. The country was also divided into just 82 electoral districts in which well-known local figures could not match organised and high-profile parties in terms of resources or visibility.

Of the 36 parties which registered for the 2011 parliamentary elections, 12 were Islamist, 9 were offshoots of the banned NDP, 2 were Nasserist, 2 Socialist, 5 Centre-Left, 6 Centrist and 5 liberal parties. Between 50 and 60 parties exist altogether, although about 20 are not registered, and not all sought participation in the elections. Most importantly, not even a third of the parties that had registered for the elections emerged as entirely new political actors – the remaining two thirds emanated from parties and political movements which had existed before the 2011 events, either as officially registered parties or as banned movements. Several of the Islamist parties, such as the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, the *Salafi Al-Nour* and the Building and Development Party of the *Gamaat Al-Islamiya*, did not exist as political parties before, but were born out of political movements.

TABLE 1: EGYPTIAN POLITICAL PARTIES POST-2011

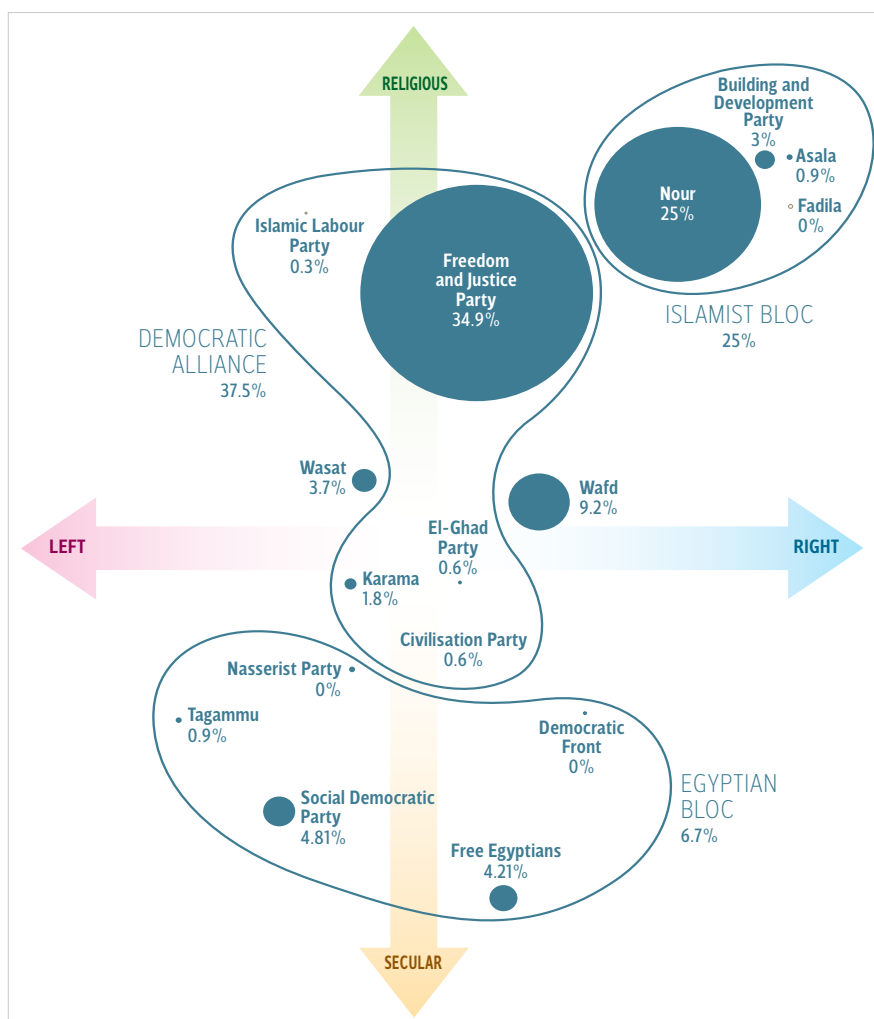
Parties co-opted by the Mubarak regime	Parties banned by the Mubarak regime	New parties
El-Ghad (leader Ayman Nour imprisoned in 2005)	Freedom and Justice Party (Muslim Brotherhood)	Free Egyptians
Tagammu	Wasat	Al-Asala
Nasserist Party	Democratic Front	Social Democratic Party
Wafd	Karama	Al-Fadila
Labour Party	Building and Development Party (Gamaat al-Islamiya)	
	Al-Nour (Dawa)	

The parliamentary elections of 2011 (later declared unconstitutional) led to the formation of several political alliances which either reflected a shared history under the previous regime (such as the *Democratic Alliance*, including parties such as *Karama*, *El-Ghad*, the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party as well as the Labour Party) or a shared political vision (such as the *Islamist Bloc* including *Al-Nour*, the Building and Development Party, *Al-Asala* and *Al-Fadila*, and the *Egyptian Bloc* including *Tagammu*,

the Free Egyptians and Social Democratic Party). The Egyptian Bloc is the only alliance to include truly new parties.

The election result of 2011 was therefore evenly divided between active antagonists of the previous regime (the *Democratic Alliance* won 37.5% of the vote) and Islamist parties which had been tolerated as religious movements by the previous regime (the *Islamist Bloc* won 27.8%). The *Egyptian Bloc*, concerned with the future role of religion in the state, got 6.7% of the vote. The only two parties to have run outside alliances, *Al-Wafd* (7.5%) and *Al-Wasat* (2%), existed well before the Mubarak regime fell.

FIGURE 1: SPECTRUM OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN EGYPT AFTER THE 2011 ELECTIONS



The toppling of President Morsi in July 2013 changed this state of affairs. While most Islamist parties rallied in support of Morsi and formed the **Anti-Coup alliance** (*Al-Asala*, Building and Development, Labour Party, *Wasat*, *Al-Fadila*), the Salafi *Al-Nour* (the biggest rival of the Freedom and Justice Party) refrained from doing so. The alliance's opponent is the **National Salvation Front** which comprises 35 parties in total, including leftist-secular parties such as *Karama*, the Nasserist party, the Socialist Party, the *Wafd* and the Free Egyptians. At the same time, the protest movement *Tamarod*, which had contributed to Morsi's downfall, has announced that it might form a political party to run in parliamentary elections – although it prefers candidates to run individually.

It is worth noting that in spite of highly visible mobilisation in Cairo, large parts of Egyptian society do not actively participate in the political process. This is particularly true in rural areas lacking education and access to information. A spring 2013 poll¹ showed that only 33% of the population had heard of the National Salvation Front; 51% knew the interim president's name in summer 2013 – only 35% in rural areas. One pressing task for political parties would therefore be to engage these potential voters in the political process.

Tunisia's sudden political liberalisation led to the emergence of dozens of new political parties. The 2011 decree which lifted certain limitations on parties – such as the obligation to respect an Arab-Muslim identity – maintained however a ban similar to the one introduced in 1988. As in Egypt, parties are not allowed to be based 'on incitation to violence, hatred, intolerance, or discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, region, or tribal affiliation'. In practice, this would allow the authorities to ban parties promoting women's rights or an Islamist agenda.

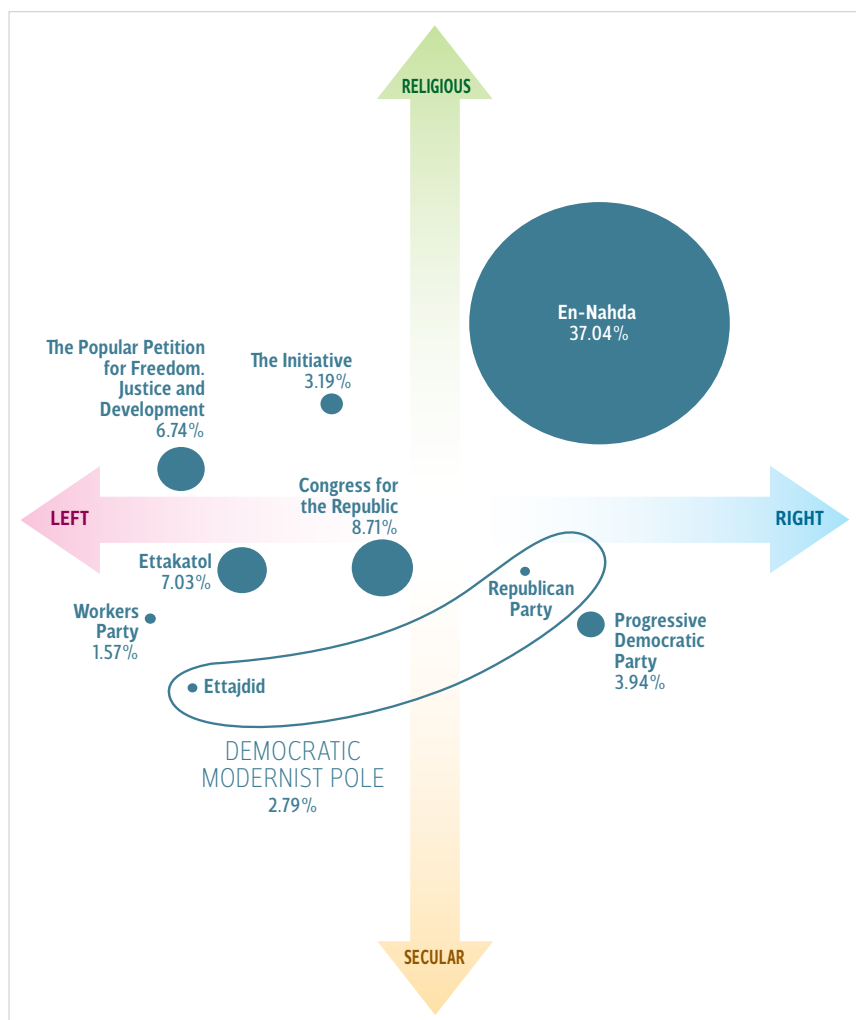
TABLE 2: TUNISIAN POLITICAL PARTIES POST-2011

Parties co-opted by the Ben Ali regime	Parties banned by the Ben Ali regime	New parties
Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties (Ettakatol)	En-Nahda	Free Patriotic Union
Movement of Socialist Democrats	Workers' Party	People's Movement
Progressive Democratic Party	Congress for the Republic	Republican Party
Ettajdid Movement (part of the Democratic Modernist Pole)		The Popular Petition for Freedom, Justice and Development

1. National Democratic Institute, 'Believing in Democracy: Public Opinion Survey in Libya', August 2013, available online at: <http://www.ndi.org/libya-believing-in-democracy>.

116 political parties were registered by the time the constituent assembly was elected in October 2011– more than double the amount in Egypt but with only an eighth of its population. The dispersion of votes over this wide array of parties led to a loss of 32% of ballots cast in favour of parties which did not make it into the assembly. Surveys conducted before the elections indicated that the parties had failed in conveying clear messages to their audience; confusion over party programmes not only had an adverse impact on certain parties' success rate, but was cited as one reason to abstain from voting altogether. In some surveys, the fragmented political party landscape was seen as divisive rather than beneficial to political pluralism.

FIGURE 2: SPECTRUM OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN TUNISIA AFTER THE 2011 ELECTIONS



27 lists of parties, independents and coalitions did win seats. As in Egypt, the relatively short campaign period of nine months following a complete reshuffling of the political landscape favoured those parties which had capital – either in the logistical sense of financial and organisational support, or in the political sense of widely known opposition to the previous regime.

En-Nabda, an Islamist movement banned by the previous regime, gained the largest amount of votes with 37%. It was the only party to be known by all surveyed citizens in a poll conducted prior to the elections. The Congress for the Republic, also a formerly banned party, came second with 8.7%. Both *Ettakatol* and the Progressive Democratic Party, which won 7% and 3.94% each, had existed as co-opted parties under the Ben Ali regime. The only truly new movement, the Popular Petition for Freedom, Justice and Development, won 6.74% of the votes. It managed to attract voters from the rural and southern areas of the country, often neglected by other parties courting the population concentrated in coastal and urban regions – although it is a new movement, it is rumoured to be an indirect descendant of the regime's *Rassemblement constitutionnel démocratique*. Of the top five parties in the assembly, only one was created after the ousting of Ben Ali.

It is worth noting that of the formerly co-opted parties, such as *Ettakatol* or the Progressive Democratic Party, only those which had managed to maintain their distance from the previous regime gained votes; others which held seats in parliament under Ben Ali, such as the Popular Unity Party, failed to gain a seat in the assembly.

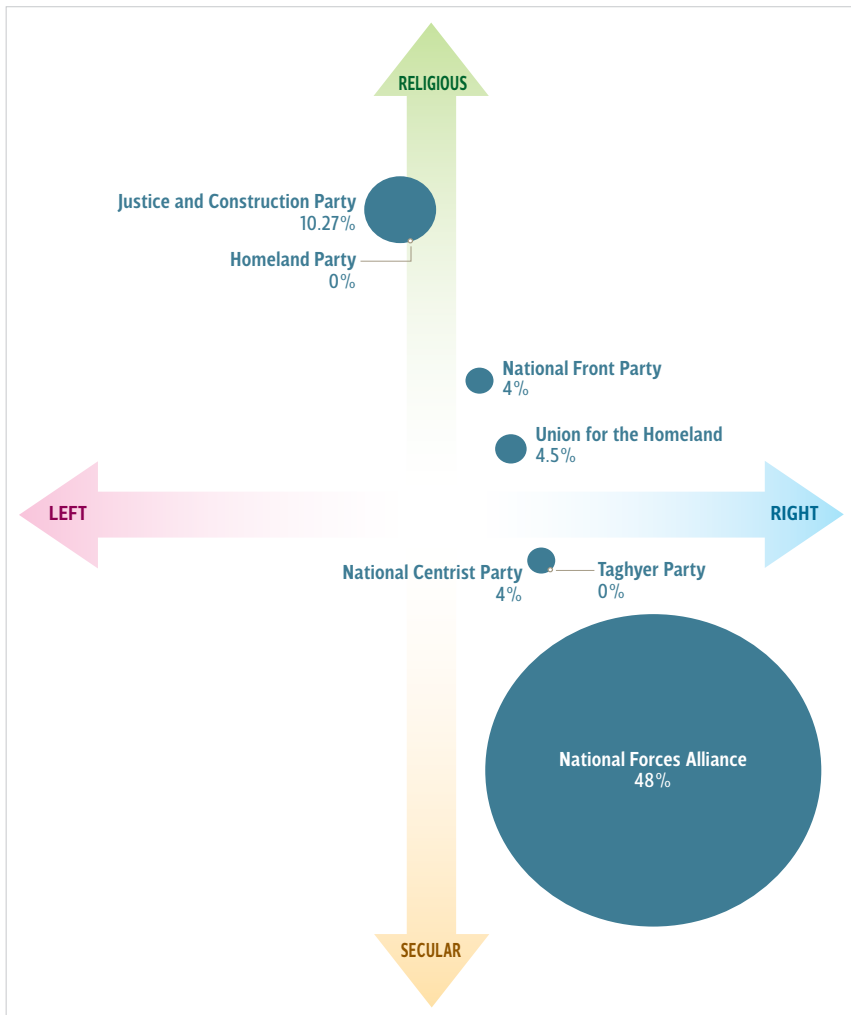
This set-up has changed since the elections. *En-Nabda* has been accused by hardliners of being too soft, leading to the creation of the Salafi party *Hizb Al-Tabrir*. Similarly, a secularist party, Call for Tunisia, emerged in 2012 which managed to lead in the polls in late 2013 with 31.4%. Trailing behind it was *En-Nabda* with 30% and its two coalition partners, *Ettakatol* and the Congress for the Republic, who together gained 7%. Elections scheduled for late 2014 will therefore see a new line-up of parties.

Although **Libya** is the least populous Maghreb state – with a population of 6 million as opposed to Tunisia's 10 million and Egypt's 80 million – and had no political parties before 2011, it had by far the highest amount of political parties in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. 142 registered and 125 filed lists for the 2012 elections of the General National Congress – of these, only ten were able to field candidates in all of Libya's 13 constituencies, pointing to a strong regional dimension in party formation and outlook. This phenomenon of proliferating political parties stood somewhat in contrast with a system that discouraged participation in the political process: 120 of the constituent assembly's 200 members are elected as individuals and only 80 from party lists.

The legal framework for Libya's political parties is still under construction. The previous ban on political parties was lifted in January 2012: a first – and controversial – law

by the National Transitional Council (NTC) banned parties based on religious, regional, tribal or ethnic affiliation. It was retracted after public protest. Similarly, the first draft for the law regarding the election of the General National Congress (GNC), the transitional parliament, foresaw no seats for parties, only for independents. This draft was dropped as well. Currently, political parties are subject to stringent financial restrictions: the electoral commission requires complete transparency regarding the sources of party funding used for electoral campaigns. Most importantly, the Political Isolation Law prohibits anyone who was even remotely involved with the previous regime from holding leadership positions in political parties.

FIGURE 3: SPECTRUM OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN LIBYA AFTER THE 2012 ELECTIONS



The atomisation of Libya's political landscape was consequently reflected in the congress's make-up. 21 parties are present in the assembly, but 78% of the seats are shared by the top five parties. The National Forces Alliance, which won 48% of the votes, is a conglomerate of 58 political organisations, 236 NGOs, and more than 280 independents. It is a spin-off of the National Transitional Council and while it cannot be considered secular, it is more liberal than the Muslim Brotherhood's Justice and Construction Party which won 10.27%. The National Front Party, which won 4% of the votes, is the successor to the Gaddafi-era opposition National Front for the Salvation of Libya. The Misrata-based Union for Homeland won 4.5% of the votes, and the National Centrist Party won 4%. The fragmentation of Libya's political landscape into local and regional, tribal and ethnic, Islamist and secular interests has left the political parties de facto disempowered. In addition, political opposition parties were not able to build constituencies and develop an organisational structure under the previous regime – something they were able to do, at least to a certain degree, in Egypt and Tunisia.

As Libyan parties started out under less favourable circumstances than in the two neighbouring countries, it is perhaps not surprising that approval rates for parties in general have remained low. According to a survey carried out by the National Democratic Institute, 44% believe political parties are not necessary for democracy; 59% express distrust in parties; familiarity with parties in general is underdeveloped.² Only one of five major parties could be identified in polls in terms of leadership, programme and ideology. The National Forces Alliance remained high in the opinion polls with an approval rate of 71% in late 2013; its leader, Mahmoud Jibril, is also a widely known and respected figure. The Muslim Brotherhood's Justice and Construction Party is viewed negatively by 55% of respondents.

Since then, numerous new parties have emerged which intend to run in parliamentary elections once the new constitution is drawn up. These include parties based on former or still active political movements (such as the Libya Party), those that have evolved as spin-offs of former opposition parties (such as the National Consensus Party) or those which decided not to run in 2012 (such as the Change Party).

2. National Democratic Institute, 'Seeking Security: Public Opinion Survey in Libya', November 2013, pp. 15-21. Available at <https://www.ndi.org/files/Seeking-Security-Public-Opinion-Survey-in-Libya-WEBQUALITY.pdf>.

THINK TANKS AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES

The status quo ante

Think tanks and their sibling institutes are defined broadly as a body of experts providing advice and ideas on specific political or economic problems, ranging from those conducting academic or policy-oriented research, or advocacy for certain policy issues to those providing analysis and advice to decision-makers. Think tanks play an important role as innovation ‘brokers’, since they occupy an intermediary position between the policy level and the academic community.

Before the events of 2011, the Arab world was one of the regions with the lowest density of such institutes. This was a result of a combination of four factors: the limited availability of funds, general restrictions on freedom of opinion, inadequate access to data as well as decision-makers and an underdeveloped pool of academic structures which could provide the necessary personnel. In 2008, the Arab world comprised just 2.4% of global think tanks, chiefly concentrated in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and the Palestinian Territories. Those institutes that existed were often highly academic rather than policy-oriented, and more often than not attached to universities or governmental bodies. Their key deficiency was therefore the inability to translate research results into concrete policy projects.

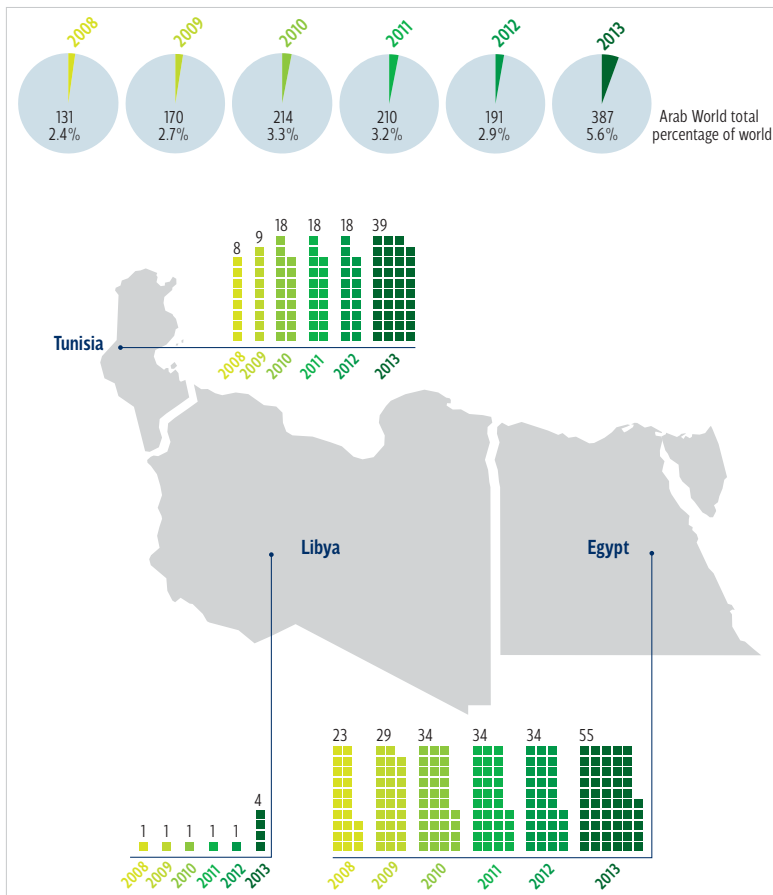
The majority of pre-existing think tanks was created in the early 2000s; only a few had any substantial pre-2011 history. Most of the latter were either directly controlled by the regime – such as the *World Center for the Study and Research of the Green Book* in Libya – or at least closely affiliated to it. The oldest and probably best-known, the Egyptian *Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies*, is part of the Al-Ahram Foundation and therefore nominally independent. In practice, it has had sometimes closer and sometimes less close ties with the ruling regime. Its sister institution, the *Al-Ahram* newspaper, was headed by Nasser’s confidant Mohamed Hassanein Heikal: its directors have generally enjoyed friendly relations with the regime, including President Nasser’s son-in-law Hatem Sadek and later foreign minister Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Created after Egypt’s 1967 defeat against Israel, it was originally dedicated to the study of Israeli society and politics. In 1972, it broadened its research to encompass international issues of security and diplomacy. Although it was at times able to voice modest criticism of the government, it was not capable of changing governmental policies fundamentally. The directors and staff of other think tanks, such as the Ibn Khaldun Center in Egypt, were imprisoned and prosecuted on occasion.

This picture has evolved considerably. By 2013, the total number of research institutes in the Arab world had tripled compared to 2008, making up 5.6% of global think tanks.

The region is finally catching up with a global trend that gained traction in the 1970s and 1980s. This trend began before the 2011 events, however, and is not limited to those countries which have experienced regime change. Rather, this is a regional phenomenon which has led to the emergence of multiple new institutions in virtually every Arab country in the past five years.

The comparatively late arrival of the information revolution, technological advances, the government’s loss of information monopoly thanks to the internet and the recognition that complex challenges cannot be managed by the government alone have all contributed to this development. Furthermore, the availability of funds in the Gulf states in particular has translated the need for analysis and expertise into tangible results, such as the arrival of international think tanks with local branch offices.

FIGURE 4: ARAB THINK TANKS³



3. Source: EUISS; Global Go To Think Tank Index, 2008-2013.

TABLE 3: ARAB THINK TANKS⁴

Total	Egypt	Tunisia	Libya	Arab World total/ percentage of world
2008	23	8	1	131 (2.4%)
2009	29	9	1	170 (2.7%)
2010	34	18	1	214 (3.3%)
2011	34	18	1	210 (3.2%)
2012	34	18	1	191 (2.9%)
2013	55	39	4	387 (5.6%)

Post-2011 developments

Although the growth in the number of think tanks antedated the Arab Spring, their number increased exponentially in the two years following it. Between 2012 and 2013, the total number of Arab think tanks doubled. This development was visible in the countries surveyed here – Egypt, Tunisia and Libya – but also elsewhere: in Iraq, the number of institutes rose from 29 in 2012 to 43 in 2013. Similar statistics can be found in Jordan, where the number increased from 16 to 40, in Lebanon from 12 to 27, and in Morocco from 11 to 30. 2012 therefore saw a proliferation of research institutes across the region. Even though the exact statistics are difficult to determine, other surveys mirror the general trend.

In part, this was the result of the lifting of political restrictions, but it was also attributable to an environment of change. Governments were not only short on expertise – a gap which think tanks fill elsewhere – but were also managing a crisis of an important magnitude. Now, more than ever, expertise, knowledge and spaces for debate were needed. Whether or not these institutes will be able to establish themselves will largely depend on availability of funding; not only does a political culture not yet exist in which financing of think tanks is encouraged (by e.g. tax reductions), but quite simply there are only limited funds available.

Even before 2011 **Egypt** was one of the Arab states with a comparatively dynamic academic environment. The presence of over 60 universities in the country provided an intellectual context conducive to debate, somewhat hampered by the emphasis on rote learning rather than critical thinking in Egyptian educational institutions. This, as well as financial constraints, was further limited by the legal context. Due to Egypt's state of emergency – in place from 1967 onwards with an 18-month hiatus in the early

4. Source: Go To Think Tank Index, 2008-2013.

1980s – political activity and basic freedoms were severely restricted. Although the law was lifted in 2012, the legal framework for think tank activity has not changed significantly. Think tanks in Egypt fall legally under legislation governing NGOs that has been in place since 2002. A first attempt to regulate the situation in 2013 was shelved after the removal of President Morsi from power, and another draft is in the making at the time of writing.

The current restrictions in place – such as the ban on political activities by NGOs, the possibility to deny registration on rather vague grounds (such as activities which could ‘threaten national unity’, ‘disrupt public order’ or ‘offend against public morality’) are expected to remain in place. Most importantly, the law requires prior approval of foreign and in some cases also domestic funding by the Ministry of Social Solidarity, as well as for contacts with foreign organisations. The raid on 17 think tanks (including the National Democratic Institute, Freedom House and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation) in February 2011 was based on the latter provision, and has led to 43 people being sentenced to prison on charges of membership of illegal organisations. Overall, this crackdown has driven think tanks to be more cautious about the disclosure of their funding, and has discouraged foreign think tanks from opening branches in Egypt.

Although the legal conditions have not improved, the general ambiance of a political opening, the need for expertise and advice and the weakening of the security apparatus in charge of monitoring these institutes have led to the creation of new institutes – 21 in total – and an overhaul of existing ones.

It is worth noting that the majority of these new think tanks promote an agenda relative to the demands of the 2011 revolution. The *Centre for Arab Spring Research*, for instance, focuses on the establishment of good governance; the *Egyptian Democratic Academy*, an advocacy body for human rights and democracy, also conducts research on Egypt’s political system in its in-house *Egyptian Policy Center*; the *House of Wisdom Foundation* – named after the famous ninth-century Abbasid academy – contributes research on areas where Egypt is facing change, ranging from the economy to domestic politics to social aspects. Similarly, the *Egyptian Initiative for the Prevention of Corruption* seeks to contribute legal advice to foster laws and regulations designed to prevent corruption; it conducts research on international legal practices pertaining to this field. The *Regional Center for Strategic Studies*, founded in 2012, looks at the regional strategic landscape in a changing region and overlaps, in terms of staff as well as focus, with the *Al-Abram Center for Political and Strategic Studies*.

More generally, the Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research *Baseera* (foresight in Arabic) conducts surveys and polls to provide reliable data on public attitudes regarding political issues. The *Nile Center for Strategic Studies* focuses mainly on regional and international issues, re-launching a debate on Egypt’s foreign policy.

Those think tanks which existed before the 2011 events have changed their outlook as well. The *Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies* for instance, already very active in the development of human rights legislation and promotion since its creation in 1993, has become even more vocal in its criticism of the government. The *Al-Abram Center for Political and Strategic Studies* has created a new research section dedicated to the 2011 revolution; it has also begun to hire additional younger researchers and increased its staff's salaries. Its ex-director (and former party colleague of Mubarak), Abdel-Moneim El-Said, is currently facing corruption charges along with former employees in the *Al-Abram* group, and has been replaced by a university professor.

It is too soon to tell to what extent these new think tanks will be able to shape the policy debate – their mere existence reflects the expectation that they will do so.

The situation in **Tunisia** mirrors that in Egypt: the legal status of think tanks is regulated by the relevant NGO law originally promulgated in 1959 and last updated in 1992. The law restricted NGO activity significantly: activities countering 'morality' or 'disturbing public order' were declared illegal; the Minister of Interior could refuse the registration of a new NGO and suspend an existing one without any possibility to appeal the decision. Although the new law of September 2011 reduces political interference – their suspension now requires a court ruling – and explicitly prohibits state interference in NGO activities in article 6, there remain a few idiosyncrasies. NGOs are not allowed to incite to discrimination, hatred or violence based on religion, gender or regional affiliation, which could be used against think tanks promoting women's rights only or the economy of a certain region only. As under the previous law, NGOs have to register with the government by providing their name, address and the founding members' ID card numbers; people who are members of a political party are still not allowed to create an NGO, and therefore not a think tank either. However, these restrictions have not impeded the creation of new think tanks in Tunisia.

Although much smaller in size, Tunisia boasts almost as many think tanks as Egypt. Between 2012 and 2013, their number has more than doubled and now stands at 38. The background of these new research institutes is diverse: some are affiliated to parties politically – such as the *Centre Mohamed Chakroun* which is close to the formerly banned Congress for the Republic; some are more active in conducting advocacy for certain issues, such as *Think Ahead for the Med Tunisia*, a body promoting research and projects on sustainable development in the region, or the *Arab Institute for Youth Policy Making* which aims at connecting Arab Youth across the region in order to increase their influence in political decision-making. Similarly, the *Research Association on Democracy and Development* seeks to foster a culture of democracy in Tunisia by means of civil society debate facilitation. New think tanks with a very policy-oriented outlook are the *Arab Policy Institute* (currently focused on transitional justice), the *Institut Kheireddine*

(working on civil liberties in Tunisia) and the *Maghreb Enterprise Development Initiative* (dedicated to the promotion of entrepreneurship and job creation in the Maghreb). More academic in their approach are the *Mediterranean College for Scientific Study* as well as the *Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy*.

Two research institutes which existed before 2011 are worth mentioning due to their recent new orientation: the *Tunisian Institute for Strategic Studies*, which had been created in 1993, formally distanced itself from the regime on its website. In a bold move, the institute criticised its previous work, its staff and its collaboration with the regime, and declared a new beginning for itself, dedicated to the revolution. The *Arab Institute for Human Rights*, created in 1989, has also been considerably emboldened in its work which consists mainly of the promotion of a human rights culture.

The least active place in terms of think tank development is **Libya**. This is largely the result of almost four decades of a very restrictive political environment which meant that the country was almost entirely cut off from international academia and the international media. The teaching of English, access to the internet or availability of foreign publications were all minimal under Qaddafi's regime, and this did not create an environment conducive to intellectual debate. Although the 1971 Association Act allowed the existence of NGOs, the generally repressive environment effectively impeded their creation. Registration could take up to two years, associations required permission by the revolutionary committees, and representatives of the regime had the right to be present at meetings. As a result, only 22 NGOs were registered officially before 2011, and no independent think tank existed at all. The new framework has changed this: associations are allowed to operate freely unless a judicial decision ruling otherwise exists. As in Egypt and Tunisia, discrimination based on race, gender, language, or ethnic or tribal affiliation is banned. On a side note, former staff members of the previous regime's think tank *World Center for the Study and Research of the Green Book* are all targeted by the Political Isolation Law and can therefore not hold any public office.

Since 2011, four new think tanks have opened in Libya while the regime's centre has closed down. The *Sadeq Institute*, so named after an opposition activist executed by the previous regime, seeks to provide analyses of a variety of challenges Libya is facing; the *Libyan Economic Advancement and Development Foundation* focuses on economic aspects; the *Libyan Policy Institute* seeks to promote the establishment of democracy and the rule of law while the *Libyan Centre for Strategic and Future Studies* takes a more strategic and regional approach.

Overall, research institutes and think tanks face a less welcoming environment in all three cases than new political parties or media outlets, since a policy-advice culture is slowly emerging only now. A change in the legal framework is not enough – the availability of funding and an environment which welcomes and uses think tank products are equally crucial.

MEDIA

In democratic societies, the media play an important role: they raise awareness of political and social issues, inform audiences on current topical issues and create a platform for debate. By and large, the media in the countries surveyed here were subject to varying degrees of political control and could act only in a limited way as conduits of democratic discourse and values. This changed after 2011.

The **Egyptian** media landscape was already quite diverse before the revolution. Not only state newspapers, but also political party publications, independent as well as international newspapers, were allowed. There was also a large number of TV channels. Radio stations were either controlled by the government or only broadcast music. However, the various media outlets that existed were subject to strict regulations: even though press freedom was guaranteed in Law 96/96 on the media, the law also included penalties for journalists who overstep the limits of ‘acceptable reporting’. This term could be interpreted freely by the Supreme Press Council and the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU). Furthermore, the government could punish political criticism under the emergency law and ERTU did not allow news programmes on non-governmental TV channels. The media therefore succumbed to self-censorship in order not to lose their licence or to avoid prosecution and as a consequence could not report freely or honestly on political affairs. This legal framework has not yet been completely revised. Broadcast media, for example, are still under the supervision of ERTU which is affiliated with the Ministry of Information. Nevertheless, there has been a change in the application of the legal framework and in the way the media act.

With around 90% of Egyptians owning a TV, television is the main source of information in Egypt and therefore has considerable influence. Given an illiteracy rate of 40%, fewer people can be reached via print media or the internet. This is probably one of the reasons why there has been less of an increase in print outlets than in TV channels. Already in the last few years before the revolution, there had been an increase in Free-to-Air (FTA) satellite channels in Egypt which led to the emergence of a new public sphere. After the revolution, this increase was all the more pronounced: between the beginning of the revolution and July 2011, 16 new FTA channels were launched.

This trend was not entirely new, however; shortly before the revolution a restoration of freedom of political expression in both broadcast and print media could gradually be observed. Newspapers could cover political events in the country more freely and did so in the days and weeks leading up to the revolution.

Political topics continued to be treated in the media and this influenced politics directly: during a talk show on ‘ONTV’ on 2 March 2011, for example, the novelist Alaa Alaswani told the Interim Government’s Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq that he would

go to Tahrir Square to force him to resign whereupon Shafiq lost his temper. The fact that Shafiq had to resign the next day shows the powerful influence wielded by television in the aftermath of the revolution.

In the post-2011 environment, politics continued to be discussed on Egyptian TV: on 11 May 2012, a presidential candidate debate was aired for the first time in Egypt, highlighting how television has become a political space. Furthermore, new TV channels like *Al Tahrir* or *Misr 25* (founded by the Muslim Brotherhood), have the clear goal of providing the public with political discussions and information. In addition, a daily newspaper, also called *Al Tahrir*, was launched with the objective of providing deeper analysis of the political news.

While most of the newspapers created after the revolution had a political objective, many TV channels launched after the revolution do not have political information as a goal. Some TV channels transmit the political messages of their owners while others were founded by businessmen that were close to the Mubarak regime. Naguib Sawiris, who already owned several channels before the revolution, founded two new channels that serve the political interests of his Free Egyptians Party. Muhammed Al-Amin Ragab, who was close to Mubarak, founded the Capital Broadcasting Centre (CBC) and employed journalists who were accused of having connections with the Mubarak regime.

Because of the politicisation of the media since the revolution, political tensions are now also reflected in media organs: they are often either pro-Muslim or pro-military. While channels like *Misr 25* clearly support the Muslim stance in society, *Al Nahar* or CBC position themselves as pro-military.

Furthermore, despite important advances, censorship and self-censorship still exist. In 2012, a National Military Media Committee was created. It censored the media by counteracting 'biased media coverage' with regard to the military and led to a partial return of self-censorship. These problems still exist today: after the toppling of President Morsi in summer 2013, the Muslim Brotherhood channel *Misr 25* and several other Islamic channels were taken off air. The popular comedy programme *Al Bernameg* also had to stop transmitting after the comedian Bassem Youssef criticised General Al Sisi. In December 2013, two *Al Jazeera* journalists were arrested for conspiracy with terrorists and alleged links to the Muslim Brotherhood. Thus, the media are again subject to restraints in their political reporting and Reporters Without Borders (RWB) estimates that media freedom has declined since the days before the revolution.

Another problem is that of the financial difficulties facing new media. The TV channel *Al Tahrir* for example had problems finding enough investors for their politically focussed programme. Many new channels are constrained by small budgets, resulting in a predominance of political talk shows in their programming. However, the talk shows

at the same time offer the possibility to democratise political participation by including the public in discussions.

Finally, as a lot of the new actors do not have previous experience in journalism, they often do not comply with professional standards. As the media were not free under Mubarak, even experienced journalists are not used to working independently and without self-censorship. This tendency is reinforced by the fact that criticising the government can still result in being put under pressure or indeed being prosecuted.

Before the revolution, the **Tunisian** media were among the most heavily censored in the Arab world. Private media were not allowed to report on politics and were controlled by the Agency of External Communication. Thus, the media were not able to report openly or honestly on politics. The press was regulated by a very restrictive press code (Law 1975-32). There were two state and two private television channels, the latter with a strong connection to the regime, and 12 radio stations, two of which were owned by the state. Print media consisted of publications that were directly run by the state or by the ruling party, private ones that had strong ties with the regime and opposition newspapers that had to contend with strong economic pressures applied by the regime.

After the Revolution, the National Authority for the Reform of Information and Communication (INRIC) drafted two decrees: Decree 115/2011 on the press, printing and publishing and Decree 116/2011 on audio-visual communication and its regulatory authority. They are both less restrictive than the laws that existed prior to the revolution. The government was at first reluctant to implement the new decrees, hence they were only implemented in 2013. The Penal Code, however, still contains provisions that can lead to the imprisonment of journalists.

97% of Tunisians access information largely through television. In post-revolution Tunisia, there is still a state-run TV station that is theoretically controlled by the government, but which in practice does not always support it in its programmes. Overall, the increase in the number of broadcast media outlets has not been very pronounced. Up until September 2011, INRIC had granted five new licences for television channels. However, contentwise there has been a change in what is being discussed in the media. Compared to the situation prior to the 'Jasmine revolution', when political discussions were completely absent from the media, the media has become highly politicised. As a result the media now reflect the political tensions in the country between Islamists and secularists.

In the Tunisian radio sector there have been more new developments since the revolution than in the television sector. Twelve private radio stations started transmitting after the revolution. Now, there are several radio stations that focus on political issues.

The newspapers that were previously owned by the ruling party were shut down after the 2011 uprising. The INRIC counted 228 new print publications in Tunisia after the revolution, but most of them did not survive the first year as they often had severe financial problems and could not compete with the established print publications. The old publications continue to be the most popular ones. Thus, there has not been a lot of change in the print media.

As investors prefer to cooperate with the old, established media, new media often have to contend with financial problems. In the radio sector, this leads to problems in particular for the few existing associative radios that do not have a financially stable foundation. *Sawt al Manejem*, for example, a new associative radio station that mainly works with young volunteers on post-revolutionary issues, is grappling with serious financial problems.

The low number and the rather lacklustre performance of new Tunisian media can also be explained by the fact that Tunisians have access to French-speaking media and tend to trust them more than the Tunisian media after years of censorship and suppression.

All in all, the situation of the media in Tunisia has improved since the revolution. There is less state control. However, the private media that existed before the revolution are still in the hands of the same owners, and their practices have largely remained the same. On top of this, journalists still face violence and the media have to cope with the limited professionalism of many journalists, a result of years of repression. Furthermore, there has not been a significant increase in new media. Therefore, the Tunisian media cannot yet be described as an independent political actor. The media discuss political topics, but they do not yet exert a real influence on the political sphere.

Libya resembles the other two cases in that the media were under the strict control of the state before 2011. The press law and the penal code were very restrictive and did not allow independent journalism. There had been a short, controlled period of liberalisation instigated by Saif al-Islam in 2007 but it was ended by Qaddafi in 2009 because several newspapers and TV channels had overstepped the limits of what was acceptable to him. Although the media landscape was very restrictive, satellite TV and particularly *Al Jazeera* became very popular in Libya in the years before the revolution and already introduced an element of change in the Libyan media landscape.

After the elections, the GNC recreated the Ministry of Information that had been abolished directly after the revolution. This was criticised as a step backwards, as the Ministry of Information had a very repressive role before the revolution. Nevertheless, the media are less controlled than before.

Taking into consideration the radical restrictions imposed upon the media before the revolution, the change in Libya has been very impressive. Already during the




revolution, the new media landscape was characterised by an unprecedented pluralism. The Libyan media were actively contributing to political information and debate even before a new political system was established. In July 2012, different observers had already identified 200 radio stations and between 200 and 400 new newspapers. Many of those who began working in the media sector had no previous experience and no stable financial background. Furthermore, the large increase in media did not match the actual demand of the Libyan public who were not used to such a wide range of choice in media outlets. Therefore, many of the new media that mushroomed during and after the revolution were forced to close down. There still is a variety of state-run, independent and local media. Thus the media landscape is more diverse than before the revolution.

After the revolution, Gaddafi's main propaganda channel *Al-Libya* was taken over by the rebels. The staff remained but the content of the channel changed overnight. In May 2013, there were 23 TV channels in Libya, many of them new. Most of those channels try to address political issues and perform a political role. *Libya al-Hurra TV*, one of the first new channels that sprang up after the revolution, clearly showed the importance of this political role when it launched a televised appeal asking the population to disarm and turn in their weapons. In response to this appeal, a lot of weapons were handed over to the army. This example shows the practical influence that the media had in the wake of the revolution. Another TV channel that contributed to the political sphere after the revolution was *Tobacts TV*. Founded in July 2011, this channel broadcasts short animated films about the new political system, and other topics of interest in order to foster political awareness in the Libyan public.

Another sign of the democratisation and political role of the media since the revolution is the sudden emergence of political talk-shows on Libyan TV. The talk-show format not only allows very controversial topics to be discussed but also serves as a public forum for debate on important political topics.

Already during the revolution, most of the state-run radio stations were occupied and swiftly changed their programming, and several new radio stations were created. Many of them had political goals. *Radio Free Libya Misrata*, for example, covers political issues by conducting interviews with politicians and rebels and *Radio Shabab*, a new radio station, aims at educating young people about democracy by hosting a political talk show and conducting interviews.

TABLE 4: MEDIA COMPARISON⁵

<p>Tunisia</p>  <p>Press Freedom Index</p> <p>2010: 164 2011-2012: 134 2013: 138</p>	<p>Libya</p>  <p>Press Freedom Index</p> <p>2010: 160 2011-2012: 155 2013: 131</p>	<p>Egypt</p>  <p>Press Freedom Index</p> <p>2010: 127 2011-2012: 166 2013: 158</p>
PRE-REVOLUTION		
Before the revolution, the Tunisian media were among the most heavily censored in the Arab world. Private media were not allowed to report on politics.	The media were under strict state control, even more than in Tunisia and Egypt.	Diverse media landscape before the revolution but discretionary: characterised by censorship and self-censorship.
EVOLUTION		
The media that already existed prior to 2011 are still the most popular: there has been less of an increase in new media than in Egypt and Libya.	The increase in new broadcast and print media has led to pluralism.	There has been an increase in TV channels and print media since the revolution. While some are political and revolutionary in tenor, others are purely business projects.
PUBLICATIONS		
New publications lack financial backing.	New publications often face financial problems.	New publications lack financial backing.
STANDARDS		
Limited professionalism of journalists.	Limited professionalism of journalists.	Lack of professional standards in the media.
FOCUS		
The media now focus more on political issues.	The media now focus more on political issues.	The media now focus more on political issues.
CENSORSHIP		
Since the revolution, there is less self-censorship and a greater diversity in the media.	Self-censorship is still practised after the revolution but has decreased significantly.	Censorship and self-censorship are still practised, but to a lower degree.
REFLECTION		
The Tunisian media reflect the ideological tensions between conservative Islamists and secularists.	Tensions between secularists and Muslims are not reflected as strongly in the Libyan media.	Polarised media landscape after the revolution: reflects tensions between Islamists and the military.
RADIO		
The increase in radio stations has been more pronounced than the increase in broadcast and print media.	A lot of new radio stations have been created.	

5. Source: EUISS; Reporters Without Borders.

There has been a massive increase in the number of newspapers since the revolution. In a society where few people were used to reading newspapers, many new publications vanished soon after having been created as they turned out to be financially unsustainable. This high turnover makes it difficult to keep track of the existing number of newspapers.

The number of newly-founded print publications largely exceeds those that already existed before the revolution. A lot of them are very innovative and try to play a political role. A good example for this is *Al-Sawt*. In order to give a voice to the population, in the early days of the revolution when the government had closed down mail and internet access they installed a mailbox on Freedom Square in Benghazi where people could submit their thoughts, ideas and even articles. They published various submissions and in this way contributed to the open discussion of politics and democracy.

Although the situation of the media in Libya has improved and new media have emerged as a political force, there are still some problems that have to be resolved. Many journalists have not yet adapted to the new climate of freedom. In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, in particular, there were still unspoken red lines. This was demonstrated by Law No. 37 which was passed in 2012: it prohibited the glorification of Qaddafi and criticism of the revolution. Although this law has been revoked by the Supreme Court, it shows that the habit of censorship still casts a long shadow even today.

Finally, there is a strong divide between the journalists who were already active under Qaddafi and the 'newcomers' who are claiming their space in the emerging media landscape but who often lack media experience.

Despite these remaining challenges, the Libyan media landscape has changed, gaining in political freedom and influence since the revolution. As the Libyan media were very restricted before the revolution, the change is even more pronounced than in Egypt and Tunisia.

CONCLUSION

The events of 2011 have had repercussions on the three categories of institutions studied here on two levels: on the one hand, they have engendered a sense of political liberty which has spawned the emergence of new actors and entities participating in the political debate in different forms; on the other hand, they have initiated tangible changes in legal and economic terms facilitating the emergence of such actors. More often than not, the psychological effect generated by the revolutions has played the more important role in this process, while legal changes have followed, rather than preceded, the advent of new participants in the political dialogue of the states concerned.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the first wave of new actors included mainly those entities which had already existed, one way or the other, underground, either as political movements or as a collective of researchers eager to create an institution for themselves. The second wave, however, comprises the actors which evolved dynamically in response to and in the wake of the events of 2011.

Both sets of actors will continue to play an invaluable role in contributing to a dialogue which ultimately fosters a societal consensus on the nascent political system in the respective countries.