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ARTICLE

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South African Media and Politics: Is the Three Models Approach Still Valid After Two Decades?

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Abstract

When Hallin and Mancini (2004) produced their watershed three models theory, South Africa was a new democracy barely a decade old. Even then, along with other countries of the Global South, the experience of a young democracy posed certain critical challenges to Hallin and Mancini's understanding of the way that media and politics interrelate. Two decades later, South Africa has continued to change. There has been increased diversity in media ownership, rapid growth in community and social media, digital disruption, and significant challenges to media freedom. How does the three models theory stack up now? This article reviews scholarly critiques of Hallin and Mancini's model, including their follow-up work, *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World* (2012), and assesses to what extent the three models is still a valid approach to understanding the connection between media and politics in the Global South. The article concludes by evaluating Hadland's (2012) Africanisation of the model in light of the complex postcolonial trajectories of South Africa, suggesting that this, along with Hallin et al.'s (2021) expanded hybridisation model, still offers a better set of variables with which to understand how the media and political systems intertwine in the postcolony.

Keywords

comparative media systems; democracy; Global South; South Africa; three models

1. Introduction

Hallin and Mancini's (2004) thesis, the three models of media and politics, is a watershed moment for media theory. Their model highlights how media systems are shaped by broader social, economic, and political factors and how this impacts the democratic processes of a society. Yet it was their follow-up 2012 work,

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Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World, that showed how these three models could (or could not) be transposed to non-Western societies. Hadland (2012) responded that there is a need to "Africanise" the model, observing the challenges facing media systems in South Africa specifically. While Hadland gave a framework for this postcolonial African model (including the preponderance of a dominant single party, the growing gulf between rural and urban, and serious obstacles to democratisation), much has changed in the country and globally since this response was published.

This article assesses to what extent the three models and Hadland's Africanised model are still valid approaches to understanding the connection between media and politics in the Global South. It does so by considering the dimensions of the original model and Hadland's response but adds new data and context by evaluating the rapid changes in South Africa's media/politics system over the last decade. This enables a more rigorous appraisal of the significance of these changes and their subsequent impact on the validity of the Hallin and Mancini thesis. The article suggests that a hybrid model of media systems is more appropriate and applicable to the postcolonial location. It argues that Hallin and Mancini's model is, as Hadland (2012) and others have argued (Fourie, 2011; Rodny-Gumede, 2015a, 2015b, 2020), a useful set of variables but cannot and should not be the Procrustean Bed of media system analysis.

From the perspective of Hallin and Mancini's model, Hadland (2012) argues that South Africa's media landscape reflects a mix of the democratic corporatist and polarised pluralist models. The country's media ownership is concentrated in the hands of a few powerful players and there are continuing concerns about the media's independence and impartiality. At the same time, however, there is a strong tradition of investigative journalism and a relatively high degree of media freedom. And so, despite South Africa appearing to fit somewhat into these models, Hadland argues that an "Africanised" model of media and politics should prioritise issues such as media ownership, media freedom, and the role of traditional media in a digital age as these often come with unique challenges in the African context. South Africa, he suggests, has strong features of political parallelism in that there is a direct link between journalists and politicians or businesspeople. Hadland cites the removal of South Africa's second democratically elected President Thabo Mbeki from office in 2008 as a key identifier of the centralisation of power in the country. Professionalism in media is generally low too, while there is a fourth estate tension and journalistic autonomy that is increasingly at stake due to heavy-handed state intervention with a dominant party that often overwhelms media agendas, narratives, and debates.

Further "Africanisation" of the three models (Hadland, 2012) occurs because of South Africa's postcolonial context. A dominant single-party state, state-sponsored initiatives to deracialise civil society, exacerbation of interethnic tensions, attempts to detribalise local government, the economic development within the context of unequal international relations, the rise of clientelism, the rural and urban divide, and serious obstacles to democratisation are all features of the uniquely (South) African media and political systems.

The Hallin and Mancini model does not cope very well with rapid, dramatic systemic change or divergent models of democracy, and expects too much of homogenisation, particularly in emerging democracies (Hadland, 2012). It is this focus on Western/Global North media systems and societies that disrupts the three models, and this is Hadland's ultimate aim—suggesting a broader focus on the tensions inherent in non-Western societies between media systems and politics. This article aims to update both Hallin and Mancini's and Hadland's initial responses by accounting for a further decade of media systems change and challenges in the country and globally.

2. Literature

To populate their original thesis, Hallin and Mancini (2004) decided to focus on gathering data from 18 nations, all drawn from Western Europe or North America and all with similar histories as advanced capitalist democracies. This, they explained in their follow-up volume (Hallin & Mancini, 2012), was deliberately done to seek empirical commonalities within a relatively homogenous group and to avoid the temptation encountered by previous studies to universalise findings from narrow data "producing superficial analyses" (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 1). The authors were quick to acknowledge, however, that in selecting a cohort of Western systems, "systems we simply knew best" (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 1), this would prompt scholars from around the globe to ask: "How does my country fit into your model?" (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 1). Certainly, those scholars who did grapple with this question began to identify aspects of the model that didn't correlate with their own experience of their national media systems. Hallin and Mancini's (2012) follow-up volume sought to expand the cohort of countries and the spectrum of critique by inviting a range of global scholars to consider the validity of the variables used in the original study and to reflect on the scope of its assumptions and methodology.

The result was a reconsideration of many of the components of Hallin and Mancini's three models thesis. Among these was a "reconceptualisation" of variables used in the models such as political parallelism, which the authors agreed meant something different in Chinese or African systems compared to European party environments. Relevant to this article, Hallin and Mancini (2012, p. 294) conceded: "As Hadland shows, South Africa would be an example of a one party dominant system…such a case clearly requires a different conceptualisation of the relation of media and politics than anything we develop in comparing media systems." Further challenges were mounted within the 2012 volume to the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the Hallin and Mancini thesis. The three ideal types proposed in the original work, the polarised pluralist, liberal, and democratic corporatist models, were shown to be demonstrably more porous and hybrid beyond the Western world. The inevitable convergence of media systems toward a commercialised, politically unaligned sector, argued by Hallin and Mancini in the original work, was subsequently contested by scholars from the Global South. Media partisanship, an important media system characteristic in the original model, looked to have a different value in a political system where there was only one dominant party. Journalistic professionalism was a further concept that had a diverse range of meanings within different national contexts, from China to Brazil.

Hallin and Mancini embraced many of these revisions. In spite of the contestations and reconceptualisations, most scholars agree on the profound importance and utility of the Hallin and Mancini paradigm and the validity of its empirical, rather than normative, approach to media systems analysis. Hallin and Mancini themselves warned against any expectation that their work would result in a single conceptual framework but rather the nurturing of a "broad and deep tradition of comparative analysis" (Hallin & Mancini, 2012, p. 304) that would inevitably embrace an increasingly global and diverse frame of reference. This is an aim to which this article wholeheartedly subscribes.

South Africa as a case study poses a number of critical questions which initially emerged with Hadland's (2012) response but have since been expanded and diversified by other scholars in the light of more recent historical, technological, and theoretical developments. In his original response, for instance, Hadland (2012) argues that the model should consider a more participatory approach to journalism and should emphasise the importance of community-based media initiatives. In this context, some positive changes have taken place since 2012. The increase in media diversity and ownership by Black South Africans started in the late 1990s with New Africa Investment Limited, or Nail, and Johnnic Holdings bringing some of the biggest newspaper titles under Black ownership, while Sekunjalo, a Black-owned private equity firm, took over the Independent Group in 2013. This process has not been without its problems, however, as transformation efforts have had mixed success (Wasserman, 2020). Additionally, the growth of community media and the digital disruption have helped to promote greater participation and representation. More scholars have also revisited the Africanisation debate from the perspective of broadening media systems in South Africa.

It would be remiss to start revisiting the three models and Africanisation theses without first mentioning Hallin et al.'s (2021) article about hybridity in journalism studies. While there have been multiple responses to the three models, this article outlines how journalism studies have evolved over the decade since the original concept was published. Hybridity, the authors suggest, has always existed and was, they argue, at the heart of the three models concept but not stated so overtly. Indeed, the polarised pluralist model, with which Hadland (2012) states South Africa most aligns, is characterised by blurred boundaries between politics and media and a lack of consensus on professional norms. Even the democratic corporatist model, which Hadland suggests is where South Africa straddles alongside political parallelism, is defined by the coexistence of commercial and party press, a blurring of the political and the commercial as it were. This "hybridity," the networked characteristics built on the legacy professionalism of modern media, stems from postcolonial studies where the interplay of global and local cultures creates a mixture of a third type. "Central to the hybridisation of culture perspective is the idea that people actively appropriate global cultural forms and combine them with their own, pre-existing forms to create new ones" (Hallin et al., 2021, p. 224). The "blurring" of media systems and political boundaries appears to be the updated feature of the three models concept. Although Hallin et al. (2021) argue hybridity has always been at the heart of their thesis, Hadland and others have failed to see that in such clarity.

Indeed, Rodny-Gumede (2020) has dedicated much time to analysing how South Africa's media systems blur with political structures, particularly in the last decade, and determinedly states that comparative media systems have failed to address the postcolonial context in any meaningful manner. She acknowledges that South Africa is commonly analysed purely on its own terms without comparison, but also that Hallin and Mancini's thesis is less of a model and more of a set of variables to consider during the analysis of such systems. Rodny-Gumede also points out that the changes and challenges of South Africa's modern media system over the last decade serve to significantly update Hadland's Africanised model and thus by extension the original three models thesis. Concepts of professionalism and the move against normative liberal journalistic values (Rodny-Gumede, 2015b) in South Africa form the ideal of "Ubuntu journalism" (Rodny-Gumede, 2015a). "Ubuntu" is a sub-Saharan public service ethos where communal values and harmonious relations are at its heart. Meanwhile, Wasserman (2020) outlines the extensive changes to South Africa's media landscape over the past two decades, from the inception of the Media Development and Diversity Agency in 2003 to the media ethics and regulation enquiry of the South African National Editors Forum in 2019. Wasserman (2020) agrees that the normative frameworks and regulatory processes of South Africa's media are still contested and debated, while tensions between the media, government, and corporate interests continue to significantly affect journalistic practice.

Along with the rest of the globalised world, South Africa has undergone immense technological and societal changes since Hallin and Mancini's (2004) thesis and Hadland's (2012) response. The last decade has seen the rise of social media and its role in democracy, the entrenching problems of media freedom and the (as yet unsigned) Protection of State Information Bill, and a senior executive manager of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) essentially censoring news during a period of heavy protest action in the country. One of the most horrifying attacks on the media structure in South Africa occurred between the years of 2014 and 2017 when UK-based PR company Bell Pottinger ran multiple campaigns to discredit journalists and destabilise the political system of the country (Al Jazeera Investigative Unit, 2023; Jones, 2021; Wasserman, 2020). They did so at the behest of the Guptas, a rich Indian family with strong and corrupt ties to the President at the time Jacob Zuma, with their campaigns designed to deflect attention and undermine investigative journalism in the country.

The destabilising of the South African mainstream media—initially through corporate acquisition and then by political subordination—was accompanied by a simultaneous, rapid accumulation of influence in all other spheres of the economy and government. This wave of acquisitive cronyism underpinned by racial tropes became known as “state capture” which, in turn, led to a catastrophic setback in race relations in South Africa. The capture of South Africa’s state and some of its media was so complete that, in under three years, the family had wreaked enough havoc in the social coherence built up after the advent of democracy in 1994 to set it back by decades (Jones, 2021, p. 73; Wasserman, 2020). The event reads like a parable, but it is, unbelievably and painfully, true. In the midst of this chaos, South Africa has seen two (and a half) presidents, countless political scandals, one pandemic, and digital disruption so severe it received its own title of the “Fourth Industrial Revolution” (Schwab, 2016). These changes have affected the tension between media and politics in ways that highlight the faults in Hallin and Mancini’s (2004, 2012; see also Hallin et al., 2021) models and call into question the applicability of the models entirely in such a context. Given the literature on South African events over the last decade, the following sections discuss four areas of Hallin and Mancini’s original thesis and evaluate the applicability of the three models and updated hybridity response as well as Hadland’s Africanisation framework.

3. The Structure of the Media Markets

The original three types outlined in Hallin and Mancini’s original work, the polarised pluralist, liberal, and democratic corporatist models, are arguably more porous and hybrid in countries once called the Global South or the non-West. While Hallin et al. (2021) argue that media convergence is commercial and politically unaligned, this is simply not the case in countries beyond the Western world. Media and politics are invariably linked and intertwined, to varying degrees, in post-colonial countries such as South Africa. One such glaring case exists in the national broadcaster of South Africa, the SABC. In 2011, Hlaudi Motsoeneng took over operations at the SABC, the country’s biggest supplier of news, and the already beleaguered media provider nosedived. Then, in 2016, Motsoeneng, in a catastrophic misunderstanding of media effects theory, banned images of protest action on the news when property was damaged (that is, almost all of the time). This act effectively censored news about protests in South Africa during a time when protests were widespread against the ruling African National Congress (ANC) government and, in particular, the then-President Jacob Zuma. Motsoeneng’s censorship of South Africa’s largest broadcast news provider prevented many from seeing how widespread these protests had actually become and at times how desperate and violent. SABC’s spokesperson Kaizer Kgangyago attempted to explain: “We are not going to show footage of people who are destroying property but we are still going to explain everything and tell people what has happened, and if that is censorship then I don’t understand” (Heiberg & Motsoeneng, 2016).

Despite the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa ordering a reversal of the policy, the SABC continued to promote “70% positive news” (Heiberg & Motsoeneng, 2016) on its bulletins and removing talk shows and news items that discussed the Guptas, a rich Indian business family with close ties to former President Zuma. The “Guptagate” scandal ran long and deep in the history of modern South Africa, and the investigations from the subsequent Zondo Inquiry ran into the thousands of pages. Deputy Chief Justice of South Africa Raymond Zondo, who chaired the Commission, found multiple government ministers, senior ANC members, former and current heads of state, media and parastatal enterprise owners and directors, and law enforcement had engaged in corrupt acts in support of the Gupta family (Jones, 2021, pp. 73–77, 101).

These scandals are by no means the only corruption events to run through South Africa’s modern media history, but they are probably the most important. Motsoeneng’s placement as chief operating officer of the SABC and the Guptas’ capture of the state and media effectively tied independent journalism in the country to a stake. The deteriorating relationship between government and the media markets is never more obvious than during elections, where the national broadcaster often engages in acrobatics to avoid government scandals and corruption stories while attempting to report in a Westernised, liberal, “fourth-estate” manner. It is here where Fourie (2011) and Rodny-Gumede (2015a, 2015b, 2020) argue that South Africa’s journalism system does not fit neatly into the liberal, Western conception of news.

Rodny-Gumede (2020, p. 618) also argues that the analysis of South African media markets needs to be seen in light of growing social media infiltration, primarily because these platforms provide easier access for a broader layer of population and impact the social activism of politics. Despite enhanced democratisation of the media thanks to social media (Twitter or X, Facebook, and WhatsApp being the most used platforms for much of the preceding decade in South Africa), there are limits to this role thanks to the country’s postcolonial and African location. Twitter, in particular, has had a levelling effect on modern politics (Ahmed et al., 2017; Yang & Kim, 2017) whereby social media can help overcome resource inequality in campaigning and mobilisation, but the data with which to use the app is expensive in all but the most urban areas of South Africa. Smartphones and the related internet costs are out of reach for many rural and impoverished South Africans and, until recently, bandwidth and data were the most expensive in the world (Newman et al., 2020, p. 106). These high costs prohibit a plurality of streaming news sites from reaching the rural enclaves (see Jones, 2021, pp. 94–99; Wasserman, 2020), and most South Africans rely on the SABC in both radio and television or print news, a fast dying out information medium across the world. Digital diversification of the media landscape is happening, but some South Africans are simply left behind as others steam ahead with the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Despite the diversification of the news landscape in recent years (from print news across the language spectrum to television news networks globally sourced and locally presented), South African media systems have slipped steadily further into the polarised pluralist model and away from the liberal model, entrenching the trends Hadland (2012, p. 100) noted. The closeness of political actors to the media now blurs the line between the Westernised ideal of journalism and the so-called “developmental” journalism style so prevalent in postcolonial nations. The blurring of these lines is characteristic of Hallin et al.’s (2021) updated “hybridity” response, yet also corroborates Rodny-Gumede’s (2020) argument that post-colonial news and journalism practice does not fit exactly into these Western models.

4. Political Parallelism

In 2012, Hadland noticed that the closeness of political actors to the media systems in South Africa showed signs of slipping further from the liberal model and into the polarised pluralism realm. Civic society structures were diminishing, including media literacy and unequal access to media, while the media that was available exhibited clientelism. Despite this and the apparent slippage into political parallelism, some areas of South Africa's journalistic profession are still fiercely independent with a strong civic activist slant. These overlapping issues show that South Africa was, in Hadland's view, a poor example of the Hallin and Mancini media markets model in that the country has elements of everything.

Characterising the state and support for the state is important in understanding the media markets, because of South Africa's unique history of apartheid. Often, support for state intervention in media markets is legitimately built through a combination of development journalism and the liberation history of the ruling party, the ANC. The ruling party still dominates media coverage (Jones, 2021, p. 30) and has a stronger role in the beleaguered public broadcaster than in other, more independent media. During Zuma's rule between 2007 and 2019, political parallelism was at its height. The intervention of Zuma's cabinet in the SABC is widely recognised (Wasserman, 2020), turning the once-reformed SABC into an ugly monster (Malala, 2015), reminiscent of the apartheid-era mouthpiece of the government. These recent issues of state intervention show a clearer link to Hallin and Mancini's political parallelism than in Hadland's original thesis, in that additional constituents are now visible: an emphasis on commentary rather than neutral news (Jones, 2021, p. 7), the activist role of newspapers in mobilising for politics (Arant et al., 2023), party-politicised public broadcaster (Jones, 2021, pp. 91–95; Wasserman, 2020), and strong ties between political figures and journalists (Rodny-Gumede, 2015a). Clientelism amongst the broad spectrum of government is heightened, seeping into media markets too (Wasserman, 2020). South Africa now seems to be a stronger fit for political parallelism than in Hadland's article a decade ago. While this intervention of the state is visible primarily in the public broadcaster, it is the SABC that controls most of the airwaves for the majority of the South African populous.

However, as Hadland (2010, p. 90) notes, the "dynamics of power is an under-represented concept within the three models paradigm" and this remains true. In emerging democracies and transitional societies, the structures between media and politics tend to interlock and overlap because of the tension between the structure itself and the agency (Roudakova, 2012; Voltmer, 2011). It therefore stands to reason that South Africa is a difficult at best fit to the original models. Hallin et al.'s (2021) updated response also fails to take into account the dynamics of power between state and media to the extent that the "hybridity" model focuses predominantly on blurring cultural forms and norms, rather than tensions between cultural and political norms stemming from post-colonial histories.

5. Professionalism

The indicators of professional journalism, in Hallin and Mancini's original model, include autonomy, distinct professional norms, and public service orientation. Hadland makes the point that public service orientation has different meanings in South Africa, in that state-funded initiatives to provide information and content are frequent and widespread, especially on the public broadcaster. These professional norms have only increased over time: For example, during the early days of the pandemic, the satellite subscription service

DSTV provided free-to-air access to international and local television news channels ("SABC: Informing, educating, and entertaining," 2020). The SABC TV channels provided educational content during the lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, such as the *Covid-19 Learner Support*, designed to prevent disruptions to students' education. While the public service orientation had come under criticism about media freedom during the pandemic (the Public Media Alliance highlighted concerns about the battle with disinformation and the public broadcaster), the attempt to enhance and expand the public services shows that professionalism is still strong in some areas of the country.

The second meaning of public service broadcasting, Hadland outlines, is developmental media generating responsible coverage of emerging democratic states. Here, Rodny-Gumede (2020) argues that transitional societies often undergo a "re-politicisation" of media. In South Africa, the Media Appeals Tribunal—which remains unsigned at the time of writing—includes a Protection of State Information Bill, otherwise known as the Secrecy Bill. South Africa's independent media and the social media revolution have so far resisted attempts at state coercion and have kept up the pressure by reporting on corruption and limits to media freedom, but this activistic trend is under constant tension in the country. The tension between processes of a global liberal ethos compared to the legacies of autocracy in postcolonial societies (Rodny-Gumede, 2020, p. 620) highlights how South African journalists conceptualise their own role in democratisation. Constant pressures of the public versus national interest (threatened by the Secrecy Bill), development ideals, and nation-building on the side of government versus a more fourth estate conception of journalism, pull at the professional efforts in South African newsrooms. Indeed, there is constant tension and declining professional norms in newsrooms globally, with Curran's (2019) triple crises of journalism a reminder that global pressures can and do affect non-Western journalistic practice, albeit with slightly different foci. Despite Hallin and Mancini's neatly delineated models, Hadland and Rodny-Gumede argue that South Africa's professional journalism systems do not fit exactly into any model or framework. Rodny-Gumede (2020, p. 621) raises the question: The role of journalism in South Africa and elsewhere need not be polarised as being either a watchdog of power *or* serving the government's agenda. It could be all things. Fourie (2011) and Rodny-Gumede (2015a, p. 2020) suggest that South African journalists, while ascribing to the liberal model of objectivity and autonomy, acting as overseers, do not enforce nor desire these normative ideals. Hence, Hallin and Mancini's model is, as Hadland originally argues, a useful set of variables but cannot and should not be the Procrustean bed of media system analysis.

The recent "hybridity" model update accounts for some of these blurred lines but does not consider the postcolonial trappings of South African professional journalistic practice aside from the need to move away from what is or is not journalism, media, or politics. Hermida's (2013) "ambient journalism" accounts for the blurring of lines between actors, practices, and genres, while Mellado et al. (2017) show that journalism professionalism does not have to be an either/or equation and can in fact exist within multi-layered hybrid cultures. The added level of hybridity should account for the postcolonial tension between media and state, particularly where the state has a complicated history of capture by business, disruption, and antagonism of the freedom of the press, and increasing blurred lines between state, political, and journalistic actors.

6. Role of the State

There is well-documented hostility of the ruling ANC government towards the media in South Africa. From the second President Thabo Mbeki, through the disruptive and damaging Jacob Zuma years, to the current

President Cyril Ramaphosa, the state's policy towards the free media of South Africa has been to snub, at best and, at worst, to attack. The ANC has had a rough relationship with the media that increasingly attempts to hold the party to account for its actions since taking power in 1994. Yet, the party fails to see this as a liberal fourth-estate action of global journalism and more as a personal, vindictive, and often racist attack on them as self-designed liberators of South Africa. This antagonism stems from a tension between the liberal normative understanding of journalism, the freedom of the press and its role in democratisation, and the African values of a development media with an acquisitive state (Hadland, 2010).

Over the last decade, the ANC government has had various interventions in the media that further blur the line between state actors and media systems. These interventions have been legislative, such as the Media Appeals Tribunal in 2008 (Wasserman, 2020); legal, such as the libel cases between Jacob Zuma and the political cartoonist Zapiro (Jones, 2021, p. 64); as well as limiting access to statistics and information from the government, as in the Arms Deal (Jones, 2021, p. 71) and the HIV/AIDS debate under Mbeki (Jones, 2021, p. 59). Liberation movements such as the ANC have a poor reputation once in government as they tend to, as Southall (2013, p. 332) says, grow old disgracefully. Once in power, they turn their new democracies into one-party states where the distinction between government and state is blurred. Rodny-Gumede (2020, p. 617) makes important points here: The new elite in South Africa have clear links and close ties to politics, and this is different from the democratic corporatist model from Eastern Europe. These elites are empowered in not dissimilar ways to the old National Party under apartheid, where white elite businessmen forged close ties with the Afrikaner capital (see Jones, 2021, p. 84). Hadland (2012) also notes that South Africa has unorthodox modes of intervention, where both silent and overt censorship are used routinely through corporal punishment, the use of state-owned media to discredit opposing voices, and by-passing laws making insult and libel punishable in courts. There is a disconnect between South Africa's constitutional rights and practice and this has been a growing divide over the last decade.

Hallin and Mancini (2012) do acknowledge that the shaping of postcolonial markets is determined through the use of access—both in terms of economic, literacy, and digital inequality but also in the hybridisation of local and global influences, such as China's influence across Africa (Rodny-Gumede, 2020). The problem is that South Africa's unique and complicated history of apartheid, liberation, state capture, and geography means that the country does not fit neatly or at all into these media system structures. The hybridity that Hallin et al. (2021) speak of is often limited to the kinds of media targeted to distinct audiences, legacy and digital media, and the unbundling of media outlets, while in South Africa the fragmented media markets are tied to political interventions. Hybridisation in South Africa affects the local and global influences, "pertinently shown through the presence of Chinese media on the continent and how this is changing ownership patterns and media practise" (Rodny-Gumede, 2020, p. 618). This raises the question of media freedom, the role of the state, and the democratisation role of the media.

7. Conclusion: The Africanisation of the Model

Hadland (2012) set out the strong characteristics of the three models' failure in the application to a postcolonial, post-apartheid country such as South Africa. The original models do not cope very well with rapid, dramatic systemic change or divergent models of democracy. These models tend to expect too much of homogeneous markets, even in new democracies or the postcolony. Hadland also notes that the original models miss how commercialisation can actually enhance the process of political parallelism and state intervention, rather than diminish them. Hence, Hadland sets out an "Africanisation" of the model, whereby there is a preponderance of a dominant single party, state-sponsored initiatives to deracialise civil society, the rise of clientelism, and the growing gulf between the rural and urban societies. These are recommended additions to Hallin and Mancini's thesis and they still ring true. The last decade has shown a further slip into polarised pluralism. New elites created in the post-apartheid era have close and clear ties to politics and the political influence of the nation's media has strengthened to the point where soft and outright censorship now controls much of the state's public service broadcasting ability.

Although Hadland noted that South Africa had more in common with the liberal model than the polarised pluralist model, it now seems that none of these models is adequate enough to describe and analyse the media and political systems in the country. The updated hybridisation model (Hallin et al., 2021) helps to understand the media markets in terms of fragmentation but does not go far enough to explore and evaluate the influence of global and local politics in the media markets, particularly in the postcolony. Additional characteristics that affect the postcolony, particularly in the Global South and especially in Africa, should better outline ethics of media practice (Rodny-Gumede, 2015a), the continued political interventions on journalistic integrity and professionalism, and the unique specifics of digital, language, and geographical access. Blanket models that are developed for and by Western theorists have a difficult application to Global South systems, even if some aspects fit with a squeeze. The Hallin and Mancini (2004, 2012; see also Hallin et al., 2021) models are important and illuminating, but none fit exactly the media systems of a country such as South Africa. The hybrid model is more appropriate and applicable, but even here the application is mixed. These models are a useful set of variables with which to understand how the media and political systems intertwine, but trying to ruthlessly force this system to fit into the blanket models would be best left for Procrustes, not communication theory. In this article, we have argued that it may be time to create a new, non-Western-centric typology of media markets that considers the intricate histories of postcolonialism, struggles of democracy, and a Fourth Industrial Revolution that steamrolls over some and yet simply leaves others behind.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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