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Democracy And The Press In The Middle East

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DEMOCRACY AND THE PRESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

by

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This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines relationships between Arab media and several different institutions including government in general, democracy specifically, and Islam. The primary purpose of this research is to gain not only broad, but also in-depth understanding of Arab governments and their control of media. One of the key issues discussed is the role of the Arabic media channel, Al-Jazeera, in the Arab region.

A literature review has been provided that serves the purpose of providing valuable background on Islam and democracy, Arab media history and the new Arab media. The literature review provides a context for the use of normative theories, authoritarian theories, Social Theory of the Media, Spiral of Silence theory and Deception theory. The review revealed four important unanswered research questions:

- How do Westerners have a different meaning of democracy than Arabs? If so why?

- Do media experts differ from Al-Jazeera employees in their interpretation of democracy?

- How do media experts and Al-Jazeera employees agree that Al-Jazeera shows have increased public-sphere discussions, if so why?

- Do media experts differ from Al-Jazeera employees in terms of critiquing the free information access through the Al-Jazeera channel?

In order to examine these four questions, two groups of Arab media experts were interviewed: scholarly Arab Media experts in the United Arab Emirates and Al-Jazeera channel employees in Qatar. The researcher used face-to-face and phone interviews in order to gather the research data. The researcher took notes, and there were no video and audio tape recordings used. The data were content analyzed for themes relevant to each of the two respective Arab media groups. The researcher divided the research themes into two different sections, each section summarized the interviewees' concepts and suggestions.

Conclusions are made that Islam ideals lead to press freedom and the personal right of information access is established. Arab people seek freedom through the right of elections in different countries like Kuwait and Bahrain, and Al-Jazeera has a positive influence on change in the Arab public sphere.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the last several decades, a variety of paradigms regarding mass communication have emerged to account for the effects that media have on its audience. From the limited-perspectives view, to the propaganda argument, that media are used as a tool to control thoughts and attitudes. Theories have emerged that addresses a variety of issues, themes and perspectives (Baran & Davis, 2006).

These theories have developed in response to certain social issues that are of significant concern, such as the effect of media on the public sphere of discourse; the effect of media on political outcomes and policies; the ability of the media to impose hegemonic perspectives; the tendency of the media to perpetuate social norms, values, assumptions and biases; as well as, the penchant for the elite and powerful to use the media as a tool to their advantage (Graber, 2000). In order to begin to answer the research questions that mentioned in the abstract, a comprehensive view of a variety of theories is necessary.

The archetypal assumption, as described by Baran and Davis (2006), is that media is used as a tool of control, although the effects may not have the desired outcome. This is the

view that mass communication is a process of transmitting messages at a distance for the purpose of control. The archetypal case then is persuasion, attitude change, behavior modification and socialization through the transmission of information, influence or conditioning. (p. 243)

Another view is that media are more of a representation of the shared beliefs of a culture "where reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed" (Baran & Davis, p. 243) to maintain the status quo, a structural functionalist perspective. Some theorists posit that the mass communication experience is more interactive, with messages being sent, but that the audience assigns meaning to those messages, and people develop a way to create schemas or a way to interpret sets of symbols to make meaning regarding experience. The resulting theory, symbolic interactionism, hypothesizes that the way people respond to events and phenomena are in part mediated by our schemas and symbolic sets. "Therefore, a person's understanding of and relation to his or her physical or objective reality is mediated by the symbolic environment—the mind, self and society that we have internalized" (Baran & Davis, 2006, p. 247). In summary, people received huge media messages that create different shapes and concepts.

In order to gain a more clear understanding of media and their effects, a broad examination is required that combines several different perspectives as described earlier. A good example of the need for more than one theoretical viewpoint is revealed when trying to evaluate the relationship between media and democracy. A basic assumption is that in order for democracy to exist, there must be an open and free press, unfettered by the restraints of governmental control. Whether a true and unfettered press actually exists

is not the issue—the commonly accepted view is that one (democracy) cannot exist without the other (press freedom); the more limited and constrained the press, the more limited and constrained the freedom and liberty of the citizens involved (Graber, 2000).

Currently, the views about democracy and freedom of the press are being applied to Middle Eastern societies, partly due to the development of open broadcast companies such as Al-Jazeera (El-Nawawy, M. & Iskandar, A., 2002). Many Arab scholars are questioning whether the creations of allegedly uncensored news media open the door for more democracy in the Middle East. According to the commonly accepted views about the relationship between freedom of the press and democracy, the answer would be, of course (El-Nawawy & Iskandar 2002). Over the decades, theorists have debated on how much impact the news media actually have on shaping people's thoughts and behavior. Interestingly, although there are many ways to examine the press and its effects, those who design and control news media mostly assume a normative view. Even in a democratic society, regulation to meet normative ideals is approved when commodification, "the transformation of relationships, formerly untainted by commerce, into commercial relationships" (Martínez, 2005, p. 11), of the press or other problems are apparent. Whether the resulting social responsibility agenda is to maintain order and the status quo of a totalitarian regime or to promote the ideals of democracy does not matter. What matters is that communication theorists find new ways of evaluating the effects of the press and develop new theories accordingly and that those who manage the press operate under a normative perspective, whether it is to promote democratic ideals or maintain the control of powerful elites.

There are five main purposes of choosing this study. First, this study reviews the theories of media that are used to examine such issues, and it applies those theories in order to explore the current situation of news media in Arab societies. The traditional authoritarian normative tactics are being challenged not only by professionals, but ordinary citizens. What actual effect will this challenge have on Arab society? Therefore, this paper emphasizes normative theories and critical social theories to explore the changes that have taken place since the advent of increased accessibility to a variety of media and messages for Arab citizens.

Second, the research is meant to explore the nature of media in the Arab world and the way that modern technologies have changed the nature of the Arab public sphere. It considers the role of an open press in promoting a more democratic society, while recognizing the unique qualities of an Arab culture. Although democracy will not necessarily unfold in a way that is easily recognizable to Western observers, a more open press has certainly changed the landscape of Arab societies to one of more transparency and accountability from its regimes, and more accessibility and participation in public discourse on the part of Arab citizens. Third, the study is important not only because it allows us to witness the transformation that is occurring because of communication technologies, but also as a way to provide a more clear understanding of Arab culture to a Western audience—an understanding quite necessary in this world of modern conflict between the West and certain Islamic groups.

Fourth, one of the main reasons for choosing this research topic is that there is not a lot of research published or discussed on the relationship between Islam, the press and democracy. Many people in the West agree that a conflict exists. Focusing on the

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relationship between the press and Islam on one hand, and press and democracy on the other hand, is important. The paper examines not only the relationship between them but also the meaning of democracy in the West versus in Arab regions.

Fifth, the research is meant to provide more information about media history in the Arab countries and the new changes in the media. Additionally, the paper provides some examples of Arab democracy that are compared and contrasted with the western democracy. For example the Al-Jazeera channels that that began broadcasting its programs from Qatar in 1996.

Suellentrop (2003) believes that the Al-Jazeera channel made became a major influence in the global broadcasting arena after September 11, and the beginning of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Some scholars like Straus (2001) referred to Al-Jazeera as the CNN of the Arab world. She believes that Al-Jazeera serves to compete with western channels like the CNN and BBC because of its increasing popularity with western audiences. There is little doubt that the influence of Al-Jazeera on Arab and global audiences – especially United States audiences – has increased. This is despite the many cultural, political and economic challenges to the media influence found in Arab regions.

The literature review is broken down into five major parts. The first part discusses Arab media and the historical information about the press and broadcast media. The research focuses on theories including normative theories, authoritarian and Social Theory of the Media, Spiral of Silence theory and Deception theory. The second part explores the relationship between press, media and Islam in Arab countries. Examples from different Arab and Muslim countries that believe in the possibility of freedom under Islam are provided. The third part discusses the media challenges in the Middle East with

a focus on the government and media control in the region. The fourth part discusses the

social changes that Al-Jazeera channel has engendered in the Arab region, as well as the

channel's global appearance. One example of this is the exploration of Al-Jazeera's

decision to make their broadcasts available in the United States. The international fame of

the channel elicits different questions that need answers. The final part adds more

information about the channel, including the influence of the channel and its exclusive

shows.

The methods chapter focuses on the interview and content analysis. There are two

groups that were interviewed face-to-face and through the phone. There were no audio

and video tape recordings used. The researcher took notes. Each interview took forty

minutes. All interviewees were interviewed during their work time in their offices in the

United Arab Emirates or Qatar. The first group is media experts in the United Arab

Emirates, and the second group is Al-Jazeera employees. The researcher has developed

some themes related to the interviewees and the gathered data. The themes are presented

in two distinct sections; those that were derived from interviews with the media experts in

the United Arab Emirates and those that came from the Al-Jazeera employees'

interviews.

Under each group there are different themes analyzed. There are seven themes for

group one, and nine themes for group two. The researcher gathered related interviews

questions and related data such as suggestions and discussions and divided them into

many themes.

Discussion chapter is the last chapter that includes research results, limitations

and suggestions. For example, there are not many research studies written about the Arab

press and democracy. Also, there are few studies focused on the Al-Jazeera channel and its role in Arab region. Many articles have been published about related topics, but there is no study about the Al-Jazeera channel and its influence on Arab discourse. This study focused on the role of the channel and meaning of democracy and press freedom after the appearance of Al-Jazeera in 1996. The paper is presenting Arab experts' needs and suggestions such as their need of press freedom and change of press laws. In addition, this paper suggested that future papers should concentrate on changing Arab press laws to continue to the new, open Arab dialogue.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review will focused on the paradigmatic issues in media theory and continue discussing different media theories. In order to gain a more clear understanding of media and its effects on an Arab audience, the literature review will focus on the dominant effects paradigm which explores the social critical theory, social theory of the media, authoritarian theory, the spiral of silence theory and agenda setting theory and cultural and critical theories as applied to Arab societies. These theories have developed in response to certain social issues that are of significant concern such as how media are used as a tool of control by the elite and powerful, the main role of media in the Islamic society and the relationship of democracy to media.

Through the literature review, the researcher will apply all mentioned theories and discuss different topics such as the meaning of democracy, Islam and democracy, Arab media history, Arab news media. Then, the literature review will move to the governments and Arab media challenges and the Arab and western audiences. The last part in the literature review discusses the Al-Jazeera channel as a case study of this research; it will explore: why Arab audiences need Al-Jazeera, Al-Jazeera and Arab discourse, Al-Jazeera and its impact on the international market, Al-Jazeera as a competitive threat to western news channels and Al-Jazeera's continuing increase in market share and dominance.

The last part of the literature review will allow the researcher to analyze data to answer the research questions such as: do media experts and Al-Jazeera employees agree that Westerners have a different meaning of democracy than Arabs? why?

Dominant Effects Paradigm

Trying to examine and come up with insights about the effects of media on audiences is complex, and results in a variety of answers emerging. For example, when examining the effects of media, some theorists look at the effects on individuals, some on the group, or the institution and/or the society as a whole. "To specify the level meaningfully also requires us to name the kinds of phenomena at several levels— especially opinion and belief which can be a matter of individual opinion as well as the collective expression of institutions and societies" (McQuail, 2000, p. 9). And exactly what kind of effects are we exploring? Are we looking for media's ability to facilitate, to prevent, to change, to reinforce and reaffirm? These are only a few of the complexities involved in mass communication research. Therefore, several paradigms have evolved that have been broadened, refined, changed, incorporated as time goes on and more is learned.

In the early stages of mass communication research, the primary focus was on the power that mass media had in shaping beliefs and behavior, which is known as propagandistic perspective Herman and Chomsky (1998) continues to study the effects of mass media and its role with propaganda. It is interesting to note that even if communication scholars have perpetuated a more limited-effects view, those who control media in various societies still seem to assume that those people who control the media can control the thinking of citizens in a particular society, a clear assumption taken by

modern Islamic/Arab regimes (Herman & Chomsky, 1998). So, mass communication theory itself went through an era where the power of the media and its effects went from being dismissed to a certain extent, to modern times. The impact of media is believed to be more significant than assumed in the previous few decades. The way media has been used in non-democratic states emphasizes the more authoritarian view that media is a powerful tool of control.

The article "Communications vs. Cultural Studies: Overcoming the Divide" by Kellner (1996) describes what he calls the bifurcation between cultural studies and communication studies, which further complicated the examination of mass communication effects, especially when studying differences based on culture. He explains that two schools of scholarship, however, overcame this bifurcation to a certain extent, more specifically the Frankfurt School and the British Cultural Studies perspectives.

Kellner (1996) argues that the Frankfurt School integrated both culture and communication by developing a framework of Social Critical Theory. The theory promotes the idea that people should not only study the way society is but also should try to change it for the better. The Frankfurt Scholars include theories regarding cultural analysis of texts, and audience reception theories of the social and ideological effects of mass media. These theorists examine cultural artifacts in the context of industrial production,

> The commodities of the culture industries exhibited the same features as other
> products of mass production: commodification, standardization, and
> massification. The products of the culture industries had the specific function,

however, of providing ideological legitimation of the existing capitalist societies and of integrating individuals into the framework of mass culture and society. (Kellner, 1996, p. 1)

Kellner (1996) added that Adorno, Lowenthal, Herzog and Horkheimer all developed studies based on the Frankfurt school approach. One common factor in their work is that they all emphasized the importance of "culture industries" and the way they "reproduce" modern societies. Mass culture and communication are agents of "socialization, mediators of political reality, and should thus be seen as major institutions of contemporary societies with a variety of economic, political, cultural and social effects" (Kellner, 1996, p. 1). Nevertheless, in order to be most relevant, these studies would need to be updated, according to Kellner, with more work in the analysis of political economy and the production of culture, among other empirical studies. According to Kellner, there are also problems with the way the school tries to distinguish between high and low culture, the differentiation between what is art, such as opera and modernist literature (high culture), and mass-produced entertainment such as soap operas and popular music (low culture).

Kellner called for a unification of this differentiated way of looking at the artifacts and products of culture, the need to see them as part of a larger spectrum. In addition, applying the same critical methods of analysis to all parts of the spectrum, instead of separate analysis based on what is categorized as high or low culture. British Cultural Studies, and later post-modern and critical theory, also overcame the bifurcation of cultural and communication studies by combining political economy, social theory, cultural analysis, and political critique (Kellner, 1996). They used these combined

theories to analyze and evaluate the complexities of cultural production and its effects on people's lives. The analysis was also meant to evaluate how the power structure in the society used media to reinforce its position.

> They draw on a disparate range of disciplines to theorize the complexity and contradictions of the multiple effects of a vast range of forms of media/culture/communications in our lives and, to different extents, demonstrate how these forces serve as instruments of domination, but also offer resources for resistance and change. (Kellner, 1996, p. 4)

Kellner (1996) wrote about British Cultural Studies that investigated the way that cultural forms can either serve to reinforce social domination or allow people to resist that same social domination. Using Gramsci's concept of hegemony, the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group, they studied both the hegemonic methods of domination and the "counterhegemonic" (p. 4) forces of resistance. The theory thus analyzed the configuration of the society and the ability of cultural artifacts to perpetuate or transform the society. In Arab countries, there are some groups like elite who control media by using their economic power (Winkler, 2008). For example, people who manage media or press will not allow media practitioners to critique the government rules. The elite power had inhibited and limited the media and its role in different Arab societies.

Social Theory of the Media

Chaney (1996) agreed with John Thompson, who developed the Social Theory of the Media in 1995. He looked at the way media impact society through his Social Theory of the Media with the assumption that mass communication changes our frameworks of

understanding, at both the communal and individual levels. Thompson's theory can be applied in the Arab region for many reasons. For example, he purports that mass media have created new forms of social interaction which are more limited than everyday social interactions. This social interaction created by the mass media is slanted and probably prejudicial because mass media is used to create and generate propaganda (Chaney, 1995). Again, the emphasis seems to be the power of cultural artifacts produced through media to influence, shape and transform a society, for good or not. While the forms of action created through mass media certainly could be used to reinforce the current power structure and relations, they can also be used to develop new social relationships, transforming the old system of power elitism.

Social Theory of the Media works at three main levels of analysis. The first is cultural, which Thompson describes as the mediazation of culture. For modern society, he addresses such issues as the mediazation of culture through changing sociopolitical structures, globalization, cultural imperialism, and the significance of traditions within the culture of media.

The second level of analysis focuses on collectivity and the nature of public life, specifically the character of the public sphere. The idea of the public sphere will be discussed in more detail below. Thompson examines the public sphere as a precursor of modernity, and how those in power have become most visible. He states, "Thanks to the media, it is primarily those who exercise power, rather than those over whom power is exercised, who are subjected to a certain kind of visibility" (p. 134). As a result, power holders attempt to control and/or manipulate the outcomes of this visibility the way many presidents in Arab countries rule. Thompson (2005) explains the idea of visibility in

depth. He explains that skilled politicians use the media to their advantage, seeking to create and maintain a basis of support by managing their visibility in the arena of politics. Thompson argues, however, that this visibility creates a double-edged sword for politicians because they are exposed to new dangers. "However much political leaders try to manage their visibility, they cannot completely control it: mediated visibility can slip out of their grasp and can, on occasion, work against them" (Thompson, 2005, p. 31). In many Arab countries, the elite still control the media (Winkler, 2008). So Thompson's theory could be useful to describe the control of media in Arab region, especially because in recent years that control has work against them to a certain extent because of new technologies. With the advent of electronic, computer, digital and satellite technologies, the powerful elite in Arab countries no longer control access to information in a complete way.

The third level of analysis emphasizes social interaction, and how this interaction has been altered by new communication facilities. Here, Thompson is concerned with the social organization of what he calls mediated quasi-interaction, especially as seen in television, the ways the self is extended through mediated interaction, and the limitations of what he calls the institutionalized reflexivity in media culture (Thompson, 2005). In other words, through new communication modes, there is a sense of more interaction of the self (as represented by people who seem like us, i.e. news reporters, etc.) and the actors/agents of the elements of mass media—we see ourselves. The evolution of the Internet as a new social space for expression of the self (in places like Social Networking Websites) (Thompson, 2005) is an even further development of this mediated quasi-interaction where the self is extended into the functions of producing mass media.

Normative Theories

One of the ongoing themes in communication studies is the role of press in society. To assign a given role to the press, normative theories regarding the press were created. Normative theories are models that investigate a phenomenon and then determine what needs to be changed so the object of study will be the way it should be instead of the way it is. In communication studies, then, one of the primary functions of normative theory is to define the role of the press in a democratic society (Kellner, 1996).

Most assume that normative theories regarding the press would be used to support an open and free press that facilitates the democratic process. Depending on the type of society applying the normative view of the press, people might have a different perspective in what the function of the press should be. Consequently, normative theories often reflect the cultural values and biases of those who apply it, with the result being more of a structural functionalist outcome. Structural functionalism is an examination of a cultural phenomenon to understand it, not transform it. In fact, an underlying assumption of structural functionalism is that to change the structure would be to cause instability and perhaps chaos (Eriksen, 2004).

In applying structural functionalism to the media, when trying to evaluate what the press should be, a normative task, the end result often tends to be that the press should operate to help maintain stability and internal cohesion, a structural functionalistic role. Through the lens of structural functionalism, "All social and cultural phenomena are therefore seen as being functional in the sense of working together to achieve this state" (Structural Functionalism, 2007, p. 1). The normative process becomes relative to the question—what is best for society and how can the press function to help achieve what is

best? Ultimately, the outcome is that the function of the press is shaped by the ideological underpinnings of each society or type of governance system (Winkler, 2008). The totalitarian state could easily justify the way the press functions in that system by saying that the outcome of a controlled press is for the benefit of the majority over the interests of the few.

Normative theories, then, are not so much on what the press is doing as it is on what it should be doing. "These purposes are best understood in relation to larger claims about the *good society*. In principle, there are as many normative theories of journalism as there are political systems, from Marxism-Leninism to diverse conceptions of democracy" (Benson, 2005, p. 1).What is considered good for society is determined by the ideology of those in power over the mass media. It could just as easily be that communism is what is considered good for the society rather than democracy. So, normative theories are not necessarily related to democracy as might be assumed in a Western society.

Unsurprisingly, then, different ideological forms of government have developed their own normative views of the proper function of the press. Autocratic regimes promote an authoritarian, totalitarian role of the news media, while democratic societies promote a libertarian, social responsibility, public sphere view. So, normative theories can describe and define the differences between authoritarian and libertarian regimes in the Arab region.

<div align="center">Authoritarian Theory</div>

For the most part, the authoritarian perspective of the role of news media is seen as negative in Western societies that believe that democracy cannot exist without a free

press and free access to information. The Authoritarian Theory first promoted by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956) describes that the news media's objective is to maintain social order and promote the political goals of the state. In a democracy, the assumptions are that the individual's right to freedom and liberty are more sacred than the society's right to maintain order. Some states justify their role from a different perspective believing it is their responsibility to create a stable and just society, which could mean controlling the sources of information in order to prevent social chaos. "Where authoritarianism stresses the importance of maintaining social order, libertarianism aims to maximize individual human freedom" (Benson, 2005, p. 3). In this light, the authoritarian regime would feel justified in maintaining a censored press, supporting the media's normative role.

At a minimum, the press is expected to avoid any criticisms of government officials and to do nothing to challenge the established order. The press may remain free to publish without prior censorship, but the state retains the right to punish journalists or close media outlets that overstep explicit or implicit limits on reporting and commentary. (Benson, 2005, p. 3)

In more extreme conditions, the press is closely censored to extend state control. The Soviet-communist press is a good example, as well as the function of press in several Islamic nations. Turkey, for example, has found it difficult to gain admission into the European Union, in part because of its censorship and control of its news media and persecution of anyone who dares criticize its governmental authority. In recent years, however, the Islamic regimes, especially in the Arabian Gulf, have been unable to exert as much control over the media and access to outside media, and this phenomenon is

changing the policies of government and interactions of citizens to media sources

(Benson, 2005). Because of new technologies, citizens have access to sources of

information that are not as easily controlled by the government as the print press or

television news channels owned by the government. The Internet and satellite

communications have changed the relationship of governments to sources of media

production—they have lost the ability to control that production. Add that to the fact that

many young citizens have been educated in Western countries where access is abundant,

and you have a citizenry that is beginning to demand more and more access.

As described, Western press and communication research hold negative views of

non-democratic approaches to a free press. The criticism of these non-democratic sources

of media is not as pronounced in non-Western countries. As described by Benson (2005),

> Certain ideals in non-western societies are not necessarily anti-democratic, such
>
> as the poetic or literary ideal of the Arabic press. Democratic normative theories
>
> have been motivating forces behind emerging non-western media outlets such as
>
> the Qatar-based Arabic language cable news channel Al-Jazeera (modeled after
>
> the BBC and CNN). Even in the most repressive authoritarian states, the language
>
> of democracy has become commonplace. (p. 3)

In Western democracies, the role of the press is seen as critical to maintaining

democracy as promoted from a libertarian point of view, a view that promotes individual

liberty and a society unfettered by government intervention. The normative function of

the press is to promote the marketplace of ideas, a full range of options available to

citizens from a variety of sources, to support individual liberty and freedom of choice by

informing a citizenry of a variety of perspectives, news, stories, etc. Just as there should

be a free marketplace for trade, so the Western ideal is a free marketplace of ideas. However, over the years, a free marketplace of ideas was often tainted by the need for "profitmaking" (Baran & Davis, 2006, p. 243) and so the radical libertarian view (which believed government was the primary threat to a free press and democracy), was replaced with the perspective that the media must also serve to promote social responsibility and accountability. Government regulation was created to curtail an unfettered profit-oriented press/media (Baran & Davis, 2006). This was thought to be necessary because an unfettered and profit-oriented media did not meet the ideals of the function of a citizenry that made informed decisions based on what the media provided. Even the news media, when its main purpose is to garner revenues, does not have its idealized democratic purpose as a main function, but more the purpose to entertain and gain audience share. The government wanted a more accountable, credible and legitimate source, and so regulations were created.

Consequently, the American press has many functions from a normative point of view. One is to be a watchdog against government abuse. Another is to allow for a diverse and rich source of opinions and images, "the proposition that the media should provide a robust, uninhibited, and wide-open marketplace of ideas, in which opposing views may meet, contend and take each other's measure" (Gurevitch & Blumler, 2000, p. 25). Still another function is the public's right to know of events, policies, phenomena etc. Although the western, democratic press hopes to fulfill these functions, many critics argue that considering American media is owned by a few giant media corporations, they are remote and closed to accountability; they do not offer a broad spectrum of ideas; they are bounded by a two-party political system, and they are "primarily concerned with

private enterprise and profits and the values of a consumer society" (p. 25). So, even though the press may aspire to certain normative functions, those who control and manage media may have different goals which often cause conflict and dilemma.

The justification for the function of the press in the Islamic societies follows a normative line of thought. Keep in mind that in an Islamic society, there is not as much emphasis on individual rights as in America; the moral emphasis is on what is best for the society in general, even if the rights of some have to be sacrificed. So, in the past, the autocratic regimes of the Arabian Gulf, for example, have felt quite justified that the government-controlled press was serving the best interests of their respective citizens, in recent years, however, the citizens of Islamic regimes that have maintained media control and censorship are no longer willing to accept such a lack of access to information. Changes in technology, access to higher education and much greater mobility have connected a large portion of Arab citizens to new media and channels of communication not easily controlled by governmental censors. As citizens of Arab monarchies are exposed to international news stations like CNN, open broadcast organizations like Al-Jazeera, or the Internet, a different kind of public sphere is public sphere is forming in the Arab world. Arab people have always been passionate about politics and social issues, but heated debates often took place, at least in recent decades, in the private sphere.

Spiral of Silence Theory

The Authoritarian theory focuses on governments' power and the relationship between the government and audiences. But Spiral of Silence Theory focuses on audiences and their reactions. The tendency of Arab people to speak out only in the private sphere could perhaps be understood by thinking of the influence that a "Spiral of

Silence" (Noelle-Neumann, 1984) might have on Arab citizens. The theory of the Spiral of Silence was first introduced by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann. According to her theory, when people believe their view of the world or events has wide support, they speak out with confidence. Those who have different perceptions that are not widely supported are more likely to withdraw and remain quiet for fear of ridicule or rejection.

> As more people are encouraged either to express their views openly or to remain silent, one view becomes dominant, while the other disappears from public view entirely. Motivated by fear of isolation, the people who fall silent wish to at least appear to share the seemingly universal dominant view. (Martin & Peters, 1999, p. 1)

Spiral of Silence theory would certainly apply to an Arab society. However, criticism of certain elements of society could cause a person literally to disappear, and the Spiral of Silence is firmly implanted in that culture.

Perhaps, then, because of the influence of a "spiral of silence," and because of real threats to personal safety, many criticism of powers that be were silenced, curtailed and subverted. The Arab audience was often passive, not believing in the legitimacy of the news media because of the function of the media as a mouthpiece for those in power. Again, this silence is being broken, and a new public sphere is emerging—one that has strong elements of democracy, at the least, a call for ordinary citizens to have more voice in public affairs. Noelle-Neumann (1984) discussed the meaning of Spiral of Silence theory. She mentioned that media have different influences under certain circumstances, and this influence is limited. Therefore, a large gap can develop between representation in the media and the attitudes of the people. She wrote:

public opinion is here defined as controversial opinions that one is able to express in public without becoming isolated...this applies to fields subject to changes, that is, fields of opinion that are in flux...public opinion is constituted by attitudes and modes of behavior one has to express in public if one does not want to become isolated.". (Noelle-Neumann, 1973, p. 145)

Again, the concept of what people do to conform to what is acceptable so that social isolation does not result is a powerful one in explaining the way people behave in the public sphere, and why many Arab citizens may function mostly in a private sphere when expressing political or social opinion.

What is a public sphere? As described by Habermas (1989), "it is social movements and groups using these media actively for social change" in different societies. Soules (2001) wrote that the public sphere began to develop in the 1700s when people began to congregate and socialize in coffee houses, volunteer associations, literary societies and so forth. The success of the public sphere depends upon how much access there is for all people, the autonomy of citizens (to be free of coercion), the equality and a rejection of hierarchy, the rule of law and the quality of the participation of all citizens.

No society have reached the ideal public sphere because there are always exclusions, to one degree or another, based on ethnicity, gender, class, religion, etc. In recent decades, Habermas (2005) argued that there were other factors that "deformed" (p. 1) the public sphere including the growth of culture industries and large private interests, among others. For example, large newspapers and news organizations that are mostly devoted to profits "turned the press into an agent of manipulation: It became the gate

through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere" (p. 1). In most

societies, the illusion of the public sphere is maintained, but mostly to provide legitimacy

to the decision of those in power.

The Arab media has evolved in a different way than in Western societies. As an

arm of the government, the media outlet has not been overly commercialized because it is

not a private, for-profit organization. It has been used to support the legitimacy of current

regimes.

> Television in Syria is directly financed by both the government and advertising
>
> sales, and most of the programs such as those featuring news, drama, music, and
>
> public affairs are designed to promote the political regime, as in other Arab states
>
> under mobilization broadcasting. (Amin, 2001, p. 37)

In recent years, this model of the news media has been challenged by new outlets that are

for-profit; for example non-government controlled news agencies such as Al-Jazeera. The

Arab public sphere is changing because of these new outlets. As a result the meaning of

democracy was changed in the Arab region.

<center>Deception Theory</center>

Buller and Burgoon (1996) first developed what they called the Interpersonal

Deception Theory (IDT) which they described as being a combination of concepts from

deception theories and interpersonal communication. They argued that this merger of

concepts was a way to better reveal how deception operates in interactive communication

(Buller & Burgoon, 1996). Deception theory in communication is important because

experts like Buller and Burgoon (1996) believe that deception takes place in

approximately 25% of all interpersonal communication, for a variety of purposes and reasons.

Buller and Burgoon (1996) created the Interpersonal Deception Theory model where individual factors are considered, such as goals and motivations, but these are not enough to predict deceptive interactions and their outcomes. So, they place the individual factors in a relational context, from a dyadic and dialogic point of view. Buller and Burgoon (1996) argue that there is a cooperative element to deception, with the acts of the people involved having an influence on shaping the deceptive episode from both the sender and receivers. This perspective is based on concepts of interpersonal communication that shows each party in interpersonal communication is an active participant, not passive (Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005). This is the dyadic view that says communication cannot be understood without considering the "interplay" (Buller & Burgoon, 1996, p.206) between the people participating. The interactive and dynamic nature of interpersonal communication is then combined with deception theory that reveals the way people manage how they present messages so that certain things are conveyed and other things are hidden or altered.

Interpersonal Deception Theory can be applied to study how people who are in the public's eye may use deception in the interpersonal context when exposed in the media, such as in interviews. In this study, the researcher used the interview method to gather the research data. Depending on the questions asked, participants wanted to present most things in a very positive way if they are associated with a practice. There are, however, ways to detect when someone is not revealing everything, or if they believe one thing but say another. According to Buller and Burgoon (1996), "fabrication" (p.214)

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and news "concealment" (p.216) can appear if people, like participants, do not have a free speech and press. In other words, the researcher applied deception theory when interviewing Arab media experts and asking them about their jobs and news accuracy. Some of them may not provide the truth because they do not trust the researcher. Burgoon and Buller (1996) agreed that "equivocation" (p. 215) might appear too if an elite power who control the media and people's rights is present. They wrote that:

> We could hypothesize that the benefit of shared history would evaporate, but so might the fear of detection, beca. e equivocation requires only shading the truth rather than completely fabricating information. (p. 215)

The theory argues that deceptive behaviors will vary according to context, unlike non-face-to-face deceptive communication. Because there is interaction taking place between participants, the non-truth teller will adapt and alter communication to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the familiarity with them, the purpose (Berger, 1994).

Buller and Burgoon (1996) hypothesize that when people are being deceptive in interpersonal communications, that they use more strategic activities to manage information and their image; they also display more non-strategic arousal cues, such as negative and dampened effect, noninvolvement and other performance cues. Buller and Burgoon (1996) agreed that "when relationships are built on mistrust or are negatively toned, the truth bias should be attenuated or even become a lie bias" (p. 214). The context makes a difference. For example, when someone is being deceptive with people who know them well, they are much more likely to engage in more strategic behaviors to try and control the way they are delivering their messages. Another important aspect of this theory is that the expectations and skill of the receiver to detect deception are important

in the interaction. For example, if a person expects that the other might not be telling the truth, the way they respond to the non-truth teller will influence the way deception is presented (Buller & Burgoon, 1996). Alterations to the message will be made depending on the response of the receiver (Berger, 1994).

Burgoon, Buller, Ebesu, White and Rockwell (1996), suggest that receivers might become more suspicious when there is less sender involvement, a lack of expressiveness, a lack of composure or non-immediacy. There might also be problems with conversation management and there is likely to be less pleasantness. These factors arouse suspicion, and then the sender often senses this and begins to alter presentation (Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005). In summary, Deception theory is one of the important theories which is applied in this study.

<center>Meaning of Democracy</center>

The original meaning of democracy comes from the Greek language—democraci, which means "the people," and krato which means "the power of the people" (Ober, 2006, p. 3). Ober (2006) argues that the current meaning of democracy has changed from its original Greek meaning that emphasis on people power. Today, in the West, democracy is understood as meaning the authority of the majority to make decisions. A more accurate understanding from the Greek point of view according to Ober is that democracy is when the collective group has the power to take action and make things happen. It is where an empowered citizenry can effect change in the public realm. Today, the meaning of democracy means most commonly that people can effect change with their vote.

In the last several decades, history has witnessed and increasing numbers of nation states introducing more democracy into their political systems. While it offers

freedom from oppression for many, "it is a complex term and coming to grips with its practical meaning takes a long time" (Pitts, NA, p. 1). Democracy is not just a philosophy that guides government policy; it is behaviors, skills, knowledge and attitudes. It creates a special challenge for the people who are participating in a democratic society.

> Democracy does not consist of a single, unique set of institutions that are universally applicable. The specific form that democracy takes in a country is largely determined by prevailing political, social, and economic circumstances and it is greatly influenced by historical, traditional, and cultural factors. (Pitts, NA, p. 1)

United States president Lincoln (1809-1865) defined democracy as: "Government of the people, by the people, for the people," (Graham, Kent, 2001, p. 131). This suggests a more active role of the citizens in government decision making because it is not just for the people, it is by the people. So, citizens have more access and influence on government actions.

Free elections are only a small part of democracy. It also refers to good governance. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP)'s Arab Human Development Report describes democracy as "a set of societal institutions that fully represent the people, interlinked by a solid network of institutional regulation and accountability (with ultimate accountability to the people), whose purpose is to achieve the welfare of all members of society" (Sarsar, 2006, p. 21). There have been endless debates in recent years to evaluate the compatibility between Islamic and democratic values. The debate centers on whether or not Islamists should participate in electoral competition or whether western values should be allowed to "contaminate" (Guazzone,

1997, p. 95) local values and beliefs. Most of these debates are tainted by ideology, and a common ground is not easily formed. "They contribute more to creating Middle East exceptionalism than to overcoming it" (p. 85-86). So there is a common circumstance between Islamists and proponents of democracy.

In most societies, in today's complicated and information-permeated world, direct democracy is not the usual model. Democracy is representative where citizens can choose those who will make decisions for them. This type of democracy is especially needed in the more diverse societies seen today (Strom, 1996).

Regarding the Middle East, there are some inherent problems with the assumptions about bringing more democracy to the region. One problem is regarding the assumption that introducing democracy will be peaceful. In fact, in reality, as countries enter the transitional phases of democracy, they often become more conflicted and war-prone, not less (Mansfield & Snyder, 1995). A mature democracy, one that has been developing over several generations, is much consists. It also includes a limited government, where many of the economic, social and cultural needs of the society are met by the private rather than the public sector. There has to be stability through law, and governments must be accountable. Meaning of democracy in the Arab world is different. Each nation state has to develop its own type of democracy that is based on its own culture's experience and history; otherwise, the form of democracy imposed is not compatible with the citizens, and could end in a failed system. "The desire for freedom, the rule of law and a vibrant civil society, and for a voice in one's government, is universal, but the specific institutional expressions of democracy will naturally vary by country" (Dobriansky, 2004, p. 1). In general, meaning of democracy in the west and the

East is related to citizens. For example, People desire freedom and liberty and justice, but religious, cultural and historical factors will determine the ways in which these elements are distributed. Not all societies see social justice in the way America sees it. Some are more geared to protecting the rights of the society to ensure happiness for all than just ensuring the rights of individuals, for example.

Lappe (2006) argues that most democracies are "thin." (p.40). The author states,

By thin democracy I mean a society that behaves as if the best possible outcomes flow from a simple combination of elected government and a free market ruled by supply-and-demand "laws" divorced from ethical values. Inexorably, wealth and power concentrate to the point that both a competitive market and an accountable political process are undermined, and citizens' voices are increasingly sidelined. (Today Washington lobbyists outnumber elected representatives 56 to 1.) Thin democracy leads to an instant-gratification ethic that seeks only short-term results and to shrinking public investments that compromise public safety and allow social and physical infrastructure to decay. (p. 40)

Democracy then is a form of government where a constitution is created that guarantees basic individual rights, including political rights, independent courts of law, fear and free elections, a transparent government, and a press and media that is free and open.

There are minimum requirements for a country to be defined as a Democracy in the West, such as the control over government, elected representatives chosen in frequent and fair elections, all adults have the right to vote in elections, and have the right to run for public office. If " the citizens have the right to express themselves on political

matters, defined broadly, without the risk of state punishment and the right to seek out alternative sources of information, such as the news media" (Pitts, NA, p. 1). That is mean the democracy exist in the society. But without the access of controlled information, such as controlled press by government, then a true democracy does not exist. The ability to access information is one of the key components for a democracy.

Developing an access to information culture can be divided into three phases: the passage of the law, its implementation, and its enforcement. Our ATI project includes activities at all three phases. Passing the law is the easiest part. The most difficult part, for governments, is the implementation, and enforcement is arguably the most important. (Neuman, 2002, p. 2)

Public documents must be made available to all citizens, and there must be access to all activities of the government unless in the interest of national security such knowledge may jeopardize lives. This need for accountability and the public's right to know requires that governments maintain records of activities.

Altschull (1995) described the power of press in the United States. He wrote that media- in particular, the television journalist- on the course of modern events, has many writings. It is assumed that the power of press is an independent power which can be used in adversarial style adjacent to governments and who run them. It is obvious that belief in the train of free power by the press is a weapon with who try for using press for their intentions (O'Reilly, 2004). Governments and the economically powerful have been maneuvering journals during history (Melton, NA). Altschull (1995) adds that the four articles of faith of press noted that the press is free of outside impediment. Also, it serves the public's true to recognize and reports facts impartially. It is the widespread belief in

them that makes the mission of the manipulators possible and helps in the preservation of the basic ideology. It keeps them in force (Althusser, 2001). After the World War II ended, Robert Hutchins wrote that the mass media became an important part in American society; they become a countable to the democratic structure. The media, the commission stated, are "vital necessity" (Altschull, p.68) in the transaction of public business.

De Beer and Merrill (2004) in their book *Global Journalism* focused on the philosophy of freedom. They mentioned that until now we have emphasized the drag of authoritarianism. But where is the press freedom? Many people around the world watch news on television, read the newspaper, and listen to news on the ratio. In the United States, for example, you will find an excess of opinions about freedom of the press. People seem to believe that they have sufficient freedom and the media also have a lot of freedom. However, De Beer and Merrill (2004) asked the question: "what is the accurate quantity of freedom?" (p. 76). They present a few hypotheses about the advantage of press freedom, from European Enlightenment of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Arguably the major maker of personal freedom in the eighteenth century was the Frenchman, Turgot (Rothbard, 1995). Today, when we believe that there is a global rally for freedom of the press, we encounter difficulties which most often emerge from the (American) liberation and assumptions broadcast by the influential media described above. The five assumptions are: Freedom is excellent for a media scheme and a people, freedom is essential for national growth, freedom is required for maximum news coverage, freedom is required for the truth detection, freedom is essential for information pluralism and variety (De Beer & Merrill (2004).

Stevenson (2004) argued that global freedom of the press focusing on sweeping principles like Human rights which contain freedom of speech and the press. This is a requirement in most national constitutions. Most countries whose presses fall under the Freedom House, "a non-profit, nonpartisan organization is a clear voice for democracy and freedom around the world" (Freedom House, NA, p. 1), signed on to the United Nation statement. The statement includes "A free press means freedom of conscience for journalists; press freedom is less important than the viability of the nation; a national press policy is needed to provide legal safeguards for freedom" (Altschull, 1995, p. 435). Different countries symbolize some type of international standards unenforceable and have no impact on their newspapers.

Islam and Democracy

In the meaning of democracy the researcher discussed the definition in general in the West and East, but in this section the researcher will focus on the meaning of democracy in Islam. Democracy is a common word in Muslim and Arab countries. The definition or meaning of democracy is connected to strong political words such as the Freedom House and the United Nations' statements mentioned above. Muslims support the democratic process, but support for Islam takes precedence in different communities of mixed religion. In many parts of the Arab world, in fact, citizens express simultaneous support for democracy and Islamism. Unlike what most Westerners believe, the discourse about democracy in the Islamic world is vibrant and dynamic. "From mosque sermons to newspaper columns, college campus speeches to coffee shop discussions, citizens of the Arab world view the tenets of Islam as inherently democratic. There is no distance between Islam and democracy" (Jamal, 2006, p. 51). Pew Research Center (2006)

published a case study of Western thought. The study is about Islam and the West. One of the results is

> Western Europeans and Americans see a conflict between Islam and modernity more often than do Muslims themselves... The current poll finds Europeans are less optimistic about prospects for democracy in Muslim countries than Muslims are. (p. 1)

In other words, Western observers fail to understand the nature of democracy in the Arab world. Further development would add to the strength of this democracy. Even the concept of local representation is built into the society as the local sheiks are required to represent the people in their districts, taking their needs and demands to higher levels, just as what is supposed to occur in American democracy. So, the structure of the society lends itself to democracy processes.

This does not mean that a switch to true democracy will take place anytime soon. The Islamic cultures of the Middle East are steeped in tradition. As described earlier, Muslims prefer gradual change.

> Are Muslim, and particularly Arab, Political cultures so malleable that within a generation or two we can transform most or even some of them into genuine liberal democracies? Perhaps we can but perhaps in our desperation to achieve absolute security in newly perilous world, we are distorting the social history of democracy and misreading the nature of the societies whose political virtue we mean to raise up. (Jamal, 2006. p. 51)

It is important to achieve democracy in a way that is embraced by Arab citizens--through gradual reform; trying to impose a Western version is likely to fail, especially if

there is a lack of understanding of the current democratic structures already in place. To understand why gradual reform is much more likely to be successful than radical, sudden reform, people only have to look to Islam. Islam

> is a monolithic, hierarchical faith devoid of individualism, liberalism, and political freedoms. But more important, these explanations assume that Islamic culture, Islamic interpretations, and Islamic religiosity all similarly stifle the democratic process and do so the world over. (Jamal, 2006 p. 53)

A lack of democracy usually equates to a lack of freedom; democracy, however can also repress dissent and be "intolerant" (p.53). Also, in order to institute democracy, all people must be included, even Islamic fundamentalists. They are active in Muslim social life.

> They are substantial, they are there on the ground, they are disciplined, and they are committed. They have been performing important social services for the poor and the needy, and they have managed to project an image of a corruption-free political force in contrast to regimes that are plagued by corruption. (Ottaway, Schwedler, Telhami, & Saad, 2005, p. 11)

Also, in contrast to most Western views, there is a good deal of evidence that support for democracy is not necessarily lower among those individuals with the strongest Islamic beliefs and behaviors. "Since Islam bases its belief on God (divine law) whereas democracy is obviously based its value on human law (secularism)" (Fatkhuri, 2008, p. 1). Many Islamists scholars like Mazrui (2003) agree about the strong relationship between Islam and democracy. He states that "Some democratic principles have been a part of Islam from the beginning - concepts like Idjitihad, unit" (p. 1). Also, he discusses the misunderstanding of Islam, Islamic fundamentalists in Muslim countries.

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Western thought Islam laws can tie democracy under freedom which did not happen in any Muslim country (Mazrui, 2003).

Another misunderstanding about Arab culture is the belief that no democracy exists. In fact, local representatives have been a part of tribal practices for centuries. Local sheikhs have an open door policy at least one day a week where all citizens visit and express their needs and concerns. Still, although the actual principle of Shura (consultation between authority and the governed) occupies a conspicuous place in Islamic principles, in practice it is not much used.

Furthermore, the recent history of some Arab countries in the last quarter of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century demonstrates that it is possible to apply democracy despite the economic and cultural differences between the countries. (Arab democracy Foundation, 2008, p.1)

In some areas, there is more democracy than others, but it truly depends on the integrity of each local sheikh. Not surprisingly, some local leaders are much more interested in their own agenda and needs than those of the citizens they represent—a common problem in any democracy. In summary there are differences between Arab democracy and press freedom depends in economic, culture and history of Arab countries.

Arab Media History

Essoulami (2006) argued that as long as newspapers have existed, they have been used as tools of the authorities in the Middle East region. The Ottoman Empire, and later foreign Embassies, controlled the distribution of information throughout the nation states known as the Middle East. In spite of strict controls, in the mid 1800s, an independent

Arab press appeared in Egypt during the cultural and intellectual renaissance of the time, partly encouraged by the Khedive Ismail, a liberal leader in Egypt between 1863 and 1869. A few years later, Syria and Iraq followed with their own written presses, but true freedom of speech was rare as the newspapers were subject to continuing censorship. Rather than continuing to work in a confined environment, many journalists left these countries to work in Egypt where there was more freedom. The group of journalists who came together in Egypt who also shared a desire to rejuvenate Arab literature, took up the fight for freedom of the press. The newspaper *Al-Ahram* was founded in 1875. It is one of the first Arab daily newspapers which still appear as a leading daily newspaper (Hourani, 1983). The paper also would translate important diplomatic and political documents into Arabic for its audience. The newspapers were often used for political protest, but it was in the 1870s that the newspaper that focused on citizens' opinions became more important in political life. This new purpose also created the political journalist, like Bishara Taqla who established *Al-Ahram*, whose purpose was not so much to inform but to arouse strong emotions in the audience through the writing about political events (Hourani, 1983).

However, there were still some restrictions, even in Egypt. Not until 1908 were the legal and political restrictions in Egyptian journalism lifted altogether, and through the legal pressure from young Turks, free press was instated in Syria and Iraq as well. By 1909, there were 144 newspapers and reviews in Egypt alone. The press was infused with the energy of young writers (Hourani, 1983) and politicians who were

Committed to the promotion of a national Arab conscience in the context of

Turkish domination. From 1945 onwards, the press became the privileged

instrument in the fight for national independence. (p.2)

Theirs were struggles that faced Arab journalist. For example, journalists were often

political activists as well, and their newspapers were often banned. In summary, if

journalists published articles or concepts against colonialist and their policy, the

colonialist will close newspapers.

During the mid 1940s, many intellectuals and citizens hoped that with the

growing literacy rates and greater mobility, there would be more open dialogue and more

freedom of the press in general in the region (Assessing the Islamist Threat, 2006). The

citizens liked to see themselves as more cosmopolitan than previous generations, and

they wanted a society and its information to reflect that. The journalists at the time knew

there was a concern regarding Islamist movements, but they

did not foresee just how malignant such groups could become, nor did they

envision that oil-rich states such as Saudi Arabia would fund extremism rather

than regional development. (p. 2)

So, there was a movement in Arab press. The colonialists' control and restriction of the

press made a reaction of Arab Journalists. Journalists tried to publish their own opinion

even if some of them were anti-colonialists.

In the 1960s and 1970s, people in Islamic countries began to move to urban

centers where educational opportunities, secularism, economic growth and personal

opportunity promised a better future for many. Although, the promise began to dwindle a

bit during the 1980s (Jamal, 2006) there was a degree of political liberalism developing

off and on in Arab modern history. Especially in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon,

Morocco and Syria as more people became educated and mobile. The first Arab

experience with liberalism and press freedom was in the constitutionalist era under

Ottoman Empire during the 1870s–1910s. The second wave of liberalism happened

during the era of parliamentarianism, where colonial authorities began to develop this

form of local participation during the 1920s–1950s. The third wave of liberalism began in

the 1980s and continues today (Guazzone, 1997).

The Cold War not only lifted some of the restrictions of communism off of

Eastern Europe, but there were also consequences of this liberal trend in the Middle East

as well. The three most significant events of the time were the first Gulf War, the

development of a politicized Islam, and a growing democratic process in several

countries, most notably Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Yemen

(Essoulami, 2006). The democratic system that was created after the overthrow of

Saddam Hussein has mostly failed. Most critics believe that in order for this new

democratic system to be successful, the Iraqis needed a much longer transitional period

so they could adjust and build a civil society with strong democratic institutions. This

new society would need to adopt an Arab temperament rather than a Western one

(Essoulami, 2006). If the Iraqi residents can access the news and elect their own leader,

they will meet one of the democracy requirements. Not only in Iraq the media was

changed but in Arab region in general. The next topic includes the new changes in Arab

media.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the mass media in the Arab world have undergone significant and radical changes. Because of new technologies like satellite television and the Internet, a more global discourse has developed with many citizens of the Arab nation states. This has allowed Arab consumers to "bypass the limits of authoritarian information control" (Hafez, 2001, p. 1). Trying to close media spaces to global forces is much less likely today than in the recent past.

The question remains, however, whether new access to external media and the widening of media horizons is sufficient to generate political and social changes in the Arab world and the Middle East (Hafez, 2001).

Common sense says, however, that even if change is gradual, change will occur when citizens are more able to access information and use that information to become educated and express themselves. The access can help break the spiral of silence; in other words, if people see that their own views are supported by others; they are more likely to speak out. More open access means more access to differing views (Noelle-Neumann, 1984), a breaking of the spiral of silence.

In the early 1990s, the media system of the Middle East was considered the most closed and controlled in the world by most scholars. Three different types of press were described in the Middle East first, the mobilized press, which is almost totally subordinate to the governments involved. Second, the loyalist press, which is owned privately and not always censored, but usually supports regimes because the regimes control the resources (and persecute journalists who criticize them). Third, the diverse press, where the discourse is freer. The presses in Kuwait and Morocco have been more

free in recent decades than the other Arab nation states, although Kuwait closed its free press during the Iran/Iraq war (Amin, 2001). Many Arab countries have developed their media technologies and increased the number of media experts. As a result the media role was changed in many countries like Kuwait.

Before Al-Jazeera and other channels like Al-Arabiya and Al-Manar were introduced in the 1990s, the limited freedom of the press that existed was focused in newsprint stories. Radio and television were under the control of the absolute monarchies, most of them operated by government agencies. The reason for this model was that the governments wanted to preserve national unity and their central control of government. So, the Arab governments used the broadcast media as a tool to reinforce their centralized control and position of power (Furia & Lucas 2006). There was also a desire to keep the media tools out of hostile control, which is the government control (Amin, 2001). When Al-Jazeera appeared in 1996, it played a significant role in the Arab region by changing the old concept of government control of media.

The reasons provided by Arab governments for their desire to control the media fall under a normative approach. In the early 1990s, Arab regimes resisted new technologies because they were a threat to the ability to control media. In the last twenty to thirty years, however, this has changed. Satellite television has been allowed, along with the Internet. These were not introduced, however, until the regimes could find alternative methods of control. As noted by Amin (2001):

The lack of skill within governments to cope with what is defined as negative reporting about Arab leadership and Arab governments causes jingoistic responses, such as the banning of satellite dishes in Saudi Arabia, or the refusal to develop telecommunication

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structures....Arab media has responded to the cyber era by applying rules of censorship

that are imposed by different nations. In the West, freedom of expression is a basic right

to every citizen, and is protected at all costs. Within the Arab world, this type of

censorship is easily tolerated and even expected as a form of civic responsibility (p. 39).

In summary, some of these rules of censorship include liability. Arab citizens do

not have the right to publish anything against the government. The governments some

time lead the media and sort or change the media content. To learn more about it, the

following sections takes describe and apply the Agenda Setting Theory.

Agenda Setting Theory

McCombs and Shaw introduced the agenda setting theory in 1972 (McCombs &

Shaw, 1972). They asserted that

The correlations between the rate at which media cover a story and the extent that

people think that this story is important. This correlation has repeatedly been

shown to occur. (p.176)

This acceptance of media control should not be surprising. Even in democratic societies

"The mass media softly but firmly present the perspective of the ruling class to their

audiences. The result is consent and support" (Amin, 2001, p. 70). In a democratic

society, the expectation is that the media present diverse views and is not controlled by

ruling elite; however, as many studies and critics show, the American media is not

particularly diverse and often reflects the interests of the elite, yet the audience does not

often challenge the agenda. Why would an Arab audience that expects its media to be

more controlled protest? This phenomenon of acceptance by both American and Arab

audiences provides further evidence for Spiral of Silence theory first promoted by Noelle-

Nueman (1999). According to the Spiral of Silence theory, people who believe that their view is widely supported will speak out self-confidently, while those with a different view will stay quiet and withdraw (Noelle-Nueman, 1999). As more people are encouraged either to express their views openly or to remain silent, one view becomes dominant, while the other disappears from public view entirely. People are motivated by inclusion or exclusion much of the time (Martin & Peters, 1999). The Spiral of Silence theory explains why, even when expectations about media may not be met, people may not be too vocal if their views are not in the mainstream or if they appear confrontational. The Spiral of Silence Theory is easily applied in Arab societies, where confrontation is often avoided. Rejection or isolation is social death in an Arab society. And so, people will exhibit the Spiral of Silence in public opinion making. "Public opinion is the attitudes or behaviors one must express in public if one is not to isolate oneself, in areas of controversy or change; public opinions are those attitudes one can express without running the danger of isolating oneself" (Spiral of Silence Theory, 2007, p. 1). Arab people live in much more bonded and unified social communities than some other cultures. To lose this connection would be devastating to an Arab person.

Those who are managing and controlling media according to an accepted normative view would gain even more power as those who have different opinions are often indirectly silenced. In recent years, however, there has been a shift in Arab media that has already had a profound impact.

In fact, Al-Jazeera has triggered a profound shift in the way the Arab mediascape functions which may potentially contribute to the reconfiguration of the political systems in the Middle East region. (Oifi, 2005, p. 67)

With the introduction of Al-Jazeera and other open and uncensored (although not uninfluenced) media, the control exerted by Arab regimes has become relatively ineffective. Because of new technologies, a wide array of perspectives and information channels are now available in the Arab world. The variety, depth and breadth of media is much richer with the new channels made available than with the conventional media. With the advent of satellite, the Internet, and other information technologies, current regimes can no longer control the flow of information that comes in and out of their jurisdictions.

> Although individual online access in the region does not compare with Western access, it is nevertheless a growing phenomenon, which is gorily apparent by the choice of the Internet as the preferred outlet for the public spectacle of beheadings by terrorist groups. (Arab Media, 2005, p. 5)

Nevertheless, there are ways to impose the standards and interests of the regimes even in this new electronic environment. If a site becomes noticed by the state security forces and is deemed unacceptable for some reason, it can become subject to censorship. Egyptian security forces visited the offices of Islamonline.net, and, consequently, the rhetoric of the site changed with a more conservative tone. While all the new forms of media are challenging the status quo, though, the most promising to enhance political change are the satellite channels. Nevertheless, "Whether these changes will ever be realized and whether they will be for the good of Arab populations in general depends on many factors" (Arab Media, 2005, p. 5). The growing power of the satellite channels was clearly seen when Al-Jazeera took precedence over CNN during the 2003 Iraq war. A new media "star" (p.5) was born.

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Many new channels face challenges like any channel over the world. In the Arab

courtiers there are different challenges face the media. The next paragraphs discussed

those challenges.

Government and Arab Media Challenges

Amin (2001) argues that because of the information revolution, the Arab nation

states have reached a critical point in their development. During the early 1990s, the Arab

world was limited because of "old political divisions, static economic models, and poor

media structures" (Amin, 2001, p. 24). The print media have been plagued by repressive

press laws, censorship, ideological and political tensions and distribution problems. This

limited free expression in the region, with Iraq and Saudi Arabia being the most

repressive in recent decades. While other areas of the world were becoming more

democratic,

> Middle Eastern governments continue to resist transforming their political
>
> systems and cling to power through alternative policies of coercion and
>
> cooptation, repression and reform. (Bill & Springborg, 2001, p. xii)

Citizens of the Arab world tolerated censorship, many believing that it is part of

their civic duty—a free press could be subversive and undermine stability. This

acceptance was in part due to the history of the press in the region; the press was almost

always an "official voice of the ruling party" (Amin, 2001, p. 25). Not all Islamic

societies have a censored press; Egypt, for example, has an advanced free press system,

but the nation states of the Arabian Gulf (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia

and the United Arab Emirates), the oil-rich states, have controlled their media outlets.

Until recently, the most diverse and open press of these was found in Kuwait. Radio and television networks have been

Absolute monopolies and usually function under direct government supervision… they are frequently used as a propaganda arm by Arab governments to control and mobilize the public. (Amin, 2001, p. 29)

As described earlier, the Arab governments used the media to promote their centralized control of the society and eliminate hostile voices. The Arab governments, however, have not been the only compelling factors in the way the media was managed. Religious conservatives demanded strong normative policies in relation to media presentations. For example, in 1991, a large group of Islamic activists in Saudi Arabia sent the king a letter that stated:

Reformation of the mass media in accordance with the Kingdom's policy to serve Islam and to reflect the ethics of society, elevating its culture, and purging the media of everything not conforming to these objectives, with a guarantee of its freedom to spread awareness through accurate news and constructive criticism within the limits of the sharia…and to censor foreign materials, magazines, and television programs to prevent the dissemination of infidel and secular ideas and nude pictures. (Boyd, 2001, p. 48)

What is this normative force in Arab thinking and policy that seems to be the fear of freedom of thought? Mernissi (1992) explains that unlike the name Christianity which refers to a person, Christ, Islam is about the relationship with God—to submit, to surrender to God's will. When Islam became the dominant religion, the citizens gave up Shirk, which is the Islamic concept of the sin of polytheism (Mernissi, 1992). In return,

Allah would guarantee peace and stability. The idea of freedom of religion, and therefore freedom in thinking, is associated in the Muslim's mind with Shirk, and its result—disorder and confusion. The ideal in society is to have Rahma—Rahma is the love that people have for one another, like members of a family, and it makes them concerned about the circumstances of others. Rahma is associated with sensitivity, tenderness, and forgiveness. It is nourishing and safe, like a mother's arms. Individual selfish interests are the opposite of Rahma. At the time these concepts were presented in Islam, there was violence and conflict in the Arab world, and these concepts were meant to try to end the suffering and bring harmony to Arab lives. Islam promises peace, but this requires sacrifice of individual desire. This does not mean that individual desire was eliminated; it just could not go past the sacred limits of what is acceptable in a just and stable society. Individuals must live in moderation and "never lose sight of the interests of society" (Mernissi, 1992, p. 90). Opposition between people is seen as a weakening of the group, Rather than weaken the group, it is better to rid the group of dissenting voices.

Press Democracy in Different Arab Countries

A variety of activists have been fighting for several years for more democracy in the Middle East. This section includes the differences between democracy levels in many Arab countries. Also, it discussed Arab governments and leading similar elites.

President George Bush was not the first to introduce democracy in the region, although he might believe so (Ottaway et al., 2005). In fact, the modern elites have been forced to create democratic institutions, even if only for show, in order to satisfy the growing demand for democracy by the Arab populous. More liberalized autocracies now

exist in Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain along with the more traditional types of authority seen in Syria, Tunisia, Libya and Saudi Arabia.

> For instance, in all liberalized autocracies there is a similar trend of ruling elites co-opting new social segments in order to control the privatizing economy according to a pattern dubbed 'from plan to clan'; the trend may be similar, but the beneficiary groups are different and differently aggregated from country to country. (Guazzone, 1997, p 92)

The result is a different kind of autocracy with elements of democracy at play. Each nation state has a different kind of democratizing process within the frame of its authoritarianism.

Because of the influence of Islam, and because of tribalism and sectarianism, most Arab people are more comfortable with gradual reform rather than radical reform. Scholars agree that it was unfortunate that the West did not learn this that would have been nice to learn from the West before the current conversion to democracy by Iraq. When asked if they wanted gradual change to a more democratic country or an immediate change, most citizens said they wanted a slow and incremental process of change to help overcome the backlash that would surely accompany radical reforms (Ben-Meir, 2006).

Professional legitimacy is the primary concern of most new broadcast organizations in the Middle East. Because of a lack of development from the past, most Arab news organizations are plagued with unprofessionalism, either real or perceived. If there had been a genuine press culture, professional and ethical standards would have been more developed, but currently, these values are somewhat rare in the Arab media world. For example, "Among practitioners, there is no perceptible difference between

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journalists and columnists—that is to say, between reporters and advocates" (Arab Media, 2005, p. 5). The claim, however, that "Arab journalists and reporters lack professional training is not necessarily true" (United States Institute of Peace, 2005). Many have worked with American and British news organizations like CNN or BBC (Schewe, 2008). Interestingly, however, many of the Arab journalists seem to abandon some of the professional standards (Iskandar, 2005) once actually practicing in the Middle East. According to the United States Institute of Peace (2005), there are three reasons for this. One is that the Arab regimes still try to enforce censorship, even using brute force at times. So, there is often intense self-censorship in the news rooms. A second reason is the competition between journalists to introduce more excitement in their stories. And third, and maybe most importantly, Arab populations do not think of the press as the watchdogs of society, but just another source of entertainment, and not a highly valued or prestigious source by any means. The Arab press is still in a formative and growing stage (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 2005) and has not solidified its own image, including strong professional standards (United States Institute of Peace, 2005).

Arab journalists are searching for new media like Al-Jazeera channel (Iskandar, 2005). "Al Jazeera TV has had an enormous impact on the media in the Middle East" (Ferguson, 2005, p. 1). The next section discussed the appearance of Al-Jazeera and its power in Arab countries.

Al-Jazeera and Arab Governments

Although most news channels like Al-Jazeera would like to be independent and able to sustain themselves through earned revenues, the stark reality is that advertising in the Arab world is not highly valued norare advertising revenues. One of the reasons that

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these organizations cannot achieve this independence is that advertising totals an annual amount of approximately $1.5 billion a year. This includes print, television, radio, and other media. In contrast, the annual operating costs for these media run around $16 billion, which means a $14.5 billion net loss each year. The news organizations are still quite reliant on the current regimes for funding, and it is not likely they would want to completely alienate their source of funding. (Arab Media, 2005) Other factors are involved in the dominance of a pan-Arab market. The audience exists in a highly saturated market as satellite television becomes more and more accessible. In many areas, there is low literacy, which means that programming which is trying to reach the largest audience often uses material that is considered the lowest common denominator entertainment (Arab Media, 2005). Finally, Arab governments will use the media to try to maintain control over their populations through whatever means they can.

Al-Jazeera has ignored governments that manage their media (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2005). In 1999, it aired the Iraqi Saddam Hussein's Army Day speech, as he called on Arabs to remove their governors from power if they joined with United States (Hachten & Scotton, 2007). Al-Jazeera has informed conflict in the occupied lands of Israel and the Palestinian live in living rooms of the Muslim world. After the events of September 11, 2001, Al-Jazeera became main element in "Middle East propaganda war" (Schleifer, p. 1, 2005). It has access to the news of Afghanistan and it was the only source through the first weeks of war. However, as the war continued, the United States policy makers were concerned by the regular re-airings of Al-Jazeera's exclusive December 1998 interview with Osama bin Laden, as he motivated all Muslims to "target all Americans" (Hachten & Scotton, 2007, p.118). Nevertheless, Al- Jazeera's Arab audience

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can watch things which are not supposed to be watched. For first time, Arabs can watch unrestricted news. Al-Jazeera is also one of few Arab channels to interview Israelis.

In 2005, Al-Jazeera became a principal medium for the area's growing alteration movements, adoptions and changes (Ajami, 2003). Al-Jazeera broadcast ten hours of recordings when Lebanon Street dissenters required the government to drive out the Syrian throngs after assassination of Rafiq Hariri (Hachten & Scotton, 2007).

Al-Jazeera's Growing Market Dominance

Al-Jazeera's rise to prominence following its breakthrough broadcasting in Afghanistan and its broadcasts of the Bin Laden tapes have helped to expand its reach far beyond the Arab-speaking world. According to managing director Jasim Al-Ali, the network's list of nearly 200,000 weekly subscribers in the United States and Canada is growing by 500 viewers weekly. These subscribers pay $22.99 per month to receive Al-Jazeera on the EchoStar's DISH Network, the Colorado-based distributor of Al-Jazeera programming in the United States (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2002). Most of Al-Jazeera's audience is from the United States.

The number of Al-Jazeera's viewers have increased because of the unique coverage. For example, the network's website traffic jumped after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attack in the United States from about 700,000 page views a day to about 1.2 million page views. Then it jumped to about two million page views a day in the first week after the United States strike on Afghanistan, and it reached about three million page views a day in the second week. More than 40% of the website visitors of Al-Jazeera are from the United States. The highest traffic comes first from the United States, second from Europe as a whole and third from the Arabic countries. Jasim Al-Ali said

"it's not unusual that the United States is the source of so much traffic because Internet technology started in the United States. ... and is spread widely" (Curie, 2001, p. 1). The exclusive news of the channels increased Al-Jazeera's audiences not only in the Arab region but overseas too.

Sullivan (2003) reports that Al-Jazeera's anchorwoman Al-Ramahi suggested that During the Iraqi crisis in 1998 and Intifada, we were established as the number-one Arabic channel in the world. Now, with this crisis, because this crisis is global, Al-Jazeera is starting to be of importance everywhere in the world.

(Sullivan, 2001, p. 1)

Sullivan (2003) says that Al-Jazeera became regionally recognized during Desert Fox and the Intifada. Even before September 11, however, the station was being watched by Arabic speakers all over the world. After September 11, non-Arabic speakers began continued to turn to the news station for reports about this part of the world. The channel had already established 35 bureaus and offices around the world. When there is a crisis, many become involved in this coverage, including in the cities of New York, Washington, Cairo, London, Moscow, Islamabad, Kabul and Kandahar. During the crises, the station uses a variety of media strategies, live broadcasts, hosting talk shows, or recruiting officials and experts for on-air appearances. Sullivan writes that the network is becoming more and more admired for its style and quality of reporting, saying,

Al-Jazeera had long been praised by the West for breaking new ground in Middle East media and reporting what many Arab governments don't want it to report. Now its exclusives—and the criticism it has drawn—are on a global scale.

(Sullivan, 2003, p. 1)

Al-Jazeera branches spread internationally and as a result it covers more exclusive news. As Robin Wright (2005) of *The Washington Post* informed "Al-Jazeera's reputation has given increase to 100 satellite channels in the area" (p. 2). Al-Jazeera staffers state they are in charge of the growing wave of activism in the Middle East. It was the first time for Arab people in this area to be able to topple a government (Ahrari, 2001).

In 2005, Al-Jazeera started introducing an English language station (Pfanner & Carvajal, 2005). The target is to reach not just Western viewers but also English-speaking Muslims all over the world. Before the end of 2005, there were reports that the network was being put up for sale due to strong stress from the Bush administration on Qatar. Indeed, the network was being put up for sale (Ahrari, 2001). The Asian, African, and Latin American countries have recognized the BBC feature; however, these media were considered as mainly covering Western points of view in the non-Western Third World (Kurtz, 2005). Such an actuality has been so significant, particularly throughout armed quarrels, and a lot of which have been rebounded in those districts in the past century.

In the 21st century, the Arab world appears to have shaped a procedure of catching up with the West in the broadcasting of data, which has previously from a distance been forcefully controlled by leaders. For example, the Afghan emergency of 2001 - what United States George W. Bush has referred to as the "first war of the new century" (Ahrari, 2001, p.1) - will be kept in mind for its self-determining reporting by the Al-Jazeera television system. United States secretary of State Colin Powell has stated that protested to the Emir of Qatar, Sheik Hamad Al-Thani, that Al-Jazeera is distribution anti-American propaganda (Grant, 2007). There are two causes fundamental to this

protest. First, the United States does not fairly know how to switch this progress (Ahrari, 2001). Also, there is little doubt that the Bush administration has been miserable with the function of this system, which is providing a 24-hour, live reporting of this diverging opinion (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2002).

Al Qaeda has been regularly using the worldwide Ai-Jazeera network to worldwide depend its perspectives on the Afghan quarrel (Lidster & Rose, 2001). In the Islamic world in general, these messages are being watched with high attention. There is distrust that for the primary time in the post-Cold War years, the United States gets difficulties to broadcast its own message on the quarrel to the non-Western, in particular to the Islamic countries (Stewart, 2006). Al-Jazeera's journalistic location - the truth that it is not just providing widespread reporting of the Taliban and the bin Laden part of the battle, but has rejected to agree to the United States classification of "terrorism" (Ahrari, 2001, p.1) - has been a foundation of enormous irritation on the American part. The Bush administration "strappingly" (Ahrari, 2001, p.1) objects to Al-Jazeera's description of "objectivity" (Ahrari, 2001, p.1). To understand the differences between Arab and West audiences the next section two sections are include more information about both audiences.

The Arab Audience

Zayani (2005) in his book *The Al-Jazeera Phenomenon* wrote that not surprisingly, Al-Jazeera has been met with reprisals because of its challenge to political restraint, some regimes even going so far as to ban the network from their borders. Nevertheless, Zayani (2005) points out that while governments have not been happy with the coverage presented by Al-Jazeera, the network has attracted a wide Arab audience.

For example, even several years ago in 2002 Al-Jazeera has become more popular, 56 percent of the population of Kuwait preferred the station over others, and 47% of the population of Saudi Arabia chose the station as their preference (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2002). Ultimately, despite harsh criticism from some groups, Al-Jazeera is regarded positively in the Arab World. Although Arab audiences look to the media largely for entertainment, they also value information provided by the media. Therefore, one reason given for this growing popularity is that Al-Jazeera is perceived as being the first on the site of events and so provides instant and direct information which might not be available from other sources. Consequently, Al-Jazeera has come to be accepted by the Arab world as presenting news that matters to them. Part of this reputation has been built on the station's commitment to provide live, unedited news and images, and viewers have witnessed unfiltered news, especially in times of conflict (Zayani, 2005). The audience perceives Al-Jazeera as balanced and objective because it also provides a variety of viewpoints (Qusaibaty, 2006) by inviting guests that have a diversity of opinions and political stances.

Zayani describes Al-Jazeera as "Pan Arab" (p.7), which may be one of the reasons that outside viewers perceive it as biased. As described by Zayani, "Al-Jazeera plays off and even feeds an Arab nationalist trend in its viewers" (p. 7). However, the rhetoric is "wrapped in a democratic style" (p. 7) which is appealing to its Arab audience. Still, Al-Jazeera, although enjoying freedom of speech that is unprecedented in the Arab world, especially in the Arabian Gulf, is not without its limitations. Zayani points out that it is suspicious that the network rarely reports on events in Qatar, its host nation (Zayani, 2005). In other words, the station rarely criticizes or even addresses policies and events

involving the Qatari royal family. The Chairman of the Board is part of the ruling family, after all. And although rated favorably in polls, its objectivity is its weakest area, even though it ranks higher than other Arab news broadcast stations. So, while Al-Jazeera has been touted as an autonomous network, these are relative concepts.

The Western Audience

In 2006, Al-Jazeera introduced its English-language (AJE) channel, but over time, no major United States. Cable and satellite companies except for Dish Network, which is in Arabic, have been willing to carry the station (Ivry, 2007). Fakhry, an anchor for the Al-Jazeera channel, says she believes the reason why AJE is not being sought more is that the Bush administration has presented such a negative view of the broadcast network (Pintak, 2006). For example, former Defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld described the channel as "vicious, inaccurate and inexcusable" (Al-Jadda, 2007, p. 1). The organization Accuracy in Media (AIM) has labeled AJE "terror television" (AIM Report, 2006, p. 1) and it has worked to keep AJE out of the American market. AIM (2006) argues

> In the same way that Al-Jazeera television has complicated the prospect of a
> United States victory in Iraq, the channel has dramatically increased the Islamic
> terrorist threat to Israel, helping to produce the war with the Hezbollah terrorist
> group. The United States and Israel will not be able to win this global war on
> terrorism unless the role of Al-Jazeera in radicalizing Arabs and Muslims
> throughout the world is recognized and addressed. (AIM Report, 2006, p. 1)

Al-Jadda (2007) wrote against that stance saying,

> Preventing AJE from becoming part of our news diet means that most Americans
> are missing out on a unique glimpse of international news, views and events. With

our military heavily engaged in the Middle East and elsewhere, we need to look beyond our borders to better understand how others perceive us — even if we may not like what we see or hear. (Al-Jadda, 2007, p. 1)

Ivry (2007) also wrote that even if the Arabic broadcast does cater to an Arab audience (its primary audience after all); the English Al-Jazeera broadcasts are much different.

While the Arabic version is aimed at an Arab audience and often plays on emotions, AJE sounds more like the BBC World and looks more like CNN International with its high-quality presentation and graphics. (Al-Jadda, 2007, p. 1)

Marash, who was a news anchor with AJE for two years, describes what makes AJE different than western news stations (Cunningham, 2008). He agreed that while Western bureaus focus on news from North America, Western Europe and Japan, AJE focuses elsewhere, including South America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East (Paul, 2006). Considering the broadcast organization has been controversial from the beginning, it is unsurprising that the American audience of Al-Jazeera has had a mixed response. Many American critics charge that the station is connected with terrorists and supports terrorist activities.

Other voices in the West support the channel; they believe that the United States itself often produces highly partisan output, with FOX News usually being identified as the worst offender. (Al-Jazeera—About to Shake, 2006, p. 1)

Al-Jazeera first received attention from an American audience because of its coverage of the military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq (Miles, 2006). The focus of the station

was to report on the lives of ordinary people and how the war impacted them. Many Americans felt this was antagonistic toward the goals of America and its people (Sharp, 2003). The airing of American prisoners of war did not help with this perception. However, "It is often argued that many of the critics in the West have never watched Aljazeera and that their opinions have been formulated by the right-wing media in the United States" (Al-Jazeera [sic], 2006, p. 1). Marash argues that whether the American audience likes the station or not, it is "a major milestone in the movement toward a media global culture" (Shister, 2008, p. 1). Marash describes that the network does fewer stories than Western news, but it does them with more depth and context. They report from areas mostly ignored by Western news, and they ignore "inconsequential stories (the adventures of Lindsay Lohan, Paris Hilton, and O.J. Simpson, for example) our competitors seem to thrive on" (Five Questions for Dave Marash, 2007, p. 1). Marash eventually left AJE because he believed that while its reporting was excellent most of the time, it somehow lost validity when reporting on American events. He said of the station and his departure that

> The oddity is, everywhere else, particularly in the Southern hemisphere, their reporting is excellent, intelligent, authentic and driven by people from the place they're covering. In the United States, they found it 'hard to find' American talent. It wouldn't be that hard if they were looking…it became clear to me that, for some reason, the United States was not a journalistic priority. (Shister, 2008, p. 1)

When Josh Rushing, a former United States Marine, took a job with Al-Jazeera as a reporter, the response was a reflection of the mixed feelings regarding Al-Jazeera and an American audience (Rushing, 2007). Some strongly criticized Rushing saying that he

was betraying America by supporting its enemies through Al-Jazeera (Miles, 2007). Bill O'Reilly of Fox News supported this view calling Al-Jazeera a "propaganda network ... bent on encouraging violence and sympathetic to terrorists" (Memmott, 2005, p. 1). However, Rushing believes he is helping to further the cause of better understanding and cooperation between the two worlds (Rushing, 2007). He believes that Al-Jazeera's English language channel can be a

> forum for reaching millions of Muslims, many of whom may not understand the America he knows, and for reaching millions who he thinks know little about the Muslim world, including Americans. (Memmot, 2005, p. 1)

American journalist Scahill (2005) argues that American audiences need to be able to view Al-Jazeera without condemnation by the American President and his administration. Scahill (2005) argues,

> Nothing puts the lie to the Bush Administration's absurd claim that it invaded Iraq to spread democracy throughout the Middle East more decisively than its ceaseless attacks on Al Jazeera, the institution that has done more than any other to break the stranglehold over information previously held by authoritarian forces, whether monarchs, military strongmen, occupiers or ayatollahs. (p. 1)

Al-Jazeera's Arab American audience at first thought the Al-Jazeera network was too supportive of the regime of Saddam Hussein (Glasser, 2005). Since the beginning of the war, however, the Arab-American audience believes that the network has been reporting events in a fair and accurate way, especially regarding Iraqi fatalities (Miles, 2005). Miles (2005) explains that

The station was regarded as an important counterbalance to the propaganda power

of the United States. Only Al-Jazeera would be sure to hold the coalition to the

promises made to the Iraqi people. (p. 395)

Miles (2005) also describes that everywhere he talked with an American audience after

September 11th, they were eager to learn more about the Arab perspective. Hafez al-

Mirazi, speaking for Al-Jazeera, said that he would like to give American viewers what

people are not getting at this time. He would like to give voice to "people who are

marginalized and don't have a chance to be heard, people in the Arab world, for example,

or people like Noam Chomsky" (Miles, 2005, p. 413). Al-Jazeera believes it can

counterbalance the vacancy in American news at the liberal end of the spectrum. Al-

Mirazi believes that Al-Jazeera should bring Americans Arab voices, the same way that

Al-Jazeera brings Arabs American political voices (Miles, 2005).

Why Arab Audiences Need Al-Jazeera

In this vision a question occurs: what is the intended role of the governmental

executive media in the Qatari community which is certainly diverse from al-Jazeera?

Previous to concentrating on this question, it should be made apparent at the beginning

that the suggestions of the response to this serious question had shown the requirement

for Al-Jazeera, as an original unofficial approach of televised media (Al-Hail, 2000). Not

including omission, nearly all Gulf nations position a particular importance on the

function of media in evidencing Islamic principles and points of view.

Al-Hail (2000) argued that this role is always preserved while preparation for

programs in expressions of substance and most outstandingly in terms of timetables. The

cause of this scheduling is that, not considering what is viewed on TV or broadcast on

radio, in performance the call to prayer and broke five times a day each day for up to ten minutes distinguishes Islamic TV and radio.

Umrani (2006) believed in the importance of Al-Jazeera news to compete with the west. He argued that broadcasting additional Islamic worshipping activites like Friday's speech and prayer, Ramadan's everyday night prayer for the entire sacred month of Ramadan and the activities of the yearly Hajj (pilgrimage) from Mecca. In communities like the Gulf States up to 40% - 50% (up to 60% in the case of Saudi Arabia) of every day TV programs are Islamic slanted in their orientation (Hafez, 2001). The entire broadcasting time filled with spiritual programming arrives at a standard of 80 % (Al-Hail, 2000). The proportion rises throughout the sacred month of Ramadan, because the media in Islamic communities devote themselves totally to Islamic programs. This contains live broadcasting of every day night prayer live from Mecca that continues to night by night.

> Al-Jazeera is, in fact, the most watched – and most controversial – station in the region. It has been excoriated for its unabashed coverage of events in the region – coverage which has also won praise from international media watchdog organizations and defenders of freedom of the press. Most recently, it is taking flack for its coverage of more domestic dramas involving Arabs but set in the West. (Gabriel, 2002, p.1)

Holland (2007) wrote that the function of media in these communities is understood to reveal peoples' concentration on Islam and their requirements for those programs. At the same time as on the other it tries to switch people from the outside satellite stations which are supposed to supply extremely diverse thoughts for the

television spectators in this division of the world. These programs are common and accepted that they are understood by the restricted programmers to accomplish a "holocaust" (Al-Hail, 2000, p. 1) in opposition to people's brains young people particularly.

In 1995 restriction of the local newspapers in Qatar was officially lifted. From this time, the press has been basically liberated. Releasing the press from governmental intervention, and allowing liberty of talking and public opinion during the media, particularly radio and TV have opened the way for a strong social community (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2002). Most outstanding of all was the exceptional political first enterprise of beginning the most famous Arabic language news and informational satellite station Al-Jazeera which went on air in 1996. In addition, to make certain more liberated stream of information, the government closed the Ministry of Information and Culture in 1996 (Caldwell, 2001). Therefore with the increase of all these modern developments the government revealed the truth that media are not limited to bureaucratic rings. Consequently, a wire vision mass was launched for the object of supplying people with other resources of information in a safe social community in which people are permitted to own open right to use information.

In 1996 Qatar came in the age of the Internet. At the time of writing there are 100,000 subscribers to Internet service (Al-Hail, 2000). This shape contains Qatari persons, foreign persons, governmental subscription, private division subscription and foreign embassies' subscription. Fascinatingly, females outnumber males in entrance to the Internet by almost 2 to 1. It is may be due in part to the reputation and remarkable increase of this service, that the government determined in 1995 to end restriction of the

Qatari media (Grenier, 2001). This achievement is found generally on the idea that media are all over the place in our community.

No longer controlled by environmental borders, technological boundaries or the shortage of radio frequencies, the latest liberation systems of satellite, cable and video permit the worldwide, and practically immediate, giving out of television and film manufacture (Reaves, 2001). The single possible blockades left are those of state rule, and still then it is uncertain how they are going to finish the attack from over (satellites) or from beneath (video piracy and smuggling). In relation to the writer's study in 1995 there were 700 television sets for each 1000 people in the country of Qatar (Al-Hail, 2000). Most probably, the number of TV sets has increased over the past a number of years for elements connected to, essentially, improvement of media broadcast and technology.

These media improvements were, on one hand, answering to the international rebellion of information and media during microwave technology, on the other satisfying people's requirements for information. A social community cannot stay alive devoid of understanding and information, for which the medium are the media. Almost certainly it was somewhat with this point of view that the government of Qatar set up the new station Al-Jazeera.

Al-Jazeera and Arab Discourse

Lynch (2006) described the definition of the public sphere which is means active arguments in front of an audience about issues of shared concern. The dialogues need mass media that can fetch arguments before intended audience. In fact, the mobilization media feature of authorization of Arab states is considered as the direct opposite of a

public sphere, with a lone voice driving out all dissent, questioning, and critical reason (Al Oifi, 2005). Nor does argument alone make for a public sphere. What makes a public sphere is the existence of routine, constant, unscripted arguments in front of an audience about cases which are important to many (Lynch, 2006). This public argument notion of the public sphere concentrates on talk shows and opinion essays instead of on news coverage. What make the new Arab public new are the popular political talk shows, which change the satellite television stations into a carrier of public argument. What makes it "Arab" (p.41) is a shared communal identity through which speakers and listeners conceive of themselves as participating in a general political project?

Although the new Arab public didn't appeared lacking the growth of new information and communication technologies, the new public sphere developed grew due to what Arabs did with these new opportunities (El-Nawawy & Iskandar (2002). The appearance of satellite television networks established the technical opportunity of an Arab public sphere, by making it likely to increase a liberty for direct communication and shared experience of the news (Rushing, 2007). But it takes public argument to make a public sphere (Lynch, 2006). Only when Al-Jazeera refocused the satellites away from amusement and toward politics about Arab cases that defined by an Arab identity – did it turn into a public sphere.

Voice of the Arabs, Egypt's radio service in the 1950s and 1960s, was a tool of a potent state, used for strategic causes and intended mobilizing press from beneath on opponent systems. Radio broadcasting changed the possibility for Arab political work by bringing Arab political talk to the mobilized groups (Entrepreneur, 1998). This permitted pan-Arab movements to face the authority of new Arab states. These radio wars featured

tiny argument, and much criticism is rhetorical. It is this model that remains in the

analysts' intellects obsessed with the "Arab street" (Lynch, 2006, p 36). Those dialogues

dropped their reliability with the 1967 war, however, and although there were lots efforts

nobody has recaptured Nasser's shroud.

Al-Jazeera, on contrary, was sponsored by Qatar, a tiny country. Where the Arab

radio wars of 1950s suggest a global public sphere controlled by powerful countries and

the satellite television of the late 1990s suggests a public sphere of persons engaged in

debates before spectators of Arabs and Muslims all over the world (Miles, 2005). The

new media of the 1990s included two-way argument, as talk shows permitted people to

ask questions and to vote. It is commercials and driven by ideology. Satellite channels

like Al-Jazeera exert power in a diverse way from voice of the Arabs.

The appearance of the satellite television networks was essential, but not enough,

to make an Arab public sphere (Lynch, 2006). Before Al-Jazeera, Arabs could look at

satellite television channels full of entertainment (Miles, 2005). It was Al-Jazeera's

prioritization of politics and its achievement in starting a spread public dialogue that

arrived at extremely spread. In 1996 the satellite news channel Orbit was closed by its

Saudi sponsors after it broadcast a report that Saudi authorities considered an insult

(Zayani, 2005).

> Al-Jazeera has brought a dose of truth to the steady diet of government approved
>
> propaganda frequently fed to the Arab world. There is mounting evidence that the
>
> vast majority of the Arab world simply doesn't believe President Bush when he
>
> talks about bringing democracy and freedom to their region. (Loewenstein, 2004)

Awad (2005) agreed that speaking to transnational viewers addressed as fellow Muslims and Arabs, Al-Jazeera went to the center of a rising Arab public sphere. Al-Jazeera transformed the Arab and Muslim media atmosphere by approving political focus. Arab writers accused Al-Jazeera of numerous from a CIA procedure to a Mossad, anti-Semitism, (Friedman, 1993) and from bin-Laden to Saddam defender. Al-Jazeera infuriated much of Arab public opinion by including Israeli representatives in its programs so they said that it is a representative of "normalization" (Lynch, p.41).

Al-Jazeera programs present an idea more directly aligned with that of the public sphere (Awad, 2005). Each began broadcasting in mid-2002, suggesting a transfer in that way. And they tended to center on Iraq: through the April month in 2003, at the war summit, all of the other talk shows stopped broadcasting, while Minbar Al-Jazeera went out nightly to argue the new developments in the war – centering on viewer calls before in-studio professionals (Zayani & Sahraoui, 2007). Al-Jazeera talk shows took on the most essential basics of the ʼrab status quo, challenging viewers to ask questions. "Not only have the issue of war or peace with Israel, but how that confrontation reveals the wider deficiencies of the existing Arab order" (Lynch, 2006, p. 81) on May 10, 1999, more than one commentator observes the Israeli elections. The August 31, 1999, the opposite Direction asked how the perennial states of crisis in the Arab states could perhaps be necessary (Lynch, 2006).

In a study done by Marc Lynch in 2003 about Al-Jazeera and its programs he found that few countries escaped the scrutiny of Al-Jazeera's talk shows, although some were covered more than others (Lynch, 2006). Morocco received great attention, in part due to interest in the current Western Sahara conflict and closed Al-Jazeera. Egypt

expelled Faisal Al-Qassem's brother. Algeria with elections, mass violence and Berber conflict; in July 2004 President Bouteflika, the Algeria's president, replied and closed Al-Jazeera. Jordan closed Al-Jazeera after a guest talked about King Hussein's relationships with United States (Zayani & Sahraoui, 2007). Lebanon and the Sudan received amazingly amount of attention due to their turbulent political situation. Qatar received little attention but other small Gulf countries such as United Arab Emirates and Bahrain received little more. Kuwait closed Al-Jazeera for a month in 1999 for critical comments and in November 2002 for being not objective. Israel attacked Al-Jazeera in June 2002. The Palestinian Authority closed Al-Jazeera in March 2001 in protest over its coverage (Qusaibaty, 2006).

Even though Al-Jazeera concentrates on main Qatari cases from a representative vision and tends to abandon other Qatari local cases of important meaning to the normal Qatari citizen, it has affected definite divisions of the community during its revolutionary contest to some forbidden matters into founding features of public movement, which in sequence can produce general community in Qatar (Rushing, 2007). This is demonstrated by the turnout of Qatari women at the 1998 civic vote and the decision by a number of leading Qatari women to run for office. In relation to the Minister of Foreign Office, 47% of Qatari women voted in latest elections (Al-Hail, 2000). He explained this occasion as a pointer of increasing feminist awareness.

A contributor to the collection of essays in the book *The Al-Jazeera Phenomenon* (2005), El Oifi, describes the influence that Al-Jazeera has had on the Arab public sphere. He argues that Al-Jazeera has played a primary role in liberating Arab discourse. Arab regimes no longer have control of the news media in their region, and it has changed the

way media affects the politics of the region. He believes that Al-Jazeera has also affected political relationships between neighboring states, "disturbing the nature and logic" (p. 67) of these relationships. Arab governments are no longer able to impose their interpretations of events on the Arab audience. El Oifi goes so far as to suggest that the ability of Al-Jazeera to stir sentiment against current regimes has caused those same regimes to lose their sacred aura. Still, some believe that Al-Jazeera is part of the "global medias cape" (p.68) created by American hegemony. Pluralism is thought to result in moderation, according to El Oifi, and "Al-Jazeera seems to be part of the American recipe for a media liberalism that is capable of producing political moderation" (p. 68). Nevertheless, Al-Jazeera is the most effective critic of American policy.

Awad (2005) described Al-Jazeera's shows. He mentioned that Faisal Al Kasim argues that Al-Jazeera has brought a new and novel format to the Arab world—the talk show where guests exchange ideas. This is revolutionary in that individuals can exchange opinions and express opinions in ways not viewed by an Arab audience before. Live talk shows that discussed politics and religious, social and cultural issues were not allowed on Arab television in the past, everything being "canned" (p.102). The content is what makes these new shows revolutionary. The show The Opposite Direction, for example, pitted Dr. Nawal El Saadawi, a well-known Arab feminist who is against Sheikh Yussef Al Badri, representing the clergy, where she made "mincemeat" (p.102) of him, according to Al Kasim. Needless to say, there was an angry outcry, but this did not stop Al-Jazeera from airing such shows (Awad, 2005). The format used by Al-Jazeera is unnerving to current regimes because for the first time, dissidents living abroad now have a format to air their views so that all Arabs can listen, if they choose.

Waxman (2001) wrote about the role of Al-Jazeera's exclusive news. Waxman (2001) mentioned that Abdullah Fahd, an Islamic-law student in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia stated: "Al-Jazeera is the only place to find out what's going on" (p. 1). In the after-wake of 9/11 the controversy that really galls the West is that Al-Jazeera has gained unparalleled access to bin Laden, who has tapes hand-delivered and has granted it the only official access to broadcast in Afghanistan. Al-Jazeera proved that a television channel could succeed without the drama that is so popular in Western broadcast styles (Waxman, 2001). Al-Jazeera has more professional information access than many Arabic channels, and this makes the channel internationally known.

Waxman (2001) added that the Arabs have been longing for a channel that would express their point of views without any government restrictions. No matter how similar, in terms of its presentation to Western viewers, people who've seen CNN or the BBC know that there is a wide gulf that separates these channels (Waxman, 2001). With less government control of the media, the channel like Al-Jazeera can gain and spread variety of news sources.

Al-Jazeera and Its Impact on the International Market

Another contributor to the book *The Al-Jazeera Phenomenon*, Awad (2005), analyzes the impact of Al-Jazeera.Net, which has brought the electronic version of the satellite channel to an international audience. It allows the international community to become familiar with the Arab voice. Awad (2005) describes that after the major events of the war against Iraq, and the September 11 attacks, the bombing of Afghanistan, etc., forty percent of the hits on the website were from Americans, followed by Europe and then the Arab world. By its third year, it had had over a billion hits.

The popularity of the site has continued with, more and more of the international community is accessing Al-Jazeera. Suellentrop (2003) believes that the increasing interest in Al-Jazeera is the growing acceptance by a large audience and other broadcast organizations as a credible and legitimate source of news. Several major publications, including the *New York Times,* no longer are describing Al-Jazeera as a tool for Islamic radicalism, but as "the kind of television station we should encourage" (Suellentrop, 2003, p. 1). Suellentrop (2003) says it is not Al-Jazeera that changed—it still presents a pro-Arab perspective on news. It is clear that Al-Jazeera has an Arab viewpoint, but Suellentrop (2003) adds that American TV news has always presented an American perspective. During war coverage, however, the bias of news organizations is more obvious, and Suellentrop argues "as a result Al-Jazeera's Arab slant has become less objectionable" (2003, p. 2). Ajami (2003) criticized Al-Jazeera for its bias, saying that it has "shameless" (p. 2) promos and a clear sympathy for the Palestinians. Suellentrop (2003) states, however,

> How different are MSNBC's or CNN's montages of heroic American soldiers set
> to patriotic, martial music? Or the recurring shots of Americans saving babies and
> handing out candy to children?. (p. 2)

Suellentrop (2003) adds that in wartime, the best a network can do is what El-Nawawy and Iskandar (2002), call "contextual objectivity" (p. 2).Contextual objectivity is the attempt "to reflect all sides of any story while retaining the values, beliefs and sentiments of the target audience" (p. 2). Suellentrop (2003) argues that due to the more positive acceptance of Al-Jazeera and how it is presented in the American media,

Al-Jazeera is at least approaching that standard. It's telling the American side of the story, even as its sympathies clearly lie with the plight of the Iraqi people, whom the network, fairly or unfairly, sees as suffering under both Saddam Hussein and the American-led invasion to remove him. (Suellentrop, 2003, p. 2)

So, some people believe that Al-Jazeera is a biased channel which focuses on Arabic news like Suellentrop (2003). On the other hand, El-Nawawy and Iskandar (2002) agree that Al-Jazeera broadcasts fear news. Followed paragraphs discuss the Al-Jazeera perceptions in the East and West countries.

Al-Jazeera As a Competitive Threat to Western News Channels

This section includes the competition between CNN, Fox News and Al-Jazeera. According to Rath (2002) rating of those channels was changed in last ten years. Also, it talks about examples of the exclusive news that makes Al-Jazeera a known channel that compete the West channels.

Litvinovich (2001) describes the impact that Al-Jazeera has had in the world of news broadcasting. Litvinovich (2001) describes the recent developments as the "information war" (p.1). Al-Jazeera rose up to challenge "monsters" (p.1) like CNN and BBC, the companies that Al-Jazeera itself listed as its major competitors. Al-Jazeera replaced CNN in the Arab world as the most watched channel. Litvinovich states:

Al-Jazeera is like a window for the vast majority of the planet's population to watch the events happening in Afghanistan. Al-Jazeera is gaining a lot of profit from the conflict in Afghanistan, just like CNN did during the war in the Persian. (p. 1)

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Awad (2005) explains that after September 11, Al-Jazeera has the same type of monopoly on images that CNN had during the First and Second Gulf Wars. The channel had the sole rights to communication from Al Qaeda. To compete with the West and its major competitors,

> Its executives put forward the information market rules—taking a high added value product, selling it to other networks and promoting it to advertisers through the ever-climbing audience share. (p. 83)

Al-Jazeera received $20 thousand per minute for Bin Laden's speech. CNN, which had sole exclusive footage on the bombing of Baghdad in 1991, was forced to enter a contract with its competitor in order to be able to show what was happening in the region (Litvinovich, 2001).

CNN took other steps to try and counteract the growing competitive threat made by Al-Jazeera. For example, in 2002, when Al-Jazeera decided to begin broadcasting with English subtitles twelve hours a day in the United States, CNN announced that it was entering into the Arab market by launching its Arabic-language website, based in Dubai.

Rath (2002) agreed that Al-Jazeera channel threat end many international channels like CNN. He wrote that Mahmoud Tarabay, a journalism professor at the Lebanese University and the Lebanese American University, that the actions taken by CNN and Al-Jazeera show that they are considering the "other" (p.1). CNN already has websites in Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Danish. Its Arabic online operation will no doubt compete with Al-Jazeera's site and other online Arabic news services (Patterson, 2001). CNN has been a major competitor and at times the dominate leader in

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world news. In 1980, Ted Turner introduced the world to his Cable News Network (CNN). In one generation, the station became a "powerhouse that would soon overshadow the big three networks" (Steve, 2005, p. 1). CNN came to prominence due to its coverage of the first Gulf war. Fuchs (2005) describes that the images of the war were dominated by CNN because of its live coverage in Baghdad. CNN ratings have continued to climb. For example, in September 2005, Fox finished the quarter averaging 1.2 million daily viewers, up 31% from last year (Jaffe, 2005), followed by CNN with 693,000 viewers (a 39% increase) and MSNBC with 300,000 viewers (up 11%) (Rating Floods, 2005). CNN was one of the only knowledge known channel during the first Gulf war, but after the appearance of Al-Jazeera channels, CNN stared using some sources from Al-Jazeera. As a result, Al-Jazeera became famous in the United States.

University of Maryland performed a study in 2004 about viewers of Fox News were far more than others to think three untrue things about Iraq: that mass destruction weapons were found related to Al-Qaeda and that most global opinion had backed the war (Mellman, 2007). The plainly supporter Fox approach to the war deceived its viewers by supporting their bigotry as defending them from contrast data. Fox talk shows were controlled by supporter Republicans, with rival views symbolized either by weak liberals or leftists, thereby by destroying the reality of a reasonable resistance to the war (Lynch, 2006).

The contrast between Al-Jazeera and Fox News doesn't do fairness to Al-Jazeera, or to the whole Arab public sphere. In news reporting, Al-Jazeera and all Arab media are like Fox not only in their loyal oratory but in their focus on one face of the conflict to the elimination of the other as well (Iskandar, 2005). Fox concentrated on the human

experience of American fighters as ignoring those dominated by cases defined as minded

Arab countries (Suellentrop, 2003).

Al-Jazeera and New Arab Channels

In the Arab world there are other channels competed Al-Jazeera. The most justice

of the competitors has been the Dubai-based Al-Arabiya, which is certainly, more

respectful to Saudi sensitivities (Zayani & Sahraoui, 2007). This section includes the

competition between Al-Jazeera Channel and other newArab channels like Al-Arabiya

and Al-Manar.

Through the Iraq war, Al-Arabiya mimicked Al-Jazeera and got some success

with similar nationalistic notion to the news. In comparison with Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya

minimized the Palestine case, giving more time to covering Iraq. Many Iraqis saw Al –

Jazeera as concerned to Saddam's government (Abu Aardvark, 2006). Al-Arabiya is the

most viewed news channel in Saudi Arabia in accordance with newest consequences

from Ipsos-Stat TV study for November 2005 (Asharq Al-Awsat, 2006).The study

exposed the Dubai-based anchor as the major resource of news and information with

more Saudis tuning in to Al-Arabiya than any other resource. The study stated that Al-

Arabiya enjoyed almost 24 percent spectators arriving at prime time, with a 1.4 percent

lead over its nearby opponent, the Qatari-owned Al-Jazeera.

The consequences are important since it reveals the degree to which Al-Arabiya

has come since its beginning three years ago. In this little period, the Dubai-based

news channel has increased to the summit in the area's principal market. (Asharq

Al-Awsat, 2006, p. 2)

Al-Arabiya is the most watched satellite news channel in Iraq. Furthermore, l-Arabiya is in most important location as the district's news contributor. Consequences from Internet traffic reports by Amazon-owned Alexa demonstrate Alarabiya.Net up 19 percentage positions, suggesting the news station is a violent opponent in cyberspace additionally (Rasooldeen, 2005).

On the other hand, Al-Manar television, an Arabic channel compete Al-Jazeera, presented an image of Arab television as a propaganda device (Lynch, 2006). Run by Hezbollah in Lebanon, Al-Manar depended on a firm diet of challenging pictures layered in an opaque dialogue of anti-American, anti-Israeli oratory (Zayani & Sahraoui, 2007). Al-Manar made explicitly disdained the thought of objective journalism. In the summer of 2004 France wanted to stop Al-Manar for its anti-Semitic propaganda, as lots accused it of stirring anti-Israeli aggression (Rushing, 2007). Al-Manar reached out to niche viewers, one looking for anti-Israeli or anti-American opinion, before competing with satellite channels like Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya.

Al-Jazeera Continues to Increase Market Share and Dominance

While CNN and Fox News are battling for ratings, Al-Jazeera has captured a giant international audience. Exact ratings numbers on a daily basis are not available from the Arab world regarding Al-Jazeera, but Al-Jazeera's website is listed as one of the 50 most popular in the world, with 161 million visits in 2004 (Iskandar, 2003). Al-Jazeera's American audience is increasing—it is listed at the fastest growing satellite network in America (Al-Jazeera TV, 2005). According to Imad Musa (2007), a news producer for Al-Jazeera, around 45 million Arabic speakers watch it every day, according to the best information available. However, although audience ratings are not entirely accurate, Al-

Jazeera is able to measure numbers in North America, where Al-Jazeera has about half a million viewers who subscribe to the station through Dish Network.

Hugh Miles (2005) describes the phenomenon of the Al-Jazeera news channel and its major impact on world news broadcasting. The Al-Jazeera logo has not only become well-known to its regular viewers, it is seen regularly on such stations as CNN and Fox News whenever they are an Al-Jazeera report. In viewing the station, it has a similar appearance to other global news shows, with anchors that look like they do in the West, a ticker tape that appears along the bottom of the screen and live images from current events. The language however is Arabic, moving from right to left in Arabic fashion, along with high-tech graphics. "In other words, Al-Jazeera's news looks and feels like any Western news station" (p. 1). In a style similar to the BBC, Al-Jazeera reports from all over the world, twenty-four hours a day, all year round. One difference becomes evident early on, however, and that is the lack of advertisements. News is the central focus, but there are talk's shows and educational programs aired, as well as sports news.

Al-Jazeera is certainly divergent from any news sources found in America at this time. Although Al-Jazeera adds diversity to the international news channels, the station has been met with strong criticism from many sources, including the American government for its alleged bias against American lives and beliefs, mostly related to the war in Iraq. Nevertheless, millions of Americans have accessed the Al-Jazeera news website. Al-Jazeera already established an English language broadcast station in 2006, so that its live news can be accessible as well as its print news (Nathan, 2007). Al-Jazeera has already become an important diverse source of information and expression for the global news arena and competitor to United States channels like CNN and Fox News.

Al-Jazeera Case Study

The paper will examine Al–Jazeera channel as a case study to evaluate the way Al-Jazeera has added a new dimension in world news, both as a source of news, and a new source of diversity. Considering the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, the complicated relations between the West and the Arab world and the threat of continuing terrorist attacks, evaluating the impact of an Arab news source that has international influence could help reveal the nature of the Arab world, facilitating a greater understanding between a divergent culture as a necessary step to solve the mistrust and conflict that permeates Middle Eastern relationships.

The case study aim, then, is to evaluate the credibility of Al-Jazeera and to evaluate its impact on Arab and world news, both as a source of news, and a new source of diversity. Al-Jazeera cases' study will include analysis of Arabic experts about the news freedom and the role of the channel inside and outside the Arab region.

The case study is significant for several reasons. First, there are limited studies about the international role of Al-Jazeera and its growing dominance in the Arab region. Second, Arabic viewers of Al-Jazeera are interested in knowing the truth about the effect of the channel and its increasing or decreasing the information access in the Arab world. Finally, the growing of Al-Jazeera market and its political power in the United States make a debate in the Arab and United States societies. Many people are for or against the channel. So, one of the main topics in this research is to examine the perception of the channel and how it becomes a competitor channel in the United States. On the other hand, the case study will include defense, from Al-Jazeera's employees, regarding Al-

Jazeera's audiences. Some of them have positive or negative perception about the relationship between the channel and democracy level in the Arab countries.

The study will examine Al-Jazeera channel as a source of news diversity. Also, to gain a broad and in-depth understanding of how it affects news reporting in Arab countries, with a particular focus on the Arab experts perceptions and the diversity of news in society and in international relations.

To test the level of democracy in the Arab region the Al-Jazeera case study will answer the four main research questions:

RQ1:   How media experts and Al-Jazeera employees agree that Westerners have a different meaning of democracy than Arabs? Why?

RQ2:   Do media experts differ from Al-Jazeera employees about level of democracy?

RQ3:   How media experts and Al-Jazeera employees agree that Al-Jazeera shows have increased public sphere discussions? Why?

RQ2:   Do media experts differ from Al-Jazeera employees in terms of critiquing the free information access through the Al-Jazeera channel?

In the second chapter, research methods, the researcher will test all research questions. There are two groups interviewed: Arab Media experts and Al-Jazzera employees. The methods chapter will include participants, procedure, data gathering and analysis. Also, the chapter focuses on interview as a method and explains why the researcher uses the method to gather the research data. More information about participants and reasons for choosing them are included too.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate perceptions of Arab media experts about democracy and the press in the Middle East, which is the main topic of this research. This chapter includes more information about the rational of this study, research questions, and brief list of literature review topics. In addition, this chapter discusses five main topics: Interview method, participants, procedure, data gathering and data analysis.

This study was designed to seek evidence that differences between Arab media do exist in many Arab countries. Also, the study includes a comparison between Arab media experts and Al-Jazeera employees' perceptions about Arab democracy and Al-Jazeera's impact in the Arab regions. Many studies have reviewed the role of the Al-Jazeera channel, but there are few studies used the interview method to collect data about Al-Jazeera channel. The informants of this study include direct sources, Al-Jazeera employees, who are difficult to interview most of them without permission. The researcher gets the permission from the public relation office and some head managers in Al-Jazeera channel to start interviewing Al-Jazeera employees. The researcher interviewed two groups. The first group is sixteen Arab media experts in the United Arab Emirates and the second group are twelve Al-Jazeera Employees in Qatar.

The researcher used structured interview, with no audio and no video recorded. Previous research has demonstrated in perceptions of Al-Jazeera's role and Arab media history. The research aim is to get depth information about the Arab democracy and the impact of Al-Jazeera channel. Also, it is important to find communication strategies and Media experts' suggestions to improve the level of democracy in many Arab countries. The study will encourage many researchers in the future to study other new channels like Al-Arabiya and Al-Manar to publish media experts' needs. For example, many media experts need press freedom. They are against sorting media content or what scholars like McCombs and Shaw call it "agenda setting theory" (McCombs, Shaw, 1972, p. 176). Also, the study is significant to investigate the role of new Arab channels like Al-Jazeera and its influence on press freedom in the Arab countries. Al-Hail (2000) agreed that Al-Jazeera has a positive competition with other Arab channels like Al-Arabiya. It has aired exclusive news and critiqued the Arab government. Al-Arabiya did the same but it aired different shows against many Arab press laws. For example the Al-Arabiya office was closed in Bagdad (Al-sharq Alawsat, 2008) like what Al-Jazeera did in Baghdad.

The literature review provides a context for the use of normative theories, authoritarian theories and Social theory of the Media, which are necessary to understand the practical application of these theories to the practices discussed. Because the literature review is focusing on Arab media history, the new Arab media and theories mentioned above, there are some related methods leading to investigate the research questions such as: How might media experts differ from Al-Jazeera employees in their interpretation of democracy? Do media experts and Al-Jazeera employees agree that Al-Jazeera shows have increased public sphere discussions, if so why? How might media experts differ

from Al-Jazeera employees in terms of critiquing the free information access through the Al-Jazeera channel?

So, by using interviews, the researcher can make strong connections and find evidences about different literature review topics mentioned above and research theories. The structural interviewee, the researcher chooses this type of interviewee in this research, allowed the researcher to use same questions in both groups and compare their concepts in different themes (Reich &Frances, 2005).

Interview Method

To gather information about the relationship between changes in the media in the Middle East and the development of democracy, especially focusing on the Arabian Gulf region, the researcher would use the structural interview method. The researcher chose the interview to investigate changes in behavior, attitudes, policies, governmental response to media, public response to the new media channels and so forth. Some analysts like Lynch (2006) suggest that a new public sphere is forming in the region— what do people in the region feel about this? With a more open press, are there more exchanges taking place that are causing people to challenge the status quo? Or is the change more subtle? To find out, the researcher uses primarily interviews and personal media observation to try and collect as much information as possible about the current situation. By observation, the researcher means observing the primary sources of the new types of media communication—the broadcasts aired over Al-Jazeera and other stations, and using theories such as spiral silence theory… etc. to try and analyze the content and presentational style. Interviews with primary participants will also be quite valuable.

Unlike conversations in daily life, which are usually reciprocal exchanges, professional interviews involve an interviewer who is in charge of structuring and directing the questioning. While interviews for research purposes may also promote understanding and change, the emphasis is on intellectual understanding rather than on producing personal change. Collecting data about democracy in the Middle East and more information required a research method. For this research the method is a qualitative method which is the interview. The aim of the interview method is to explore individual differences between participants' experiences and outcomes.

This research has two main parts; the first one is about Islam, the press and democracy in the Arabian Gulf region. It will focus on the relationship between democracy, the media and the governments involved. The second part is an in a depth case study of the Al-Jazeera broadcast station. The researcher interviewed two different types of groups related to the two parts of the research.

The case study approach is also valuable and will be used in the second section. Stake (1998) describes the case study. He explains that a case may be simple or complex. It may be a child or a classroom of children. But one important way of looking at case study is to think of it as a bounded system.

> In the social sciences and human services, it has working parts; it probably is
> purposive, even having a self. It is an integrated system. The parts do not have to
> be working well, the purposes may be irrational, but it is a system. (Stake, 1998,
> p. 87)

The case study, then, is a small example of the larger extended social system, with all of its complexities.

There is a pattern to behaviors, and so this pattern can be studied and analyzed. People can not always tell where the person ends, and the environment begins, but there is a connection (Stake, 1998). Stake (1998) identifies three types of study. One is called an intrinsic case study, which is done to better understand the circumstances and factors of the particular case. An instrumental case study is examined to provide insight into a theory or an issue. The case is secondary to the main issue of the theory. It is supporting the main theory (or not). And the third type of study is the collective case study, which is when researchers study a number of cases joined together to inquire into a population, phenomenon, or general condition.

Case researchers look for what is common and what is unique different about the case, but each case study is unique. The uniqueness extends to the nature of the case, historical background, physical setting, other contexts (like political), other cases through which the case is recognized, and those informants through which the case can be known (Stake, 1998).

After discussing the importance of the interview method and comparing it with other methods like survey. The second section talked about the research participants. The researcher divided the research participants to two groups. First group is Media experts in the United Arab Emirates and the second group is Al-Jazeera employees in Qatar.

Participants

Media Experts

For the first part, the researcher interviewed a group of media experts in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Media experts who are teaching or practicing broadcast journalism are the source of information in the first group. The researcher interviewed a

total of 16 participants, 11 males and five females, from different Arab countries. The countries were three Northern Arab, two Eastern Arab, five Middle Eastern Arab and six Gulf area. Eight participants hold doctoral degrees from Western schools, two participants hold doctoral degrees from Egypt, and six participants hold bachelor's degrees of communication from different Arab schools. The participants are between the approximate ages of 30-50 years old.

There many reasons to choose them; most of them have experience in the field of media and its relationship to an open-press society and the relationship this creates with democracy. Others are teach academic courses related to media and press freedom in the Arab counties which is the main subject of this research. Also, Sociology, Political Science, Social Science and Islamic Studies professors are included in this group because they are teaching related classes like government and Laws in the Arab countries, Islam and society. Most of the faculties from those different departments are researchers, and they have publications in Arabic and English language. Also, they are participants in many conferences overseas and United States.

Capturing and describing experience is another aim of the interview. Some faculties also have their own shows in local television in the United Arab Emirates, so they are teaching and practicing media broadcasting too. There are twelve people interviewed in this group from different universities in the United Arab Emirates. The universities are United Arab Emirates University, Abu-Dhabi University, Sharjah University, and American University in Sharjah, Zayed University, Al-Khawarezmy College, Emirates College, Al-Ain University and Ajman University. The researcher chooses those universities because they are close to the researcher is home. Also, the

universities offer program-related to the research topic, like communication, political science and sociology.

Also, media practitioners who are working in Abu-Dhabi channel, Dubai channel, Ajman channel and MBC were interviewed. These practitioners of media are from different Arab countries, and they have different opinions about media in their homes and the United Arab Emirates. They can compare the media and democracy more than other people. The percentage of local practitioners is lower than foreign practitioners, who are coming from other Arab countries to work in broadcasting in the United Arab Emirates. The United Arab Emirates is a new country which was established in 1970 (Shihab, 2006). So the governments have many media experts from different Arab countries that are visiting and working in those channels. They are a valuable resource because they can distinguish the level of democracy between different Arab countries. In addition, many of them have a university degree in the media field from overseas schools like the United States (Shihab, 2006).

Al-Jazeera Employees

For the second part, the researcher interviewed Al-Jazeera employees in Qatar. The researcher interviewed a total of 12 participants, eight males and four females, from different Arab countries. The countries were two Northern Arab, five Eastern Arab, two Middle Eastern Arab, and three Gulf area. Two participants hold a doctoral degree from Western schools, one participant holds a doctoral degree from Jordan, and nine participants hold bachelor's degree of communication from different Western schools. The participants are between the approximate ages of 35-60 years old.

To provide high credibility and face validity results, the researchers choose Al-Jazeera employees because they are working and practicing broadcasting Al-Jazeera style. So, they know about the channel more than any one. Coming from different Arab countries, having a university degree from the United States and studying overseas are some of the reasons to choose them. Also, many employees receive training and work in the United States and United Kingdom (Shihab, 2006). They have experience in different types of media as well. Also, they have different programs about Arab and foreign countries. The channel now has many branches in the Arab region and out of the region (El-Nawawy, M. & Iskandar, A., 2003). In the procedure section the researcher will discuss more information about the research process. Then the researcher will introduce the date gathering and data analysis briefly.

Procedures

The researcher interviewed the first group face-to-face in their workplace. But for the second group, the employees of Al-Jazeera, the researcher used the telephone interview because of the distance. For each interviewee in both groups, the interviewee took from forty minutes to one hour because there are many questions need specific details and data. Also, many questions lead to discussion and conversations with the interviewee. The researcher took detailed notes and gathered the data by using thematic analysis, which is the second research method. Because of the sources privacy codes were used in place of participant's names.

Data Gathering

The data were collected and analyzed by dividing them into different themes. There are seven themes for group one and nine themes for the second group. Under each

them the answer of some particular question were collected. Using the open interview method, the interviewer has the flexibility to use interviewees' knowledge, experts, and interpersonal skills to explore interesting or unexpected ideas or themes raised by participants during the interview. Some interview questions are similar in both groups like: Do you think that Arab media have a good record of democracy and why? What are the challenges that faced the media and democracy in Arab region? Do you think there are many differences between media and democracy in Arab counties and why? For the full list of questions see Appendix A. Choosing same questions for media experts and Al-Jazeera's employees is useful. There are themes that must include the similarities and differences of the two groups thought about different issues like the meaning of democracy.

Distinctions between different issues as seen by the various the participants make similar questions are important. In addition, there are specific questions for each group because each group is working in different place. For example most of the first group is from other Arabic countries. They are working in the United Arab Emirates' media channels and United Arab Emirates universities, so they have more experience with different channels and democracy in other Arab countries. Also, some question for Group One is related to Al-Jazeera audiences not Al-Jazeera's employees. Media experts in the United Arab Emirates might be one of Al-Jazeera's audiences. Using different questions is useful to get clear information. Examples of those questions are: Do you watch Al-Jazeera channel and why? Do you think Al-Jazeera Channel opened a new democratic era in Arab region? Why? Do you watch some shows on Al-Jazeera channel? If yes please mention them and tell me why you watch those shows?

Also, there are other questions designed for Al-Jazeera's employees because they know more than other people about their work and they have more experiences in their work. Some of them worked in other channels or in the media press before working in Al-Jazeera. So, designing questions for Al-Jazeera's employees regarding the previous and recent jobs in Arab or foreign channels or media organization are necessary. It allowed the researcher to gather more data about the difference between the freedom and democracy level in many Arab countries which is the topic of this research. Examples of specific questions for employees are: Did you work in the media field before working in Al-Jazeera? How do you feel about freedom between your previous experience and now? Do you think that Al-Jazzera brings a new media in Arab media and why? For full questions see Appendix B.

There are many types of interviews. One of them is the Interview Guide Approach. According to Patton (1990) it is the most widely used format for qualitative interviewing. In this step the interviewer has an outline of topics to be covered, but is free to vary the wording and order of the questions to some extent. Patten (1990) believed that

The major advantage is that the data are somewhat more systematic and comprehensive than in the informal conversational interview, while the tone of the interview still remains fairly conversational and informal. (p. 1)

Meeting and interviewing people like Arabic media experts can enhance the topic and extend the idea about Arab media democracy.

Janesick (1998) argues that qualitative research using interview techniques is preferable to quantitative methods in many situations. Janesick (1998) introduces the metaphor of dance regarding qualitative research. She believes the researcher is much like

the artist when they have to recontextualize the project within the shared experience of the participants. Janesick (1998) gives examples, using the metaphor throughout, to show how to develop research design. For example, in one section she has "Warming up: Design decisions at the beginning of the Study" (p. 75). Janesick (1998) says the best way to warm up is to ask questions. The exercise stage has to do with the pilot study and ongoing design decisions. Janesick (1998) suggests that the researchers always searching for meaning and points of tension. These are usually not things that the quantitative researcher would be focusing on.

Data Analysis

Content analysis is the second main method. The thematic analysis is the best method in this study because the second method is going to make a connection between the research questions and hypothesis. Also, the content analysis allows the researcher to divide the data in two parts. The seven themes are for the first group and the second nine themes are for the second group. According to Zhang (2006), the content analysis provides more connections between the themes and data that come from the first new method. Quantitative content analysis is deductive, trying to test hypotheses or questions generated. Zhang (2006) believed that the thematic analysis is

> From theories or previous researches, while qualitative content analysis is mainly
>
> inductive, grounded the examination and inference of topics and themes to raw
>
> data. In some cases, qualitative content analysis tempts to generate theory. (p.2)

Zhang (2006) valued the ability of the qualitative analysis to demonstrate the meaning of experience rather than what calculations might imply.

Llieva, Baron & Healey (2002) believes that some studies use the survey which is one of the quantitative methods to save the researcher time and get quick response from participants. It is one of the strengths of the survey method .Also, "survey research may save time for researchers... surveys may also save time by allowing researchers to collect data while they work on other tasks" (Llieva, Baron & Healey, 2002, p.361). But in this research a survey is not useful because of other weaknesses of this method, like the limitation of the data. Participants will answer short questions with little information and it is hard to recall the participants. Questions for survey were clear:

> A methodology relying on standardization forces the researcher to develop
>
> questions general enough to be minimally appropriate for all respondents,
>
> possibly missing what is most appropriate to many respondents". (Survey
>
> research, p.1)

Another weakness of the survey is that truth surveys can be artificial, with people not answering questions in relation to their real feelings.

There were two groups, sixteen media experts in the United Arab Emirates and twelve Al-Jazeera employees in Qatar, interviewed about the Arab press democracy. These two groups reflected their beliefs in the mass media, the freedom and challenges of Arab media. The groups used their different experiences as a basis for answering questions. The statements made were divided to seven themes for group one and nine themes for group two. The themes reflect the groups' interpretation of the questions asked. The interview answers show a specific order based on the significance of the question to the overall concept of the press freedom and democracy in Arab countries. They are not specifically divided between positive and negative concepts. The

themes are actually a cluster of positive and negative based on the results of the questions. There are specific thematic descriptions that were developed by combining positive and negative responses through a dialectic process.

Next chapter, Research Themes, includes two main parts. The first part is media experts' themes which explain seven themes. The second part is Al-Jazeera employees themes that include nine themes. Each of them has a main head, and under each headline the researcher analysis the meanings of themes. Also, the research explains different meaning and concepts like the meaning of democracy and the role of Al-Jazeera channel in the Arab word.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH THEMES

There were two groups, sixteen media experts in the United Arab Emirates and

twelve Al-Jazeera employees in Qatar, interviewed about the Arab press democracy.

These two groups reflected their beliefs in the mass media, the freedom and Arab media

challenges influences. The groups used their different experiences to answer questions.

The statements made were divided to seven themes for Group One and nine themes for

Group Two that reflect their interpretation of the questions asked. The interview answers

show a specific order based on the significance of the question to the overall concept of

the press freedom and democracy in Arab countries. The two groups are not divided

between positive and negative concepts, but are actually a cluster of positive and negative

based on the results of the questions. There are specific thematic descriptions that were

developed by combining positive and negative responses through a dialectic process.

Media Experts' Themes

Table 1. First Group: Media Experts' Themes.

Themes	Percentage	Sample
1. Most Arab governments control the press.	93.75	"Arab regimes are afraid of freedom and democracy" (Interviewee #1, Group One, 2007).
2. Amount of press freedom is less than desired.	100	Media have not been allowed "to practice their natural right as fourth authority" (Interviewee # 7, Group One, 2007).
3. Arabs not allowed to have free voice.	87.5	"Journalists can be persecuted or punished as the governments seek to hush their voices" (Interviewee # 7, Group One, 2007).
4. Al-Jazeera cannot create democracy.	62.5	"Democracy comes from the political system, the civic society, and the people" (Interviewee # 2, Group One, 2007).
5. Arabs desire open press.	100	"Democracy should prevail at home, at school, at work…" (Interviewee # 2, Group One, 2007).
6. Arab media more open due to technological advances.	100	"After DSC was implemented, it has become almost impossible to censor information from the audience" (Interviewee # 10, Group One, 2007).
7. Disagreement about importance of Al-Jazeera.	50	Reporters "mixed facts with opinion often" (Interviewee # 4, Group One, 2007).

1. Most Arab governments control the press.

In regard to whether or not the media in the Arab world are a democratic form of communication most respondents described that the media is neither as democratic as they would like and/or as open and free as compared to Western media. They also point out, however, that the media is a reflection of the amount of democracy in the society in general. It is more democratic than some and less than others, much like the countries themselves. In fact, Interviewee # 13 in Group One pointed out that where there is more democracy in general in an Arab country, such as Kuwait as compared to Sudan or Syria, and then the media in each country will correlate in its level of democracy.

> There are several factors from Arab country to Arab country that might affect the amount of democracy that exists, the government being an important factor, but not the only one. (Interviewee # 13, Group One, 2007)

> For example, Interviewee # 15 in Group One described that another factor is the degree of socio-economic and technological development of the specific society. Most respondents agree that more developed countries are more likely to introduce democratic measures and have various forms of free speech and free media. The United Arab Emirates is a good example. As the country develops and becomes a regional and international player in different economic areas, a knowledge-based economy develops allowing people to access and exchange information freely. Information becomes a commodity that is available for purchase. Interviewee # 13 in Group One also believes that literacy plays an important role as well.

There was agreement that no matter what country, however, the Arab media suffer from censorship that reflects the lack of democracy in the societies in general. This lack of democracy is connected to the history of the region and the type of political regimes that have developed. The respondents either implied or stated that the media would not be more democratic than the society itself—that would be an unrealistic expectation. A democratic voice through the media would not be acceptable in countries where the regimes do not accept democracy. Some blamed the governments for being unable to accept and/or allow any criticism against current regimes. Interviewee # 1 in Group One stated, "If the whole society lacks democracy, the mass media cannot be any better. Arab regimes are afraid of freedom and democracy because the majority of them are not legitimate".

2. Amount of press freedom is less than desired.

Several respondents said they believed that the amount of democracy reflected in the media did not match the overall desire for a more free press on the part of citizens, in part because the governments either own the media or the media is owned by "merchants" (Interviewee # 9, Group One, 2007), whose welfare depends on their relationship with the government. The media itself cannot be separated from the propaganda of the regimes because the regimes are the primary sponsor, and it is difficult to find sponsorship through other means. Even though the constitutions of several Arab countries support a free press, in reality, a free press has not been allowed to function. In some ways, however, the citizens themselves were blamed because it was believed they did not understand the importance of a free press and more democratic participation. There is a lack of understanding of democracy and the concepts of liberty. There is a

failure of leadership from local leaders in their demand for a more open society. Also, in relation to this idea was the idea that democracy in the Arab countries is a new experiment, and the people themselves do not know how to sustain a free press or other public discourse to sustain that democracy. Whatever the cause, the consequence is that local newspapers and media have not been allowed "to practice their natural right as fourth authority" (Interviewee # 7, Group One, 2007).

3. Arabs not allowed to have free voice.

The current governments use punishment to keep journalists from criticizing their actions and/or policies. "Journalists can be persecuted or punished as the governments seek to hush their voices" (Interviewee # 7, Group One, 2007). Most respondents agreed that sometimes they are charged with trying to arouse passion against governments and are charged with an act of treason or even terrorism. Even in Qatar where Al-Jazeera is broadcast, they may criticize other regimes, but not their own.

4. Al-Jazeera cannot create democracy.

A common response is encapsulated in the following statement, "I do not agree because democracy comes from the political system, the civic society, and the people" (Interviewee # 2, Group One, 2007). Media can contribute if the system changes; otherwise, it is just superficial. CNN operates in a democratic society; Aljazeera operates in a country that does not even have a political party and no single opposition entity exists there (Interviewee # 8, Group One, 2007).

5. Arabs desire open press.

People must get involved in the decision-making process, and this process needs to start at home and be found in all areas of life and social institutions. "We have to free

ourselves, our children, our wives. Democracy should prevail at home, at school, at work…etc" (Interviewee # 2, Group One, 2007).

Many respondents in Group One believe that present political regimes must be convinced of the need to change media policies, to increase of the political awareness of the citizens. To get more people involved, there needs to be more concentrated political education at different stages of education. Citizens need to become more aware that they are responsible for political participation. "Nobody gives people democracy; press freedom comes from people working for this freedom. Forces from the government are not going to give up their control" (Interviewee # 4, Group One, 2007). So, it is up to the people to pressure them for change. Democracy can flourish through grass root movements or through regime change as took place in Iraq. Unfortunately, internal change often takes a long time to happen, delaying the shift to democracy. Importantly, external attempts to introduce democracy will not succeed, "principally because an Arab model for democracy is needed" (Interviewee # 4, Group One, 2007).

6. Arab media more open due to technological advances.

There are some improvements and changes, but still Arab media suffer from lack of freedom. Interviewee # 1 in Group One described that the governmental regulations and systems in the past were totalitarian, and now they are semi-totalitarian. Nevertheless, because of globalization, satellite TV channels, the Internet, Communication technology, information technology, mobile phones, education and improvement in living standards, the media are getting better in terms of democracy and freedom. In the past, there were limited numbers of media channels. Access to Direct

Satellite Channels DSC was not available to all the public (Interviewee # 10, Group One, 2007). The same is true for internet access.

> After DSC was implemented, it has become almost impossible to censor information from the audience because of access the audience might get from many other available channels both in Arabic or any other language. (Interviewee # 10, Group One, 2007)

Interviewee # 15 in Group One adds that the mass media in the past were merely a horn for the governments and carriers of formal government-controlled news especially in the Gulf, but today there is noticeable development of the role of news media, especially with the spread of satellites, and the openness of the Arab world to the rest of the world now as compared to the past. Consequently, "the Arabian media became nearer to people's concerns, and their troubles, so besides the main role of reporting on news events" (Interviewee # 14, Group One, 2007), there is another social role found in Arab media today, much more than in the past.

Not surprisingly as seen in the description of the amount of press freedom and the relationship to democracy, the liberty of media today as compared to the past depends on its degrees and practices within the Arab country. For example, the Egyptian experiment is much different than the other Arab countries because of the governmental policies and the citizen expectations, and this is apart and aside from any technological advances (Interviewee # 13, Group One, 2007). Still, even in Egypt,

> When the country was in crisis this summer, even though the liberty of mass media had been ensured, the liberty of the media was muzzled under the pretense of protecting the country from falling into chaos. Still, there has been a return to

more liberty of the mass media because of pressure from political, international and local groups and demands. (Interviewee # 8, Group One, 2007)

Interviewee # 3 in Group One described that the media today is not as open and free as it was during the 1990s, when it had developed a panacea of freedom. Since September 11, 2001, however, which had a strong impact on government-press relations, the press became more restricted in many areas to go back to reporting officially approved reports only. Interviewee # 4 in Group One described that while there is more media available for nearly everyone due to advancements in communication technology, travel, etc., there is a lack of an established communication structure of performance.

There are no strong, materially and politically independent media establishments; therefore, when the system of government fluctuates, or even the economy fluctuates, the media flounders and performance is affected, and this is a miserable thing. (Interviewee # 6, Group One, 2007)

7. Disagreement about importance of Al-Jazeera.

In response to whether they watch Al-Jazeera, most respondents agree that they choose Al-Jazeera because of its Arab voice and its importance in the world today, although one respondent said that he refused to watch the channel for the most part, he believed the reporters "mixed facts with opinion often" (Interviewee # 4, Group One, 2007).

Interviewee # 4 in Group One added, he did not like to watch any news that has an obvious ideological agenda. Still, there are some programs that are informative that he will watch occasionally, because it has some important and interesting programs (Interviewee # 11, Group One, 2007). Most agreed that it is a far better choice that

government owned and operated media, but said there are other stations now like Al Arabia that are also worth watching. In other words, Al-Jazeera has competition.

Likewise, there was disagreement about the amount of influence Al-Jazeera has had on the development of democracy. The responses in Group One ranged from, I do not think to so, because democracy is more that some television programs to the station is a pioneer that has had a positive impact because it opens the eyes of the audience, making them aware of new and exciting sources of information and other things that will benefit them for the rest of their lives. Most responses were in the middle of the two extremes. For example, interviewee # 1 in Group One said that Al-Jazeera did not provide democracy, but it did give them more opportunity of freedom of speech than other information sources. It has also encouraged other stations to imitate its style and present differing points of views on various subjects. The station provides good coverage of pan-Arab issues like the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Iraq war. The station has struck a chord with Arab audiences and prompted others to try and do the same. Interviewee # 8 in Group Two replied that of course, Al-Jazeera has brought more democracy because it "moved the stagnant water in the field of Arab media" (Interviewee # 8, Group One, 2007). Other channels continued it, and included new types of programs such as the dialogue programs which weren't common in the Arab media before the appearance of the Al-Jazeera channel. Al-Jazeera has created an excellent example for Arab channels in other countries to emulate, and they should do this. Still, another respondent said that while Al-Jazeera has contributed to increasing the quality of news media, this has not increased media liberty as much as might be expected—modern technology has done

more to contribute to the expansion of media liberty than this one channel (Interviewee # 3, Group Two, 2007).

Al-Jazeera Employees' Themes

Table 2. Second Group: Al-Jazeera employees themes.

Themes	Percentage	Sample
1. Al-Jazeera creates free, open press.	91.6	Some of the news shows as having a "rooster fight" (Interviewee # 5, Group Two, 2007).
2. Al-Jazeera cannot create democracy; democracy comes from the people.	90.0	"There is not a lot of cooperation between the governments and Arab journalism" (Interviewee # 9, Group Two, 2007).
3. Most Al-Jazeera journalists trained by Western news agencies.	83.3	The journalists came from a variety of past experiences, including working in France, Tunis, London, and the United States.
4. Al-Jazeera initiated and helped spread media freedom.	90.0	"As Al-Jazeera grew in importance, other sources of journalistic reporting began to appear" (Interviewee # 3, Group One, 2007).
5. Al-Jazeera has both criticisms and accolades from its Arab audience.	91.6	Criticisms: some accuse Al-Jazeera of being sponsored by Bin Laden or Israeli Mossad. Accolades: "it increased the freedom of speech" (Interviewee # 2, Group Two, 2007).
6. Al-Jazeera is popular and important.	83.3	"It presented news much more quickly and accurately than other Arab channels" (Interviewee # 6, Group Two, 2007).
7. Banning Al-Jazeera will eventually backfire.	66.6	"The offices of Al-Jazeera, which were closed by Eyad Alawe, Iraq's prime minister, with cooperation from the American authorities, have not opened yet" (Interviewee # 8, Group Two, 2007).
8. Al-Jazeera has positive influence on the growth of Arab democracy.	75.0	"Al-Jazeera has been able to help develop the democratic mind" (Interviewee # 6, Group Two, 2007).
9. Al-Jazeera will continue investigative reporting and critiquing social issues.	100	"The truths cannot be hidden forever" (Interviewee # 3, Group Two, 2007).

1. Al-Jazeera creates free, open press.

Common criticisms were: the news reports were biased and often sensationalized to gain viewer's attention. For example, interviewee # 5 in Group Two described some of the news shows as having a "rooster fight" (interviewee # 5, Group Two, 2007) style because the participants were mostly interested in being loud and gaining attention to themselves rather than presenting intelligent news. Another criticism was questioning whether Al-Jazeera was truly as open and free as it markets itself—after all, it rarely mentions its own state government of Qatar and does not critique that government; instead, it saves it scathing reports for other regimes (Interviewee # 5, Group Two, 2007).

Most of the respondents, however, also credit Al-Jazeera for opening a new place of public discourse, reinvigorating Arab public discourse in general with its Western style

of reporting, using investigative journalism, criticism, and creating a channel where a variety of views on subject matter can be explored. Al-Jazeera was a pioneer in raising issues that no other station had dealt with. They also provided good coverage of pan-Arab issues like the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Iraq story. The station has struck a chord with Arab audiences and prompted others to try and do the same. Any positive effort here on the part of broadcast journalism will have a positive impact because it opens the eyes of Arab citizens on new or thrilling ideas and things that may benefit them and benefit their life. Interviewee # 2 in Group Two described that Al-Jazeera channel moved the "stagnant water" (Interviewee # 2, Group Two, 2007) in the field of Arab media; other channels continued it, and now. News and dialogue programs are common in the Arab media because of the appearance of the Al-Jazeera channel. Another interviewee described that satellite television programs have raised the level of discussion and reinforced interpersonal communications in the Arab world (Interviewee# 5, Group Two, 2007). This is vital, according to the respondent, because Arab people have always depended on interpersonal communication, and the public discourse being reinforced by Al-Jazeera has taken this type of communication to new levels.

2. Al-Jazeera cannot create democracy; democracy comes from the people.

When asked what challenges they faced, the specialists responded that censorship was a main issue. Because of the type of society, not only is there fear of censorship in public news, but self-censorship becomes an issue as well. People begin to monitor themselves because of the external censorship in the society. One respondent described this as the "red lines" (Interviewee # 10, Group Two, 2007) that exist in every Arab society. An example of the effect of the direct effects of censorship are that there are

100

major differences between publishing a news articles that describe events, or publish an editorial that conveys opinions about events; many times, an editorial will be edited with phrases and complete paragraphs deleted if they do not meet approval with officials (Interviewee # 9, Group Two, 2007). Interestingly, because of pressure from the outside world for information from the Arab countries, the governments are often more willing to share information with foreign journalists than domestic ones. Interviewee # 9 in Group Two added: "there is not a lot of cooperation between the governments and Arab journalism". All of the journalists described their desire to be able to write freely, with the freedom to criticize and show the problems of wrongdoings their societies face. They want the freedom to use journalism to help improve people's lives and achieve sustained development and change. They want to be able to tell the truth and have more democracy. They also seek more professional standards in Arab journalism.

One continuous theme that ran through most of the responses, however, is that the society in general that must change—the media is only one aspect of a society and it is not responsible for creating democracy. As described by interviewee # 8 in Group Two,

> One cannot talk about freedom of the media, freedom of the press if citizens are not free; if you do not have a civil society, if you do not have strong political participation, if you do not have political parties, if you do not have powers in society that control the government, if you do not have separation of those powers, then democracy will not exist. (Interviewee # 8, Group Two, 2007)

In most Arab countries the ruler is the central authority, and the entire society revolves around him. Of course, there is no absolute freedom in any society, not even in the United States (Interviewee # 15, Group One, 2007). At this time, though, freedom is

not an aspect of Arab culture; human rights are controlled by the Arab governments (Interviewee # 9, Group Two, 2007) and rulers; Arab people need to gain their freedom like those that live in more democratic societies.

3. Most Al-Jazeera journalists trained by Western news agencies.

The journalists came from a variety of past experiences, including worked journalism in France, Tunis, London, the United States. The most common experience was working in London with the BBC. In the European and Arab (pre-Al-Jazeera) news agencies, there were "red lines" (Interviewee # 3, Group Two, 2007) that prepared the journalists regarding the official and unofficial rules that controlled what could be written or not. Interviewee # 9 in Group One described that

> there were unwritten press laws that had to be followed about what could be
> broadcast; for example, there was the understanding the official and government
> events or activities had to be respected. (Interviewee # 9, Group One, 2007)

Meetings would be held every day to discuss what subjects could be presented, and deleting those that might have a conflict of interest with the government. Many events or issues were completely ignored, but many others were presented in such a way as to diminish their importance if they were broadcast. Most journalists felt they had more freedom working at Al-Jazeera than in their previous occupations. Most of the journalists feel lucky to be working at Al-Jazeera because they feel more freedom here. The only comments that showed equivalent freedom about what could be reported was with the BBC, with interviewee # 10 in Group Two describing that his reporting there was totally free, although every report had to be verified by at least two sources.

Al-Jazeera, of course, does not air every news story, but the difference is that the selections are made based on what the journalists feel are stories that are more important than others. (Interviewee # 7, Group Two, 2007)

There are preferability standards set, meaning the journalists have to place stories on sort of a hierarchy, with the most important being the obvious stories to be aired, and then decisions being made as stories fall below the most important levels. Interviewee # 12 in Group Two described that this ability to choose which news stories are considered the most important gives the news reporting more meaning and power if the journalist knows what stories are the most important and has this power of choice.

4. Al-Jazeera initiated and helped spread media freedom.

a. Al-Jazeera opened many closed doors on news stories before Western and Arabic Media generally. Al-Jazeera intentionally sought to tell the news about areas where other agencies were "dimming" (Interviewee # 11, Group Two, 2007) the truth, as one respondent put it. For example, in Afghanistan, the only stories being told by journalists were those of narcotics, terrorists' activities, and women's rights. So, Al-Jazeera decided to set up a permanent office there to highlight the important stories that were happening in Afghani society and the Taliban rule. Interviewee # 5 in Group Two described that "this work uncovered the deceit in reporting by western news agencies, and the injustice caused to the Taliban movement because of that deceit" (Interviewee # 5, Group Two, 2007). The reports were not meant to be either supportive or critical of the Taliban, but to reveal the reality of the situation from a neutral news model. Because of work like this and the attention received, not just from Arab audiences, but internationally, the authorities in some Arabic countries who are in charge of the media

sector began to change their perception about the role of media, and began to discuss changing media letters. As the authorities and regimes began to notice how large the audience was for Al-Jazeera, this too pushed them to begin to change their formal media standards, and allowed the establishment of more channels and giving more space to what they called "Al Goraa" (Interviewee # 3, Group One, 2007), which means bravery in handling cases and definite events (Interviewee # 3, Group One, 2007). As Al-Jazeera grew in importance, other sources of journalistic reporting began to appear, such as on the Internet, where essays and texts began to be published that revealed situations and events in a more open and frank way. Opinions were being expressed more freely. Previously, people who dared air such opinions were often pursued, jailed or even threatened with death. Many journalists or commentators chose to migrate abroad where they could practice more freedom of speech. "Because of this growing activity of open discourse, the spotlight was aimed as past offenses against journalists where political expression had been forbidden" (Interviewee # 12, Group Two, 2007). A growing demand for a more open press influenced the governments to become more tolerant and open in their media policies, whether they wanted to or not. In other words, too many people were watching and learning about the persecution of journalists and the lack of freedom of the press, and the governments succumbed to this political pressure to a certain extent. Al-Jazeera helped these events to unfold because it broke many barriers and forbidden themes that had previously been found in almost all Arab media. This led to positive steps in the recovery of Arab media.

5. Al-Jazeera has both criticisms and accolades from its Arab audience.

Criticisms:

o Al-Jazeera continuously takes aside with some views such as "Hamas in the Palestinian situation, Hezb Allah" (Interviewee # 2, Group Two, 2007). Islamic groups, in Lebanon, in addition to the Islamic movements in the Arabic countries, but at the same time, ignore the others' sides. Obviously, this leads to where "the opinion and the other opinion" (Interviewee # 2, Group Two, 2007) are absent.

o Some of the reporters at Al-Jazeera present stories sympathetically with particular cases, but not others based on ideology. "The viewer does not know the ideological background" (Interviewee # 15, Group One, 2007), of this biased situation.

o Al-Jazeera sometimes presents some programs which concentrate on the fanaticism and antagonism of situations, but not on the dialogue and explanation.

o Al-Jazeera concentrates on some areas and others which it deems to be of less importance (Interviewee # 10, Group One, 2007), such as the Western Arab world and Africa.

o You often hear that Al-Jazeera has a political agenda (Interviewee # 14, Group 1, 2007), or that it is too Islamist. On the other hand, people always tell you that when they want to make sure that information is correct, they tune to Al-Jazeera.

o Some of the audience criticizes Al-Jazeera because it does not present Qatar issues or news.

o Some of the "dialogues are from riffraff and aren't useful" (Interviewee # 13, Group One, 2007), for the audience and give more emphasis to Islamic characters than the others.

o Some accuse Al-Jazeera of being sponsored by Bin Laden or Israeli Mossad, Israeli administration, as being biased toward and against Islamists, of waging a propaganda war against the West.

Accolades:

- Al-Jazeera usually presents the truest news of obscured events.

- Al-Jazeera conveys the events immediately and presents the news more literally (Interviewee # 1, Group Two, 2007), than the other channels.

- "It gives the Arab spectator the right to understand what is happening in his country" (Interviewee # 5, Group Two, 2007) where the traditional Arabic media would have ignored many of the events reported by Al-Jazeera.

- Al-Jazeera reveals important cases which indicate the contrast of the Arab government between what they say and what they really do, such as normalization, economic administration (Interviewee # 9, Group Two, 2007), and Arab common work…etc).

- Al-Jazeera offers cases and opens the reality of the Arabic viewer.
  Al-Jazeera has shown courage; clearness and presenting the voice of those who are forbidden (Interviewee # 6, Group Two, 2007), to express their opinion.

- Al-Jazeera has presented forbidden themes and challenged the Arabic political associations who had presented themselves as untouchable holy states.

- Before Al-Jazeera, the Arab audience had to tune into radio channels outside of the Arab world (Interviewee # 1, Group Two, 2007). Al-Jazeera was the first news station that gave an accurate account of what was going on (Interviewee # 12, Group Two, 2007). Because of this Al-Jazeera could be described as a revolution.

- It shaped a different school for other Arab channels, and "it increased the freedom of speech" (Interviewee # 2, Group Two, 2007), and the press. It is like a good pattern for democracy. It is a known international channel.

- Al-Jazeera has credibility, is comprehensive, is outspoken, daring and has no taboos.

6. Al-Jazeera is popular and important.

Al-Jazeera began and still has a ceiling of liberty that other channels lack; it is allowed to be more liberal and free than other Arab channels. One of the ways that Al-Jazeera established its credibility, though, besides becoming known as a channel that broke barriers, was because "it presented news much more quickly and accurately than other Arab channels" (Interviewee # 6, Group Two, 2007). Many news stories in the traditional channels were aired much after an event, and they were "distant from reality" (Interviewee # 6, Group Two, 2007). Another source of credibility is that the station started as one that was not controlled by the Qatari government, and eventually whatever financial sponsorship from that government has lessened as Al-Jazeera becomes more successful in its own right. The perception is that Al-Jazeera is much freer from Qatari policy and gets rid of any official and political considerations and the restrictions which the Arabic governments try to impose (Interviewee # 3, Group Two, 2007). The

credibility and legitimacy of the station was further enhanced by its modern techniques, and its editorial, executive and professional systems of presenting the news. It also depends on professional reporters who have developed high credibility.

> The reporters are Arab professionals who do not ignore those matters which are important to the Arab viewer; their focus is on the Arab viewer, not the views of the government, acting as a mouthpiece for their particular sponsoring regime. (Interviewee # 6, Group Two, 2007)

This has created a great deal of legitimacy in the minds of the Arab audience, who view traditional news stations as nothing more than an arm of their ruling authorities. Priority is not given to the prince or ruler of Qatar, unlike most stations which focus and emphasize on the events and activities of the political leaders, even if those activities are trifling.

As the station's reach grew, with offices and professional reporters everything in the world, its ability to cover urgent events fast and comprehensively placed it far ahead of other Arab stations, and the audience responded. It used reporters on site just like the Western model (Interviewee # 7, Group Two, 2007), which gave the station an immediacy unavailable to Arab media in the past, again enhancing the sense of accuracy and authentic of the news reporting. Today, when you hear Arab citizens talking about news events, and they say they heard of something on Al-Jazeera, most people take this as accurate and objective news, which is a testament to the amount of credibility developed. In the past, this was not the case for government-controlled stations. Also, by bringing together reporters that were educated and trained and worked in stations all over the world, the employees have presented thought, concept and methods that are different

from the other Arab channel reporters, giving a sense of authority, but also of "worldliness" (Interviewee # 10, Group Two, 2007), a connection to other cultures and the Western world.

7. Banning Al-Jazeera will eventually backfire.

When Al-Jazeera has been banned by certain regimes, it is because the regimes have failed to recognize and/or accept that the world has become more open to a flow of information, including the Arab world (Interviewee # 7, Group Two, 2007). It is foolish for the regimes to try and close the Al-Jazeera offices in their country because the citizens are not stupid and illiterate, and they desire and will eventually demand the ability to follow international and regional news (Interviewee # 1, Group Two, 2007), uncensored. The various regimes that have tried to silence Al-Jazeera use the following arguments:

- A reporter violated something related to the "public safety"(Interviewee #12, Group Two, 2007) to Qatar country.

- That the office or the reporter published something that is oppressive to the country.

- The channel welcomes people, who the country considers them their enemy.

- "Al-Jazeera offers what the Arabic authorities want to be obscured" (Interviewee # 11, Group Two, 2007), but Al-Jazeera does not.

Interviewee # 2 in Group Two claimed that the criticisms from regimes, especially those who try to silence Al-Jazeera, are unwilling to take responsibility for the failure of their societies, and so they seek to blame others. Al-Jazeera is a highly visible scapegoat. Some countries still ban Al-Jazeera in their countries For example; Al-Jazeera

has been banned in Algeria and Saudi Arabia. In 2007, Saudi finally allowed the channel to cover the pilgrimage, but there is no indication of when Algeria might allow Al-Jazeera reporters to return (Interviewee # 11, Group Two, 2007); "of course, the offices of Al-Jazeera, which were closed by Eyad Alawe, Iraq's prime minister, with cooperation from the American authorities, have not opened yet" (Interviewee # 8, Group Two, 2007). The explanation was that Al-Jazeera presented reports that were negative to the Iraqi people, although this was not a direct reason given. Still, Al-Jazeera has many volunteers who provide recorded tapes of events and presents facts that are happening in the country.

8. Al-Jazeera has positive influence on the growth of Arab democracy.

Before Al-Jazeera, Arab citizens did not have a credible source of information easily available that provided them with information about current events and information that was not censored by their governments. Al-Jazeera has been able to help develop the democratic mind in the Arab world (Interviewee # 6, Group Two, 2007). With new advances in technology and the brave actions of channels like Al-Jazeera, the monopoly that the regimes had over information presented to its citizens has been finished. Although "the governments have tried to imitate the style of Al-Jazeera" (Interviewee # 11, Group Two, 2007), the attempts fail as soon as there is a revealing of the reality of the Arab governments. The channels lack credibility because instead of having a free dialogue, the government-controlled channels have a dialogue with the government only. Because of Al-Jazeera, there is a continuously growing "public sphere model" (Interviewee # 5, Group One, 2007) that presents many cases and different types of political interests. Whatever the criticisms of Al-Jazeera, it has remained strong to its

mission of giving a voice to the voiceless and uncovering corruption and injustice in favor of freedom, justice and democracy.

For this Al-Jazeera is often seen as a threat, but the popularity of the station shows the desire that the people have to hear this type of voice. The channel is definitely shaping a new generation of young Arab minds, and that is leading to loosening the grip of government on people. (Interviewee # 5, Group One, 2007)

Al-Jazeera has contributed in increasing Arab democracy and human rights because it is a voice for Arab scholars, audiences, reporters and novelists, many of whom were silenced in the past.

The direction of many Arabian governments is to continue to restrict public freedoms. But because of Al-Jazeera, new technology (Interviewee # 4, Group Two, 2007), a rapid increase in information sources, and a growing desire for a public sphere of dialogue and open discourse, the attempts to silence people are weakening more and more. The Al-Jazeera model and voice is expected to continue to impose pressure on governments to reform. Still, democracy is a long process of education (Interviewee # 5, Group Two, 2007). Most Arab media is still controlled by corrupt governments or those with wealth and power. Al-Jazeera is the exception to the rule for the most part. Because of Al-Jazeera's popularity and importance in the world, it has gained power and influence of its own, and when regimes try to go against the channel, it usually ends up being a negative for the regime, not the station. This influence is only expected to grow, with the increased pressure put upon oppressive regimes who do not want to look bad to the rest of the world, but can no longer hide their activities as well as in the past.

9. Al-Jazeera will continue investigative reporting and critiquing social issues.

Interviewee # 3 in Group Two used the journalists from America and their reporting on Abu Ghraib, prison in Iraq, as an example of how journalism can make a difference in accountability for governments. The American government tried to hide the practices at the prison, but the work of journalists helped reveal the activities. The truths cannot be hidden forever (Interviewee # 3, Group Two, 2007), and journalism helps to uncover the truth if this is the purpose of the reporting, rather than promoting the interests of the state. Such reporting of truths and the changes that occur because of them are due to the hand of the liberated journalist. The Arab world suffers because there is limited journalistic freedom, and so there are delays regarding the appearance of truth.

> A difference between Western and Arab media is that the liberty of media in the
> west is perceived as an inherent social right, and is based on cosmic values for
> western modernity and a liberal prospective to the entire society generally,
> whereas the liberty of media in the Arab countries is still under the ideological
> umbrella of the regimes. (Interviewee # 6, Group Two, 2007)

In other words, many Arab citizens do not view an open and free press as their inherent right, but view it as whether the regime feels it is acceptable. This does not mean that the Arab citizens do not want a free and open discourse (Interviewee # 10, Group Two, 2007), but they do not expect it as their right; there is still faith in the political leadership and their shackled laws, and this causes self-monitoring in a lot of Arab journalists. In the Western world, the reporters and editors are submissive to the capitalists, whereas in the Arab world, the reporters and editors are submissive to the officials, religious and political. In the Western world, however, the journalists and media negotiate with the

owners in order to respect the rights of the citizens to their liberated media. However, Al-Jazeera has helped to change the relationship between journalists and the regimes, with negotiations beginning to take place.

Summary

In conclusion, the two groups interviewed feel that the amount of press and media democracy will not exceed the amount of democracy in the society itself. In addition, journalists and other citizens are not allowed to have a free voice. They believe in the importance of Al-Jazeera channel and other free press in Arab societies, but democracy and freedom can not be created by the media only but by educated Arab citizens. Most of the interviewee agreed that Al-Jazeera played an international role and it presented new Arab news. The majority of the second group, workers at Al-Jazeera channel, believed in the positive influence of Al-Jazeera channel on the growth of democracy in the Arab world. They also believed that the Al-Jazeera developed and increased discourse and critique of Arab social issues. The people interviewed had many different interpretations of the Press freedom and government challenges. All people interviewed believe that the Arab media needs new free laws to increase the level of Arab public opinion because people are not willing to receive information without making their own opinions.

In the discussion chapter, researchers will summarize the importance of the research, research limitations and future researchers. Also, the researcher writes the research results and many suggestions. The discussion chapter is the main chapter that includes testing research theories and research questions.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

In the beginning of the discussion chapter, the first three paragraphs will include the research outline and a summary of each chapter. Also, this chapter discusses the research aims; research limitations, recommendations for further study, research findings and conclusion.

The general topics are as follows: First, in chapter one, there are five major parts in the literature review. The first part discusses Arab media and the historical information about the press and broadcast media. The second part explores the relationship between press, media and Islam in Arab countries. The third part discusses the media challenges in the Middle East with a focus on the government and media control in the region. The fourth part discusses the social changes that Al-Jazeera channel has engendered in the Arab region, as well as the channel's global appearance. The last part discussed Al-Jazeera channel as a case study of this paper. It adds more information about the channel, including the influence of the channel and its exclusive shows.

Second, the methods chapter focuses on the interview and content analysis. There are two groups were interviewed face to face and through the phone. There were no audio and video tapes recorded. The researcher wrote notes. Each interview took thirty to forty minutes.

All interviewees were interviewed during their work time in their offices in the United Arab Emirates or Qatar. The first group consists of media experts in the United Arab Emirates, and the second group is Al-Jazeera employees. The researcher chose the structure interview to get more information about similar questions in both groups.

Third, in the themes chapter, the researcher has developed some themes in Chapter Four related to the interviewees and the gathered data. The themes are presented in two distinct sections; those that were derived from interviews with the media experts in the United Arab Emirates and those that came from the Al-Jazeera employees' interviews. Under each group, different themes were analyzed. There are seven themes for Group One and nine themes for Group Two. The researcher gathered related interview questions and related data such as suggestions and discussions and divided them to many themes. Most of the interviewee agreed that Al-Jazeera played an international role, and it presented a new venue and type of Arab news. The second group, Al-Jazeera employees, agreed that the Al-Jazeera channel has a positive impact on the growth of democracy in the Arab world. They also believe that the Al-Jazeera changed and increased Arab discourse. All interviewees suggested that the Arab media needs new free press laws. They need more press freedom. They are against controlling and sorting media contents as is the practice of most of the Arab governments in different Arab countries. Consequently, Arab people cannot make develop their own opinions like the western countries.

Research Aims

The aim of this research is to discuss in-depth the Arab governments' control of media. Another aim is exploring the nature of media in the Arab world and the way that

modern technologies have changed the nature of the Arab public sphere of discourse. Also, examining Arab Democracy and the relationship between the Arab governments and democracy is one of the research aims. One of the key issues discussed is the role of the Arabic media channel, Al-Jazeera, in the Arab region. The discussion focuses on the importance of the channel and information or sources of the news that have served to make the channel so popular.

Research Limitations

Knowledge gained from this study led to a better understanding of why Arab governments control media. Most of the Arab media researchers, however, focused on Arab media history and have not included new Arab channels such as the Al-Jazeera channel. Since Al-Jazeera is a new channel, established in 1996 (Iskandar, 2003), not many papers were published about it.

Also, there are few research studies about the influences or the impact of Al-Jazeera channel in the Arab region. In addition, this research used the interview method and two different groups were interviewed to gather the research data, but of course, the groups of participants were not large in number, although they did cover a broad range of media backgrounds, including those who are involved in academics and are working in the field.

There are a limited number of studies about Arab media experts, especially studies that focus on the Gulf region. Not many research studies have used the interview method for gathering data from media experts, because media experts do not trust researchers. The issues covered in this study are considered quite sensitive, discussing areas such as press freedom and democracy in the Arab media. Most Arab media experts are worried about providing such information as divulged about their governments. They

work under a blanket of censorship and a lack of freedom of speech. Therefore, the researcher had to develop the interviewees' trust, which is why audio and video recordings were not used. Also, there are no names published in this study. The researcher used numbers and codes for each interviewee. So, during the interview most of the participants talked more openly and honestly.

Limitations for this study included the amount of time set for the interviewees; the time period could have been longer, allowing more opportunity for emergent questions and discussion. Most of the interviewees answered the questions briefly. As described previously, there are few research studies written about Arab democracy where the interview method was used, but this study included both of them. Also, there are not many research studies about the impact of the Arab new channel in the United States, but this study includes perceptions and impact of the Al-Jazeera channel in the United States. The literature review discussed the international role of the Al-Jazeera channel in the United States, and its competitiveness with other American channels like the CNN and Fox News (Straus, 2001).

Recommendations for Further Study

Future research should include public perceptions about democracy and press freedom in Arab countries. This paper included media experts in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar but does not include the public, ordinary citizens of the area. It may be of importance to understand not only the different media experts' views, but also the public conceptions and perspectives about press freedom. Also, the study focused on one case study which is Al-Jazeera, a broadcast channel in the Gulf region; further researchers should focus on print press too. Many Arab groups, including a few

governmental organizations, are seeking to change the press laws such as in the United Arab Emirates.

The Ministry of Information and Culture has called for the amending of the UAE publications law to protect the freedom of the press and to prevent the harassment of journalists. In particular the law will address circumstances that could lead to the imprisonment of journalists in libel cases. (Mohammad, 2008)

As a result of public demand, Arab governments have sometimes changed their press laws, like what happened in Egypt, Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Syria as more people became educated and mobile (Guazzone, 1997). So, studying those countries is very important. There is limited research comparing the old and new laws on those mentioned countries; the researcher suggests increasing the studies in a variety of contexts, past and present, regarding media and its relationship to democracy and public discourse in the above- mentioned countries.

One important finding in this study that should be addressed in future research is that people who studied in Western countries have a more broad experience and can communicate more fluently about media freedom and other issues. They were educated in Western universities, and they try to apply what they have studied about the role of media in a democracy, and they are more likely to seek change. It could be very valuable to further research and investigate the influences that a Western-based education in communication and journalism has had on the western degree holders and their practices/experiences in an Arab journalistic environment. Most of the second group, Al-Jazeera employees', are Arab professional journalists who worked in the West. Many moved from other Arab countries to Qatar and Al-Jazeera because they found that Al-

Jazeera has more open press laws than other countries like Yemen and Iraq (Interviewee 1, Group Two, 2007).

Another prime area for future research is the immigrant Arab Journalist. For example a couple of interviewees mentioned that many Arab media professionals leave their homelands altogether to work in Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States. The main reason was strict Arab press laws (Interviewee #1, Group One & Interviewee # 5 in Group Two). There is a need to change many press laws in the Arab countries. So, future research should focus on the Arab press laws and how they should be changed.

An interesting area for future research would expand on the current study in examining the impact of the new Arab channels like Al-Arabiya and Al-Manar which have become competitors of Al-Jazeera channel (Zayani & Sahraoui, 2007). It would be interesting to study this factor in the Arab region by asking public and media experts who watch those channels whether they actually liked or disliked the news broadcasted by mentioned channels and why. Also, focusing on the differences between those channels is an important area of investigation to compare the freedom level in each channel, and what impact that might have on the audience. Further study may lead to other avenues on how to create more effective press laws and to discover ways in which to help media experts practice their job in a freedom environment.

In addition, there are not many studies about the relationships between Islam, media and democracy. More studies needs to focus on those topics. Some articles and scholars studied the relationships between media and government in Arab countries, but still there is a limitation about Islam and its relationship to media in the Arab worlds. Many questions need answers, such as: are there conflicts between Islam and democracy?

What is the relationship between Islam media and Islam and democracy? To answer specific questions, more research needs to be done in this area.

One final area of future research is the American perceptions of new Arab channels in the United States. In this study, the literature review focused on the Arab perceptions of the Al-Jazeera channel. Future research should continue to address the American perceptions of Arab new channels such as Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya and Al-Manar.

Implications for Communication Theory

In this study the research applied authoritarian theory, Social theory of the Media, Spiral of Silence theory and Deception theory. All the mentioned theories are Western theories but they applied in the Arab countries. First, when applying authoritarian theory, Peterson and Schramm (1956) describes that the news media's objective is to maintain social order and promote the political goals of the state. From the literature review and research themes, the researcher fined that most media experts in both groups agreed that the Arab media is still controlled by the Arab governments. But in the West people are watchdogs of news media. Second, in the Social Theory of the Media, Thompson (1996) believed that mass media have created new forms of social interaction which are more limited than everyday social interactions. In the Arab countries, this social interaction created by the mass media is slanted and probably prejudicial because mass media is used to create and generate propaganda. Third, Spiral of Silence theory is related Arab interaction too. For example, most of the first group, Arab media experts agreed that there is a desire for a free press in the Arab countries but people do not have free speech and free press. According to Noelle-Neumann (1984), when people believe their view of

the world or events has wide support, they speak out with confidence. But if there is a power like elite who control media and people withdraw their speech. Most of the participants believed that there are different levels of press freedom in the Arab countries. For example Egypt, Kuwait and Morocco have more press freedom than other Arab countries like Yemen and Saudi Arabia (Interviewee # 1, Group One, 2007). So, because of many restrict press laws, many Arab prefer withdraw their speech, write and takes (Interviewee # 1, Group One, 2007). Finally, Deception theory is related to "Concealment" (p.216) and news "fabrication" (Buller & Burgoon, 1996, p.214). According to Buller and Burgoon (1996), if people or mass receive part of the news and there was a control and news gate keeping, the news are fabricated. All participants agreed that most Arab governments control and sort the press news. Buller and Burgeon (1996) instates that "equivocation" (p. 215) might appear too if people are controlled by others like governments and elites. But in this study, the "equivocation" (p. 215) is not applied to this study. All interviewees speak honestly to the researcher and mention more information against Arab governments. There was a big trust between the researcher and the research participants because there were no names and video or audio recorded.

<center>Research Findings</center>

The common assumption in the Arab world about democracy is; where there is economic prosperity, there is more support to democracy which is associated with higher levels of education. More economically deprived areas are linked to more support for Islamism. Jamal (2006) argues that "the dichotomization of Islam and democracy is a false construct in the context... in many parts of the Muslim world" (p. 59). In most Islamic societies, there is support for both institutions. However, Guazzone (1997) agreed

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that it is clear that democracy must be tailored to meet the needs of specific countries and meet the requirements of gradual implementation rather than radical implementation. First should come constitutional guarantees of human rights. Also, there is a need to integrate Islamic political groups and movements by approaching them with a strategy of cultural dialogue (Guazzone, 1997). "Ultimately, political philosophers and theorists need to rediscover liberalism and re-emphasize its universal application" (Lea, 2005, p 46), while not imposing policies that are too radical all at once.

Before democracy develops strongly, a change in the media and news organizations is required (Arab Media, 2005). Although the new satellite channels are technical improvements over what came before, they are plagued with unprofessionalism, a lack of accountability, a lack of objectivity, and a lack of responsibility to their citizens in the nature of the "fourth estate" (Arab Media, 2005, p. 5). To a certain extent, this renders them illegitimate in the eyes of citizens, although far preferable to government-controlled media. This could be a genuine danger to the West.

> To ignore or somehow justify their lies and inflammatory reporting as incidental to doing business in their political environment amounts to gross relativism. If al-Jazeera and its peers are not held accountable to the highest standards, they will never become genuinely professional media outlets. (p. 5)

Regime reform that institutionalizes a rule of law, that protects individual rights and concurrently freedom of speech, is the necessary precursor for media reform. "Increasingly, calls by the public for political reform are appearing in and being disseminated by regional media" (Arab Media, 2005, p. 6). Citizens are no longer willing

to sit back and have no influence or expression regarding the public sphere. They have been exposed and are not willing to go back into the darkness of controlled media.

According El-Naway (2003), the development of more liberal organizations is another element of increased democracy in the Middle East. This may take several years before they can develop as a new political force. As mentioned above, the rights of citizens must first be formalized through a constitution before any further democratic development can truly move forward.

That in most Arab societies the rights of the collective generally supersede the rights of the individual adds another impediment to implementing democratic reforms, since these reforms basically focus on protecting individual rights. (Essoulami, 2006, p. 3)

Unlike in America and some other Western societies, the emphasis of stability and justice in the Arab world is seen as making sure that the collective group is more protected than the rights of individuals (Essoulami, 2006). Threats to social stability are seen as much more threatening because the right of the individual to express him or herself is seen as subordinate to the right of the society to exist harmoniously.

Toward the late 1990s, Arab governments had to acquiesce to the appeal of satellite television (Hanley, 1999). Rooftops in Saudi Arabia are becoming crowded with satellite dishes. Thousands of students who have been educated in the West are returning home and wanting the same technologies that they had access to in other parts of the world (El-Nawawy, 2003). Hanley (1999) argued that the new satellite dishes could change the Arab world. News is starting to flow across borders, and the regional news information that was starting to be presented (by stations like Al-Jazeera) was

challenging the news and information presented by the national media broadcasts. The governments were feeling more pressure to justify their policies. Some predicted that the new modes of information and news broadcasts could be strongly transformative.

> With Arab countries getting the same information at the same time, there can be common identity building...just as Britons, Canadians and Americans can all share a cultural identity when enjoying Monty Python films. By sharing a regional pan-Arab media, people can share an Arab cultural identity and political disunity may end... Governments will have to provide complete transparency to maintain their credibility. They'll also have to respond to and seek to shape public opinion.
>
> (Hanley, 1999, p. 116)

With a more open press that presents diversity, the acceptance of diversity will broaden, and a cultural identity may expand to include a more diverse definition that is more liberal and true to the nature of the tolerance and generosity of Islam.

Unfortunately, as described by Hanley (1999), the new broadcast stations are still struggling to survive financially. The Arab audience is not a good target for advertising, and most stations have to rely on their respective governments to cover their losses. A more subtle form of control develops in this regard, must as Western stations try not to offend their sponsors or alienate potential customers of those sponsors. El-Nawawy (2003) agreed that, this reliance on government funding has a clear effect on Al-Jazeera, for example, while the station has been openly critical of other regimes in the region, it rarely criticizes its own government of Qatar.

Boyd (2001) wrote in 2001 that Iraq was the only Arab state in the Gulf that did not have satellite television, primarily because no company wanted to provide its services

there. This does not mean that the Saudi government gave up all attempts at media control. In fact,

> At the close of the 20th century, Saudi Arabia has decided that it can most effectively influence television programming through either direct or indirect media ownership. (Boyd, 2001, p. 57)

Nevertheless, government-controlled Arab media is no longer seen as credible by the majority of its audience (Zayani, 2005). Most Arabs acknowledge and recognize that the media is used by current regimes to promote the regime's interests, and also to act as a stabilizing force in the society. In other words, the Arab audience has accepted two primary factors about a government-controlled media—it is a normative force based on the assumptions that a citizenry must be protected from invasive and corruptive messages and images, but at the same time, most of what is being shown promotes the status quo of those in power in the society (Qusaibaty, 2006). In other words, the audience has accepted and approved that the government has a right to censor media for the public good, but in reality, much of what is presented is to better the interests of those in power, not so much the good of ordinary people. After Al-Jazeera and other stations were introduced and became popular, one of the most common responses when asked why they chose these particular stations was that the news presented on the non-government controlled stations was more reliable than the government-owned station (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2002). The stations represented many more perspectives than could be found in the traditional Arab media. They did not deny that Al-Jazeera might be biased, it was just much less biased than a government-owned station, and the viewers had the opportunity to hear a variety of voices (El-Nawawy, 2003).

With an increasing number of young adults, both men and women, receiving higher education in the Arab world, along with their greater mobility and ability to access new sources of communication/information, there has been a "fragmentation of religious and political authority, challenging authoritarianism in many domains" (Eickelman, 2002, p. 40). Eickelman (2002) argues that because of new information technologies, Arab regimes have had to adapt to what some call the Arab street. The term refers to the growing ability of Arab citizens to have access to uncensored television and international news coverage. This accessibility is influencing the Arab public's view of its leadership. Arab governments are responding, although it is not clear how much impact this new access will have on future policy. Still, even though Eickelman (2002) believes the "Arab street" (p. 40) (public discourse) is still not overt, "nonetheless, its use indicates that policy makers at least acknowledge that even regional authoritarian and single-party states now have 'publics' to take into account" (p. 40). The current regimes can no longer ignore the reality of the emerging public sphere that is growing in strength and vitality in the Arab world.

The Arab public sphere was changed in the last decade; after the appearance of the Al-Jazeera channel, many Arab people decided to choose different sources of exclusive news like Al-Jazeera's news (Lynch, 2006). Although as stated by El-Nawawy & Iskandar (2003), Al-Jazeera is by far the preferred news and program channel in the Arab world, this does not mean that the audience believes Al-Jazeera is completely objective. Eighty-five percent of those surveyed believe that Al-Jazeera is not entirely independent from the Qatar government, and that it still needs to establish more independence (Zayani, 2005). However,

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It is still seen as the best broadcast organization to present live events, a pro-Arab perspective, controversial events and content, which is all revolutionary to an Arab audience. (p. 49)

Still many Arab audiences do not admit that new Arabic channel like Al-Jazeera is not governmental sponsored.

El-Nawawy and Iskandar (2003) wrote that Al-Jazeera's managing director explains that the staff of the broadcast station all has professional backgrounds, many with Western media experience, the purpose, however, was to transform that experience into an Arabic presence. He states, "We know the mentality of the Arabs—but we also want the expatriate Arab audience, who are used to Western media" (p. 54). Another criticism of Al-Jazeera is that in its desire for audience ratings, just like Western media outlets, the station is being led by the masses; it doesn't lead the masses. The question becomes, say the authors, should the media lead the masses? Is this the role of the media? Ideally, the news media are completely objective, in its role on commercialized television; however, it would be hard to find any media that are completely objective, being also driven to respond to local sensibilities. Others criticize Al-Jazeera for being sensationalistic to win ratings and being nothing more than a tabloid (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2003). Al-Jazeera has established itself by creating and driving controversy, and it appears that Arab audiences are ready for such controversy.

Conclusion

What can be learned from this study? Many Arab governments are still controlling the media in different countries. But there are other Arab countries that changed their press laws like Egypt, Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Syria as their mass

citizens became educated. Some of the new channels established in mentioned countries like Al-Manar channel are banned in other Arab countries. Al-Manar, a Lebanese channel, broadcasts news or shows criticizing other Arab governments. Because of the desire to squash such criticism, Arab governments do not allow press freedom and do not allow the public, in their countries, to watch any Arab channel news (as much as possible) that might turn citizens against them. With the latest technologies, though, the governments are losing control, and they should become more proactive rather than reactive and change their press laws.

Al-Jazeera creates propagandas and many Arab for and against Al-Jazeera (Bozell, 2006). In the western countries like the United State many international channels like the CNN, Fox News and CNBC has propaganda like Al-Jazeera channel (Bozell, 2006). So, what Al-Jazeera have, lots of critics, is normal and spread in the West channels too.

Western theories like Spiral of Silence theory can apply in the Middle East countries like Arab countries. For example, there is limited freedom of speech or a public sphere in most Arab countries. The researcher agrees with Noelle-Neumann and her Spiral of Silence theory. Noelle-Neumann (1984) wrote those who have different perceptions that are not widely supported are more likely to withdraw and remain quiet for fear of ridicule or rejection. The mass must talk, write and ask for their speech freedom. One of the main results that researcher find in the study is western like American, are watch dog for the media. They can critique the governments and media. But in many Arab countries, critiques are not allowed to publish or talk about the elite and governments (Interviewee #1, group one, 2007). So, there are many different between the meaning of democracy in the West, which has the press freedom, and the

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meaning of the democracy in the East (Yushkiavitshus, 2004).

A new channel like Al-Jazeera does not only play a big role in Arab countries but also in the west, especially the United States of America. Al-Jazeera became a known channel in the United States because of its exclusive news such as September 11th, the Afghanistan war, the Bin Laden tapes and the Iraq war news (Sullivan, 2003). The researcher believes there is no 100% of freedom in any society; therefore, the agenda setting theory can apply everywhere. Shaw & McCombs (1972) agreed that people who have power, such as political leaders and media owners, can sort and choose different kinds of news for the public. The researcher agrees, however, that there is practice of this theory in the Ea.   ~re than the west. Arab people should watch and have access to other West channels and media, so they can choose their own news and shows.

Media professionals in Al-Jazeera or Al-Manar and other free relatively channels can invite leaders and people who have power in authoritarian countries to their programs and discuss media issues. Media experts can make indirect changes in authoritarian countries by discussing issues like media laws and press freedom and democracy with those leaders.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Questions for Group One, Media experts in the U.A.E.

1- Do you think that Arab media have a good average of democracy and why?

2- What are the challenges that faced the media and democracy in Arab region?

3- How can we increase the level of democracy in Arab countries?

4- Do you think there are many differences between media and democracy in Arab counties and why?

5- How do you compare the freedom of the Arab media in the past and now days?

6- Do you watch Al-Jazeera channel and why?

7- Do you think Al-Jazeera Channel opened a new democracy era in Arab region? Why?

8- Do you watch some shows in Al-Jazeera channel? If yes please mention them and why you watch those shows?

9- Al-Jazeera shows like Al Ray and Al Ray Al Akher and the opposite direction brings strong and first new discussion in the Gulf region? Why?

10- Why do you think Al-Jazeera branches were banned in many Arab countries like Lebanon, Kuwait and Iraq...etc

11- Some people believe that Al-Jazeera is the Arab CNN. Do you agree or disagree and why?

12- Can Al-Jazeera threat the west like the United States and United Kingdom global channels like the CNN and BBC and why?

13- Can you mention other channels that increased media freedom in the Middle East? Why do you think those channels have powers?

14- Can you mention some Arab countries that have more media freedom than others and why? Please rank at least four from the highest to the lowest.

15- Do you have comments you want to talk about?

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Group Two, Al-Jazeera employees.

1- When did you work in Al-Jazeera channel and why did you choose this channel?

2- Did you work in media field before working in Al-Jazeera? How do you feel about freedom between your previous experience and now?

3- Do you think that Al-Jazeera a brings a new media freedom in Arab region and why?

4- What are the positive and negative critiques that you always heard from audiences about the channel?

5- How do you think Al-Jazeera is different than other Arab channels and why?

6- Is there something distinctive about Al-Jazeera and its power unlike other channels and how?

7- Why there are many branches banded in many Arab countries?

8- If the branch was banded how long it will take to open it again?

9- What are the most popular opinion shows in Al-Jazeera channel? Why they are important for audiences?

10- Do you think that Al-Jazeera now have equal power to west channels and why?

11- What are the developments that Al-Jazeera gets from 1996 until now?

12- What is the future of Al-Jazeera in Arab and international region?

13- Do you think that Arab media have a good average of democracy and why?

14- What are the challenges that faced the media and democracy in Arab region?

15- How can we increase the level of democracy in Arab countries?

16- Do you think there are many differences between media and democracy in Arab counties and why?

17- How do you compare the freedom of the Arab media in the past and now days?

18- Can you mention other channels that increased media freedom in the Middle East? Why do you think those channels have those powers?

19- Do you have comments you want to talk about?

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