

Arab Satellite Broadcasting: An Alternative to Political Parties?

Prof. Dr. Kai Hafez

University of Erfurt, Germany

(kai.hafez@uni-erfurt.de)

currently also:

Visiting Fellow at Oxford University

The famous Arab news network Al-Jazeera has been considered one of the most important ‘Arab parties.’ Since most Arab countries have not yet established functioning democracies most relevant institutions, like political parties and a parliamentary opposition, are still rudimentary, Arab satellite television seems to be taking over part of their designated role. As a mouthpiece of Arab peoples and ‘the common man’, Arab satellite broadcasting seems able to mediate between the state and society. In the international context the transnational Arab news networks, in particular, have made tremendous inroads into the Western dominated flow of news. Perhaps for the first time ever in history, Arabs have an effective and up-to-globalization tool of information at their disposal to inform the world about their own views on regional conflicts, for example, in Palestine or in Iraq.

However, to what extent can Arab satellite broadcasting really be considered to play a proactive and avant-garde role for Arab democracy? The international debate on Al-Jazeera and other Arab satellites in recent years has been characterized by tremendous controversy and insecurity. While Al-Jazeera, in particular, was considered by some to be the herald of Arab democracy and civil society, its critics highlighted the networks’ anti-Israeli or Anti-American biases and their sensationalist tendency towards ‘politainment.’ Proponents applaud Arab transnational television for opening up the public discourse, but opponents argue that they are doing quite the opposite because they resonate and perpetuate intrinsic biases of Arab political culture. That Al-Jazeera has been labelled “The Arab CNN” is not really helpful since American networks and other mass media also showed many (pro-American) biases especially after 11 September 2001 and during the Iraq War in 2003.¹

The stagnation of the debate that is firmly entrenched in the above mentioned bipolar views results not only from empirical and research deficits, but also from the fact that there is no clear theoretical basis for satellite television in the process of political transformation. Media in authoritarian countries operate under completely different conditions when compared to Western consolidated democracies. While in the West the identification of mass media with or as ‘political parties’ easily discredits their legitimacy as objective information hubs, the media in authoritarian countries have to face a double challenge. While their basic aim is still ‘objective’ and ‘neutral’ information, the extraterritorial situation of satellite television enables them also to take over a number of the functions of political parties and political movements. The idea of Arab broadcasting being able to articulate and mobilize civil society and to encourage democratic transformation is surely part of the fascination about these media.

Whether one sides with the critics or with the sympathizers of Arab satellite broadcasters depends much on theoretical premises. However, it seems naïve to measure the performance of Arab broadcasting according to Western mainstream standards because the political systems and political cultures they operate in are in many regards different from that of developed democratic systems. As a consequence, the functional dualism creates new problems, because: what is to be done if the political culture that the media are trying to

¹ Tumber/Palmer 2004; Schechter 2003; Hafez 2004; Thussu/Freedman 2003; Zelizer/Allan 2002; Hess/Kalb 2003.

represent is not sufficiently 'democratic' in nature and direction – as might be the case with Arab-Muslim culture that has never experienced full-fledged democracies? And to what degree are broadcasting networks and journalists really able to substitute for the weaknesses of Arab democratic political movements, organizations, institutions and sometimes intellectuals – a new and complex role that journalists have neither been mandated nor educated for? And to what degree can one realistically and legitimately ask Arab satellites to take the lead in the move towards democracy – and where do they need to be protected themselves by the democratic constitution of the political systems?

The present paper seeks to elaborate on the theoretical role Arab transnational news networks can play in the process of political transformation and to interpret the often insufficient empirical evidence that exists. Aided by an original full-text analysis of Aljazeera.net, it attempts to establish in which aspects the contemporary networks already meet those theoretical needs. The conclusion that will be drawn is that Arab television has achieved a lot, but that, particularly after the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the Iraq war in 2003, structural changes will be required in the newsrooms and in the Arab satellite broadcasting system to consolidate and advance a role supportive of democracy. Otherwise the danger is inherent that instead of succeeding perhaps for the first time in history in making a big mass medium and its journalists an avant-garde for a globally and regionally inspired democratization, Arab networks could lose their critical function.

1. Theoretical Perspectives: Media as an Alternative to Political Parties

The state of political affairs and the role of the media in Arab societies is contrary to many lessons of history and ridicules mainstream transformation theory. That theory holds that political parties were created as a reaction to modernization processes, mostly as class parties like the German Social Democrats or British Labour.² The more middle-classed Western societies became, the more the political parties reflected the interest of ever larger parts of the populace. They developed from class parties to popular parties by integrating the broad underlying values of societies, for example, conservatism versus social equality ideals. Parties are at the same time a reflection of underlying social structures and self-conscious elites that aggregate the political will of large fragments of a society, articulate it and thus develop the democratic project. Transformation theory underlines the role of elites³ which, in the case of political parties, design political programmes and finally create governments and recruit political personnel for leadership. To put it in a nutshell: According to democratic transformation theory (non-revolutionary) political reform and democratization has always been the privilege of political counter-elites and oppositional parties – but not of mass media.

On the contrary, although many general media and communication scientists consider the media important for democracy,⁴ the theoretical debate in political science about democratic transition has never done so. The so-called "small media" like the Internet or even the underground press might be considered important⁵ – but the big mass media have always been thought to *follow* rather than *lead* democratic change.⁶ Authoritarian regimes, however, are neither so much afraid of the Internet nor of the press, since especially in widely illiterate societies, as in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the usage and the effects of these media are limited to small elites, but they are hardly made for broader societal mobilization. Many Arab

² See, for example: Merkel/Sandschneider 1997; Schubert et al. 1994.

³ Potter 1997, pp. 13-18.

⁴ See, for example: McNair 1995, pp. 16-27.

⁵ Sreberny-Mohammadi/Mohammadi 1994; Jones 2002.

⁶ McConnell/Becker 2002. With the same basic conclusions for the Arab press' "weakness" see also: Garon 1995. With a slightly more optimistic view on the mass media's ability to work for democracy also in the pre-transitional phase see: Rozumilowicz 2002.

and other Middle Eastern political regimes have, for example, liberalized parts of their media systems, like the Internet in Morocco, Egypt, or Jordan or the press, especially weekly or monthly journals, in countries like Jordan or Iran.⁷ But none of the Middle Eastern states has ever opened up the TV sector – except maybe for the Gulf states as hosts of the new regional Arab news networks like Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabia or Abu Dhabi TV.

But despite the regimes' fear of television and the fact that it might be the only medium reaching 'the masses', transformation theorists consider the *struggle for media freedom* important for democratization, but not television itself, largely for two reasons. First, transformation theoreticians believe that television, in particular, but also other large mass media, are acting according to the primacy of organizational goals. Politics or market forces seem to dominate the media, and the organization of the media constantly struggles for its own survival, and television especially is an industrial process that can be easily controlled by the state.⁸ Second, the mass media have never been considered primary social actors, but rather they seem determined by actors like the government, lobbies – or political parties.

For all these reasons mainstream transformation theory has never considered the big mass media an 'avant-garde' of democratization. On the contrary: The classical and influential book "Four Theories of the Press" by Friederick S. Siebert, Wilbur Schramm and Theodore Peterson has claimed that the media always take over the form of the respective social and political structures, be they authoritarian or democratic in nature.⁹ It is only after system changes to democracy occur and electoral democracy is established that television is considered important for formulating the public agenda and representing civil society of the democratic society. Transformation theoreticians say that the mass media, television and the big press, is not as crucial in the authoritarian phase as certain dissidents, artists and other freedom fighters might be, but that it is only in the phase of consolidation that the media are effective.

However, this theory was written for nation-based media but not for the new situation of satellite television that crosses national borders. In this situation state control over television is regressing and big media gain more freedom – a freedom they can use to play a role in early democratization processes. It is not so much globalization and Western media, but regionalization and the geo-linguistic unity of regions like the Arab world that creates new challenges at the crossroads of regionalization and democratization.¹⁰ Interesting enough, the same moment Arab television gained more freedom, it created a pan-Arab dialogue on democracy and reform (see below).

From a theoretical point of view the new situation of television in the Arab world is one of growing freedom – but also of new problems. Reconsidering the two reasons why television was never considered a democratic avant-garde, only one – state control – is less important now, the other one – the reactive character of the media vis-à-vis primary social actors – is still effective. In the Arab world the media are operating in a vacuum of political mobilization, because political parties, if they exist at all, are hardly ever relevant or representative.¹¹ Many of society's political institutions are weak, and the reason is that while political parties in England or Germany, for instance, were created on a class basis in the process of modernization and social change, that socio-economic push is non-existent in the Arab world. Moreover, many organizations and intellectual elites of Arab civil society show a certain degree of ambivalence about democracy.¹²

If they move at all, social movements and opposition parties head into a different direction to that of those ethical and religious groups that captured non-state areas like Imbaba

⁷ Hafez 2001a.

⁸ McConnell/Becker 2002.

⁹ Siebert et al. 1956.

¹⁰ Sinclair et al. 1996.

¹¹ See, for example: Hegazy 2000.

¹² Harik 1997, p. 350.

and Ain Shams in Cairo.¹³ You might like it or not: Islamists are not necessarily democracy-minded, but they are the most effective opposition with an established constituency among people in the Arab world. However, even their impact on society is disputed among scholars as either growing¹⁴ or slowly eroding.¹⁵

In this situation, there are two intellectual alternatives to consider. One is to consider the media revolution ‘dead’ before it has been effective in helping to create new democracies, because there is no sustainable link between media and political parties. Or, one accepts that media take over the leading function in democratization themselves and substitute at least some of the tasks political parties do not fulfill.

In principle, television can take over some of the functions of political parties. It can integrate, aggregate and articulate the political will of the people; it can mobilize people for non-parliamentarian political action; and while it might not be able to work out political programmes, it can help a society open up a dialogue on democratic reform. The most important function of the mass media is to uphold the agenda of democratic change by being the people’s voice and letting the ‘repressed’ express themselves in the media. In taking over the role of mediators between state and society the media’s democratic agenda *could* eventually lead to mobilization and a democratic system change.

Shibley Telhami rightly argued that mass media are mostly effective where people have no first hand experience and therefore must rely on the media.¹⁶ But is ‘democracy’ a primary or a secondary issue? It is certainly both. It is primary because many people in the Arab world feel that regime corruption and other problems need to be resolved. And it is at the same time secondary, because most people who have lived in autocratic systems all through their lives have no direct experience of democracy and therefore the media are effective in providing information on democratic developments elsewhere and in the Arab world. Therefore the mass media must be considered to have a high potential for shaping public opinion on matters related to democratic reform.

What sounds illusional at first is a natural consequence of the nature of politics and society in our days. In the West we are already debating the impact of the so-called “media democracy” on traditional institutions like political parties.¹⁷ We consider ourselves to live in the era of “mass democracy” and of “mass communication.” Although there is certainly too much hype about that, why should it not be possible that the character and composition of institutions that are relevant for democratization change over time? If social classes are less relevant due to the change of the so-called “Fordist” (heavy industry) to the information society and due to the growing importance of professionals, or even of ‘the masses’ – why should not the media take over the lead rather than follow political parties?

One can argue that the decline of political institutions corresponds with the rise of the authoritarian Arab state in the 20th century and – most recently – with the rise of the mass media as mediators between state and society. But before one can proclaim such change in paradigm there are more hurdles to take. *First*, the media cannot solely be the mirror of people or the peoples’ ‘party’, but must at the same time value their primary function of information objectivity and balance out their old and new functions – objective information and democratic partisanship – in the context of democratic theory. *Second*, mobilization and change can only occur when the political parties and institutions that do not exist at once start to develop.

¹³ See Salwa Ismail’s chapter “Contemporary Islamism as a Popular Movement: Socio-Spatial Determinants in the Cairo Urban Setting” in: Ismail 2003.

¹⁴ Burgat 2003.

¹⁵ Kepel 2000.

¹⁶ Statement made by Prof. Shibley Telhami of University of Maryland during the Conference on “The Media and Political Change in the Arab World”, Cambridge Arab Media Project, Churchill College, Cambridge University, 29-30, September 2004.

¹⁷ See, for example, Manuel Castells’ deliberations on the „crisis of democracy“ in: Castells 1997.

The media must not only mirror the people, but they must inform them, correct them, educate them. If they do not, the danger is inherent that a political culture that has never experienced democracy merely reproduces itself and that the old populism of the regime is merely replaced by some 'techno-populism.' The kind of democratic partisanship of the media that is needed for democratic change is not in contradiction to objectivity as long as it seeks to compensate for the lack of articulation people suffer under authoritarian rule. But it conflicts with objectivity if it does not reflect *all* or, at least, *a significantly broad spectrum* of the important voices, of the opposition as much as the government.

At this point, conflicts between the role of the media as 'political parties' and as 'informers' and 'educators' are inherent. What do you do if the political culture of those whom you are trying to articulate is not in itself pluralist? How can you be attractive to people if you tell them unpopular truths?

However, from the viewpoint of systems theory of the media it is absolutely clear that one function of the media – objective information – cannot be replaced by another function – popular partisanship –, and that both must coincide in domestic as well as in international news. According to functionalist systems theory the media must be considered a sub-system of society that is both autonomous and open to interaction *with* and pressure *from* other parts of the society (politics, economy, audiences etc.). The media seek to outbalance their indigenous functions that make them indispensable, which is primarily to generate unbiased information and to set the society's agenda, with the needs of the various other sub-systems that compete for access to the media: a competition which, under authoritarian circumstances is clearly dominated by the state and in which societal forces must be better represented if there is to be some kind of democratic transition.¹⁸

If the media lose their ability to counterbalance pressure exerted by the state, the society, audiences, the political culture or any other outside forces, there is no basis left for political information and political opinion that is needed for any electoral democracy or political mobilization. Because being a party for democratization means accepting that democracy is first and foremost based on the principle of non-violent competition of all legitimate interests – and that is the intrinsic informational and educational functions media have and must not lose. On the premise that in any society a minimum of pluralist world views prevails, the transfer of those views is a functionalist theoretical necessity in the context of a democratic theory of the mass media. Therefore non-democratic forces, opinions and issues can be part of the public media discourse, but they must not dominate it.

If the media are mobilizing people without applying professional standards of objective reporting then they might actually be a party for the wrong case – not for democracy. But unfortunately, if you are mobilizing with the right agenda and based on professional standards – the same thing can happen to the media, because the media can never lead *alone*. They can take over a portion of the political parties' functions, but they are only effective on the condition that the link between the media and social and political movements, which is weak in the beginning, becomes stronger over time. 'Television democracy' can never fully replace the function of political parties because societies need acting institutions. In contrast to the classical three powers, the media are not parliamentary sphere and executive at the same time, but are merely a 'virtual parliament.'

Television talk is useless if the agenda is not transformed into political action. Arab satellite broadcasting will remain ineffective if movements, organizations and institutions of a democratic body politic do not develop. In this case it is absolutely possible that the current mobilization of Arab people by Arab networks might not lead into the direction of democracy but to more confrontation between Arab regimes and non-democratic parts of the opposition – a situation which would perpetuate authoritarian rule in one or the other form.

¹⁸ For an introduction to media systems theory see: Kunczik/Zipfel 2001, pp. 66 ff.

2. Al-Jazeera – A Fading Democratic Agenda ?

The first question to be answered is whether Arab satellite broadcasting fulfils the specific tasks of the media-plus-political-party-symbiosis laid out in this paper. The international perception of Al-Jazeera especially passed through two very distinct phases that are marked by the attacks of 11 September 2001 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.¹⁹ Before that date, Al-Jazeera was almost unanimously applauded for its ability to criticize governments and discuss matters in the public sphere that were previously taboo (sex, religion, politics).²⁰ After the attack, however, Al-Jazeera was confronted with rising critique against its perceived anti-Israeli and anti-American coverage and its support of Arab-Islamist terrorism as a result of its showing video tapes by Usama Bin Ladin's Al-Qaida-network. Despite this very contradictory image, hardly any solid content analysis has been pursued so far about any of the Arab satellite networks.²¹ Arab satellite broadcasting requires interdisciplinary research between, for example, media studies and Oriental studies that seems hard to achieve.

When looking for the democratic agenda of Al-Jazeera that dominated Al-Jazeera's international image between its foundation in 1996 and 2001, it becomes clear that the lack of existing in-depth-research is flagrant. While for the period before 2001 there is much 'anecdotal' evidence for the fact that Al-Jazeera was probably the first television network in the Arab world able to openly criticize Arab governments and state politics, the second period was characterized by a concentration on conflict, war and terror, and very few contemporaries have followed the coverage of the democracy issue. Therefore it is legitimate to ask how Al-Jazeera, as the main Arab information network, shapes the democratic agenda and if it serves the theoretically founded needs for democratic partisanship that would be needed to call the medium an 'avant-garde' of democratization.

To substitute for the lack of content studies, a full-text analysis of the English language website Aljazeera.net has been undertaken for the period 1 January to 1 September 2004. While Aljazeera.net is neither identical with the Arab language homepage of the network nor with the original television programming, much of the content is the same²² and it therefore gives an indication of the way Al-Jazeera covers the issue of democracy. The analysis of English language homepages of foreign language news channels that remain otherwise unexplored is a method that has been used previously in other studies on Arab television.²³

Between January and September 2004 the word 'democracy' was mentioned in 46 texts on Aljazeera.net. Most articles covered Asia while only eleven news items could be identified that contained the word 'democracy' and covered the Arab world or single Arab countries. About half of the eleven articles mainly criticized the plans and initiatives of the George W. Bush government after the Iraq War in 2003 for democratization of the Middle East.²⁴ The rest of the texts covered different issues: Fears of Western intervention in Arab school book reform;²⁵ warnings of the Qatari foreign ministry that Arabs were incapable of democratizing

¹⁹ Interview with Aktham Suleiman, correspondent of Al-Jazeera in Germany and Iraq, Berlin, 6 January 2005.

²⁰ For general literature on Al-Jazeera and other Arab satellite television see: Sakr 2001; el-Nawawy/Iskandar 2003; Ayish 2003.

²¹ For very limited qualitative and or quantitative content analysis on Al-Jazeera see, for example: Ayish 2002; One Year After (Panos Institute) (2002); Knudsen n.y.; el-Nawawy 2004; Jasperson/Kikhia 2003.

²² Auter 2004, p. 10.

²³ For methodological arguments see One Year After (Panos Institute) (2002), p. 11.

²⁴ US Plans Middle East Pact (11/2/2004); Saudi, Egypt Reject US Democracy View (27/2/2004); Bush Chided for Ignoring "Road Map" (10/5/2004); A Strategy, but not for Freedom (18/5/2004); Iraqi Conference off to a Shaky Start (18/8/2004).

²⁵ Arab Schoolbooks Reform Face Opposition (6/1/2004).

without help;²⁶ elections in Algeria;²⁷ a statement by the Arab League concerning democracy;²⁸ the “awakening” of democracy in the Arab world;²⁹ and the Arab Human Development Report.³⁰ On the whole, given the very limited number of texts containing references to democracy and the fact that between 1 January and 19 May there was not a single article about the Arab world in which ‘democracy’ was even mentioned, it seems obvious that the question of democratization of the Arab world is not on the agenda of Aljazeera.net and that the rest of the coverage is very defensive against the US presence in Iraq and Washington’s influence in the Middle East.

To avoid misinterpretation as a result of terminological problems – maybe Aljazeera.net merely avoided the term ‘democracy’ – the search strategy was changed to Arab ‘reform:’ a word that is frequently used in the Arab world for all kinds of transformational needs from education, economy, human rights to political change. Indeed, the title “Democracy Awakening in the Arab World” (20 May) turned out not to be an article (by Mustafa al-Sayyid) but also the headline of a Special Report on “Arab Reform” that was mostly a compilation of previously published articles.³¹ The impression the report left, however, coincided with that of the analysis on ‘democracy’. The editorial Aljazeera.net raised hopes that Arab reform could be pursued top-down by the existing Arab regimes – which in most cases have ruled Arab countries in a more or less dictatorial style since World War II and have never pursued the reforms that the United Nations’ “Arab Human Development Report” mentioned in 2002.³²

About 60 per cent of the Special Report’s articles dealt with US plans for the Middle East.³³ There was an interview with the American Enterprise Institute, the most important think tank of the Bush administration, which revealed Al-Jazeera’s capability to integrate alternative viewpoints.³⁴ The moderate Islamist perspective was well represented. In an interview the well-known Muslim scholar and Dean of Qatar University, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, expressed his opposition to US plans for Arab reform because those plans, according to Qaradawi, were against the people’s will.³⁵ The Special Report was rounded off by an interview with Amr Musa, the General-Secretary of the Arab League, who insisted that reform was already under way and being mastered by the existing regimes.³⁶

There were only two articles left that deserved to be called ‘advocative’ of democratic change. The Egyptian Professor for Political Science, Mustafa al-Sayyid, looked back upon the history of Arab civil societies’ struggle for democracy and the formation of a political movement.³⁷ The most outspoken critique of the failure of Arab regimes and of the Arab League to cope with the needs of political and economic reform was formulated by the Algerian author Muhammad Bahi.³⁸

As a result of the full text analysis of 2004 it seems that obvious democracy at Aljazeera.net currently tends to be superimposed by international and regional Arab conflicts with American and Israeli policy. While there is substantive reporting about democratic

²⁶ Qatar: Arabs Can’t Reform Alone (18/3/2004).

²⁷ Algerians Vote for Presidential Poll (9/4/2004).

²⁸ Arab League Talks Democracy (12/5/2004).

²⁹ Democracy Awakening in the Arab World (20/5/2004) (see below).

³⁰ Arab Human Development Report (20/5/2004).

³¹ Special Report: Democracy Awakening in the Arab World, Special Report: In Pursuit of Arab Reform (20/5/2004).

³² Arab Human Development Report 2002.

³³ Islam and US Security; US Reform Threatens Arab Identity; The Greater Middle East Initiative; EU: “Strategic Partnership”; A Strategy, but not for Freedom; US Initiatives for Reform (all Special Report 20/5/2004).

³⁴ US Initiatives for Reform, Interview with Danielle Pletka, Vice-President of AEI (Special Report 20/5/2004).

³⁵ Reform According to Islam, An Interview with Shaikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (Special Report 20/5/2004).

³⁶ Arab League and the Future of Reform, An Interview with Amr Musa, General-Secretary of the Arab League (Special Report 20/5/2004).

³⁷ Democracy Awakening in the Arab World (Special Report 20.5.2004).

³⁸ Arab Reform Alternative (Special Report 20/5/2004).

developments in other parts of the world, only a very limited number of articles covers the phenomena of democracy in the Arab world. 'Reform,' a vague concept that is very flexible and can easily be adopted by Arab regimes, is more central, but there were no concrete references to specific Arab countries. It is not so much that Aljazeera.net reveals an ideological bias, since different voices can, in fact, be heard. But the democracy agenda is very limited in scope and differentiation.

An additional analysis revealed that even in the central field of human rights Aljazeera.net tends to focus on American, British or Israeli rather than Arab torture, even though one occasionally finds critical articles about countries like Morocco, Tunisia or Bahrain. In its current form Aljazeera.net cannot claim to be an alternative to political parties' potential for designing and articulating a democratic programme for Arab societies.

Of course, there are many talk shows on Al-Jazeera TV in which Arab governments are criticized and this seems to be the specific contribution of the network to Arab political culture. It acts as a mouthpiece for Arabs' critique of their governments. Without in-depth content analyses of the television programmes of Al-Jazeera, only temporary trends of the coverage can be elaborated. But tendentially it seems obvious in the post-2001 period that what is required is a much more concrete democratic agenda that tackles the on-the-ground reality of politics in Arab countries, and which represents intellectual streamings and the fragments of political movements existing in all Arab countries in order to give Arab people a political vision of how to act and where to go on politically. Criticism of Arab governments is in danger of having no real impact on political opinion-making and political action. In the words of Layla al-Zubaidi democratic exchange "represents not much more than a shimmer" on Al-Jazeera which is "almost completely detached from the socio-political realities of most, if not all, Arab countries."³⁹ Since the attacks of 11 September 2001 the democratic agenda seems increasingly absorbed by the occupation and resistance agenda – domestic political debates are hampered by regional crises in Iraq and Palestine.

Other transnational Arab satellite networks like Al-Arabiyya or Abu Dhabi TV are even less appropriate since because they are owned by Saudi Arabian or Emirati businessmen they do not allow for critique of Saudi Arabia or the Gulf states.⁴⁰ The question whether Arab news networks could be an avant-garde for democratization has always focused on Al-Jazeera, and it is all the more problematic if that debate starts to fade away. In such a situation Arab regimes can keep on criticizing Al-Jazeera and its controversial journalistic style, including many elements of 'politainment.' However, despite all that criticism, Arab satellite broadcasting might develop into a force that stabilizes the existing regimes and the political status quo.⁴¹

Such observation is not in tune with Muhammad Ayish's complaint that Arab satellite broadcasting is too sensationalist in style.⁴² One could even argue with Matthew A. Baum that soft-news or entertaining forms of news journalism are, in fact, *needed* for Arab television to be an advocate of democratic change and the mobilization of people for opinion-making and political action.⁴³ Fatima Mernissi can be supported when she argues that Arab satellite broadcasting has widened the public sphere for critical journalism and Arab dialogue.⁴⁴ However, she ignored all the literature on the agenda-setting effect of political reporting when she declared the 'television agenda' to be irrelevant and, at best, secondary in importance to the revolution in the style of Arab television news and political reporting that occurred with the new networks. In one of the very rare content and effect analyses that exist Erik C. Nisbet,

³⁹ al-Zubaidi 2004, p. 20.

⁴⁰ Statement made by Dana Suyyagh, Al-Arabiyya, on the International Conference "New Means of Communication Change in the Arab World", House of World Cultures, Berlin, 24-26 June 2004.

⁴¹ See also: Saghieh 2004.

⁴² Ayish 2002.

⁴³ Baum 2003.

⁴⁴ Statement made by Fatima Mernissi on the International Conference "New Means of Communication Change in the Arab World", House of World Cultures, Berlin, 24-26 June 2004

Matthew C. Nisbet, Dietram A. Scheufele and James E. Shannahan revealed that the choice between various Arab satellite networks can contribute to anti-Americanism among the consumers.⁴⁵ Whether such views are toned down or inflammatory fuelled depends on how the networks cover the relevant issues and that television influences opinions about democratization must be assumed.

Since the idea of political transformation and democratization is based on a positivist vision of solutions to existing political problems and of the future of political development rather than the reconfirmation of existing agendas, opinions, and stereotypes and the rejection of already practiced politics, the current Arab television agenda would need extensive improvement to meet the needs of democratic advocatism.

3. Professionalism or Pan-Arabism?

The second question that needs consideration is whether Arab satellite broadcasting is able to merge, as theoretically required, democratic partisanship with the function of professional neutrality and objective reporting. With regard to Al-Jazeera's reporting on regional conflicts not only the US American, British and Israeli administrations but also many Arab journalists criticize the network. There is no doubt that transnational Arab television provides the world with images of Palestinian or Iraqi victims that were previously hardly noticed by Western media.⁴⁶ It is equally obvious that especially Al-Jazeera is able to integrate "the other opinion": Israeli, American and many other voices are heard. In contrast, the then leading American television network Fox News showed no original interviews with Arab politicians during the Iraq War of 2003.⁴⁷

However, critics have often bemoaned that there is a clear pan-Arab bias with regard to the selection and interpretation of news on transnational Arab satellite networks. Injustices against Arabs are dealt with much more critically and extensively than injustices done to Israelis, whose victims are hardly present on screen. The supremacy of a pan-Arab agenda over programmes like those broadcast by Al-Jazeera becomes clear when the network – justifiably – criticizes, time and again, injustices arising from Israeli or American policy and their militaries while it is too often downplaying the responsibility of Arab states, regimes and the role of 'privatized forms of violence' (terrorism). Extensive reporting on the burial of Shaykh Yasin, the radical leader of Hamas, for example, or the playing of video messages by Usama Bin Ladin echoed terrorist messages. While it is true that most Western media show the same commercial interest in the phenomenon of terrorism, Arab satellite channels operate in an environment that lends itself easily to violent mobilization. It is not only that Israeli victims hardly appear on Arab television screens but that Arab audiences tend to be re-emotionalized by Arab television. Above that, Judaism, if it is mentioned at all, is equated with radical Zionism.⁴⁸

Most transnational Arab news networks do not dare to avoid strong criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism as in the case of the radical network Al-Manar. The station operating from Lebanon is the self-declared weapon of "psychological warfare"⁴⁹ of the Islamist Shi'i group Hizb Allah for the spread of its clearly anti-Zionist ideology. This ideology is ultimately directed against existence of the state of Israel and is derived from the past struggle of the group against Israeli occupation of South Lebanon. The showing of an openly anti-Semitic television series ("Al-Shatat"/"The Diaspora") triggered the French government's ban of the

⁴⁵ Nisbet et al. 2004.

⁴⁶ For Western coverage of the Middle East see: Hafez 2000.

⁴⁷ Contrasting War Coverage (2003).

⁴⁸ Israeli Rabbis: Don't Spare Civilians, Aljazeera.net (7/9/2004).

⁴⁹ This term was long present on the first page of the homepage of Al-Manar (<http://web.manartv.org/>) and only eradicated after France had banned the channel.

channel from EUTELSAT satellite in December 2004 and the US's decision to list the Lebanese television station as a terrorist organisation.

However unethical their treatment of the phenomenon of terrorism might be, the mainstream Arab television networks like Al-Jazeera or al-Arabiyya are not 'hate media' supporting terrorism against the United States or Israel as some critics of Arab media have argued. Most of the reporting is neither anti-American nor pro-terrorist but a quite regular mix of news and entertainment. The US administration's resentment of Al-Jazeera or its closing down of Al-Jazeera's office in Iraq is therefore inappropriate and rightly criticized by human rights organizations.

While a clear distinction must be drawn between the regular transnational Arab television networks and Al-Manar's approach to Israel and the Jews, most experts on Arab television agree that even the mainstream channels generally reveal a pro-Arab, anti-Israeli and anti-American bias – even though they draw very different conclusions from this point of departure. However, the existing very narrow empirical base on the content of Arab television concentrates almost completely on this point. Therefore a full-text analysis for the international dimension of Arab broadcasting coverage is not as urgently needed as it is for the democratic agenda and it would certainly not help us to understand the subtleties of the Arab broadcasters' framing of the Palestinian or Iraqi conflicts.

The French Panos-study undertaken after the attacks of 11 September 2001 argued that Al-Jazeera is more critical of the United States than many other Arab media.⁵⁰ Mamoun Fandy from Georgetown University in Washington maintained as early as 2000 that, with the exception of regular news programmes, Al-Jazeera represented a new kind of alliance between nationalists and Islamists⁵¹ – a view that, until today, is shared by some critical Arab journalists.⁵² Muhammad Ayish from the University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates argues that in the field of Arab regional conflicts Al-Jazeera lacks professional standards of objectivity.⁵³ Mohammed El-Nawawy of Georgia State University elaborated on the emotionality and anti-Americanism of Al-Jazeera's reporters when covering the battle of Fallujah, Iraq between American troops and Iraqi resistance in 2004.⁵⁴ Abdel Karim Samara observed that Arab television was generally not able to report the variety of political views on the war in Iraq in 2003 and oppositional perspectives against Saddam Hussein were not given sufficient attention.⁵⁵

Nawawy and Iskandar describe very accurately the fascinated reactions Al-Jazeera has evoked in the Arab world when it identifies with the Arabs' struggle against Israel and the United States intervention in Iraq. For the first time in history, an Arab medium was capable of counterbalancing the Western world's news hegemony based on the big news agencies such as Associated Press, Reuters and Agence France Press and opinion leaders like the television and radio services of CNN and the BBC. Salameh Nematt of the prominent Arab newspaper Al-Hayat argues that the Arab television's one-sided representation of images of victims of American and Israeli violence continues with pan-Arab political positions that suffered a decline due to the diminishing role of the Arab League in regional politics.⁵⁶

However, the new pan-Arab media movement is more than a mere continuation of the pan-Arab political institutions. While the traditional Nasserite pan-Arab policy was based on single-state national interests, whereby the national interests of states like Egypt, Syria and Jordan often prevailed over solidarity with the Palestinians,⁵⁷ Arab broadcasting provides an

⁵⁰ One Year After (Panos Institute) (2002), p. 17.

⁵¹ Fandy 2000, p. 388.

⁵² Chimelli 2004.

⁵³ Ayish 2002, p. 150.

⁵⁴ el-Nawawy 2004, p. 7.

⁵⁵ Samara 2003.

⁵⁶ Woznicki 2004.

⁵⁷ Seale 1987; Seale 1988.

unfiltered platform for public emotions, pro-Palestinian sentiments and other national identities. The Egyptian-Israeli peace accord of Camp David (1979) left the Palestinian problem unresolved with the result that popular Arab perceptions of Israel remained at least partly hostile.⁵⁸ The pro-Arab framing of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by Al-Jazeera and the other transnational Arab news networks is a straight-forward expression of popular sentiments, for example, when Al-Jazeera calls dead Palestinians “martyrs” – a label that is reserved for Palestinians, because Iraqi and other dead are not labelled that way. It is therefore absolutely correct when the Panos study states that Arab television is a “platform for the collective identity and imagination” of the pro-Palestinian Arab mainstream.⁵⁹

While national Arab television continues to present and still presents a combination of pan-Arab and single-nationalist perspectives that often conflict with each other, modern transnational Arab television provides its audience with a clear pan-Arab world view that Shibley Telhami described as a common denominator of most Arabs: “(T)he logic is no longer catering to the Egyptians or Saudis and for the Qataris, but to the Arab. In that sense, they [Arab media/K.H.] are trying to find out what most Arabs want and what is the common denominator among most Arabs”.⁶⁰ A “common denominator” means that, except for those rare occasions that became popular in the West (for example, reports on Libya and Muammar al-Qaddafi), transnational Arab news networks do not interfere with issues that are sensitive to the Arab nation states or that touch inner-Arab conflicts. They focus instead on issues like the liberation of Palestine and Iraq from foreign occupation.

The bottom line of Al-Jazeera’s and other Arab television networks’ content is to combine factual (‘objective’) information with culturally adapted (but also occasionally transcended) world views. Such a newsline might sound rational and legitimate, but it is not exactly what democratic transformation theory expects from television, because it confuses the direly needed ‘democratic partisanship’ with ‘national partisanship.’ To say it in other words: It is not sufficient to allow for objectivity in some fields that are not sensitive to Arab cultural sentiments, objectivity is needed in all topics and it is surely needed where vital questions of war and interstate conflict are concerned. The real test, it seems, is not ‘governments,’ because they stepped back and let Arab satellite networks articulate the peoples’ feelings and thoughts on issues like Palestine or Iraq, the real test is now Arab political culture.

Hazem Saghieh from Al-Hayat argues that Arab television compensates for the decline of the big Arab institutions like the Arab League, trade unions etc. of the Nasserite era. It serves as a mediator between state and society in the field of pan-Arab nationalist aspirations.⁶¹ Like the French Panos study, Ayish, Nematt and others, he argues that Al-Jazeera and other transnational satellite networks have given up objectivity in the central fields of reporting. Media populism, Saghieh says, has politicized many people, but at the same time it has lent itself to a new stagnation of political thought in the Arab world.

One must disagree with Mohammed El-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar definition of the obvious deficits of Arab networks like Al-Jazeera as “contextual objectivity.” While they share the basic observation of Al-Jazeera’s biases, they justify it because they say Arab media must compensate for opposite biases in the Western and world media.⁶² Such a view, however, is very problematic since the main audience of Arab television is still made up of Arabs and the Arab world, which means that distorted views on regional conflicts will first and foremost disinform the Arab public. Moreover, the one-sided perspective of Arab networks has probably also partly discredited Al-Jazeera in the West and in the rest of the world, particularly after 11 September 2001. Even without any serious research data on the Arab channels’ image in the world, it is well possible that the Arab networks’ efficiency to

⁵⁸ Wolfsfeld et al. 2002; Shipler 1986.

⁵⁹ One Year After (Panos Institute) (2002), p. 24.

⁶⁰ Telhami 2002.

⁶¹ Deutsch-arabischer Mediendialog 2004.

⁶² el-Nawawy/Iskandar 2003, p. 54.

counterbalance world public opinion could be limited due to professional inadequacies, because Al-Jazeera received most of its reputation before 2001 when it was identified with a free media concept.

The lack of objectivity in the field of regional conflict reporting qualifies Arab satellite broadcasting as a mediator and mouthpiece of many Arabs, but it disqualifies it as a source of political information and as a creator of an agenda heading for democratic international relations. In spite of the ability to integrate American and Israeli voices, most Arab television reporting on regional conflicts represents a techno-compatible and globalized form of populism rather than a contribution to international dialogue. In search of a balance between professional journalism and the will to pose an alternative to political parties, Arab satellite networks get out of track.

There are many examples in history of deluded democratic forces being absorbed and misdirected by nationalist crises and aspirations. Looking back upon the history of political parties and movements, for example, the German Social Democrats support of the German "Kaiser," whom they had previously opposed as an autocrat, in starting the World War I. Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, though probably not really democracy-minded, abolished his project of social and political reform by giving way to a primacy of foreign policy and the Arab-Israeli conflict. If comparison between modern transnational television and political parties is justified, lessons about various forms of development, but also of degeneration can be learned from such failures.

4. Entering a 'Third Stage'? Structural Paradoxes and Reform Requirements of Transnational Arab Television

The present paper has posed the question whether transnational Arab satellite television fulfils the theoretically required needs for playing an avant-garde role in the democratization of the Arab world. The aim, it was defined, would be to combine classical and primary functions of the media (objective information) with secondary and context-specific tasks, for example, its ability to act as an alternative to political parties in articulating the peoples' critique of governments and a desire for democratization.

Since more empirical content analysis and audience research will be needed in the future, only tentative conclusions can be drawn:

- Al-Jazeera and other transnational Arab news networks have freed themselves from state interference and gained autonomy, but only to give way to those cultural biases existing among their audiences, especially concerning regional conflicts in Iraq and Palestine. The previous regime-centered mobilizing function of national Arab television has been replaced by some kind of 'enlightened techno-populism' that includes 'the other opinion' but only at the cost of deconstructing it in a stream of Arabo-centered perspectives.
- The Arab news networks' ability to act as partisans for democratization has been demonstrated in numerous instances when they have criticized Arab regimes and pointed to political issues that were hitherto excluded from public debate. However, the democracy agenda remains rudimentary, discontual and, in many regards, confined to controversial debates rather than opting to spread facts and details on authoritarian policies, oppositional movements and seeking for a programmatic outlook for democratic change.

It was mentioned that the image of Al-Jazeera, the pioneer of transnational news networks, went through stages pre- and post-2001, and many critics argue that in the post-2001 period

the difficult task of walking the tight-rope between the various theoretical expectations has overburdened the channel. Since it is not the task of a theoretically based analysis to be normative, the remainder of the paper will not argue that a readjustment of Arab networks is absolutely necessary. Rather it will point to various structural problems and potential changes that will be needed for Arab news networks to enter a 'third phase' of their development characterized by a democracy model of the media.

Structural problems, and sometimes paradoxes, can be located on various levels:

1. the relationship between media organization, ownership and media system orientations on the one hand and news policies, content decisions, objectivity, as well as the democracy agenda on the other hand;
2. the link between pan-Arab regionalism, regional differentiation and the democratic agenda;
3. the interaction between the 'global public sphere' and Arab television culture.

4.1 The Double Curse: Arab News Networks between State Protectionism and Market Orientation

Gregory Mendel Selber und Salma I. Ghanem have rightly pointed to the fact that the growth of Arab satellite television since the 1990s has introduced a market model into the Arab world. Nowadays, private television stations coexist with state television channels, and this is the main reason why the era of totalitarian media systems in the Arab world and of the "mobilization press", as William A. Rugh called them,⁶³ has passed. Selber and Ghanem maintain that events like the Syrian government's massacre of Islamist rebels in Hama in 1980, where about 10.000 people died without the Arab mass media even taking notice of it, is over.⁶⁴ However when the authors suggest that Arab media should keep on following the market model because its benefits outweigh its disadvantages,⁶⁵ they enter difficult territory. There is a very problematic and instable relationship between the market model of the media and the avant-garde role of television in democratic transition.

The main problem is that the market orientation reinforces the existing populist trend in Arab television. While in many European countries strong public television stations like BBC receive budgets that, although often tax-based, are granted to provide the financial basis for societal institutions that are formally independent of both governments and audiences and based on the idea of 'public broadcasting', the market orientation of Arab television reinforces the trend to perpetuate cultural preferences (and biases) of audiences in order to receive large transmission ranges and advertising.

The reality of Arab transnational television is even worse, because Arab news networks desire to be privatized, but they are still highly subsidized by benevolent governments like Qatar's Emir al-Thani. Other television stations in the Arab world, in particular, the Saudi media empire, are often covertly linked with governments through personal and family relationships.⁶⁶ The establishment of new transnational networks by the governments of Qatar (Al-Jazeera), the UAE (Abu Dhabi TV) or Saudi Arabia (Al-Arabiyya) has been applauded by many observers as a generous act. But it also implies that present-day Arab news networks are based on a structural paradox, or even a 'double curse': they are allowed to be populist and market-oriented as long as they do not go too far and become a real danger for the existing regimes. A channel like Al-Jazeera, which is at the center of many debates about Arab democracy, can still be closed-down from one day to the other. The Arab news networks'

⁶³ Rugh 2004, pp. 29-41.

⁶⁴ Selber/Ghanem 2004, p. 2.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

⁶⁶ Hafez 2001b, p. 8 f.

market orientation is a problem that interferes with objectivity in culturally vibrant issues such as the Palestine problem; the state subsidies prevent Arab networks from acting as a real advocate of democratic change.

Today's transnational Arab television needs to reflect its organizational underpinnings and develop models that are as independent as possible from governments or other forces of society. Democratic institutions, by definition, are liable to controlling mechanisms and parliamentary checks and balances, although they are autonomous in generating their own specific programmes and agendas. Structural changes are needed that might include the configuration of new financial networks and probably also the establishment of extra-territorial media on Cyprus, in London or in any of the 'media free zones' in Egypt, Jordan or in the Gulf States if those places offer enough protection from outside interference.

A public television model is not necessarily an equivalent to traditional 'educational television.' Entertainment and 'politainment' as in Al-Jazeera's talk shows have long entered the debates on modern development communication.⁶⁷ The idea of reconsidering the organizational and financial base, however, is designed to regain independence and programme control so as to be able to gradually shift cultural biases and advocate for democratic change. The two-page long "code of ethics" that Al-Jazeera adopted in July 2004 and in which the channel manifested its desire to be objective and accurate in reporting, is certainly not sufficient for a reform.⁶⁸ Not only that the BBC's "Producers' Guidelines" contain hundreds of pages and are much more appropriate as an ethical device.⁶⁹ Ethical codes are also no substitute for deep structural changes that seem necessary for a programme reform.

4.2 An Antinomy between Publicity and Sustainability? Pan-Arabism, Sub-Regionalism and the Democratic Agenda

From the structural point of view of programming capacities it seems that for Arab satellite broadcasting to establish a democratic public agenda more 'Al-Jazeeras' will be needed that operate from a safe transborder distance and escape national regime control. It is certainly positive for democracy when Al-Jazeera covers the West-Sahara conflict, for example, as they did on prominent occasion. But the discontinuity of reports on twenty-two Arab countries certainly completely overburdens a handful of transnational satellite channels like Al-Arabiyya, Al-Jazeera and Abu Dhabi TV. Most other networks concentrate on entertainment with little or no programme space for political reports.

Theoretically speaking the aim is that Arab satellite broadcasting compensates for some of the inability of Arab political parties to help mobilize for a newly developing link with civil society. This media-civil-society-alliance could then pave the road to democracy. Honestly, however, we must say that after ten years of Arab transnational news journalism there has been no significant development for democracy in the Arab world. Although critical elites and NGOs are heard on television, their real political impact remains rather weak. While these conclusions remain tentative, because media effects can be "latent" (Saad Eddin Ibrahim)⁷⁰ and might make themselves felt only in the long run, there is certainly a link between the lack of density and continuity of reporting on problems related to democracy in the single Arab countries on the one hand and weak mobilizing effects in terms of political action on the other hand.

⁶⁷ Mody 2003, pp. 1, 21, 137, 177, 180, 214–15, 247, 269.

⁶⁸ Aljazeera Code of Ethics (<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/07256105-B2FC-439A-B255-D830BB238EA1.htm>).

⁶⁹ BBC Producers' Guidelines (http://www.bbc.co.uk/info/policies/producer_guides/).

⁷⁰ Statement made by Prof. Saad Eddin Ibrahim of the American University in Cairo during the Conference on "The Media and Political Change in the Arab World", Cambridge Arab Media Project, Churchill College, Cambridge University, 29-30, September 2004.

Coverage of transnational Arab news networks might lead to an upgrading or downgrading of existing anti-Israeli or anti-American opinions⁷¹ but it is certainly not sustainable enough to mobilize for political action that is in the Arab world, like anywhere else, based on decentralized activity within single nation-states. The possible argument that the success of Al-Jazeera and other transnational Arab broadcasting is based on pan-Arab outreach is valuable. However, there is no antinomy between regional concentration and sustainability on the one hand and the publicity of political television news in the Arab world on the other hand, since, after all, national television is still more popular in most Arab countries than transnational Arab networks because people are more interested in news related to their immediate reality.⁷² Therefore, a sub-regional differentiation, for example, in channels concentrating on the Maghreb, the Nile states, the Mashreq and the Arab peninsula, seems viable and needed as a prerequisite for the establishment of a continuous and dense democratic agenda that enables political mobilization.

4.3. Missing Competition: A Global Democratic Agenda for the Arab World

The current global parameters act in many ways against the acquiring of a democratic function by the Arab media. The claim for more objectivity in Arab reporting on regional conflicts is not supported by the flow of international news. It is not only that American television often covers the Middle East in a very one-sided manner.⁷³ The opening up of Western media spaces is, in many regards, limited to a transference of images and film rather than text and context. Arab positions on Western and especially American neo-imperialism seldom reach Western mainstream media.⁷⁴ Also images of dead Palestinians, that can be seen on a daily basis on Al-Jazeera, are hardly present in Western television. Television-based democratic advocatism in the Arab world needs a global partner that takes over part of the job and reduces the Arab nationalist pressure on formats like Al-Jazeera.

The foundation of the American foreign broadcasting television channel in the Arabic language, Al-Hurra ("Freedom"), is certainly no alternative and not supportive of the Arab media's democratic endeavours. William A. Rugh criticized that Al-Hurra clearly preferred American political opinions and actors in the news.⁷⁵ Although the name "Freedom" implies that the channel acts on behalf of democracy, it has shown no interest in problems of internal Arab political reform. It is unwilling to confront the allied authoritarian regimes in countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan or Morocco. However, as long as there is no real competition for the 'better democratic agenda' between the global level of foreign broadcasting and regional level of Arab news networks, the interaction between those layers is inefficient.

Conclusion

It is debateable whether the classical notion of transformation theory that media rather follow than lead in the process of democratization is obsolete in our days. The mass media are surely no substitute for pro-active elites and oppositional parties and movements. On the contrary, they often seem to be preoccupied with organizational goals like market income or pure political survival. However, transnational Arab news networks operate in a regional Arab

⁷¹ See Nisbet et al. 2004.

⁷² Rhodes/Chapelier 2004, pp. 82-84.

⁷³ See Tumber/Palmer 2004; Schechter 2003; Hafez 2004; Thussu/Freedman 2003; Zelizer/Allan 2002; Hess/Kalb 2003.

⁷⁴ See for example the analysis on German press news coverage of the Afghanistan war in 2001: Hafez 2002.

⁷⁵ Rugh n.y.

environment and the transborder situation makes them more immune to many of the influences that classical transformation theory emphasized.

Seeing the tremendous change in Arab media culture in the last ten years and the resultant new public sphere on political issues that many observers have witnessed and which made Al-Jazeera, in particular, a prime topic worldwide, the assumption is justified that transnational television can take over an intermediary and catalyzing role for articulating the Arab peoples' desire for democracy that was hitherto reserved to political movements and parties.

However, if that premise is accepted – a consequent reform of Arab satellite broadcasting seems inevitable.

First, content reform: for ASB to face the challenge of becoming an avant-garde of democratization and to take over some of the functions of political parties in the field or in the articulation and mobilization of the populace, it will require a revision of certain trends in the current broadcasting culture. The democratic agenda must be elaborated, objectivity in regional conflict affairs readjusted and the link between the media and extra-media elites, organizations and movements improved.

Second, organizational and system reform: For the agenda of democracy to be relevant and effective, not only a change in the news policies of the existing Arab news networks and other Arab satellite broadcasters, but also an organizational reform and an extension of the Arab broadcasting system would be needed. Reflection on the implications of the private capital market model is needed, in particular, with regards to existing populist trends of crisis reporting. More than anything else, a re-evaluation of the democracy issue can only be achieved if the political reporting of Arab news networks, currently separated in many ways from grass-roots problems in most countries, is differentiated regionally. Ultimately, the success of Arab broadcasting will also depend on the global media situation, which currently forces Arab broadcasters into false, nationalist and defensive competition, for example, with American foreign broadcasting instead of their supporting a democratic public agenda.

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