

What Is 'Global' About Arab Media?

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Globalization in Arab Media?

- It is inconceivable and unwise to think of any Arab media as 'global' when even the dominant media players from the first and second 'tiers', who enjoy a longer history and more established market structures, are not regarded as 'global':
 - CNN, for example, has so often been labeled as a 'global' news channel, even though its worldwide audience (cosmopolitan and mobile elite) does not exceed 1 percent.

Globalization in Arab Media?

- For any media to be considered 'global', they must be able to: transcend nation-state boundaries and language communities;
 - use English, the language of globalization;
 - attract a cross-section of international audiences that is not limited to the rich and influential.
 - also be coupled with access to the resources and means of production necessary to compete at a global level.

The Arab Region



Where Do 'Arab' Media Stand In All This?

- 'Arab' media are hampered by restrictive state policies and also a 'lack of acceptance of the new media by state authorities'
- They are mostly nation-bound in terms of regulation, programming and 'power structures'.
 - 'for as long as most governments retained both a monopoly and direct editorial control over broadcasting stations based in the Arab world, the vast majority of television personnel effectively remained government employees'

Where Do 'Arab' Media Stand In All This?

- This situation is illuminated rather conspicuously in the recent *Arab Human Development Report*, which found cultural production in the Arab world to be generally adulterated by governmental restrictions 'on content and by superficial market preferences'.
- The report also found that Arab countries had lower information media to population ratios.
- In the case of the press in the Arab world, there are less than 53 newspapers per 1000 Arab citizens compared to 285 papers per 1000 in developed countries.

Where Do 'Arab' Media Stand In All This?

- There are less than 18 computers per 1000 persons, compared to the global average of 78.3 computers per 1000 persons.
- This means that access to the internet in the Arab world is restricted to a very small elite which has the skills and financial power necessary to take advantage of this medium

Where Do 'Arab' Media Stand In All This?

- The only sector in the Arab media which comes close to the category 'global' is satellite television, specially the Qatar-based channel Al-Jazeera,
 - due to its reporting of the Afghan and Iraq wars, and also to its broadcasts of Bin Laden's tapes.

Where Do 'Arab' Media Stand In All This?

- **If any media are to be considered 'global', Al-Jazeera included, they will need to transcend not only nation-state boundaries, but also language communities. Al-Jazeera may be watched by some 40 million viewers in the Arab region and among the members of the Arab diaspora, but how many non-Arabs are watching the channel?**
 - **Westerners may hear of or read about al-Jazeera through Western news outlets, but because of the language barrier they are unable to understand the channel. Furthermore, even what Westerners hear or read about Al-Jazeera is often domesticated to a news agenda that is characteristically Western.**
 - **Al-Jazeera may be a transnational phenomenon, but it is certainly not a global channel. To answer the question 'what is global about Arab media?' it is also important to ask what is 'Arab' about them.**

What Is 'Arab' About Arab Media?

- The 'Arabness' of Arab media can be defined through three levels of dependence:
 - Technology
 - Stylization
 - Content

Excerpt from Dishing Democracy



Al Jazeera America Debuts on Cable Amid Concerns in Market

