

## **Chapter 13**

### **Arab states**

#### **Lawrence Pintak**

Egypt is a place where torture is institutionalized. Human Rights Watch calls the abuse of prisoners in Egypt “epidemic,”<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International says it is “common and systematic,”<sup>2</sup> and the U.S. State Department’s 2007 Country Report on Egypt concluded that “police, security personnel, and prison guards routinely tortured and abused prisoners and detainees.”<sup>3</sup> The country is one of several to which the CIA, under the now-infamous rendition program, sent prisoners to be interrogated using techniques too harsh for the agency’s own operatives to administer.<sup>4</sup>

So when two Egyptian policemen were convicted of torture in late 2007 and sent to prison, it was a landmark victory for human rights activists. It was also a seminal moment for the media.<sup>5</sup> The case, in which Cairo police used a nightstick to sodomize a cab driver in their custody, came to light only when Egyptian blogger Wael Abbas posted cell phone video of the assault on YouTube, sparking a media feeding-frenzy that ultimately forced the government to prosecute the kind of conduct that has long been condoned.

#### **The mouthpiece tradition**

In the Arab world, media has traditionally been gatekeepers favoring those in power. Until the past decade, all television stations in the region were owned by governments – “television journalism” was an oxymoron – and most print media were tightly controlled. The extent of that control was evidenced in the fact that when Saddam Hussein’s armies invaded Kuwait in 1990, media in neighboring Saudi Arabia waited more than 48 hours before telling the Saudi public, giving the panicked government time to formulate its response.<sup>6</sup> It was the equivalent of the French media ignoring a German occupation of Belgium.

Before the advent of Arab satellite television, the idea that media might drive public opinion in a direction other than that dictated by government was essentially unthinkable, much less that media would have an agenda-setting effect independent from that of those in power. The theory of agenda-setting as applied to the Arab media thus attracted little scholarly interest, even though the Arab-Israeli conflict served as an important case study for agenda-setting in the Western<sup>7</sup> and Israeli media.<sup>8</sup> It was not until 2007, for example, that the historical role of the Palestinian media in shaping public attitudes toward the British occupation and the early Zionists was documented.<sup>9</sup> The few other examples of

research in the field quickly became dated. A study of Saudi media found that while the Saudi media was very effective at influencing the international agenda among Saudi civil servants, it had little impact on domestic issues; but that research was completed in 1992, well before the advent of Arab satellite television.<sup>10</sup> Another major study concluded that the print press in the region was far more important than the electronic media, a notion even the casual observer of the Arab world knows has been turned on its head since government broadcasters lost their television monopoly.<sup>11</sup>

Much of the credit for that turnabout goes to the emir of Qatar. In 1996, he invested \$120 million and hired much of the team from an ill-fated BBC-Saudi television venture to start Al-Jazeera, with a mandate to shake up the media landscape. Make no mistake: Al-Jazeera is owned by, and answerable to, the Qatari government. But the channel was given a very long leash and soon brought to the region's television screens a diversity of voices and a kind of questioning journalism never before seen in the Arab world. Its *raison d'être* was political and social change, which is precisely why, over the past decade, at one time or another its reporters have been thrown out of virtually every Arab country and, as of this writing, remain banned from Saudi Arabia.

The Qatari ruler did not create Al-Jazeera because he saw himself as the patron saint of media freedom – Qatar's domestic media remain firmly under heel – but rather to give himself a powerful weapon in the struggle for regional influence with his neighbor and erstwhile rival, the House of Saud (It was the same reason he agreed to host the U.S. Central Command when Washington decided to shift most of its forces out of Saudi Arabia). But the effect was still the same. Arab journalism would never be the same.

Arab reporters who had spent their entire careers as little more than a mouthpiece for their respective governments were now exposed to a new way of practicing their profession. Many of them aspired to emulate their Al-Jazeera colleagues. This desire to break new ground was particularly evident in the newsrooms of the handful of semi-independent newspapers that began appearing in the region, such as *Al-Masri al-Youm* in Egypt and Jordan's *Al-Ghad*. "We started *Al-Masri* to bring a new, more professional kind of journalism to Egypt," founder Hisham Kassem told me. The impact of this more aggressive form of journalism quickly became evident. A 2004 study of Egypt's main government daily, *Al-Ahram*, and *Al-Wafd*, the official organ of the opposition party by the same name, found a high correlation between the agenda of the opposition paper and its readers and low correlations between that of *al-Ahram* and its readers (Mohamed 2006). But even those working on government-controlled newspapers and television stations began pushing the envelope. "We want change too," the editor of a

key government-owned newspaper said during a closed-door session of Egyptian editors and journalism educators. “We just have to go about it a little differently.”

Meanwhile, there was an explosion of new Arab satellite channels. More than 300 free-to-air Arab satellite broadcasters now crowd the spectrum, representing every political and social viewpoint, from royalists to revolutionaries to religious extremists. Among them are several direct competitors to Al-Jazeera, which means that few major regional events take place beyond the glare of the television lens. And that is a reality governments are slowly learning they cannot ignore.

### **Agenda-setting and (incremental) change**

The intrinsic link between the arrival of pan-Arab satellite television and shifting public attitudes toward the now-faltering democracy agenda across the region – the so-called “Al-Jazeera Effect” – is well-documented.<sup>12</sup> One of the more interesting studies traces a direct connection between the pro-reform agenda of Al-Jazeera, that of its more conservative, Saudi-controlled rival, Al-Arabiya, and the relative attitudes of their audiences toward questions of political and social change.<sup>13</sup>

But media-fueled aspirations for change and real change are two very different things. More than a decade after Al-Jazeera revolutionized the very nature of Arab political dialogue with its mantra of “The opinion – and the other opinion,” not a single Arab ruler has lost his job through popular pressure. Political control remains a family affair. In three of the four countries where change came through natural causes – Morocco, Jordan and Syria – the sons have risen to fill the void. In Saudi Arabia, power shifted to the late king’s brother, while in Egypt, Mubarak’s son Gamal waits in the wings for his own coronation. The so-called “Arab Spring” of 2005 has given way to a renewed cold snap as the Bush administration’s “forward strategy of freedom” has faltered, leaving the region’s reformers “increasingly scornful of a democracy agenda that seems selectively applied to suite narrow U.S. interests.”<sup>14</sup>

But while media has yet to create broad political change, its impact on policy is beginning to become evident – even if still nascent enough that one can easily cite most instances when it has been apparent.

The Lebanon conflict in the summer of 2006 was one of the most vivid examples of media driving Arab government policy. At the beginning of the conflict, Saudi Arabia and other Sunni-majority Gulf states criticized the Shiite militia Hezbollah for provoking the Israeli assault on Lebanon. In the early days of the war, Al-Jazeera’s main competitor, Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya, downplayed the conflict. But it was not long before it joined Al-Jazeera, the privately-owned Lebanon Broadcasting Corporation (LBC),

and Hezbollah's own channel, Al-Manar, in providing wall-to-wall 24/7 coverage of the war. The Arab world was transfixed. Public opinion from Morocco to Yemen united firmly behind Hezbollah's defense of the Lebanese homeland. Tensions between Sunni and Shia, political differences between Arab nationalists and Islamists, were – for the moment – largely set aside. Crowds in Cairo held high, side-by-side, pictures of the late Arab nationalist leader Gamal Abdul Nasser and Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah, an unheard-of juxtaposition. As the conflict dragged on, LBC producer Marwan Matni, a Christian, later told me, "I felt myself changing. Lebanon was under attack. We were all Lebanese. By the end, I, too, felt myself to be Hezbollah."<sup>15</sup> The sentiment was shared by Arabs across the region to a degree governments could not ignore. Soon after hostilities ended, Nasrallah was welcomed in the Gulf as a conquering hero. "The Lebanese people and their resistance have achieved the first Arab victory, something we had longed for," said Qatar's emir, Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.<sup>16</sup> In a matter of a few weeks, Gulf policy had come 180 degrees.

Lebanon also served as the backdrop for another, even more dramatic, confluence of media and policy. Since the country was carved off from Greater Syria by the colonial powers after World War One, the government in Damascus has considered Lebanon its natural fief. For 29 years, since their initial intervention during the civil war, Syrian troops had kept a permanent presence in Lebanon, fighting at one point or another on the side of virtually all of the confessional groups. Though various factions tried, no militia had the power to force the Syrians to go home. But with the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, whose death was widely assumed to be the work of the Damascus regime, the political landscape changed. Tens of thousands of Lebanese took to the streets to demand a Syrian withdrawal in what was quickly dubbed the "Cedar Revolution."<sup>17</sup> The movement featured a made-for-TV color scheme reminiscent of the Ukraine's Orange Revolution and produced 24/7 coverage by all of the main Arab satellite channels. As during the conflict with Israel a year later, Arab audiences were riveted to their television screens. Here, on live TV, was a revolution against one of the most brutal Arab regimes.

At one point, Syrian President Bashar Assad forlornly called on the cameras to "zoom out" to show that the crowds weren't as large as they appeared on the TV screen, but it was not long before he gave in to the new media reality. The powerful army of Syria was ordered home. It would be misleading to say that television alone forced Assad's hand. The Bush administration had been ramping up its pressure on Damascus even before the Hariri assassination, and with the murder of the former prime minister, who was related by marriage to the Saudi royal family, Riyadh also began turning the

diplomatic and economic screws. But a credible argument can be made that without the unblinking lens of Arab television, which in turn drove anti-Syrian sentiment across the region, Assad might easily have resorted to the kind of brutal tactics that led his father to wipe one of his own cities off the map to put down an Islamist revolt in the 1980s, back in the days when punishment could be applied well out of frame.

The impact of media is also being seen on what were once purely internal issues, long ignored or hidden by the tame domestic media. A case in point is that of an 18-year old Saudi girl who was gang raped by seven men when they discovered her sitting in a car with a male schoolmate, who was also gang raped. Under Saudi law, it is illegal for an unrelated man and woman to be alone. When the woman reported the assault, she was arrested and eventually sentenced to six months in prison and 90 lashes for violating the separation of sexes law. But when she went public to protest the sentence, a rare move in that controlled society, the court increased the punishment to 200 lashes, because of "her attempt to aggravate and influence the judiciary through the media." Her plight set off a bitter debate in the Saudi media, which dubbed her "Qatif girl," for the town where the attack occurred. "Qatif girl's dream of redeeming any of her self-respect through the judicial system was crushed in front of her own eyes," the *Saudi Gazette* reported.<sup>18</sup>

The story was quickly picked up by pan-Arab satellite channels, with talk show hosts like LBC's Shatha Omar pitting government officials, the girl's lawyer and her husband in live debates. The ministry of justice reacted to the media fracas by, as one Saudi blogger put it, "slandering the girl and portray[ing] her like a slut who deserved to be raped."<sup>19</sup> Adding fuel to the fire, an appeals court judge told the Saudi daily *Okaz* that the controversy was all a conspiracy on the part of the foreign media and said everyone involved in the incident – including the girl – should receive the death penalty.<sup>20</sup> By that point, the story was making headlines around the world and the Saudi government was firmly on the defensive, with the White House calling the situation "outrageous," Canada decrying the sentence as "barbaric."<sup>21</sup> Saudi commentators on both ends of the political spectrum expressing concern about the damage to the country's reputation. In the face of the domestic and international uproar, King Abdullah finally stepped in and overruled the court with a pardon read live on Saudi television by the justice minister. The crime, said the King, was "brutal," and a pardon was justified because "the woman and the man who was with her were subject to torture and stubbornness that is considered in itself sufficient in disciplining both of them and to learn from the lesson."<sup>22</sup> It was a ruling designed to placate both the critics and those on the right who felt the girl deserved punishment, but it also represented an

undeniable, and unprecedented, response to media-driven pressure by a man labeled by Reporters sans Frontiers as one of the Arab world's "predators of press freedom."<sup>23</sup>

Along with violence against women in places like Saudi Arabia and Jordan, many other once-forbidden issues are now being reported in the Arab media. In 2005, UNICEF, the UN children's agency, noted a sharp spike in the number of inquiries from journalists on topics such as HIV-AIDS and female genital mutilation (FGM).<sup>24</sup> One reason is that the rise of Arab satellite television has brought a growing acceptance of discussion about human sexuality. That has filtered down to national print media as well. Front-page reporting of the deaths of two young Egyptian girls who died after botched circumcisions sparked an unprecedented debate that led to a national campaign against the practice, led by Suzanne Mubarak, wife of Egypt's president. Much the same was happening with other sensitive topics. Governments like those of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were still jailing on homosexuality charges men who were diagnosed as HIV-positive, but fact-based stories on the disease, its methods of transmission and treatment were beginning to appear in media across the region.

UNESCO also noted a dramatic increase in media interest in Darfur, a story Arab journalists had struggled with for years. The fighting turned on its head the narrative of Arab as victim – as in coverage of Palestine and Iraq. In Darfur, Arab tribes were responsible for the killing. It was an Arab *Jihad on Horseback*, as Al-Arabiya titled a documentary on the conflict. That program, produced in 2005, never aired. It was killed after a phone call from Sudan's president to the then-Saudi crown prince, who in turn called the owner of Al-Arabiya, who also happened to be King Fahd's brother-in-law. But by that point, other Arab journalists were breaking out of the old model in which they parroted the pronouncements of Sudan's Arab government; they were skipping the government-run guided tours and slipping into Darfur on their own to take an uncensored view. Suddenly, a new version of the story was being reported: Muslim victims of Arab Muslim fighters.

### **Watchdogs and lapdogs**

One of the criticisms of the pan-Arab media is that while they focus on the big regional stories like Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, and, more lately, Darfur, they ignore local issues – like water, sanitation and roads – that are far less sexy. They also avoid soiling their own nests. In Al-Jazeera's case, that involves largely ignoring domestic Qatari issues; for Al-Arabiya, the "red lines" involve Saudi politics, religion, and domestic terrorism.<sup>25</sup>

The contrast between regional and local media was vividly played out during the April 2008 bread riots in Egypt, centered on a textile mill in the Delta town of Mahalla. There, thousands of

protesters clashed with government troops in violence that left several dead, including a 15-year old bystander, hundreds injured and resulted in scores of arrests. Al-Jazeera and other pan-Arab channels featured graphic footage of the violence; and still photos of protestors stomping on posters of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and bleeding victims of the violence appeared on the websites of Egyptian bloggers and foreign news organizations, until the government banned journalists from the area. But such images were harder to find in the domestic media. Even pan-Arab broadcasters like Orbit, Dream and Al-Mehwar, which are based in Egypt's so-called "free zone" Media City, largely avoided showing the more dramatic scenes. News managers at those channels privately told me that they had been warned by the Mubarak regime to tone down their coverage and to make sure their talk shows included a heavy representation of the government's viewpoint. The implicit "or else" did not need to be stated: Just days before, Egypt pulled the plug on a London-based channel highly critical of the regime which has been distributed on the Egyptian-owned satellite.

The move was facilitated by the adoption of an Arab League Satellite Charter, authored by the Egyptians and Saudis, who control the two main satellites in the region, Nilesat and Arabsat. The charter contained vague language warning against jeopardizing "social peace, national unity, public order and general propriety" and ordering that channels must protect "the supreme interests of the Arab countries."<sup>26</sup> Other sections warned against offending "moral, social and cultural values"<sup>27</sup> and "threatening national unity, spreading propaganda and harming the overarching interests of the country."<sup>28</sup> Similar catch-all phrases had long been used to shut down newspapers, block Internet sites and jail journalist.

Charter supporters insisted the document was aimed at hard-line Islamist channels that were allegedly radicalizing the youth,<sup>29</sup> but the silencing of Al-Hiwar, a secular anti-regime channel, just weeks after the charter was adopted appeared to put lie to that claim. So too, did subsequent raids in Cairo to confiscate satellite transmission equipment used by Al Jazeera and other international broadcasters, the closure of the Cairo offices of several foreign satellite channels, a campaign against satellite channels in the state-run Egyptian media, and the introduction of a draft law in the Egyptian parliament that would prohibit journalists from undermining "social peace," "national unity," "public order" and "public values."<sup>30</sup>

As the Mahalla riots dragged on, dozens of activists were arrested in security sweeps in Cairo. Bloggers were among the targets, including "Facebook Girl," a 27-year old woman who created a group on the social networking site that became the focal point for a one-day national strike in support of the

Mahalla workers.<sup>31</sup> The government's attitude was summed up by Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif when, during a speech at Cairo University, he told a student in the audience who defended Facebook Girl, "There is a thin line between expressing your opinion and encouraging destruction, striking and rioting."<sup>32</sup> The fact that the student was arrested a few days later and briefly detained underlines just how thin that line really is.

Amid the riots and roundups, which coincided with local elections widely condemned as rigged by the regime, the reporting in government-owned *Al-Ahram* seemed to hark back to an earlier era. As the paper framed it, the government's response to the riots was magnanimous: "President Hosni Mubarak agreed yesterday to give a one-month bonus to the workers in the Mahalla textile factory, in addition to a 15-day bonus granted to textile workers throughout the republic in appreciation of their noble positions."

*Al-Ahram's* coverage was an example of the lapdog function of the government-controlled press in much of the Arab world. But even those semi-independent and opposition papers that aspire to be watchdogs often lack teeth. Criminal libel laws in many countries mean that journalists who try to root out corruption and uncover malfeasance often find themselves being sent to jail as a result of lawsuits filed by the subjects of their stories. And truth is no defense. A reporter and editor for a newspaper in Alexandria, Egypt, for example, were given prison sentences after being convicted of libel, even though their corruption story was factually correct. Similar examples could be found across the region. As the Committee to Protect Journalists reported in 2007, "scores of journalists who challenged the political order were threatened by government agents, hauled before the courts, thrown in prison, or censored in media crackdowns that stretched from Algeria to Yemen."<sup>33</sup>

Many Arab governments talk about "freedom of the press," but it is often code for precisely the opposite. The Freedom House map of press freedom in the Arab world is monochromatic; most of the region is colored dark blue for "not free." In the 2008 edition, just three countries qualified as "partly free." But that is very much a relative term; Arab countries occupy the bottom third of the global rankings. One of those "partly free" countries is Lebanon, where several high profile journalists have been assassinated or maimed in assassination attempts. Another is Kuwait, where laws were recently adopted making it a crime to criticize the constitution, the emir or Islam, or to incite acts that "offend public morality, religious sensibilities, or the basic convictions of the nation."<sup>34</sup> And the third is Egypt, which was moved from the "not free" category as a result of the appearance of several new semi-independent media outlets and despite the increased government campaign against the media.

[INSERT FIGURE 13.1 (FREEDOM OF THE PRESS) ABOUT HERE]

But even in places where there seems to be a commitment to media reform, the contradictions between words and actions abound. At a gathering of American and Arab reporters at the Dead Sea in the spring of 2008, Princess Rym Ali, sister-in-law of Jordan's King Abdullah, made an impassioned speech in support of press freedom. There was no doubt of her sincerity. The former Rym Brahimi is herself a former CNN correspondent. Sitting beside me as we listened to the talk was Osama al-Sharif, former editor of Jordan's *Al-Dustour* newspaper, who, just days before, had been sentenced to three months in prison on charges of contempt of the judiciary for reporting – correctly – that a Jordanian had filed a lawsuit against a court that stripped him of his citizenship.<sup>35</sup> The disconnect between commitment to media reform in Jordan and its implementation, al-Sharif and other Jordanian journalists say, lies in the gulf between the desires of the palace and the agenda of the bureaucracy that implements the laws. In other places, they are completely in synch, but not in a positive sense.

Nowhere does the national agenda take a backseat to media reform. Even the façade of freedom in Dubai's much vaunted Media City, where news organizations are supposedly guaranteed the right to operate without interference, proved hollow in when Pakistan declared martial law in November 2007. After two private Pakistani channels based in Media City, GEO TV and Ary One, refused a demand from the Musharraf government to sign a new "code of conduct," Emirati authorities gave them two hours to stop broadcasting. Officials left little doubt the principles of press freedom on which Media City was supposedly based had taken a back seat to Emirati foreign policy. "As an entity within the UAE, Dubai Media City would also observe the broadcast principals of the country's foreign policy and prevent the telecast of news and material that would undermine those principles," said Amina Al Rustamani, executive director of Dubai Media City.<sup>36</sup>

The incident underlined the schizophrenic approach to media in the Arab world. Media is power, nowhere more so than in the Middle East. By controlling the messenger while fostering some perception of media independence, Arab governments can at least attempt to control the nature and pace of change. At a major Saudi-financed conference on the media in Dubai in the fall of 2005, I asked the president of the Arab Thought Foundation, Prince Bandar bin Khaled al Faisal, why a nation that was, after all, a feudal monarchy with no pretensions to representational democracy, would finance a gathering on media freedom, itself an historic precursor to democracy. "Journalism is a part of change," said Bandar, the owner of Saudi Arabia's *Al-Watan* newspaper. "And this conference is an effort to say, 'OK, maybe we should expedite the process a little bit because we really do have a lot to lose.'"

On one level, national leaders want the power and prestige of high-profile media outlets; the Saudis, Qataris and Emiratis, in particular, are in a cycle of media one-upmanship. They point to their supposedly “independent” media as evidence of political and social reform. But the façade is often far prettier than what is going on behind the scenes. No project is more emblematic of this contradiction than *The National*, an English-language daily with a staff of almost 200, including high-priced reporters and editors from *The New York Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Wall Street Journal* and a variety of other Western news organizations.

Hyped by its British editor as “the last great newspaper launch in history,”<sup>37</sup> the inaugural issue was modern and flashy in design but its content was vacuous; in all, the new paper was strikingly similar to that of Singapore’s well-designed but toothless government-owned Straights-Times. The National’s front-page in its first week highlighted cheerleading stories about UAE government reform, “five-star food” in the country’s prisons, and the first Emirati kidney transplant. Not exactly crusading journalism, but not surprising for a newspaper owned by the government and backed by Abu Dhabi’s \$850 billion investment fund. Within days, foreign reporters on the paper were grumbling about a “go easy” mandate from the top and a virtual ban on controversial stories like the plight of foreign laborers in the Emirates. A media executive who had considered taking a post at the paper told me the approach was described to him this way: “It’s not Arab censorship; it’s Arab sensitivity.”

But the paper’s deputy editor, former *New York Times* correspondent Hassan Fattah, says that if they are going to help set the agenda, Arab media cannot afford to emulate the attack-dog approach of some of their Western counterparts. “We’re not screaming. We’re trying to influence and convince,” he told me by phone, one week after the first issue hit the street. The lead story that day was a much-hyped “investigation” into the private trade in rare animals, which was actually based on the work of a government agency, not the paper’s own reporters. “We are part of a broader reform initiative. By definition, we will push boundaries and try to make change, but in the Arab world change does come slowly.”

Meanwhile, Al-Jazeera’s effort to address criticisms of its failure to focus on more local issues by launching a daily broadcast from Rabat about the Maghreb ended abruptly when the Moroccan government pulled the plug after some local reporting that cut a little too close to home.

Despite their fascination with media, it is clear that some Arab leaders are still struggling to understand – or refusing to accept – the implications of the new media landscape. On one level, they are hungry for the instant access to information made possible by the media revolution. In the first days

of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, I visited a media monitoring command center established at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research in Abu Dhabi. In a small villa in a residential area of the city, a special team sat in front of a wall of television monitors 24 hours a day, while in the next room video decks recorded every minute of coverage on every channel. The smallest development was instantly sent by SMS to all of the rulers in the Gulf, and major breaking news required an immediate telephone call to their *aides de camp*.

Yet, in stark contrast, when in the summer of 2007 the media began to report rumors that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was seriously ill, or perhaps even dead, the government failed to respond for more than a week. No statement, no photo op with the president, nothing; which naturally meant the rumors spread like wildfire. Eventually, the government had the first lady give an interview in which she said her husband was healthy, expecting that would be taken as gospel. It was not and only then did the president appear in public. It was a textbook example of a government locked in the old media paradigm, underscored by the fact that the regime followed up by arresting the editors who published the rumors and eventually sentenced them to prison.

The Catch-22 of press freedom is that media helps drive political reform, but without some modicum of political openness, that very media struggles for a foothold. As the final communiqué of a 2005 conference on “Media and Good Governance” put it, “The role of the media in supporting good governance is conditional on the freedom and the independence of the media as well as its professionalism,” and “the lip service pledges made by the governments through various official declarations have not been translated into serious and effective acts. ... An arsenal of laws and regulations have remained that block any attempts for accountability and transparency, both in the areas of access to receive and impart information ... which make the attempts of the press to question corruption and abuse of power next to impossible.<sup>38</sup> In the West, the idea of media as watchdog is grudgingly accepted by political leaders as part of the checks-and-balances of government. In the Arab world, the watchdog is treated as if he is a rabid stray. “Arab rulers, regardless of their differences, agree on one thing – all of them consider the Arab press to be their sworn enemy,” according to Jamal Amer, editor-in-chief of *Al-Wasat* in Yemen,<sup>39</sup> where Reporters sans Frontiers said a “climate of violence” exists.<sup>40</sup> Some reporters – and news organizations – don’t even make a pretense of being a watchdog. “What kind of pressures do you face?” I asked the editor of one Gulf paper after chatting about the attacks on Lebanese journalists. “None,” he replied. “We don’t report about political issues.”<sup>41</sup> Complained another senior Gulf editor: “Our press is infected with the self-censorship virus.”<sup>42</sup>

### ***Centurions at the Gate***

Self-censorship is as real on the satellite spectrum as it is in the local newsrooms. “Red lines,” as they are known in the Arab world, surround many issues. As noted above, for Al-Arabiya, those involve issues of Saudi domestic politics, domestic terrorism and many areas of religious debate. The constraints at Al-Jazeera are less restrictive, but just as real. Al-Jazeera was created to break the lock on Saudi media hegemony in the region. It was one piece in the regional power struggle between Qatar and Saudi Arabia. On Al-Jazeera’s airwaves, Saudi Arabia was fair game. Few stories were off limits. But in the face of the rising threat from Shiite Iran in late 2007, Sunni Arab governments began to close ranks. In Doha, the palace sent word to the Al-Jazeera newsroom: Back off on the Saudis. The channel’s coverage wasn’t the only victim. Plans for an Al-Jazeera newspaper to challenge Saudi Arabia’s stranglehold on the pan-Arab print media were put on hold. “We were sacrificed on the altar of regional politics,” one senior journalist involved in the project told me.

The incident is emblematic not only of the degree to which governments still set the media agenda, rather than the other way around, but also the fact that, all too often, Arab media are protagonists to the region’s conflicts. The traditional media gatekeeper role, as discussed in the introduction, involves “encouraging dialogue, tolerance, and interaction among diverse communities.” Instead, Arab journalists commonly help fan the flames of conflict and intolerance, whether in the case of the regional Cold War that arose in 2007 between the Sunni-led Arab states and Iran – and, by default, Sunnis and Shia in the region – or within individual countries. In Egypt, much of the media alternates between being dismissive of the religious element of Muslim attacks on Coptic Christians and fanning the flames of sectarian strife. The fact that Iraq is the most dangerous place in the world to be a journalist has much to do with the partisan nature of media outlets, which are virtually all owned by one faction or another. Ditto Lebanon, where what has been termed a “refeudalization” of the media landscape meant that when Hezbollah and its allies briefly took over West Beirut in the spring of 2008, they immediately stormed the newsrooms of a television and newspaper company owned by their main political rival.

Gatekeepers are also supposed to provide balanced coverage of groups across the political spectrum. Suffice to say, that doesn’t happen in Iraq or Lebanon, but in places where journalists do strive to achieve that goal, roadblocks are often thrown in their path. Egyptian media were encouraged to give (relatively) equal time to opposition candidates in the 2005 parliamentary elections, but it was all part of a carefully stage-managed effort to allow President Hosni Mubarak to present the façade of

democracy after he had successfully crushed the secular opposition, leaving only the bogeyman of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood. But by the 2007 local elections, the media had been driven back into its corral through a campaign of intimidation, which a lawyer for the Press Syndicate estimated included more than one thousand summonses and 500 court cases.<sup>43</sup>

A study of media coverage of the 2006 Bahraini elections by a human rights group concluded that despite “the relative margin of liberty in Bahrain ... the media played a role in hindering democracy instead of supporting it” through self-censorship, favoritism and one-sided access. The report concluded: “When radio and TV channels lack independence and refuse to take a campaigning role, and when the national newspapers lack impartiality and professionalism, and when candidates lack effective means to reach voters, that all reflects negatively on participation, the voter's right to access to information, and their ability to make the right choice, which would put under question the credibility of the entire democratic process.”<sup>44</sup>

The report was issued by the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, whose own Internet site was blocked by the government prior to the election, one of several dozen websites shut down by the authorities in the tiny island nation. Subsequently, the government would detain dozens of journalist and ban publication of a controversial report that claimed the Sunni Muslim royal family had financed an effort to undermine the majority Shia during the elections, through tactics that included handing out Bahraini citizenship to Sunnis from other countries. Elections in Yemen that same year saw broadcast outlets relegate opposition candidates to the late night hours and newspapers simply reprint identical accounts of President Ali Abdullah Saleh's rallies written by the official national news agency. Numerous websites were blocked, and in the run-up to the election, five new newspapers appeared on the street, reporting positively about the president and attacking journalists who took a less laudatory approach.<sup>45</sup> Syria's government-controlled media took a somewhat modestly professional approach to that country's 2007 elections, yet journalists, bloggers and human rights activists regularly found themselves being questioned or behind bars.

While the pan-Arab media is certainly helping to write the region's broad narrative, the gatekeeper role in most domestic media – like that of agenda-setter and watchdog – remains limited, for all the same reasons. Those ‘alternate voices’ the theory says journalistic gatekeeper are supposed to empower, remain marginalized in the mainstream media across the region. Civil society, the foundation of representative democracy, is given short shrift; human rights groups as often ignored. Indeed, even on the more outspoken domestic media outlets, many journalists harbor high levels of suspicion and

resentment toward activists in the NGOs, who they frequently accuse of being mercenaries doing the bidding of foreign aid agencies and governments. That was epitomized by the muted reaction to conviction in absentia of Egyptian civil society activist and one-time presidential candidate Saad Eddine Ibrahim in the summer of 2008.

Along with the obvious tactics of arrests and intimidation, news organizations that try to give voice to the voiceless often find themselves silenced by an array of other weapons wielded by the centurions of the government security services who man the proverbial gate. In most Arab countries, the government-run press controls the printing and distribution infrastructure, and is thus able to freeze individual issues that the government takes umbrage with. They can also wield an economic stick. Just as a boycott by Saudi Arabia, which dominates the advertising industry in the region, means Al-Jazeera has few commercials despite its huge audience, independent publications on the local level can also find themselves frozen out of the market.

Tunisia's *Al Mawqif* is one of the few newspapers in that tightly-controlled country to report on civil society organizations. As a result, most newsstands refuse to carry it and revenues are sparse. "We do not even have access to private advertising because companies know that buying ad space in our paper can lead to problems," says editor in chief Rachid Khechana. "Companies even remove their ads from newspapers if these write about sensitive issues." As a result, he says, the paper's reporters and editors practice "self-censorship" when it comes to issues like corruption and coverage of the president, which frees them to continue to focus on civil society. "We have to choose between carrying a part of the message or present ourselves as victims of repression. We have decided to pass the message," Khechana says. But, as in many Arab countries, the "red lines" of self-censorship are constantly moving. "Even sunny weather can be censored if it is a bad new for agriculture. Taboo topics are updated by the government on a daily basis," says Sihem Bensedrine, the editor of the online newspaper *Kalima*, who was herself barred from leaving the country and roughed up by security police at Tunis airport in late summer 2008.<sup>46</sup>

### **Change Agents**

The good news is that despite the challenges, Arab journalists continue to push the envelope. My research partner, Jeremy Ginges of The New School for Social Research, and I carried out a survey of 601 journalists from 14 Arab countries.<sup>47</sup> The results painted a portrait of a press corps determined to drive political and social change. "Encourage political reform" was ranked at the most significant job of an Arab journalist by 75% of those surveyed. The next six choices – "educate the public," "use news for

the social good,” “serve as a voice for the poor,” “encourage civil engagement,” drive “regional and national development,” and “analyze issues” – all supported that change agent mission (Figure 13.1). Likewise, total of 96% said Arab society must be reformed (Figure 13.2). But the majority of journalist surveyed agreed with Hassan Fattah’s observation about the pace of change in the Arab world, with 64% indicating that “Arab society must be gradually reformed,” and one-third indicating that reform must be “radical.”<sup>48</sup> That sense of caution was also seen in the fact that the traditional watch-dog role of investigating government claims, which U.S. journalists rank as their top priority (Weaver et al. 2007), did not make the top ten job functions cited by the Arab journalists.

[INSERT FIGURE 13.1 AND 13.2 ABOUT HERE]

They also cited political reform as the most important issue facing the region, followed closely by human rights, poverty, and education (Table 13.3), while “lack of political change” virtually tied with U.S. policy as the greatest threat facing the region, when the ever-present issue of Israel was put aside (Table 13.4).

[INSERT FIGURE 13.3 AND 3.4 ABOUT HERE]

Almost half the journalists surveyed described themselves politically as supporter of democratic change, as opposed to self-identifying as Arab nationalists, Islamists or nationalists (Table 13.5), and “government control” essentially tied with the lack of professionalism as the most significant challenge to Arab journalism (Table 13.6).

[INSERT FIGURE 13.5 AND 13.6 ABOUT HERE]

Significantly, journalists working for domestic media (78%) were even more supportive of the reform agenda than those working for pan-Arab news organizations (58%). The overall results demonstrate that the majority of Arab journalists fall within what we have labeled the Change Agent typology, a set of priorities unique to the Arab media, in which setting an agenda based on political and social change is the top priority. This self-perceived role puts Arab journalists firmly at odds with the ruling powers of the region.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

It is clear that media in the Arab world is beginning to have an impact on policy in the region. It is also clear that the Arab media is on a collision course with the entrenched regimes of the Gulf, the Levant and North Africa. The confrontation is, and will continue to be, painful for both sides and fraught with contradiction. If Arab journalism is going to continue to evolve as a catalyst for change and,

eventually, an independent and responsible partner in governance, much support is needed. As a recent National Endowment for Democracy report observed, media assistance is a fundamental building block in the government reform process that can “help countries make democratic transitions, spur economic growth, improve government accountability, conduct public health campaigns, increase education and literacy levels, and empower women and minorities.”<sup>49</sup>

Concrete steps that can be taken by international agencies, governments, and private donors. The targets for such reforms include changes affecting the role of the state, the market and the profession. Policy interventions directed at each of these include:

*Reforming the regulatory environment and the legal framework of civil liberties:* Arab media will never be free until governments decide to allow such freedom. Nor, in this age of satellite television and the Internet, will governments ever again truly be able to control the media. To date, most media reform efforts have focused on convincing governments they must adopt a Western model. Little effort has been expended on helping them understand how the process has evolved in non-Western countries. International agencies should explore initiatives that bring Arab government officials together with their counterparts in countries that have already experienced media reform, such as Eastern Europe, South Asia and Indonesia, in order to expose them to concepts and approaches that might better suit their cultural and political environments. In the meantime, international agencies and foreign governments must use their influence to support journalists being targeted by government pressures and government-to-government encouragement of media reform must continue.

*Alternative Media:* The growth of online media should be encouraged. It is particularly important to foster the evolution of Arab online journalism, as opposed to pure activism, to make it harder for governments to crack down on Internet sites using the excuse that they are irresponsible and vitriolic. Private funders should also provide financial support to online ventures that break new ground. Examples include Ammanet, a private radio station in Jordan that covers the kind of grassroots local news ignored by the mainstream media and which began as a purely online venture funded by foreign agencies; and Mogtamana.org, created by the Adham Center for Journalism at The American University in Cairo with USAID funding to serve as an information portal by and for Egyptian civil society. Coupled with an extensive training program in civil society coverage, the project has produced a notable increase in reporting on the sector within the mainstream media and opened new lines of communication between the media and NGOs.

*Journalism Training:* Substantial funds are being put into professional training for Arab journalists by various international organizations, notable among them USAID, the British Council, and the governments of Canada, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Germany, along with a variety of private donors, such as Open Society Institute, Carnegie Corporation of New York and others. However, there is a significant “hit or miss” aspect to this training, with virtually no coordination among the donors. The result is a plethora of short, one-off workshops and a lack of strategic vision. Donors should consider creating a mechanism for, at a minimum, “exchanging notes” on training projects and/or, more ambitiously, pooling efforts to support a series of regional training facilities that can create comprehensive training programs that provide ongoing support and professional development focused on an array of basic journalistic tools, specialized reporting skills and the kind of management expertise needed to foster an economically-sustainable media sector. Most journalism training in the Arab world is also carried out by Western journalists and trainers. Yet vibrant forms of journalism are being practiced in Eastern Europe, South and Southeast Asia, Latin America and parts of Africa. Arab journalists have much to learn from how their profession has evolved and is practiced in non-Western parts of the world. Training projects that draw on the talent in these regions should be encouraged.

*Media Education Reform:* There are just a handful of academic journalism programs in the Arab world. Most universities teach a more theoretical approach to “mass media” with little application in the newsroom. But reform is beginning. Projects are underway to build serious Arabic-language undergraduate and graduate journalism programs in places like Jordan and Dubai, while “mass comm” programs in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and North Africa are beginning the process of curriculum reform to introduce practical journalism programs. These programs need advice, expertise and, in some cases, financial support.

*Media Literacy:* “You can’t believe everything you read in the newspaper.” That adage is accepted wisdom in the Developed World, but the degree to which it rings true elsewhere in the world varies dramatically. As the Arab world rapidly transitions from a controlled media model to one in which there are numerous competing voices, including a cacophony of bloggers, Arab publics must learn to distinguish truth – or near-truth – from carefully manufactured fiction. Media literacy programs at the region’s universities provide one venue which deserve support, so, too, do literacy projects run from regional NGOs to reach the grassroots.

There is no panacea for media reform in the Arab world; no magic wand that can be waved to create overnight a journalistic corps of agenda-setters, watchdogs and gatekeepers. It’s also possible

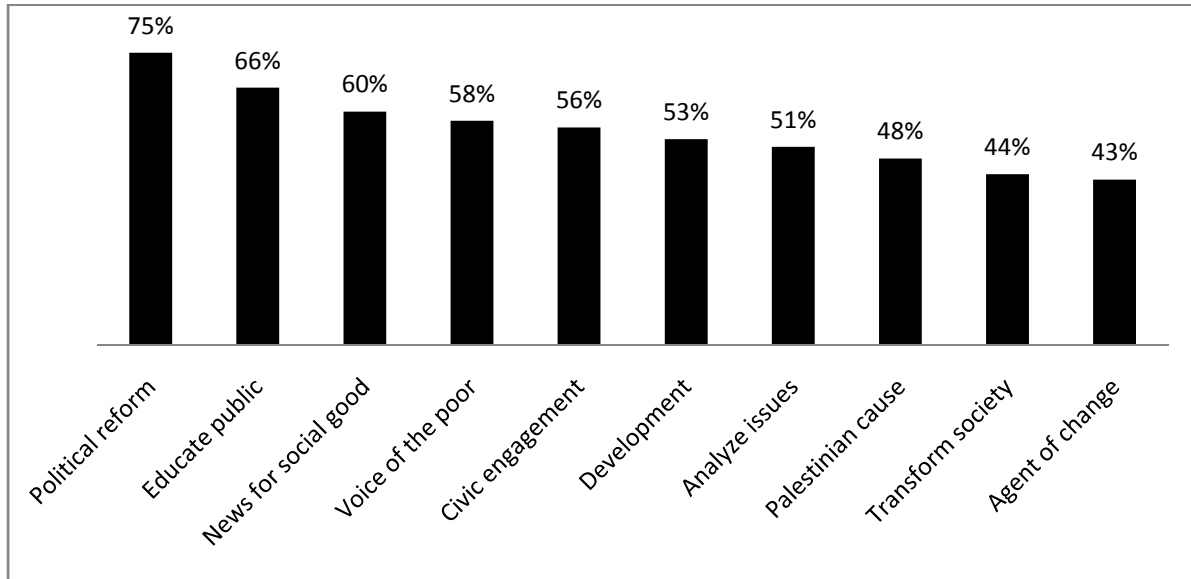
Arab journalists will never easily fall into those democratic roles. Arab media is in the midst of a revolution, so, too the relationship between journalists and governments. International agencies can support, defend, nurture and encourage, but they cannot dictate. It is for the Arabs themselves to decide the precise model of media-government relations that will emerge.

**Table 13.1: Press Freedom in the Arab region, 2008**

<b>Global Rank (of 195)</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Status</b>
114	Kuwait	54	Partly Free
117	Lebanon	55	Partly Free
124	Egypt	59	Partly Free
134	Algeria	62	Not Free
135	Jordan	63	Not Free
138 (tie)	Morocco	64	Not Free
138 (tie)	Qatar	64	Not Free
151	United Arab Emirates	68	Not Free
153	Iraq	69	Not Free
157 (tie)	Bahrain	71	Not Free
157 (tie)	Oman	71	Not Free
160	Djibouti	72	Not Free
161	Chad	74	Not Free
170 (tie)	Yemen	78	Not Free
170 (tie)	Sudan	78	Not Free
175 (tie)	Saudi Arabia	81	Not Free
175 (tie)	Tunisia	81	Not Free
179	Syria	83	Not Free
181 (tie)	Palestinian Territories	84	Not Free
181 (tie)	Somalia	84	Not Free
190	Libya	94	Not Free

**Source:** Freedom House. *Freedom of the Press 2008*, [www.Freedomhouse.org](http://www.Freedomhouse.org)

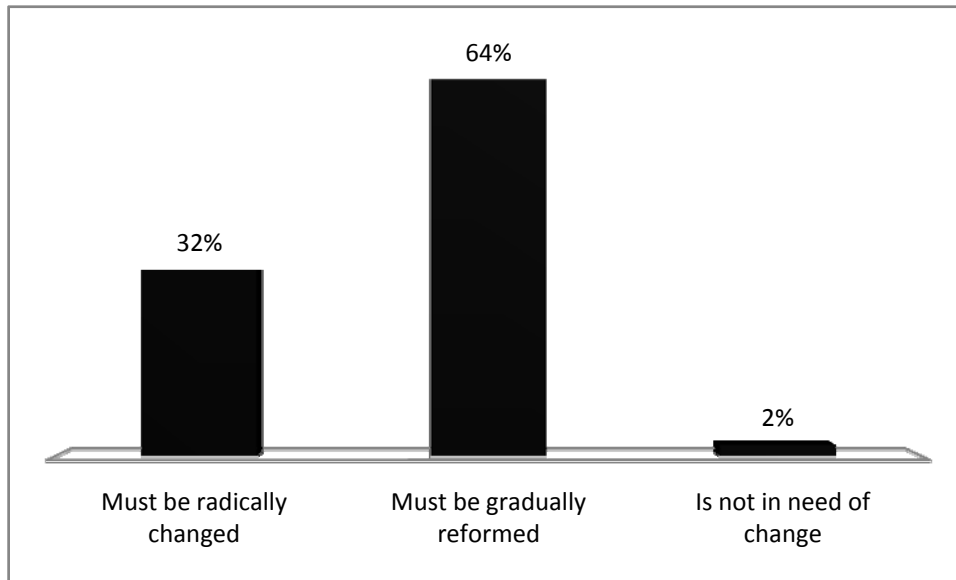
**Figure 13. 1: Journalistic perceptions of their roles**



**Note:** “Complete the following sentence, ‘It is the job of a journalist to...’” (Participants were given a list of 21 choices; totals reflect percentage answering “most important”). Survey of Arab Journalists. N=601.

**Source:** Lawrence Pintak and Jeremy Ginges. 2008. ‘The Mission of Arab Journalism: Creating change in a time of turmoil.’ *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13(3).

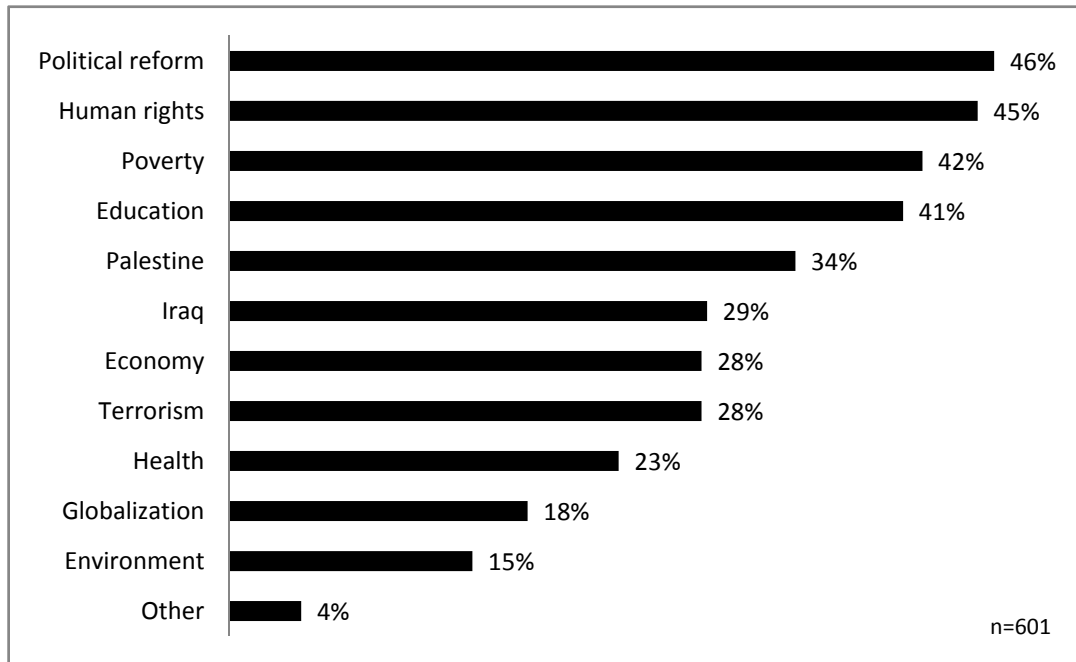
**Figure 13.2: Journalistic attitudes towards reform of Arab society**



**Note:** "Please choose the one which best describes your own opinion: 'Arab society...'" Survey of Arab Journalists. N=601.

**Source:** Lawrence Pintak and Jeremy Ginges. 2008. 'The Mission of Arab Journalism: Creating change in a time of turmoil.' *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13(3).

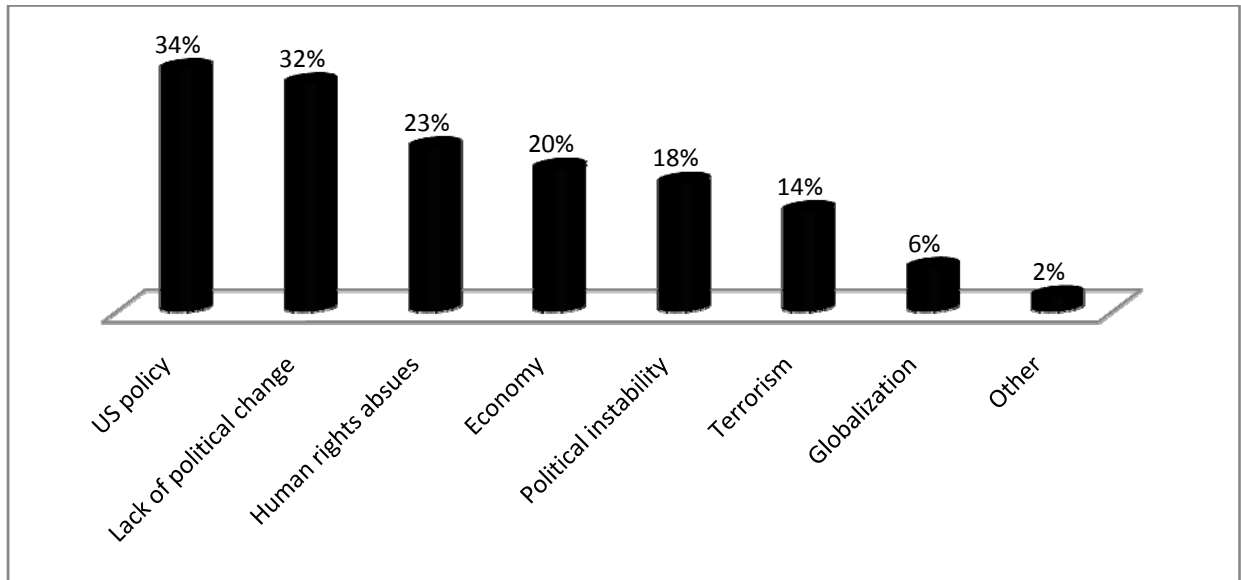
**Figure 13.3: Journalistic perceptions of the most important issues facing the Arab world**



**Note:** “Rate the importance of the following issues in the Arab world today” (participants were given a list of 12 choices; totals reflect percentage answering “most important”). Survey of Arab Journalists. N=601.

**Source:** Lawrence Pintak and Jeremy Ginges. 2008. ‘The Mission of Arab Journalism: Creating change in a time of turmoil.’ *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13(3).

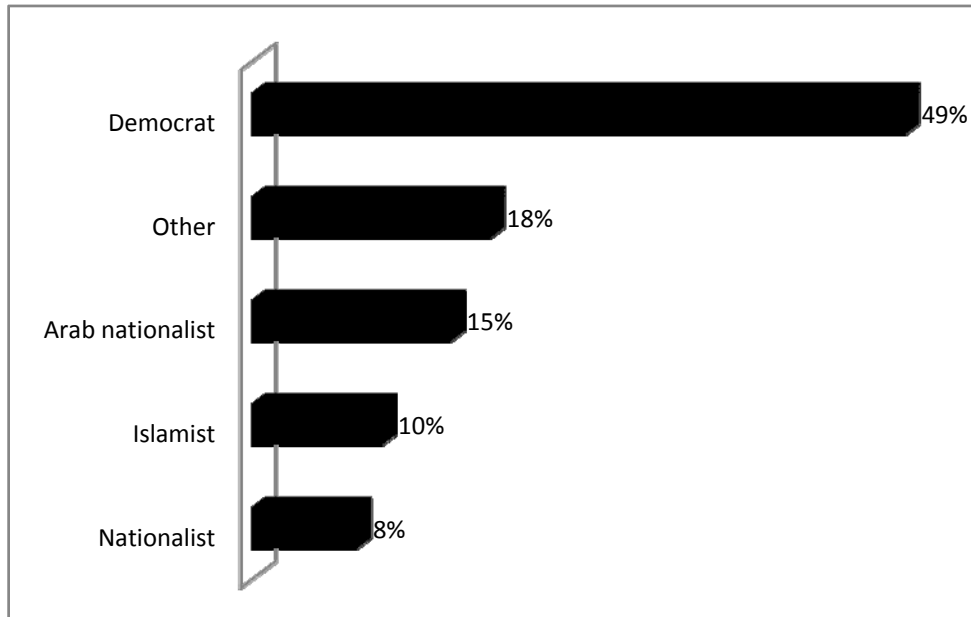
**Figure 13.4: Journalistic perceptions of the greatest threats facing the Arab region**



**Note:** “Please indicate how significant you think the following challenges are to the Arab region (percentage answering ‘most significant’).” Survey of Arab Journalists. N=601.

**Source:** Lawrence Pintak and Jeremy Ginges. 2008. ‘The Mission of Arab Journalism: Creating change in a time of turmoil.’ *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13(3).

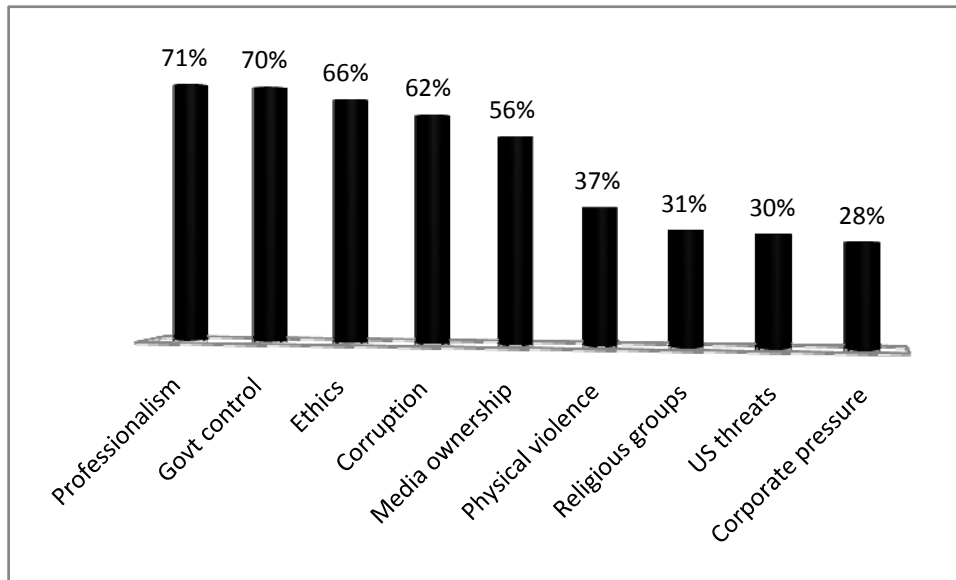
**Figure 13.5: Political Identity of Arab journalists**



**Note:** "Politically, which philosophy best describes you?" Survey of Arab Journalists n=578.

**Source:** Lawrence Pintak and Jeremy Ginges. 2008. 'The Mission of Arab Journalism: Creating change in a time of turmoil.' *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13(3).

**Figure 13.6: Journalistic perceptions of the most significant challenges to Arab journalism**



**Note:** “Please indicate how significant you think the following challenges are to Arab journalism.” (Participants were provided with nine choices; percentage answering “most significant”). N=601.

**Source:** Lawrence Pintak and Jeremy Ginges. 2008. ‘The Mission of Arab Journalism: Creating change in a time of turmoil.’ *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13(3).

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<sup>1</sup> 2004. 'Egypt's Torture Epidemic.' In *Briefing papers*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

<sup>2</sup> 2007a. *Amnesty International Report 2007 -- Egypt*. London: Amnesty International.

<sup>3</sup> 2008b. 'Egypt 2007.' In *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. State Department.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas Jehl and David Johnston. 2005. 'Rule Change Lets C.I.A. Freely Send Suspects Abroad to Jails.' In *The New York Times*. New York. Mar. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Watch. 2007. 'Egypt: Police Officers Get Three Years for Beating, Raping Detainee.' New York: Human Rights Watch.

<sup>6</sup> Lawrence Pintak. 2006. *Reflections in a Bloodshot Lens: America, Islam and the War of ideas*. London; Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto. 64.

<sup>7</sup> George C. Edwards and B. Dan Wood. 1999. 'Who Influences Whom? The President, the Media, and the Public Agenda.' *American Political Science Review* 93:327-344; Dan B. Wood and Jeffrey S. Peake. 1998. 'The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Agenda Setting.' *American Political Science Review* 92:173-184.

<sup>8</sup> Anat First. 1997. 'Television in the Construction of Reality: An Israeli Case Study.' In *Communication and Democracy : exploring the intellectual frontiers in agenda-setting theory*, eds. Maxwell E. McCombs, Donald Lewis Shaw and David H. Weaver. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates; Chanen Naveh,. 2001. 'The Role of the Media in Shaping Israeli Public Opinion: Israel after Rabin.' In *Peacemaking in a Divided Society*, ed. Sasson Sofer. London: Frank Cass.

<sup>9</sup> Mustafa Kabha. 2007. *The Palestinian Press as Shaper of Public Opinion, 1929-1931: writing up a storm*. Edgware, UK and Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell.

<sup>10</sup> Abdallah S. Al-Haweel, and Srinivas R. Melkote. 1995. 'International agenda-setting effects of Saudi Arabian media: A case study.' *Gazette* 55:17-37.

<sup>11</sup> To be clear, satellite television did exist when the study was conducted. But the only channel offering news was the Middle East Broadcasting Centre, a Saudi-owned station that largely toed the official line.

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- <sup>14</sup> Radwan Masmoudi, and Joseph Loconte. 2008. 'A Faltering Freedom Agenda: The disillusion of Muslim reformers.' In *The Weekly Standard*. Washington, D.C. Apr. 23.
- <sup>15</sup> Marwan Matni, 'Conversation with the Author.' (Monte Carlo: Oct 21, 2006).
- <sup>16</sup> *Qatar Emir Hails First Arab Victory*. (*The Peninsula*), Aug 22, 2006 [accessed Sep 3, 2006] available from <http://www.gulfinthemedial.com/index.php?m=search&id=237173&lang=en>.
- <sup>17</sup> Paula Dobriansky, undersecretary of state for global affairs, told reporters, 'As the president noted in Bratislava just last week, there was a rose revolution in Georgia, an orange revolution in Ukraine, and, most recently, a purple revolution in Iraq. In Lebanon, we see growing momentum for a cedar revolution.' See *On-the-Record Briefing on the Release of the 2004 Annual Report on Human Rights*. vol. 2007 Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of State, 2005.
- <sup>18</sup> Suzan Zawawi, . 2007. 'The agony of the 'Qatif Girl'.' In *Saudi Gazette*. Jeddah: Sabria's Out of the Box. Nov. 20.
- <sup>19</sup> Ahmed Al-Omran. 2007. 'The Qatif Girl Again.' In *Saudi Jeans* (blog). Riyadh.
- <sup>20</sup> Abdullah El Areefg. 2007. 'The Judge in El Riyad: Ulterior motives of how the foreign media dealt with the Kotaif girl incidence.' In *Okaz*. Riyadh. Nov. 26.
- <sup>21</sup> Andrew Hammond. 2007. 'Saudi gang-rape victim pardoned after outcry.' In *The Independent*. London. Dec. 18.
- <sup>22</sup> Ebtihal Mubarak. 2007. "'Qatif Girl' subjected to brutal crime: King.' In *Arab News*. Jeddah. Dec. 19.

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- <sup>23</sup> 2007f. 'Predators of Press Freedom.' Paris: Reporters sans Frontières.
- <sup>24</sup> M. Anis Salem. 2008. 'Development Communication: advocacy, programming and participation '. Cairo: The American University in Cairo.
- <sup>25</sup> Private conversations with executives of both channels.
- <sup>26</sup> 2008a. 'Arab League Satellite Broadcasting Charter.' In *Arab Media & Society*. Cairo: Kamal Adham Center for Journalism Training and Research. [www.arabmediasociety.org/?article=684](http://www.arabmediasociety.org/?article=684).
- <sup>27</sup> Amy Glass. 2008. 'Du CEO plays down net censorship.' In *Arabianbusiness.com*. Dubai. <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/516483-du-exec-plays-down-restriction-fears>.
- <sup>28</sup> 2008. 'Government cancels license of independent weekly.' In *Alert*. Toronto: IFEX: International Freedom of Expression Exchange.
- <sup>29</sup> Hussein Amin. 2008. 'The Arab States Charter for Satellite Television: A quest for regulation ' In *Arab Media & Society*. Cairo: Kamal Adham Center for Journalism Training and Research. <http://www.arabmediasociety.com/?article=649>.
- <sup>30</sup> Alaa al-Ghatrifi. 2008. 'Al-Masry Al-Youm Exclusively Publishes the Draft Law of Audio-Visual Transmission and Monitoring the Internet.' Cairo: *Al-Masry Al-Youm*. Jul. 9, <http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/default.aspx?l=en&IssueID=1096>.
- <sup>31</sup> Yasime Saleh. 2008. 'Lawyer expects 'Facebook Girl' to become Mahalla scapegoat, receive prison sentence.' In *Egypt Daily News*. Cairo, Apr. 12-13. It later turned out that she was acting at the behest of her boss, a political activist and blogger, who was then himself arrested and, according to his account, stripped, hung by his arms and tortured.
- <sup>32</sup> Safaa Abdoun. 2008. 'Nazif's heckler at Cairo University says he was provoked by PM's speech.' In *Egypt Daily News*. Cairo, Apr. 22.
- <sup>33</sup> Joel Campagna. 2007. 'Attacks on the Press 2007: Middle East and North Africa.' New York: Committee to Protect Journalists.
- <sup>34</sup> 2007. 'Freedom of the Press 2007.' New York: Freedom House.

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- <sup>35</sup> 2008. 'Five journalists given three-month prison sentences over critical articles.' In IFEX: International Freedom of Expression Exchange. Amman: AAI/IFEX, Mar. 18, <http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/91766/>.
- <sup>36</sup> 2007. 'National Media Council clarifies closure of GEO, ARY TV stations.' In Emirates News Agency (WAM). Dubai, Nov. 17. <http://www.wam.org.ae/servlet/Satellite?c=WamLocEnews&cid=1193028279857&pagename=WAM%2FWamLocEnews%2FW-T-LEN-FullNews>.
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- <sup>41</sup> Unnamed source, Conversation with the author, Beirut, Sept 18, 2006.
- <sup>42</sup> Abdul Hamid Ahmad, 'Self-Censorship Virus Plagues Media.' *Gulf News*, May 5, 2006.
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<sup>47</sup> Lawrence Pintak and Jeremy Ginges. 2008. 'The Mission of Arab Journalism: Creating change in a time of turmoil.' *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13, 3(3). The figure included a small group based in the U.S. and Europe but working for media outlets in the Arab world.

<sup>48</sup> The desire for 'radical' change was most pronounced in Morocco, where 70 percent of journalists surveyed supported that approach, and Egypt, where the figure was 27 percent.

<sup>49</sup> Kaplan, David E. 2008. 'Empowering Independent Media: U.S. efforts to foster free and independent news around the world.' ed. Marguerite Sullivan. Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for Democracy.