

Chapter 8

Media in the Middle East and North Africa

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the revolutionary changes taking place among Middle East media.
2. Understand the role and impact of Al Jazeera.
3. Understand the shared demographic characteristics among Middle East and North Africa (MENA) nations, and how they influence the region's mediascape.
4. Describe the effects of terrorism on MENA nations' media.
5. Detail the "Golden Age" of Middle Eastern knowledge acquisition and distribution, and understand the contributions made by the Middle East to global culture during this era. Know that this era ended when Europeans colonized the Middle East.
6. Name and describe the theories of the Arab press. Understand the role of governments in forming national media policy and characteristics in Arab nations.
7. Explain the key events and outlets of transnational newspaper publishing and transnational broadcasting in the Middle East.
8. Understand why a Middle Eastern advertising industry has not fully developed.

Chapter Outline

The arc of instability, turmoil, conflict, crisis, and despair
A legacy of knowledge acquisition and distribution

Theories of the Arab press
Mobilization press
Loyalist press
Transitional press
Diverse press
Liberal democratic press
The nature of Arab news
Transnational newspaper publishing
Transnational broadcasting
Al Jazeera
Al Arabiya
Arab News Network (ANN)
Middle East Broadcast Centre (MBC)
Advertising and public relations

Key Terms

Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region
Al Jazeera
Golden age (11th to 15th centuries)
Mobilization press
Loyalist press
Transitional press
Diverse press
Liberal democratic press
Transnational newspaper publishing
Transnational broadcasting
Al Arabiya
Arab News Network (ANN)
Middle East Broadcast Centre (MBC)

Test Questions – Chapter 8

Multiple Choice

- 1) Where does the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region rank on the knowledge-gap chart?

- a. On the high end, just below the most advanced (core) nations, but well above average.
 - b. Within the same range as most of the semiperipheral nations around the world.
 - c. Despite recent gains, it remains on the lower end, just above sub-Saharan Africa.*
 - d. Dead last.
- 2) MENA is the heart of what various scholars and internationalists have called the _____.
- a. arc of turmoil
 - b. arc of instability
 - c. arc of despair
 - d. all of the above*
- 3) Which of the following is NOT a characteristic shared by the MENA countries?
- a. Islam is the dominant religion, though Christians or Jews are sometimes the majority.
 - b. News reporting tends to be investigative and analytical.*
 - c. Each country has suffered a “brain drain,” particularly of scientists and technicians who have been lured to the West.
 - d. A general distrust of the West and Western, core-based media products.
- 4) How many stable democracies exist in the MENA region?
- a. none
 - b. one* (*Israel*)
 - c. 5
 - d. about 20
- 5) MENA nations’ press systems, in the degree of openness and transparency they employ, generally reflect _____.
- a. the aspirations of their governments*
 - b. the desires of their audiences, excluding women
 - c. Islamic law
 - d. rampant Anti-Western values; little openness or transparency exists because the Arab press actively avoids the Western model

- 6) What singular issue has “poisoned the air” in the Middle East, becoming an excuse cited by states for not moving forward with modernity, personal freedoms, free press, and democracy?
- fear of occupation by Western imperialists
 - desire to control the international oil market with impunity
 - the US war in Iraq
 - the Israeli/Palestinian issue*
- 7) Which of the following marked the downfall of the deep Arab legacy of knowledge acquisition and distribution?
- the Intifada
 - European conquest of the Ottoman Empire and subsequent colonization of the Middle East*
 - the rise of the United States
 - a general crackdown on free speech by Arab leaders
- 8) Choose the subcategory of the authoritarian press model that includes nationalistic newspapers that may criticize minor national figures, but refuse to criticize the central government. They are tools used by governments to mobilize populations to behave in ways desired by the government, who subtly censors their content. They fit the classic definition of propaganda.
- mobilization press*
 - alliance press
 - transitional press
 - diverse press
- 9) Choose the subcategory of the authoritarian press model that includes media fiercely loyal to the regime in power regardless of the type of ownership. Wealthy elites or members of royal families own many of these types of publications and have a stake in successful outcomes of government policies.
- mobilization press
 - loyalist press*
 - transitional press
 - diverse press

- 10) Israeli newspapers, which would be quite familiar to Americans, fit this category. They are tough, independent, and free from government control.
- loyalist press
 - corporate press
 - literary press
 - liberal democratic press*
- 11) Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of transnational newspaper publishing in Arab countries?
- Newspapers usually undergo review by censors before they can be distributed.
 - It is very difficult for the “Cyprus Press” to get an Egyptian offshore publication license.*
 - Most offshore publications are printed in London.
 - Many publications are owned by wealthy elites.
- 12) The modern era of transnational broadcasting in the Middle East *began . . .*
- with the 1985 launch of the communication satellite Arabsat.
 - in the early 1990s, when Saudi Arabian businessmen began distributing newspapers.
 - in the 1960s, during the movement toward pan-Arabism fomented by Egyptian president Gamel Abdel Nasser.*
 - None of these.
- 13) Which of the following, according to the textbook, is one of the seven factors that converged to solidify the transnational communications revolution in the Middle East?
- The disintegration of the Soviet Union, which had been influential in the region; many feared that militant Islamic fundamentalism would fill the void.*
 - Arabs desired a unified voice to speak out against the 2003 US invasion of Iraq.
 - Transnational broadcasting provided the more powerful Arab governments with a propaganda tool.
 - A general relaxation of censorship by Arab governments.

- 14) Which of the following was the first MENA country to use Arabsat for transnational broadcasting?
- Saudi Arabia
 - Israel
 - Egypt*
 - Qatar
- 15) Which of the following transnational broadcasting outlets is not run, in whole or in part, by the United States?
- Al Hurra
 - Radio Sawa
 - Radio Farda
 - Arab News Network (ANN)*
- 16) Al Jazeera is based in which country?
- Syria
 - Qatar*
 - Saudi Arabia
 - Iran
- 17) Al Jazeera's relationship with Osama bin Laden and its status as the only news organization to remain in Kabul after the US invasion of Afghanistan was met with . . .
- Praise by Arabs for first-rate journalism, but nervous disdain by Western leaders and media.
 - Requests by CNN and the BBC for tapes, to the dismay of the Bush administration.
 - International criticism for its gory portrayal of war and destruction.
 - All of the above.*
- 18) Choose a key difference between Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera, according to the textbook.
- Al Arabiya is much more edgy and opinionated.
 - By 2003, just weeks after its launch, Al Arabiya had already surpassed Al Jazeera in recognizability among Arabs.
 - Al Arabiya is more interested in credibility than sensational reporting.*

- d. Al Arabiya was founded and funded by Qatari government officials; Al Jazeera is an entirely private-sector business.
- 19) According to a 2003 survey of the six most technologically advanced countries in the region (Egypt, UAE, Morocco, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait), which satellite station is the most-watched? (Hint: founded in 1991 and based in London.)
- a. Middle East Broadcast Centre (MBC)*
 - b. Al Jazeera
 - c. Al Arabiya
 - d. Al Sharq al Awsat
- 20) According to the textbook, which event has raised the level of awareness about the power of advertising and public relations in the MENA region?
- a. The 2000 Palestinian Intifada
 - b. The 9/11 attacks
 - c. The growth of transnational and global broadcasting companies
 - d. All of the above*

True/False

- 21) The MENA region is one of the world's fastest-growing places for adopting the mechanisms of international communication (such as satellite dishes). (T)
- 22) Nations in the MENA region may achieve core status without embracing modernization and a free press. (F)
- 23) Among MENA countries, printed messages have greater population penetration than broadcast messages. (F)
- 24) A large percentage of the Arab population still believes that Israel was behind the 9/11 attacks, and the Arab media do little to dispel this type of notion. (T)
- 25) The Middle East has never been the world's most significant "knowledge center." (F)
- 26) With few exceptions, the MENA media follow an authoritarian model of the Four Theories of the Press. (T)
- 27) Media critics often regard the Middle East press as shackled by governments and by elitist interests. (T)

- 28) The 2004 South Asian tsunami was a lead story on every news outlet in the Middle East, reported with the same prominence as by the core-based channels. (F)
- 29) After the 9/11 attacks, there was a respite in criticism of US culture and foreign policy by the Arab media. (F)
- 30) Some offshore publications such as *The Middle East Times* circumvent government censorship by posting redacted or banned stories on their websites. (T)
- 31) Pan-Arab media took off during the 1967 Arab–Israeli war due to their balanced reporting. (F)
- 32) Al Jazeera became the most-watched, most-valued transnational broadcaster for Arabs all around the world because of its reporting of military conflicts. (T)
- 33) US officials, including Bush administration figures, have labeled Al Jazeera the “mouthpiece for Osama bin Laden.” (T)
- 34) Al Jazeera plans to establish an English-language version, to seek out a global audience in direct competition with CNN, Euronews, and the BBC. (T)
- 35) Al Arabiya is more fiery and aggressive in its reporting than its competitor, Al Jazeera. (F)
- 36) While internet usage in MENA lags the rest of the world, internet cafes and access to the internet is common in major cities. (T)
- 37) Internet penetration has spurred widespread economic development around the MENA region. (F)
- 38) Arab governments generally recognize the importance of commercial advertising to favorably positioning their countries in the West. (T)

Short Answer/Essay

- This chapter lists several threats to stability and freedom shared by MENA countries. These threats have led many to label this region the “arc of turmoil” or “the arc of crisis.” Explain this situation as it relates to freedom of the press and media/government interaction.
- Name three contributions made by the Middle East during its cultural golden age, during which it was the world’s knowledge center.
- William Rugh thinks the newspapers of the MENA region break down into four subcategories under the Authoritarian press theory. List and describe at least two of these subcategories.
- Explain the phenomenon of transnational newspaper publishing. Who publishes these newspapers, where are most published (*hint*: one city in particular), and who reads them?

- Discuss the trend of pan-Arabism, and explain in detail the Middle East's transnational communications revolution. Berenger lists seven factors on which this revolution was based. Incorporate these factors into your answer.
- Describe the development of Al Jazeera. How was its image affected, both in the Middle East and in the eyes of the US government, after the September 11 attacks and the subsequent war against terrorism?
- How has the journalistic style of Al Arabiya allowed it to set itself apart from Al Jazeera?
- Describe the nature of internet usage among citizens of the Middle East. What role do national governments play?
- Why has an advertising industry thus far failed to develop in the Middle East? How do Middle Eastern industries market their goods?