

International Media Systems

Welcome to AREACORE's online learning platform about international media systems!

About: The platform provides visual material about media systems in the Middle East and Europe, researched and compiled by the leading Communication Studies Institutes of the respective country.

Content: You can watch a complete movie of each country (45 min) or navigate between chapters such as „media history“, „legal framework“, „ownership structure“ or „social media“ (each 3-10 min). In addition, you can read the script of the lecture in Arabic or English and find literature references and charts for further research.

Producers: The platform is compiled by member institutes of [AREACORE – The Arab-European Association of Media and Communication Researchers](#) . Content has been produced by students and lecturers of the member institutes and is meant to be complemented by further videos and additional material. It is sponsored by the DAAD – German Academic Exchange Service.

Use: Everybody who is interested in learning more and who teaches about international media systems is invited to use the material of this platform. It can be shared under a [Creative Commons License CC-BY-NC](#). There are several options to use the material:

- individually as a starting point for research
- as a complete course
- comparatively in a course unit (e.g. “Compare ownership structures in Arab countries!”)
- as a basis for co-taught courses in two or more institutes (e.g. Egypt and Germany)

Arab Media Systems - a Classification

Video



Script (English)

Towards a New Classification of Arab Media-Government relationship

Mahmoud Galander, Qatar University

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Classification_A...alander 2017.pdf

The media system predictor is a simple method for understanding and explaining the media-government relationship in the Arab World. Based on the elements provided in the panes of the model, one may now develop media systems that will explain better the situation in the Arab world, and that may provide a better scale for the evaluation of other relevant media systems, like those of Muslim countries. As shown in table 1, the systems adopted are labeled (1) the socially focused media system, (2) the modernist monarchies media system, (3) the modernist republics media system and (4) the socially liberal media system. The distinguishing features of each of the systems, which are derived from the interface of the socio-cultural and political elements of society, are explained in the table.

Table 1: Arab Media Systems Categories & Features

	The Socially Focused media system	The Modernist Monarchies Media System	The Modernist Republics Media system	The Socially Liberal Media System
Categories				
Features				
Socio-political	Strongly Collectivist/ Social structure dictates political structure/strong tribalism.	Mildly collectivist/ political structure is influenced by social structure/ tribalism present and dominant to some extent	Mildly collectivist/ political structure is less influenced and not dictated by the social structure / tribalism present but not dominant	Mildly collectivist/ Political structure is not influenced by the social structure / tribalism is at its lowest/
Religocultural	Predominantly Mono-religious	Slightly multi-religious, with more emphasis on Islam	Slightly multi-religious/ Islam and other religions equally emphasized.	Multi-religious
Communication strategy	control-oriented	Mostly control-oriented	Mostly control-oriented	Mostly development-oriented

Communication System	Active social networks of communication / Mass media supplement the networks Media regulations and available/ media self-regulation is practiced	Social networks more active in rural areas/ Modern media (mass and social media[1]) dominant in urban centers Media regulations available/ punitive actions against the media are common.	Social networks more active in rural areas/ Modern media (mass and social media) dominant in urban centers Media regulations present/ punitive actions against media are common.	Modern media (mass and social media) are dominant/ social networks less active/ Laws exist but are used against the media less frequently.
Media	Face-to-face styles (Majalis/ mosques) are active, along modern social media. Classic mass media (Radio/ TV/ newspapers) are least effective.	Social (new) media dominant along classic mass media.	Social (new) media most dominant. Classic media are active, but not dominant.	Social (new) media most dominant. Classic mass media are active, but not dominant.
Content	No criticism of ruler/ low-level criticism of officials/ focus on historical heritage and culture.	No criticism of ruler/ more criticism of non-royal family officials/ focus on heritage and culture.	No criticism of ruler. Criticism of all other levels/ focus on infotainment.	Criticism for all levels of authority/ Focus on infotainment.

Based on the described distinguishing features of each of the four systems, and knowledge of the social, political and cultural characteristics of the Arab countries[2], we may now place the Arab countries into the four categories (Table 2). This new classification offers a more stable scheme, which places Arab countries based on the interaction of the socio-cultural tenets of society, thus avoiding the inaccurate and-sometimes faulty- interpretation of politics as the key constituent of media-government relationship in the region.

Table 2. Classification of Arab Media Systems

The Socially Focused media system	The Modernist Republics Media system	The Modernist Monarchies Media System	The Socially Liberal Media System
Saudi Arabia	Sudan	Jordan	Egypt
UAE	Mauritania	Morocco	Tunisia
Qatar	Syria	Kuwait	Yemen
Oman	Algeria		Libya
Bahrain	Djibouti		Iraq
	Somalia??		Lebanon

Conclusion:

Using a socio-cultural approach, this article provided a new scheme for the classification of Arab and other Muslim media systems, in which media government relations were interpreted based on more than the normative political setting approach adopted by several scholars. The new scheme identified the social and cultural elements of Arab societies that impact the activities and roles of media. Based on the scheme, four systems were developed, and Arab countries were categorized into them, according to the pertinent features suitable for one of the systems; thus providing a scheme that is more stable than William Rugh’s three-and four-tier systems. The scheme is considered a predictor, as it could be used for identifying the media system of socially and culturally similar entities like other Muslim societies.

[1] We use the term “Social media” to refer to the newest communication media in which mobile and internet technologies are applied: face book, twitter, snapchat, Instagram and so on..

[2] Which Rugh has succinctly identified in his writings on Arab media. See for example (Rugh, 1989).

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