

DEVELOPMENT NEWS IN SAUDI ARABIA

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF "EL-JAZIRA"

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A Journalist's main task is to inform, to give his readers the facts. His secondary task is to interpret, to put the facts in their framework, and where possible to draw conclusions. These are the tasks of political journalists, and also crime reporters, society page girls (sic), human story writers, everyone.

Including you. But you have a third task, a positive one. Perhaps the best word for it is "Promotion". It is your job not only to give the facts of economic life, and to interpret those facts, but to promote them, to bring them home to your readers. You must get your readers to realise how serious the development problems is, to think about the problem, to open their eyes to the possible solutions... to punch that hole in the vicious circle.

So you have a tougher job than most journalists. Perhaps, too, a far more satisfying one.

Chalkley, Alan B. *A Manual of Development Journalism*. Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1970. (P.2).

With the emergence of the liberation movements, and the birth of newly independent nations, the concept of development was attractive to economists, psychologists, sociologists and the like. A variety of strategies of development was provided by scholars. The final purpose of these models of development is to bring about development and change in those countries with critical conditions of life, high infant mortality, illiteracy, and unemployment.

These strategies range from right to left. In the fifties capitalist models of development dominated the trend of these strategies (Lange, Shamputer, Rostow, Hirshman, among others). In the late sixties and the seventies a literature about development strategies evolved from Third World economists and neo-marxists (Frank, Sweezy, Baran, Amin, Emmanuel, Dowidar and others). This variety of theoretical solutions has opened many doors to developing countries to choose whatever best fits their needs and aspirations. At the same time communicators started to pay attention to the phenomenon of change and what the means of communication can do about it (Lerner, Pye, Schramm).

However, and despite this score of studies and research more is still needed in these areas, and further contributions on the subject may bring about more interest in the process of development, and the potentialities of the media in implementing it. Many developing countries still do not have a communication policy after many years of independence. Third world leaders still neglect the capabilities of the media and their role in providing a good climate for the implementation of change.

These countries still have a very weak communication infrastructure and poor means, to be sufficient enough for and adequate, effective and horizontal mass information. Rural areas in developing countries still are marginalized and their populations alienated. The majority if not all the means of mass communication are concentrated in the major cities. While the process of development is intended to reach the masses in the rural areas; the means of production, facilities and commodities are in the urban areas. These contradictions and others which are inherited in their majority from a center periphery economic model imposed by colonial powers have been huge handicaps and obstacles for planners and communicators in developing nations.

This paper deals with the coverage of development news by a daily newspaper in Saudi Arabia. What one can expect from it, is good coverage and interest in what is going on in the process of change of such a country where there is an abundance of funds and capital, and where a variety of social programs, agricultural and industrial projects are expected to be enacted. On the other hand, and as Hedebro stated, the profit making character of the press may shift it away from its expected role and duty and ignore the nation's welfare and well being⁽¹⁾.

A brief look at the social, Political and Economic life in Saudia Arabia.

Saudia Arabia's poverty in mineral resources and its arid land did not attract the attention of the colonial powers at the time of the colonial expansionism. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia lies on 2,331,000 square kilometers of the Arabian peninsula. The kingdom, which extends from the Persian Gulf in the East to the Red Sea in the West, has deserts, oases, mountains, and valleys. Before the discovery of oil, the economy of the country depended mainly on pilgrimage income, a poor agriculture and livestock⁽²⁾. In the 1940's the discovery of huge oil resources transformed completely a country from its isolation and a lack of funds to a nation with one of the highest gross national product (GNP) in the world (SR 213 billion).

The Saudi political system stems mainly from a misinterpretation of the Islamic religion (Kuran)⁽³⁾. The country is governed by an absolute monarch. The king and the council of ministers, which is formed mainly of the royal family, are the legislative branches of the nation⁽⁴⁾. Besides, the king and the council of ministers, there are religious institutions and regional governors. Despite the government's claims that the political system of the country is based on the teachings of the Islamic religion, many muslim scholars believe that the political system of the saudis does not reflect the real and true picture of Islamic government. The legal estate is based mainly on the Islamic jurisprudence. The Saudi people inherited a culture strongly influenced by the Islamic religion, which is a very determinant factor in their daily life, their governing morals, dress, eating habits and business dealings.

Since 1945, with the extensive exploitation of oil, Saudi Arabia, which was a nomadic and a pastoral society, has seen many changes in its economy. From a very critical economic situation, the country has transformed itself into a new society with its social and economic infrastructure represented in schools, universities, hospitals, airports, farms and factories. In 1970 the kingdom launched its first development plan with a target growth rate of about 10 percent per year. In 1975 a second five year plan was launched. Its development strategy consisted of:

1. Diversification of the economic base through emphasis on increasing agricultural and industrial production.
2. Rapid development of the kingdom's manpower resources.

3. Development of the economic regions of the country by:

- wide distribution of productive investment based on the distinctive physical and human resources of each region, and

- social programs applied in accordance with need, thereby extending the benefits of national development to all sectors of the population without removing the incentives to individual effort and achievement⁽⁵⁾.

The strategy of development adopted by Saudi Arabia is based on the free market economy. That is to say the Saudis adopted a capitalist model of development based mainly on private investors and entrepreneurs. The economy is one-sided and depends mainly on the huge income of oil⁽⁶⁾. Despite the fact that the Saudis have tried to limit their total dependence on oil income, this aspect still prevails in their economic system. This one sidedness of the economy deepens the crucial dependence of the country on the multinational corporations and the center. Another aspect that raises major problems to the Saudi economy is the lack of qualified personnel, skilled labor force and experienced managers.

As in many other developing countries which opted for the capitalist model of development, the decision making process concerning the economic, social and cultural life is based on a micro-economic planning, a profit making goal. So far the Saudis have not established a rational relationship between the diverse components of the economy, especially the industrial, and the agricultural sectors. Furthermore, they have not been able to eliminate the contrast between town and country-side⁽⁷⁾. The income distribution pattern favors the royal family and those who own the means of production.

The content analysis of *El-Jazira* reflected this kind of weaknesses in the Saudi economic system. As it will follow in this paper, much of development news is reported about projects concentrated in urban areas. In addition, much of such news including that of high technology development may distort the local mode of consumption and patterns of social and cultural life.

With its considerable oil income, Saudi Arabia is still an under developed country importing the majority of the goods consumed by its population⁽⁸⁾. The agricultural sector is far from fulfilling its task and complementing the industrial sector of the economy. This latter is also having some problems and weaknesses. It is far from being an industrializing sector able to set up a domestic homogeneous economic framework that can avoid negative impacts and intrusions of multinational corpora-

tions and the drawbacks of the actual international economic order, which is in favor of the center and which is deepening the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots".

The rural population in Saudi Arabia is still marginalized and still suffers from a lack of necessary facilities and commodities. The resources in Saudi Arabia are not equally distributed throughout the country and some provinces have been able to develop faster than others, creating a regional desequilibrium and an internal dependency.

Another important factor in the Saudi's economic profile is the operation of the multinational corporations, which have to a large extent a freedom to act in accordance with their plans and profit making goals. The introduction of western technology, and foreign economic patterns without any prior studies and adaptation to local realities imposed on the Saudi society a new mode of consumption which destroys any tendency to independence, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency. The signs of this new mode can be seen throughout the variety of international advertising published in *El-Jazira* and other mass media.

Another problem facing planners and economic advisers in Saudi Arabia is the conservative pattern widespread throughout the whole country because of some religious leaders that are rejecting every technological goods and devices coming from the West.

Related studies of development news.

Little research on development news has been conducted, may be this is due to the difficulty to define what development news is and what is not. Another problem with this issue is to what extent can we trust some newspapers or news organizations which report in extenso what is handed to them by officials of various ministries.

The few studies that have been undertaken found that the newspapers studied paid a lot of attention to news about development (Mustafa, 1975; Asare, 1976; Sutupo, 1983). Other studies done on several third world dailies in Africa, Asia and Latin America found that little development news is reported in the newspapers. Furthermore, what is reported as development news is short in length, informative, descriptive and does not contain any criticism or evaluation. In particular, the stories did little comparison of the development outcome with original goals, of the problem with similar problems in other developing countries, and of the

relative success of a development program with government claims for success. This means that what was set by Aggarwala and Chalkley has never been practiced by third world journalists (Ogan and Swift, 1982; Ogan, Fair and Shah, 1983).

Another major finding in previous studies done on development news is the very insignificant use of cooperative and third world news agencies as providers of development news by news organizations of the "have nots". This means that the "big four" are still the main providers of news throughout the world.

Mass media in Saudi Arabia.

During the last two decades, the media in Saudi Arabia have developed rather quickly. Before 1960, the media were in a bad condition and the government paid a little attention to the whole process of development in the country. Modern mass communication media existed only on a small scale in the country, and reached a mere fraction of the population directly. There were a handful of newspapers and journals concentrated mainly in Mecca and Medina. Radio programs were, in general, accessible only to urban dwellers and the wealthier Saudis. Movies and public film showings were prohibited by the government because of the powerful influence of conservative religious leaders.

In the early sixties, the government began to work on the development of the mass media. The ministry of information has done important work to disseminate culture in the kingdom through the press and through broadcast media. An important role has been played by television through its cultural programs, such as adult education and literacy projects. By 1963 the government established its first press law defining strict guidelines for journalists and publishers.

There are now 60 publications in Saudi Arabia, 10 of which are daily newspapers. This does not include magazines and periodicals issued by educational institutions or by some special corporations and agencies. The 10 Saudi dailies are issued in four cities. Jeddah alone has 6 newspapers. Their circulation was evaluated at 20,000. Unesco in its statistical yearbook in 1981 stated that in 1970 there were 10 copies per 1000 inhabitants in Saudi Arabia. This is far below the Unesco minimum criteria, which is 10 copies per 100 persons.

AP, UPI, AFP and Reuters are the main sources for international news for the Saudi press. On the other hand some newspapers have their own correspondents in a number of local cities and major world capitals.

The press in Saudi Arabia is privately owned and "newspapers function as personal vehicles of their publishers or owners. There is no tradition of objective reporting"⁽⁹⁾. In its second development plan (1975-1980) the Saudi government did not plan or call for a single project concerning the press. However, the plan did pay much attention to audio-visual communication.

The Saudi newspapers are similar in their content. They consist mostly of similar sections, such as, international politics, local news, business, cultural activities, women's life, literature, and sports. Local and international advertising cover usually from three to six pages of the newspapers.

Crime and negative news concerning the Islamic countries are mostly prohibited. The press in Saudi Arabia generally pays attention to what is going on in the country. It covers programs, events, and facts concerning the development process in the nation. From the content analysis of *El-Jazira*, most news of this kind is merely descriptive, passive, and without in depth analysis. This phenomenon is due to two important factors. First, the lack of trained and qualified journalists. Second, the atmosphere in which the Saudi press operates. The "loyalist" press as Rugh called it in his book *the Arab Press* refers to the passive attitude and nature of the press in a number of Arab countries like Saudi Arabia, "It eschews criticism of the personalities at the top of the national government, and it exhibits little real diversity of treatment or view on important issues"⁽¹⁰⁾. The content of the press is essentially characterized by a lack of diversity. Even though the press is privately owned, one can read the same news in all the newspapers. The atmosphere in which the Saudi press functions can be explained by three major factors related to government control of the media.

1- Government influence derived from loyal authority: the Saudi press law promulgated in 1963 stated that "The state has no right to interfere with the press except for the sake of the "general welfare"⁽¹¹⁾. This is a legal strategy to censor the press and control it. In fact, there is no straight forward explanation of the term "general welfare" and what really those words mean. These kinds of restrictions can be found in the majority of developing nations.

2- Government influence derived from financial benefits: this is another practical asset that gives the Saudi government much authority to control the press. This latter is a major source of revenue through its official advertising, subscription for its employees and its agencies, and through direct subsidies in some cases.

3- Political environment: the political environment in which the Saudi press operates is not one in which a press can control, criticize or carry out adequately the role of the fourth estate. In Saudi Arabia there is no independent parliament. There is no institutionalized political opposition, and no political participation from the masses. The medieval political system established in the country is far from having a constitutional or a democratic monarchy. Backed by the elite, the royal family is the supreme power in the country over which no one has control or make challenges to. The upper class of society favors the perpetuation of the political, economic, and social status quo⁽¹²⁾. Therefore, the journalist in Saudi Arabia operates under an amalgam of constraints.

Given the actual situation of the press in Saudi Arabia and the content analysis of *El-Jazira*, the press in the Saudi Kingdom is far from fulfilling its role of development journalism. Critical and evaluative reporting dealing with development issues at micro and macro levels, making evaluations, examination and criticism of development projects in regard to national and local needs, are all difficult for the journalist to do and highlight in his writings⁽¹³⁾. This situation is due to the contradictions and anomalies in which the press must operate.

As a matter of fact, the business section of *El-Jazira* throughout 30 issues of this study's sample did not reserve a single news story to the economic development process in the country. The section focused on the prices of gold in the international market, the value of international currencies... etc, and neglected issues that could be of some interest for the country, such as the international economic relations of the Kingdom, discussions of projects and plans, either in the country or elsewhere, news analysis and evaluative reporting on the failure or success of projects.

As Kuran summarized in the *World Press Encyclopedia*, the Saudi Arabian press is far from being ripe and ready to pay its role adequately in the process of development. It is still a minor institution with very little power to change the cultural, economic and political structure of the country⁽¹⁴⁾. The country's medieval political system still has the last

decision on every single issue in the country. The future is not promising at all, except in the case of a radical change in the political and economic system.

El-Jazira: the newspaper of this study

El-Jazira is a daily newspaper published in Arabic in Riyadh. It was established in 1962. The meaning of its title *El-Jazira* is Peninsula referring to the geographic position of Saudi Arabia which is characterized by a vast desert in the South "Rubaa Al-Khali" and bordered in the East by the Persian Gulf and in the West by the Red Sea. This is why Arabs and Saudis call the Kingdom, the Arabic Peninsula. They consider "Rubaa Al-Khali" another sea that makes Saudi Arabia an Island.

The paper is published from Saturday through Thursday. It is privately owned by the "Institution of El-Jazira Press for Print and Diffusion" with a profit making character. The paper's length varies from 28 to 32 pages. It is divided into the following sections: Arab Affairs, Local Affairs, Social Life, Women's Section, Sciences and Literature, International Affairs, and Sports. The circulation of the paper was approximately estimated at 45,000 issues a day, the eighth largest paper in the country. The newspaper devotes from 4 to 5 pages to national and international advertising. The topics of advertising vary from cars, stereos, televisions, electronic goods to personal and classified ads. The format and style of the paper is largely influenced by the Egyptian school which has a lead in this area. The graphic layout and design of the paper is close to that of the Western Press. The ads are almost issued in the same manner as those in the West. Some international ads are often just translated. The local section, Arabic, and international affairs are the sections that get the largest space in the newspaper. *El-Jazira* lags far behind the large newspapers in status such as *Ech-Chark El-Awasat*, *Er-Riyad*, *Ukaz* and *El-Madina*.

Purpose of the study and research questions

In the ongoing debate of the New International Information Order, Third World countries have been criticizing western nations for not covering development news in the periphery. Development news, a new concept was added to the journalistic terminology.

Third world scholars refer to development news as a kind of journalism that should not be equated with governments handouts⁽¹⁵⁾. The journalist, according to this new concept, must criticize, evaluate, and raise issues of interest to the whole society. This new concept has been differently interpreted and suffered the constraints and contradictions under which the press operates in developing countries. It is very difficult to find good examples of this new journalism occurring in any of the developing nations.

This study may still give us an idea of how this new journalism is being implemented and practiced in Saudi Arabia through the coverage of the development process in the country.

Research questions

- Are the ideals set by Aggarwala concerning development news realistic and applicable?
- Is development news covered adequately by developing countries?
- Have Third World spokesmen been criticizing Western news agencies on this issue, while developing nations themselves fail to cover their development issues as they should?
- What importance was given to the coverage of the development process by *El-Jazira*?
- What kind of issues are being covered and which ones receive the greatest amount of attention?
- Which kind of sources were used? Are the news stories critical or just reports of facts and events about development?
- Did the model given by Aggarwala find any practice in the Saudi press? or are Western scholars right when they state that information in the periphery is “merely a report based on a government handout”⁽¹⁶⁾.

The findings of this study will shed some light on the ongoing controversy between the center and the periphery concerning the topics and the orientation of news covered by the international news agencies, and will give us an idea on how the press in Saudi Arabia is carrying out its task in the development process.

Hypotheses:

H₁: Given the constraints under which *El-Jazira* operates the percentage of development news is going to be found very low.

H₂: Development news in *El-Jazira* is going to be more informative, and descriptive than critical and analytical.

H₃: *El-Jazira* will devote the majority of its development news to the most needed things in society such as agriculture, education and cultural events.

H₄: Cooperative news agencies (CANA, IPS, PANA and the NANA) are the main providers of development news items to *El-Jazira*.

Method:

For the purpose of this study the content analysis method was used. A coding scheme (see appendix) was developed according to the purpose and objectives of the study. Issues of *El-Jazira* from the month of December 1982 and January 1983 were chosen in accordance with what was available in the main library of Indiana University. Development news was defined as follows:

Development news deals with topics such as culture, education, medicine, nutrition, shelter, health, transportation, telecommunication, employment, political participation, and a more equitable distribution of resources. The content of the news of feature should have information with a potential to satisfy the needs of the population. In that effort, the news item may provide context, background material; describe a process and not only an event, answer “how” and “why” question; and discuss the consequences of an event or process. Some news / feature items may not take such approaches, but appear to be written to meet the needs of the people, rather than to adhere to a society Western definition of news which emphasizes, conflict, personalities, politics, the sensational or bizarre, the disaster or tragic event”⁽¹⁸⁾.

Results:

Coder reliability:

Ten stories were chosen randomly and coded by an independent coder. Holsti’s formula was used to determine the reliability. The reliability score was .85, highly satisfactory according to the norms of inter-coder reliability.

Ninety-six news items dealing with development were found in 30 issues of *El-Jazira* coded in this study. The data shows the interest of the editor in development news in Saudi Arabia. Among the 96 stories coded from the sample, 18.8 percent were news items of more than one page. *El-Jazira* devotes a lot of space to development news. However, 83.3 percent of the stories received a low priority. The majority of the stories about development were in the inside pages of the newspaper and usually appeared below the fold. While the newspaper gave great importance to the size of the news stories it did not give the same importance to their placement in the paper.

This is due mainly to the fact that *El-Jazira* uses the front page for international events, and the political activities of the King and the different ministries and government agencies. This is the reason why just 3.1 percent of the news items got a high priority. Another characteristic of *El-Jazira's* interest on development news is the type of the news item. This study shows that 57.3 percent of the stories were story and photo from the findings of variables six, seven and eight respectively "Type of item" "size" and "priority given to the item", it can be concluded that *El-Jazira* pays a good amount of attention to development news.

Concerning variable number nine, "where does the item originate" findings show that *El-Jazira* concentrates on issues of development originating in Saudi Arabia (78.7%), and the remaining stories were devoted to bordering countries (6.3%) and to other developing nations (11.5%). Only one news story out of 96 was devoted to developed countries (see table 2). This shows the great interest of the Saudis in covering their own development process and those of other developing nations.

The majority of the news stories coded as development news were "home news at home". This means that the newspaper pays a lot of attention and gives a high priority to what's going on in its home country. In the meantime; however, *El-Jazira* devoted a high percentage to foreign news abroad, 21.9 percent. This category of news was mainly about regional Arab projects, and common plans among Middle Eastern and North African Arab countries and the Gulf oil nations.

The "Setting of item" shows a balance in the distribution of percentages between rural and urban areas. However, the highest percentages were about news stories concerning the whole nation (34.4 percent). This explains the interest of the government in developing the country on a regional equilibrium basis.

Findings from variable 12 "Who provided this item" show that 68.8 percent of the stories were provided by *El-Jazira's* own reporters. The reliance of the newspaper on the transnational news agencies concerning development news is insignificant. Only one item was provided by Agence France Presse (AFP). This shows that the newspaper relies heavily on its own personnel, and to some extent on the Saudi national news agency, while reporting development news originating in Saudi Arabia or in neighboring nations (see table 3).

One can also speculate about the fact that transnational news agencies do not give enough importance to development news. Concerning the second provider of the item, among the 96 cases coded in the study, *El-Jazira* did not use a single second source of its coverage of development news. This can be seen as a weakness in the newspaper. It can also be concluded from the findings on the provider of the item that the charges of Developing nations against the West concerning the New International Information and Communication Order, and the non-coverage of positive news by the "big four" are valid.

The major development news topics appearing in *El-Jazira* reflect Saudi Arabia's wide interest in aspects of development. Higher education, agriculture got respectively 15.6 percent and 19.6 percent; and health, transportation, and industry were the most covered issues by *El-Jazira*. Among these topics, agriculture got the highest percentage. This shows the interest of the Saudi government in developing the agricultural sector which is weak, and underdeveloped. The Saudis import more than 50 percent of their foodstuff needs. This interest in all components of the economy is a good indicator for a diversified and a homogenous economy. Examination of the data on the first and second subtopic shows that the highest percentages were given to culture 14.6 percent, economy 9.4 percent, higher education and education with the same percentage 6.3 percent.

Content analysis of *El-Jazira* refutes hypothesis one that states "Given the constraints under which El-Jazira operates the percentage of development news is going to be found very low" findings show that *El-Jazira* paid a lot of attention to the coverage of the development process in the Saudi Kingdom.

It was expected from earlier data that development news in *El-Jazira* would to some extent appear in feature format; however, the findings of the variable set of this purpose "type of news" show that 3/4 of the news stories were spots and only 1/4 were feature. This explains the passivity

Table 1: Size of item

	Number of stories	%
Up to 1-8th	35	36.5
1-8th to 1-4th	13	13.5
1-4th to 3-8th	6	6.3
3-8th to half	5	5.2
Half to 5-8th	9	9.4
5-8th to 3-4th	7	7.4
3-4th to 7-8th	2	2.1
7-8th to whole page	1	1.0
More than one page	18	18.8
<i>Total</i>	96	100.2%*

Table 2: Origin of Item

	Number of stories	%
In the Country	75	78.1
Any Bordering Country	6	6.3
Another Developing Country	11	11.5
Another Developed Country	1	1.0
International, Others	3	3.1
<i>Total</i>	96	100.0%*

Table 3: Provider of Item

	Number of stories	%
AFP	1	1.0
Depth News	3	3.1
National Agency	16	16.7
Non-Aligned Poll	1	1.0
Other Source Home	2	2.1
Other Source Foreign	3	3.1
Own Reporter	66	68.8
Unidentified Home	4	4.2
<i>Total</i>	96	100.0%*

* Due to rounding error total adds up to more than 100%.

of *El-Jazira* towards the process of development in the country. From the readings of the articles it was noticed that the majority of the news items were just constructed reports on facts without in depth analysis, logical criticism, or suggestions of solutions and recommendations. In spite of the fact that the size of news items was large, *El-jazira* did not emphasize the qualities of development journalism as explained by Aggarwala. This also was explained by Rugh's thesis on the loyalist press in Saudi Arabia, i.e., the press in this system is "loyal to and supportive of the regime in power despiste the fact that it is privately owned"⁽¹⁹⁾. This finding supports hypothesis number two "Development news in *El-Jazira* is going to be more informative and descriptive than critical and analytical".

Concerning the sources consulted for development news, the findings of the content analysis of *El-Jazira* show heavy use of human sources, 86.5 percent. This is a very high percentage which refutes the thesis of western critics saying that sources consulted for development news are most likely to be documents and government handouts. The percentage of the stories which use both human and documents sources was very low, 4.2 percent. This explains that the newspaper usually relies on only one source.

From the study, it was found that the main source of the newspaper for development news is the non-government source, 71.9 percent, whereas the percentage of official government source was only 22.9 percent. This can be seen as a healthy trend in Saudi Development journalism.

Foreign sources were used by *El-Jazira* to some extent (21 news stories had foreign sources), while the highest percentage was given to native sources (63 news stories). For the most part, stories originating within the country rely on only native sources. Only 12 news items used both native and foreign sources, this was mainly in stories concerning regional and international seminars, meetings, and development projects in which foreign technical assistance is needed such as industry, agriculture and urbanization.

Variables 19 through 23 (see appendix) set up to test how *El-Jazira* treated development news show some good trends and some negative ones in the Saudi press. According to Aggarwala:

"A journalist should critically examine, evaluate and report the relevance of a development project to national and local needs, the difference between a planned scheme and its actual implementation, and the differences between its impact on people as claimed by government officials and as it actually is"⁽²⁰⁾.

Was *El-Jazira* critical in its coverage? Did it evaluate the projects of development? Did it criticize planners, bureaucrats and government officials? Or did it merely report the fact without in depth analysis and critical view?

The variable aimed at measuring the overall tone of items shows that 43.8 percent of the stories were positive. Variable 20 set to measure criticism in the stories shows that 81 stories were not critical. Variable 21 aimed at measuring if the item compares subject with original goals shows that fifty percent of the stories did not make the comparison at all. Almost the same percentage was found in variable 22 aimed at measuring if the item compares the subject with government claims for success.

Variable concerning the speculation of the item on the future of the subject, and if the item examines the relevance to local or national needs, show high percentages, (87.5%) and (86.5%) respectively. While the last variable shows that 78.1 percent of the news stories did not compare the subject to similar phenomena in other countries.

In analyzing the data of the last seven variables in the coding scheme (19 through 25) one can conclude that some of them (23, 24) go hand in hand with the ideals of Aggarwala. Other variables, (19, 21, 22) show a fifty-fifty percentage. This means that it is difficult to make valid conclusions. On the other hand, variables (20,25) show that *El-Jazira* is not following the principles of development journalism set by Aggarwala. According to the data of these two variables it can be concluded that *El-Jazira* did not report critically on the Saudi government planners, and initiators of projects.

The majority of the items were thus, just stories about what some persons said in a speech, what the project is about, when it is expected to be accomplished and so on. Stories did not try to find out why some projects failed, or does such project satisfy the needs of the masses. It can be concluded that the ideals of development journalism are far from being practiced, applied and met in the Saudi press. On the other hand, the data of this study support the thesis of the "loyalist" press by Rugh in his book, *the Arab Press*.

Conclusion

In analyzing a newspaper on development news in a country like Saudi Arabia where there is an abundance of funds, and where the

country is doing its best to industrialize and to develop itself rapidly, one can expect that the news organizations are going to complement the process of development and to push it forward by covering development issues and by devoting space and time to criticize, suggest and evaluate what is going on in the country and what is right and wrong.

1. Speaking of the amount of news items about development, it can be said that *El-Jazira* devoted a good amount of space to development news. Comparison of the findings of *El-Jazira* with other studies support this conclusion. This finding refutes hypothesis number one of this study: "Given the constraints under which *El-Jazira* operates the percentage of development news is going to be found very low".

2. Another positive aspect in the newspaper is the kind of topics covered. The findings show that the highest percentages were devoted to the most important needs of the Saudis (agriculture, culture, education). This conclusion supports hypothesis number three: "*El-Jazira* will devote the majority of its development news to the most needed things in society such as agriculture, education and cultural events".

3. Quality of development news in *El-Jazira* is one of its negative aspect. While the newspaper gave great importance to the space and topics of development news, it did not give the same importance to the treatment and analysis of the stories. Another negative trend in the newspaper is the type of news. Seventy five percent of the news items were spot news. *El-Jazira* was far from being critical and evaluative, 84.4 percent of the stories did not compare the subject of the item to similar phenomena in other countries. Although the findings of some variables (23,24) did show some aspects of critical journalism, *El-Jazira* still did not succeed to a large extent in covering development issues from a constructive, evaluative and a critical approach. This conclusion supports hypothesis number two: "Development news in *El-Jazira* is going to be more informative, and descriptive than critical and analytical".

4. The charge from the West against developing nations stating that development news in Third World countries is government handouts, and propaganda, and the sources of this kind of news consist of documents and official government sources, is refuted by the findings of this study. Eighty six point five percent of the writer's sources were human. Only 3 stories out of 96 used government sources. This is a healthy trend in *El-Jazira* that may open a new perspective to its managers and reporters for establishing a new style, and an accountable, responsible, and credible journalism.

5. The charge of developing countries against the "big four" in not covering events on development in Third World nations is supported by the findings of this study. Only one news item out of 96 was from a transnational news agency, Agence France Presse (AFP).

6. References made about cooperative news agencies and their use as main providers and sources for development news by Third World countries are refuted according to the findings of this study (Hypothesis number four). The promises about such news agencies and their ability to provide to developing countries what is lacking in transnational news agencies, did not find any support in the findings of this study.

News agencies; such as Panafrican News Agency (PANA), Inter Press Service (IPS), Caribbean News agency (CANA), and other cooperative news agencies were not used at all as sources for any of the news stories coded in this project. Only the Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool (NANAP) was used once as a source for one story.

The content analysis of *El-Jazira* shows that through this newspaper the Saudi press still have a lot to do in terms of development journalism. Accountability, responsibility, and credibility are three major aspects that every journalist in the Kingdom should put into consideration if S/he wants to use her/his pen to promote development and change in the country.

Endnotes

- (1) Goran Hedebo. *Communication and Social Change in Developing Nations: A Critical View* (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1982) p.49.
- (2) Ramon Knaueherhase. *The Saudi Arabian Economy* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975) p.57.
- (3) According to Islam the inheritance of political power from father to son or from brother to brother is prohibited. The distribution of wealth in the society must be done on an equal basis. These are two of the main controversies in the Saudi political and economic system while the list is long.
- (4) Knaueherhase. p.30.
- (5) Ministry of Planning, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Second development Plan: 1975-1980* (Riyadh, 1976) p.58.
- (6) Ninety percent of the income of the country comes from oil.
- (7) The countryside in Saudi Arabia still lacks electricity, running water, roads and other indispensable commodities, while urban areas are developing tremendously.
- (8) Knaueherhase. p.111.
- (9) George Thomas Kurian. *World Press Encyclopedia*. Vol. II (New York: Fact on File Inc, 1982) p.782.
- (10) William A. Rugh. *The Arab Press: News Media and Political Process in the Arab World* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1979) p.74.
- (11) Ibid.p.77.
- (12) Ibid.p.84.
- (13) Narrinder K. Aggarwala, "What is Development News?" *Journal of Communication*, 29,2, Spring, 1979, pp.181-182.
- (14) Kurian. p.784.
- (15) Aggarwala. pp.181-182.
- (16) Christine Ogan and Clint Swift, "Is the News About Development All Good?", paper presented to the International Communication Division, Association for Education in Journalism, Annual Convention, Ohio University Athens, Ohio, July 1982. p.2.
- (17) See "Development News Codebook".
- (18) This definition was a result of work done in a Seminar on "Communication and National Development at Indiana University School of Journalism.
- (19) Rugh. p.76.
- (20) Aggarwala. pp.181-182.

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Appendix Development News Codebook

In order to determine whether an item is considered "development News" use the following definitions as a guide:

Development: A process by which a country works toward relative economic self-reliance. Self-reliance is characterized by heterogeneous, but cooperative sectors of the economy operating efficiently to meet the needs of a majority of a nation's population. (A nation's needs include: culture, education, medicine, nutrition, shelter, health, transportation, telecommunication, employment, political participation and a more equitable distribution of resources).

Development News: deals with topics such as culture, education, medicine, nutrition, shelter, health, transportation, telecommunication, employment, political participation and a more equitable distribution of resources. The content of the news or feature should have information with a potential to satisfy the needs of the population. In that effort, the news item may provide context, background material; describe a process and not only an event, answer "how" and "Why" questions; and discuss the consequences of an event or process. Some news/feature items may not take such approaches, but appear to be written to meet the needs of the people, rather than to adhere to a strictly Western definition of news which emphasises, conflict, personalities, politics, the sensational or bizarre, the disaster or tragic event.

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Coder's ID number | Cols. 1,2 |
| 2. Item Number | Cols. 3,4,5 |
| 3. Month of issue | Cols. 6,7 |
| 4. Day of issue | Cols. 8,9 |
| 5. Type of paper
1 = tabloid
2 = broadsheet | Col. 10 |
| 6. Type of item
1 = Story only
2 = Story and photo
3 = Photo/illustration only
4 = Other | Col. 11 |
| 7. Size (estimated pages, including jumps)
1 = Up to 1/8
2 = 1/8 to 1/4
3 = 1/2 to 3/8
4 = 3/8 to 1/2
5 = 1/2 to 5/8
6 = 5/8 to 3/4
7 = 3/4 to 7/8
8 = 7/8 to whole page
9 = more than one page | Col. 12 |
| 8. Priority given to the item
1 = High (generally front page and above the fold)
2 = Medium (below the fold, front page or page two or three above the fold inside)
3 = Low (placed inside, below the fold, usually farther back and with small headline) | Col. 13 |

9. Where does the item originate Col. 14
- 1 = In the country the paper is from
 - 2 = In any country bordering on the country the paper is from
 - 3 = In another developing country (not including those in 2)
 - 4 = In another developed country (not including those in 2)
 - 5 = In an international organization headquarters
 - 6 = Other

19. What setting does the item concern Col. 15
- 1 = Predominantly urban
 - 2 = Predominantly rural
 - 3 = Concerns a region of the country (urban and rural could be combined here)
 - 4 = Predominantly national — could combine urban and rural
 - 5 = Predominantly international — could combine urban and rural

11. Location of item Col. 16
- 1 = Home news at home
 - 2 = Home news abroad
 - 3 = Foreign news at home
 - 4 = Foreign news abroad
 - 5 = Other/uncertain

12. Who provided this item Cols. 17,18 — cols. 19,20
(can code two sources)
- 1 = AFP
 - 2 = AP
 - 3 = ASEAN
 - 4 = ASIN
 - 5 = Depth News
 - 6 = Fed. of Arab News Agencies
 - 7 = Gemini
 - 8 = Inter-Press (IPS)
 - 9 = National Agency (of the country)
 - 10 = Non-aligned Pool (Tanjug)
 - 11 = Other source (home)
 - 12 = Other source (foreign)
 - 13 = Own reporter
 - 14 = Pan-African
 - 15 = Reuters
 - 16 = Reader initiated
 - 17 = Unidentified-home
 - 18 = Unidentified-foreign
 - 19 = Tass
 - 20 = UPI
 - 21 = Other

13. Topics (code main and up to two subsidiary topics) Cols. 21,22,23,24,25,26
- 1 = Agriculture
 - 2 = Consumerism
 - 3 = Culture
 - 4 = Food
 - 5 = Economic
 - 6 = Education K-12
 - 7 = Education — Higher ed.
 - 8 = Family/family planning/population
 - 9 = Labor
 - 10 = Health

- 11 = Housing
- 12 = Industry
- 13 = Mass media (incl. word of mouth)
- 14 = National Integration
- 15 = Science
- 16 = Telecommunications (infrastructure, data, telephone, computer)
- 17 = Tourism
- 18 = Trade
- 19 = Transport
- 20 = Urbanization/migration
- 21 = Welfare
- 22 = AID or Foreign AID
- 23 = Energy

14. Type of News Col. 27
- 1 = spot (where currency of publication affects reader interest — about an event)
 - 2 = feature (about a process or series of events — where currency of publication does not affect reader interest; interest is long-term)

15. Writer's sources Col. 28
- 1 = Predominantly human
 - 2 = Predominantly document
 - 3 = A balanced mixture of human and documents as sources
 - 4 = Sources not attributed
 - 5 = Other

16. Government sources (quantity) Col. 29
- 1 = No government sources
 - 2 = Only government sources
 - 3 = Some government sources + other sources
 - 4 = No sources attributed
 - 5 = Can't tell

17. Government sources (kind) Cols. 30,31,32
(code up to three)
- 1 = Official government source (in office)
 - 2 = Official government opposition
 - 3 = Government expert
 - 4 = Non-government opposition
 - 5 = Other non-government source
 - 6 = Non-government expert
 - 7 = Person affected

18. Were those sources Col. 33
- 1 = Foreign
 - 2 = Native
 - 3 = Both

19. Would you say the item's overall tone is Col. 34
- 1 = Positive
 - 2 = Negative
 - 3 = Balanced
 - 4 = Can't tell

20. Does the item contain critical sources? Col. 35
- 1 = Yes
 - 2 = No
 - 3 = Not applicable

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 21. Does the item compare the subject with original goals?
1 = Yes
2 = No
3 = Not applicable | Col. 35 |
| 22. Does the item compare the subject with government claims for success?
1 = Yes
2 = No
3 = Not applicable | Col. 37 |
| 23. Does the item speculate on the future of the subject?
1 = Yes
2 = No
3 = Not applicable | Col. 38 |
| 24. Does the item examine the relevance to local or national needs?
1 = Yes
2 = No
3 = Not applicable | Col. 39 |
| 25. Does the item compare the subject to similar phenomena in other countries?
1 = Yes
2 = No
3 = Not applicable | Col. 40 |