

Is there an Arab Public Sphere?

Dr. Daoud Djefafla, University of Biskra, Algeria.

Abstract:

With the advent of satellite, channels, regional broadcasting, at the end of the last century, increased in number during the first decade of the third millennium. the idea of a "Arab Public Sphere" has grown and with a lot of academic research based on this idea to presames its ability to "create a democracy", in the Arab countries. In this study, a critical approach to try to understand the validity of this argument based on the perception of the historic public space with Jürgen Habermas and studies provided by the Frankfurt School Accordingly it constitutes the main source of the idea of the active "Arab media" and as a result the objective is to determine the nature of space, to identify its features and explain how it works.

المخلص:

مع ظهور القنوات الفضائية ذات البث الجهوي في نهاية القرن الماضي و تزايد عددها خلال العشرية الأولى من الألفية الثالثة تنامت فكرة وجود فضاء عام عربي" و ظهرت الكثير من الأبحاث الأكاديمية التي تعتمد على هذه الفكرة في القول بقدرتها على "خلق ديمقراطية" ما في البلدان العربية. في هذه الدراسة مقارنة نقدية لمحاولة فهم مدى صحة هذه المقولة بالاعتماد على التصور التاريخي للفضاء العام لدى يورغن هابرماس (Jürgen Habermas) و الدراسات التي قدمتها مدرسة فرانكفورت تبعا لذلك و التي تشكل المصدر الرئيسي للفكرة العربية حول "فضاء العام العربي" و نتيجة لذلك يكون الهدف هو تحديد ماهية الفضاء التي تنشط فيه وسائل الإعلام العربية، تحديد معالمة و شرح طريقة عمله.

Introduction

In recent years, several studies in different disciplines (sociology, political science, etc.) have been made on the metamorphosis of the field in the Arab media and concluded one way or another to the creation of "Arab Public Sphere" by the new continuous news channel, namely, the Qatar television station Al Jazeera, or at least modifying the said space (among other Lamoum, 2004 and El Oifi, 2005).

This finding suggests that an explicit way "the existence" of an "Arab Public Sphere" refers implicitly to the European model habermasian, peculiar to the West with all that represents values, social construction, fashion governance, etc. He just appears to itself legitimate and appropriate. Therefore, it seems important to identify the space where the TV and many others act and understand its establishment and operation compared to the model of Haber as. In other words, we must conduct an investigation in the Arab region to establish links between the rules of Public Sphere habermasian and realities in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East. This lets us know the stakes of this space and then understand the nature of relationships between the controls its of actors.

Therefore, it seems vital to seek its "Truth". To examine it, we start with an update on the concept of the Habermasian Public Sphere

to identify the definition, conditions and applications of the concept in order to examine the Arabic case.

1. The Reference to the Western concept of Public Sphere

Speaking of Public Sphere, is to refer mainly to the Western concept founded by Jürgen Habermas, explained in "*Public Sphere. Archaeology of advertising as a constitutive dimension of bourgeois society*"⁽¹⁾. (1978) and subsequently developed in several works including Theory of Communicative Action. Make reference to the concept of Public Sphere, does not mean explain his genealogy, nor follow its development over time or even discuss its evolution and fragmentation (Miège, 2004).

It is only to highlight the concept of Public Sphere as identified in the Western democracies and then to examine whether it is ad hoc to the realities of the Arab countries. Therefore, it seems useful to put the keys to the theory of Public Sphere in relief to measure and understand if its criteria may apply to the Arab countries.

Jürgen Habermas explains that, following the movement and cons of privatization within Western societies, a "Public Sphere" was built. Inside, a discussion was initiated between the individuals that will be as public. This Public Sphere (*öffentlikeit*) takes this qualification on two dimensions: it is public policy because it is beyond the control of the state, and is possibly the action of the latter into question by the trade and the critical within the public (*öffentlich*). Its trade and its critics allow a form of advertising to appear. The criticism then is based on reason. since only the best arguments can have it.

This sphere is the bourgeois public because access to the discussion is reserved exclusively to one category of Western society. They are those who own property and a culture allowing them to intervene on matters discussed. Therefore, this excludes the public sphere considered private skills that allows him to use reasoning. On his side and continuity of the work of the Frankfurt School, Bernard Miège described public space as a "red thread" which involves communicative action, the fate of politics and the constitution of the social bond (Miège , 1995, p.164). He does not see Public Sphere as a stable entity but as a place frozen in motion and constantly changing. Therefore, he stressed that the first emerging public spaces, organized around the release of opinion, the bourgeoisie, the closeness and Western democracy, transform it, whoop it up and break it up following the evolution of new technologies information and communication (Miège, 2004, p.166).

From this understanding, we can say that Public Sphere in Western societies is, overall, tied to its context of emergence and development of democracy, its actors (the press opinion and its successors) And its interaction with the political and social (parliament, political parties, etc..). In this situation, we will have the right to say that there is "an Arab Public Sphere".

2. The Idea of an « Arab Public Sphere »?

Many work raised the existence of an "Arab public sphere". In France, for example, Mohammed El Oifi evokes the idea of a competition between the Arab states to control "the Arab public sphere" (2005). He confirms this thought by noting that the pan-Arab

media provide the possibility of political influence “the Arab public sphere”. For his part, Olfa Lamoum (2004) suggests that Al Jazeera's voice opens up to women to access “public sphere” (p. 75). In the Arab countries, the director of studies of public opinion, the sociologist Adli Atef, claims the existence of “an Arab public space” where there is a way to “measure” the influence of regional media. Other authors found that “the Arab media” have allowed “the Arab Public Sphere” to emerge and take shape (Youssef, 1987).

From all these approaches, it seems that the vision of “Arab” public space is attached to the original concept and the Western public sphere, that is to say, it regards it as a space universal which can be used anywhere in the world. It seems impertinent because the Western definition of public space remains appropriate to democratic societies, in which the concept was born, has evolved and developed. Therefore, the idea of a Western audience naturalized Arab can not be established in a context that is not his, nor operating under conditions that are not theirs.

At the time, models of public sphere formed successively in societies where democracy has taken root since a long time (Miège, 1997, p. 114); how can we claim the existence of "Arab public sphere" based on criteria that are specific to the Western Public Sphere? Therefore, the idea of "Arab public sphere" seems impertinent, and it is important to show that insolence. How do I do that? Since the idea

of an "Arab Public Sphere" is based on the basis of the western conception of the work of Habermas and the Frankfurt School, it is appropriate to examine the basis of this "Arab Public Sphere" the criteria of the theory" original ". This helps to understand if these conditions are met and therefore whether there really grasp "Arab Public Sphere." Indeed, this review will be conducted from a few criteria operated by Bernard Miège (1997, p. 115-116) which are to define the models that the media has built as a public sphere. These criteria, which will be explained further during the review of "the Arab public sphere", are: the relationship between media and subjects ; citizens, the importance of the people involved in media services; the line writing programs, the report to state power and economic interests, and the type of economic organization adopted by the media and communication techniques dominant.

2.1 The Relationship Between Media and Subjects / Citizens

It is difficult to understand the relationship between the pan-Arab media and their viewers. If Bernard Miège (1997) focuses on the qualification, subjects / citizens, which defines the ratio of the Western media with its public, the classification grid and Arab audiences are ambiguous. In the case of pan-Arab media and in respect of satellite television in particular, it seems that at least formally, to speak of an "Arab citizen" is impertinent to the extent that there is not a pan-Arab entity (policy or official or otherwise) that establishes the duties and rights, although that term is used in different

occasions: formal discourse, press, etc.. On the merits, the notion of "Arab citizenship" is absent in pan-Arab media on the level of trust and participation. Indeed, there is a crisis of confidence between the depth Arab viewers and media. The media does not consider the Arab individual worthy of their trust because he is not able to understand the policy made by a media exercise. So, it is considered a passive actor, a consumer/receiver.

This situation makes participation, which is the heart of the concept of citizenship, not in the report "Arab media" / viewers. Because the process operates according to communicational Arabic formula of "persuasive propagandist in a single direction and vertical; that makes the Arab media believe the public as consumers and not as a participant or discussant. In this situation, it seems that the first established by Bernard Miège: the relationship between media and citizens, which plays a role in the formation of Western Public Sphere is not available in the Arabic case. From there, it becomes clear that citizenship is not the sign under which the "Arab media" and their viewers meet.

2.2 The Implication of the Population to the Media's Offers

In Western societies, the population is involved in media deals. This involvement may be among the recipients of the opinion press (the bourgeoisie "enlightened" and voters), or among viewers of mass media, only a small minority is not affected by the listings of Prime

Time or the news (Miège, 1997). But in "Arab world" rather heterogeneous, the involvement of people affected by the media offer is complex because there are two kinds of bids: National and pan. Since this is an "Arab Public Sphere" and not "Arab Public Spheres", it is clear to limit supply to pan-Arab. Indeed, the offer made by the pan-Arab satellite TV is similar in nature to supply air. The functions of the media must *"train, teach, develop, entertain, are transformed into a single function: the mobilization and propaganda in favor of existing systems and their political and ideological visions."*

Although the mode of operation has changed, the device is refurbished and maybe the owner is not the government, but the speech remains the same (Fandy, 2007). In the West, the media combine entertainment with information. Miège (1995) notes that *"the mass media [...] focus on entertainment, including now to accompany the dissemination of information or artistic production"* (p.167). In Arab societies, is quite different. Building a pan-Arab television channels providing entertainment "trend and consumer *supermarchande*." From these two elements, the information / propaganda and entertainment / *supermarchande*, it seems that the second element of community involvement in the Pan Arab media offer is not available in the case of satellite TV. This allows to say that there is a second reason not to speak of an "Arab Public Sphere."

2.3 .The Online of Writing Programmes

The line writing programmes for the style with rewrite the media is aimed at audiences. These include, for example, the polemical style of press opinion, the consensual style of so-called general media, etc. The lines of programs must take into account the diverse interests of various audiences (Miège, 1997).

For the pan-Arab media, there are two cases that characterize the editorial guidelines: national and “*paranational*”. For the first case, the treatment of internal affairs is strictly managed according to “the method of public relations” that is to say by press releases that come from official institutions, or news of news agencies. At this stage, the JT in Arab television, is dedicated to new leaders and completely disregards everything that deserves to be shown.

For example, in January 1984, the Tunisians picked up the news of riots that hit their own country in the log *TGI Rai Uno*, while the *RTT*, the government television, celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the Party and the glorification of *Destourian* its leader. The newscast *Tunis 7* (the new name of the *RTT*) has not changed even as the chain becomes satellite (Ferjani, 2002).

For editorial guidelines pan-Arab media coverage pan-Arab and international affairs according to the vision of those funding (government or private capital) (Fandy, 2007). The interest of the

viewers seems to be the last thing the media can think of as supply as private television satellite governmental interest in the content of "consumer culture: music videos, entertainment, etc.. and talk show. The change, which occurred in recent years, has been on form, not content. Therefore, the features of construction of reality and its packaging, according to precise guidelines remain the same in the various Arab media.

For *Al Arabiya*, for example, despite the highly sophisticated technical means, the news room, designed by the trendy and the staff of top journalists, Saudi TV seems to lose the challenge against *Al Jazeera* because of the influence of actors Saudi Financial on its editorial line⁽²⁾.

2.4. Relationship to Power: The State and Economic Interests

In the Western Public Sphere, the relationship of media and power, the power of the state, through the direct control of the media, or the economic interests by the "investment" advertising for example, is a major issue for some distance is necessary for a certain current exchange of opinion can be established (Miege, 1997). In the Arab context, the media reports with organic direct "powers" political and financial⁽³⁾.

Therefore, the pan-Arab media, who are in state hands, are considered "political tools" among others (Ziyani, 2005). Therefore, independent media remains "a myth" because the media company is the true voice of one who has power or decision. Under these conditions, the influence of different powers on the media, satellite channels, for example,

do not let the opportunity to discuss current exchange that can be established because the distance between Miège talks about the different actors is not established (1997). Although many channels are owned by private capital, this has not necessarily produced a plurality of content. That is why the privatization of the media did not, therefore, a political pluralism and a widening of the margin of freedom. The metamorphoses are all "cosmetic than real" (Ziyani, 2005).

In other words, the changes experienced by the Arab in the television industry trans-country mainly affect the forms and methods "to television": directing, lighting, scenery, graphics, etc. while the discourse remains the same. In Arab countries, media companies are suffering from the actions, pressures and directions of the different actors. Therefore, media organizations are further removed from their audiences. The consequences of this separation are that the media can not implement a form of free trade because they have red lines not to be exceeded. For news channels, Al Jazeera, for example, which displays many innovations in the treatment of real Arab, has the same problem of independence because it receives guidance from the Head of State of Qatar and its Minister of Foreign Affairs and, if there is a change in power in Doha, television can change its face, its media policy and its singularity (El Zeydi, 2003, p.132).

Channel Al Arabiya is in the same case as the Qatari television as complete harmony with its editorial the official Saudi does not allow to have the distance that promotes the exchange. What confirms this is the similarity we found in examining the attitudes of Al Arabiya *vis-à-vis* the various events and positions of Riyadh on those events (Djefafla, 2008).

From this observation, we can say once again that the third condition which allows us to speak of an "Arab Public Sphere", which is the distance between the television stations and government (political and economic) that allows therefore the establishment of an exchange of opinion, is not available.

2.5 The Type of Economic Organization adopted by the Media

According to Mieke, the type of economic organization adopted by the media and communication technology defines the dominant narrow political control to be exercised by the State and organs that they depend on (1997). In other words, in Western societies, the financing of the media intervenes directly on their roles in the public space.

For the pan-Arab media, much of which operates on a commercial basis since they are the property of private capital. In the era of globalization, the concept of the commercial media company has become dominant in most societies and the "Arab world", which is part and is without rules or ethics. For Al Arabiya, for example, the group's leaders emphasize that their mother MBC TV is part of a commercial group and that their first challenge is financial⁽⁴⁾.

But this television channel that devotes more than 30% of its annual budget, 60 million U.S. dollars, wages that vary between 6000 and 8500 U.S. dollars for journalists and up to 30 thousand U.S. dollars monthly for managers, the question of "commercial viability" seems to be difficult⁽⁵⁾.

The media sociologist, F. Sadoun, said that the news channels in the Arab world can not suffice for the profitability of the market. Therefore, he adds, there are those who fund them for a political objective⁽⁶⁾.

From this situation, it seems that the economy adopted by the pan-Arab media, often in private, can not achieve "independence" of the financial media. Therefore, funding of stakeholders should be the only means of survival for them. The result of this is that we can not consider the media that work together as actors in a public space Arabic. After examining the conditions that Bernard Miège (1997) has put in place for the establishment of a public sphere and after finding that they do not exist in the Arab region, it seems impertinent to talk about an "Arab Public Sphere." At the same time, there are elements that come together to evoke a certain idea of a separate Western Arab public sphere. From this, it seems that space, where the border Arab media act, in some elements may give some idea of a "Shared Arab Sphere".

3. "The Shared Arab Sphere"

In the previous paragraph, we examined the Arab, described by some works as "Arab public sphere", through the elements defined by Bernard Miège (1997) for public space in Western societies. This examination allowed us to understand that the pan-Arab media report with their viewers is not built on the basis of citizenship, there is no involvement of the Arab populations in the tender pan-Arab television, that editorial policies of these means of communication does not allow the emergence of a diversity of opinion or openness, the report states, and economic interests is

strong and that the type of organization of these media, despite that it has the business appearance, it remains subject to financing from other players. In short, the conditions established by Miège (2004) for the Western public space does not exist and, therefore, we can say that there is not "an Arab public sphere."

As we have explained that the space where the pan-Arab media conduct their actions is not "an Arab public sphere, it is important now to try to define this common sphere to Arab societies. We think it may be a "Shared Arab Sphere". Why say that? What justifies it, in our view, the actors who act, actions that are done and the consequences engendered in the Arab region. This gives us the courage to "*dare*" to talk about this "Shared Arab Sphere" lies in two elements.

The first comes from the reflections of Miège, which emphasizes that, in partially democratic countries, having experienced a history of breaking with democracy, there may be places where illegal tolerated chat rooms operating more or less regularly and publishing or disseminating of communications media (1997, p. 118).

In this spirit, it seems that there are some actions in the Arab media that can go into this framework. The second element concerns the elements shared by the Arabs. Indeed, populations of the "Arab world" share relatively few values: language, history, political systems, current challenges (internal crises as Arab fundamentalism, violence) and inspirations (democracy, freedom, prosperity). These elements have, for the media, a common representation at various levels. This common space between the

Arab populations, can be regarded as a “Shared Sphere”. From this, a legitimate question arises: how space is established?

3.1 The Establishment of “the Shared Arab Sphere”

“The Shared Arab Sphere”, in a space, is space in which actors act on issues common to the Arab populations. Their actions often lead to reactions. We try to identify these three elements: actors, common questions and responses.

The actors who act in this space are regional media: the daily *Ash-Sharq Al Awsat*, *Al Quds Al Arabi*, *Al Hayat* etc.. and pan-Arab television channels like *Al Jazeera*, *Al Arabiya*, *Abu Dhabi TV*, *Medi Sat*, etc.. Regarding the media who act in this space, they can not be regarded as full participants, because they act under the influence of the powers attached thereto (politically or financially). One of the actors says, “*Capital will not be in conflict with the political system, often totalitarian dictator, [...] even if the capital involved in politics, he is marginalized and used to service politics*”⁽⁷⁾.

- The pan-Arab media act on issues common to Arab viewers (democracy, reforms, human rights, etc..) affecting some specific to particular countries and can influence others by example "terrorism" .
- The way the media treat the pan-Arab issues defines the possible reactions to their actions. These reactions can sometimes be compatible with what the media says. But often, they can also be challenges that make these media communications. This can happen

in cases where there is a disagreement between the media and a certain category of viewers.

The reactions may come from institutions (official, media, trade union) or viewers. For example, this reaction media / official alignment. A Tunisian official made a statement to a local newspaper. Al Arabiya has adopted this statement on the air and on its website which gave the pan-Arab dimension to the statement of Minister of Tunisia. Then, the Tunisian press has taken this "replay *panarabisée*" made by Al Arabiya to justify the declaration of the Tunisian official at the regional level. The paradox in this case is that the website of the Saudi television is banned in Tunisia⁽⁸⁾.

For the reactions of challenges, which are many, many actors are involved. Some examples where the media, by proxy or by patriotic spirit, take over. Al Jazeera Channel aired a show with the former head of the Egyptian daily Al Ahram and a close friend of Nasser, Hassanine Haykel, in which he criticized the position of the founding king of Saudi vis-à-vis the conflict Israeli-Palestinian conflict. All the press⁽⁹⁾. and especially Saudi television Al Arabiya⁽¹⁰⁾. said a "war" against the journalist and the Qatari channel. Another example, in Algeria, after the broadcast of Al Jazeera on its website, the question: "*Are you for or against the attacks in Algiers?*", Most Algerian media have mobilized to respond to the Qatari television. The Arabic daily, *Akhbar El Youm*, for example, has aired for three months on his website the question: "*Do you think Al Jazeera is supporting terrorist operations in Algeria?*"⁽¹¹⁾.

Third example. The reaction of the Saudi religious establishment vis-à-vis the Arab version of *Star Academy*. Part of the

Saudi sheiks expressed their dissatisfaction with the participation of a Saudi and even the casting of his victory. They called on Saudi companies that fund the programme not to do so. All these examples illustrate our idea: there is some interaction between some pan-Arab media and some players on some subjects. From the moment the idea of “Shared Arab Sphere” is explained, it becomes relevant to know how space works⁽¹²⁾.

3.2.The Operation of “the Shared Arab Sphere”

“The Shared Arab Sphere” space is a space that works in a fantasy. There is a feeling that developed into unconsciousness is realized in the Arab imagination, which is “*a psychological social state*” (Azzi 2005) and resulting in the Arab populations in the form of a fantasy made “*media content*” and that the public have in reserve as “*their heritage*”. This imaginary operates on two elements: land, which is “*distorted historical memory*” by time, that active states and a glorious work of the media trying to push the Arab individual to exceed its real that is said to give viewers “the pan-Arab citizenship.” Viewers mobilize the collective memory and media importing western values to construct an imaginary space.

For viewers, “*the ability already acquired since the past is mobilized to give consistency to me and restore confidence in the future*” (Laroui, 1977, p. 4). This ability translates concretely in the sense of belonging to one and only “*destiny*”. For their part, the media

make systematic use of Western values to discuss the rights and duties (freedom, democracy, etc.) Because the West is considered a behavior (Laroui, 1977, p. 59).

From there, the individual builds his real value is the fabric of the legendary Arab sentiment and western values imported by the media (Azzi, 2005, p. 82). These include pluralism, democracy and freedom of expression by which the individual thinks he has "a democracy". Therefore, the mechanism of pan-Arab media is based primarily on emissions debate.

The work of pan-Arab media is to actually achieve "*the debates that were previously unimaginable on state television several decades ago*" (Schleifer 2004), which aim to offer their viewers in new products . Al Jazeera, for example, "*seeks to rely on the imagination of his audience and give it form*" with its programmes (Lamloum, 2004, p. 13).

From there, it seems that there is an unconscious association, at least on the part of viewers between the two partners (media and viewers) for the construction of this imaginary space. This combination actually works on a logical replacement brilliant past / present values difficult by Arab / Western behavior. Since each individual Arab viewers took part in the construction of this imaginary, it will, as explained Armand Mattelart, "*the illusion that*

the society in which it operates and the concrete relations that are living under the sign of social harmony "(1974, p. 35).

This individual will feel that his company beyond its "evils" because the media prevents any action that may expose the deception of those who exercise that control. This space, as we noted, contains actions and reactions. These reactions can be initiated by different actors. They are made by the media and beyond the media.

4. The Action *via/with* the medias

By their new devices, their new media practices and their related freedoms, some pan-Arab media like *Al Jazeera*, *Al Arabiya* and *Abu Dhabi TV* have created a new tradition in the Arab region. This is the opening of debate on issues important to the Arabs: the internal affairs, the question of democracy, human rights, political participation and minorities in the "Arab world" (Ziyani, 2005). The discussion by satellite televisions give voice to a large number of actors: managers, opponents, intellectuals, trade unionists, parliamentarians, etc. But they also give voice to viewers who participate in these discussions by various means: physical presence on set, the telephone intervention in the direct broadcast, sending emails, comments on the websites of the chain question, etc. (El Zeydi, 2003. P.133).

This is the result of an offer coupled with a need. For supply chains want, like *Al Jazeera* to be a forum for thinking, culture and politics that allows viewers the opportunity to submit their views and make their voices heard. For the purpose, the television viewers who meet the need to express themselves, give their opinions and feel they are the main participants in the leadership programs that require their intervention. By entering into this space of debate, the pan-Arab channels like *Al Jazeera*, *Al Arabiya*, *Abu Dhabi TV*, etc.. trying to exist in a world that is growing. For viewers, participation in a program is an opportunity that allows them to raise their voices or at least say their words. Indeed, in this process, viewers are feeling exercise the democratic right to feel its existence and relatively independent. His voice satellite earth has rewarded his voice. Understanding this openness and debate must be made within the general context in the "Arab world".

In other words, it is inappropriate to include this as a "*corporate arrival in politics and end the monopoly of elites on public action, in short, they probably announce the entrance of the Arab world in the age of democratic transitions*" (El Oifi, 2005). In fact, launching a debate does not mean a real debate. This is a myth, because he does not have a democracy, launching a television and open a debate. As highlighted Armand Mattelart, questioning, "*what is communication? We try to make us believe it will serve to unify and*

pacify the world. It is sufficient that the communication is globalizing and globalized "(2007, p. 23).

In the pan-Arab satellite televisions, dialogue can be positive and constructive if the debators intersect. But also, this dialogue may be irrelevant when the debators are a religious reference or rigid policy. The pan-Arab media may have managed to reformulate the tracking area of television in the "Arab world", choose the guests and build debates under the logic of sense and credibility, to find the tools dramatization to properly handle the conditions and play the role of those who seek the truth but this does not mean that the media announced the entry into the era of Arab democracy.

Therefore, liberalization of the media is a prerequisite for democratic change because the means of communication alone can not create democracy (Mughan and Gunther, 2000). Indeed, the pan-Arab media, who work according to business logic that is based on income, may fall under the influence of market forces that will use it for their economic interests and have nothing to do with the challenge of democratization in the Arab region.

5.The Action beyond the media

The debate initiated by / through the pan-Arab media provokes reactions that may go beyond the "media space" in the countries of North Africa and Middle East which is an extension of this debate.

Such an extension is in pubs, workplaces, homes, etc. did not cause a change in behavior or action of the Arab populations. What happens is that satellite TV did not leave people in the street, not necessarily to express discontent, but at least to support or cheer events or news.

Instead, the pan-Arab media have come challenges in homes instead of putting them in public. Therefore, a practice has developed to create "*a challenge to the remote control.*" Either by a process of zapping on the satellite channels from home, at work or during a coffee break in a pub, or by telephone emissions and Arab viewers evacuate their discontent. In the same vein, an American sociologist points out that Arab populations are cynical about media messages and gives the example of Egypt where he stayed for some time. He confirmed that the Egyptians, for example, require that the media say "*kalam jaraid*", which means "*does not mean new, but the maintenance of vacuum*" and that is a way not to give confidence to the media (Alterman, 2002). But despite that there are few places where the media have improved, the degree of confidence in them remains the same and is not increased.

This is confirmed by taking a relative distance that the pan-Arab media said. A viewer says: "*I do ratais before any episode of the popular show the opposite direction but now I cannot stand to see it because of the ongoing agitation*"⁽¹³⁾.

The challenge by the remote control seems to kill the motivation of Arab populations to action. At the time the U.S. offensive in Iraq, demonstrations were held in Paris, London and Rome, and not Riyadh or Doha, or in Cairo. In contrast, during the “war of liberation of Kuwait” in 1991, when there was not yet a pan-Arab broadcasting, “the Arab Street” has had a bit by any events in the Arab countries against the war and cons schemes they support. Because the work is based on a foundation of imagination, it seems that the reason for the no-action of Arab populations is the absence of actors and social arrangements that can activate the debate in societies and transform the real in reality television. In “Shared Arab Sphere”, there is a large vacuum devices which do not allow the emergence of a real consciousness. That is, in our view, that distinguishes the public sphere in Western societies from the Arab.

Conclusion:

The issue of this research has sucked the review of the Habermasian public sphere, as a concept unique to Western democracies, in an environment that is not theirs. At the end of this investigation, a finding stands on two registers:

- The concept of public space is a historical concept that has developed over time following the metamorphosis that has seen the West as a democratic process, since arriving in representative democracy to participatory democracy, accompanied by movement media from newspapers and publication of opinion "a penny" until the explosion of ICT, in this third millennium. Therefore, public space today is the result of a large ongoing project that involves several actors (media, politicians, trade unions), multiple measures (liberalization of the press, human rights: individual and government, equality before the Justice) and many terms (to inform about the truth, control the powers: executive, legislative and judicial) that led to the formulation of its current reality. All this is in any measure applicable to "the real Arab" to the extent that the political genealogy of the Arab has no resemblance to that of the West or on the stage of practical or political association, nor on the role and place of the elite in society, nor on the existence of the media, in continuing hold any kind of power (economic, political, etc..) nor the ratio of

communication tools with people. That said, the Arab countries in their construction postcolonial, have not invested heavily in human capital energies because the concern of some has been the struggle against imperialism and for others has been fighting against socialism . In this situation, the various fields (political, media, etc..) Have been fully and completely mobilized this "cause." From then on, talking terrorism.

- Except for the difference between the political systems adopted by Arab countries and therefore their views on democracy and its fundamental components (freedom of expression, pluralism, separation of powers, fundamental rights, etc..) States North Africa and the Middle East share several common elements (history, language, geography, religion) and face the same issues: economic, political, security threats (of violence), etc.. This allows these countries to form a shared space with common ideas which can be bet in circulation. Remains the specificities of each country play an important role in defining the tasks to be performed by each of the actors and in different fields (social, political, associative, etc.). And this remains the fundamental way in which any country Arabic can only develop its own democratization process by which emerge a public space fit for him.

Notes:

- (1) The German edition was published in 1962 by Hermann Luchterhand Verlag under the title *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*.
- (2) for details, see www.alkaheraneews.gov.eg/new_test/index/show_n.asp?n_id=4249.> (Web site visited on 10 04 2010)
- (3) For the MBC Group, King Fahd of Saudi was personally involved in financing and launching the TV channel MBC and MBC FM radio station. The group's president said "*the support of King Fahd was not for MBC but for me personally. I am proud to be close to King Fahd ... and it helped me do what I did and what I do.*" View the details of the declaration <www.ariyadh.com.> (10 04 2010)
- (4) Statement by the President of MBC Group, Sheikh Walid Albrahim. View <www.alriyadh.com.> (Web site visited on 10 04 2008)
- (5) For details, see <www.alkaheraneews.gov.eg/new_test/index/show_n.asp?n_id=4249.> (Web site visited on 10 04 2010)
- (6) *Idem*
- (7) It is the declaration of Fakhri Karim, president of *Dar Al Mada for Culture and the Arts*, which publishes the monthly magazine of criticism and the daily *El Manhadj El Mada*, at a conference on Arab media held Cairo 21 December 2007. See the full text of interventions on <www.alraimedia.com.> (10 04 2010)
- (8) The Web site of the channel is banned in Tunisia since le 12 novembre 2005.
- (9) This "war" Saudi Arabia has taken some of the personal dimensions. A cartoonist of the daily *Er-Riyadh* Haykel caricatured as a "skeleton". View www.ariyadh.com (web site visited on 10 04 2010)
- (10) The chain has spent the edition of September 27, 2004 issue of *Ed-Tahta Dhu* (under light) to "*misinformation in the Arab media*. " He took over the defense of the King of Saudi and Riyadh's position vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- (11) <www.akhbarelyoum-dz.com.> (10 04 2008)
- (12) Several preachers and sheikhs as Saudi Abdullah bin Djebrine, Abderrahman Ben Naceur, Naceur El Omor, and others have signed an appeal for the different actors involved in the issue (the advertising companies, which are journaled the promotion, etc..) and Prince Al Walid

mainly, the owner of LBC, denouncing the program. They criticized the reception by the press "star academician" the Saudi Hicham Abdallah.

View<www.riyadh.com.>

(13) *Asharq Alawsat*, le 27 September 2002.