THE MASS MEDIA IN SAUDI ARABIA: PRESENT CONCEPT, FUNCTIONS, BARRIERS AND SELECTED STRATEGY FOR EFFECTIVE USE IN NATION-BUILDING AND SOCIAL AWARENESS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

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1983
Dedicated to:
The memory and the soul of my father,
Khadher Al-Orabi Al-Harithi
for his commitment to and encouragement
of my education

And to:
Dr. Ghazi Al-Gosabi, patriot and visionary
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In 1975, when I was an undergraduate in the Mass Communications Department at King Saud University (formerly Riyadh University), my instructor, Mohammed Fathi, introduced me to Wilbur Schramm's *Mass Media and National Development*, which Professor Fathi, an Egyptian, had translated into Arabic. Schramm's book enabled me to grasp the importance of mass media in nation-building and social awareness.

Although at that time I was editor of a weekly page (called "E'lam," in English "The Mass Media") in the Saudi daily *Al-Jazirah*, unfortunately I did not have access during my editorship to information such as Schramm offered. The book was a revelation for me; it inspired me to rebuild my thinking and augment my background information regarding mass media function. I realized that media function is considerably more than just the news, entertainment, speeches, and romantic movies I was accustomed to, and I began to understand the potential power of the media in national development. I published some articles to that effect in my weekly page, and went so far as to visit our Minister of Information, Dr. Mohammed Abdu. I asked him if
he had read Schramm's book; he had not. So I suggested to him that our media directors should read the book.

That period of my life was the real genesis of this study. I do want to mention, however, a course I took in 1979 in Mass Communications Theory under Professor Bradly Greenberg, Chairman of the Michigan State University Communications Department. My study with Professor Greenberg renewed and increased my enthusiasm for my subject, and added impetus to my determination to seek solutions to the problems of Saudi mass media. Therefore, during the course of my doctoral work at Ohio State University, I have continued to concentrate on the power and potential of mass media to influence the culture, traditions, and development of a society.

It is obvious, of course, that money is only one kind of wealth, and that money alone won't change the way people perceive themselves and their relationship to the world they live in. Saudi Arabia's material riches are immense, and they increase daily. The physical structures are in place, the spiritual strength is firm, the intellectual resources face no danger of depletion. It is now time for the Saudi government to focus some of its vast energies toward defining a national consciousness among its citizens which will impel them to participate enthusiastically, intelligently, and productively in the development of their country.
It requires the compounding of countless interdependent elements to realize a nation's potential. Material wealth must be balanced by richness of the mind and spirit. In Saudi Arabia today that balance is missing; the tribal society has lost its bearings. The Saudi people are seeking a new frame of reference, but change accelerates so fast that they are in danger of losing their way in the continually shifting social and intellectual landscape. The people must be brought into touch with this brave new world that lies before them, or the nation's development will ultimately be devoid of genuine meaning. No nation is "advanced" unless its people are part of the advancement. It is the mass media, as this study will show, which can serve as the alembic to complete Saudi Arabia's transformation into a truly great modern nation.

Although communications scholars may differ widely regarding the role of mass media in developing countries, they do agree that mass media are important tools for building a nation. In fact, most studies that consider mass communication as a force for social awareness and national development have concluded that the media are fundamental to rapid, successful, planned development. Indeed, it is the nature of mass media, based as they are in evolving technology, to catalyze educational, social, and economic growth in the Third World. Further, developing nations themselves often view mass media as a vital means by which
to move toward prosperity and stability, for the media—especially radio and television, which do not require literacy—are able to mobilize a population to participate in social change.

And yet most developing countries fail to take full advantage of their media. Judging from studies already completed, from the results of interviews, and from my own observations during a 1981 visit to the Arab countries, it is clear that Arab governments, like the governments of most developing countries, make inappropriate use of mass media. Chapter 4 will discuss this issue further.

Saudi Arabia, as we shall see, is one of the countries that mis-use and under-use the mass media. Because of the media's significance as tools to engineer a nation's development and social consciousness, I decided to study my country's mass media thoroughly. My study begins with a discussion of the Saudi concept of media's role, continues with an examination of current conditions, functions, and obstacles to progress, and ends with a detailed proposal for strategy to improve the Saudi media.

The basic assumption of this study is that knowledge of the official Saudi conception of media messages and structures will lead to a firm comprehension of both the passive and positive effects created by the Saudi media at present. It is further assumed that the current structures and systems must bear much of the responsibility for
ineffectual use of the media in the process of development. It is my belief that any corrective measures or new strategies for using the media effectively ought to be based on a study of present conditions.

Since I first began contemplating research in Saudi media, however, I have realized that it is no easy task either to diagnose what the media's problems are, or to arrive at appropriate solutions. The difficulty results from several circumstances. For one thing, apart from historical material, there is a serious lack of literature concerning the subject, and what little there is has been written by people from outside Saudi Arabia who are quite unfamiliar with Saudi culture, society, religion, and politics, and whose conclusions are therefore open to question. Secondly, it is exceedingly difficult to gain access to official documents in Saudi Arabia. What is more, there are no statistics or findings from field studies in Saudi media; as a rule the media operate on a day-by-day basis, ignoring the past, neglecting to create strategies for the future, and failing even to analyze their present audiences. Moreover, a latent but strong and pervasive fear exists among media officials which prevents them from speaking frankly about their media's functions and operations, particularly about anything they feel should be suppressed, even when the information they are withholding is meant to be used only for scientific research.
Furthermore, Saudi government and development agencies have not yet fully appreciated the relevance and usefulness of scientific research as a tool to advance and modernize their operations and functions. Finally, secrecy is the dominant mindset in Saudi media administrations, especially in newspaper and magazine establishments. Each establishment wants to keep the others in the dark concerning, for example, its operation and circulation. It is next to impossible to find accurate figures for Saudi newspaper circulation; the figures have not been published, and not even the Ministry of Information could give them to me. It was only with the greatest difficulty that I was able finally to persuade newspaper editors-in-chief to let me have accurate circulation figures. Despite all these obstacles, however, I remain convinced that studying our media is essential if we are to direct them positively and accurately toward goals that will serve Saudi Arabia's development, advancement, and social awareness.

Based on the available literature, on interviews, and on examination of the Saudi media's content, this study takes into consideration all the elements that together have created the present conditions surrounding our media, and which have shaped their function. I hope it will be clear, however, that this study does not simply reflect my own impressions regarding Saudi media; rather, it is the result both of rigorous research involving the directors of Saudi
media and to key Saudi authorities, and of prolonged, painstaking examination of the media's content. The study seeks first to diagnose the problems that beset Saudi media, then to recommend a new strategy that, it is hoped, will lead to productive, creative utilization of the media.

It is important to note that although this study makes use of the mass media theories and research findings of communications scholars and media experts, it also emphasizes the fact that western scholars have different cultures, perspectives, and ideologies. The differences mean that trying blindly to apply these ideas to a developing country like Saudi Arabia is futile. Although I have not ignored Western communications scholarship, I have selected the findings that seem most suitable to Saudi Arabia's mass media. The work, then, has a distinctly Saudi bias, for it is pointless to suggest solutions that are isolated from the society in question. Although theory is the foundation of the present study, practice is its ultimate purpose.

**Statement of the Problem**

According to communications research findings, most governments in developing countries have not used mass media to the fullest advantage in the development process. This is primarily because the governments have either misunderstood or exploited the media. Moreover, most Third World nations lack the expertise required to operate the
mechanisms of media transmission or to produce their own programs; thus they must depend entirely on imported programs. Schramm, Tunstal, Wells, Lerner, and others cite this dependence as one reason why the Third World media do not serve the cause of national development as well as they could.¹

Saudi Arabia is no different from the other developing countries in the way it uses its media. As mentioned above, communications research findings reveal that the mass media in most developing countries have been ineffective as tools for nation-building and social awareness. It is not, however, that the media themselves inherently lack potential as developmental tools; rather, the problem is the result of many variables, such as a misunderstanding of mass media's function, the media's structure and system, the lack of specialized media personnel, and social and political conditions.

This study will research the Saudi media's problems and seek solutions to them. But to find solutions to a problem we must first find the cause. A physician does not prescribe until he has made the diagnosis; similarly, we cannot expect plans for the future to be successful unless they have been designed with the present in mind. It is important, therefore, to examine current conditions and functions of Saudi mass media in order to initiate reform that achieves optimal utilization of the media in nation-
building. Moreover, other variables need to be studied too, such as the social, political, religious, and cultural background in which the media operate; for the media are the product of all the variables that compose Saudi society.

**Purposes and Objectives**

Any Third World country's attempt to advance itself which ignores its people as fundamental to advancement is doomed to fail. As James Madison said:

Knowledge will forever govern ignorance. And a people who mean to be their own governors, must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives. A popular government without a popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or tragedy, or perhaps both.²

Unquestionably, it is people who are the backbone of national growth and development. Diffusion of mass mediated messages is a major element in a society's knowledge and self-awareness. Mass communications can play a significant role in motivating, educating, mobilizing, and changing a society. Used effectively, the mass media can raise the consciousness of a nation.

In fact the function of mass media depends on a society's political, economic, and social structure. And the composition of media institutions, the degree of freedom the media enjoy, and the system in which they operate all are critical factors in determining their function and their effect on society. This study will suggest a variety of approaches to the use of mass media in Saudi Arabia that
will increase their effectiveness in serving national development. The study will attempt to accomplish the following:

1. To clear up some misconceptions among Saudi authorities regarding mass media.

2. To urge that Saudi mass media at present do not serve as useful tools in development.

3. To determine that the mass media structure, system, and lack of specialized staff have hindered media's function in development.

4. To offer suggestions for the Saudi Supreme Council of Mass Communication and for the press.

5. To offer a new structure and system for Saudi broadcasting.

6. To propose an efficient combination of local and centralized broadcasting systems.

7. To ascertain and evaluate the cross-cultural impact on Saudi Society of its dependence on foreign-produced programs.

8. To ascertain and evaluate the major obstacles that retard Saudi mass media, and to seek solutions.

Significance of the Study

To the best of my knowledge and on the basis of a review of literature available on mass media in Saudi Arabia, it seems that earlier attempts to examine the Saudi mass media have focused primarily on historical aspects. Moreover,
most of these studies are written by non-Saudis who are inadequately familiar with Saudi culture, society, and politics, and who have thus been unable to offer workable solutions to mass media problems. The proposed study is the first comprehensive theoretical examination of fundamental problems of Saudi mass media structures, systems, and function. What is perhaps even more cogent, this study will seek to offer feasible solutions which are firmly grounded in theory and in present practice, and which respect Saudi culture. In short, it is designed specifically to meet the special needs of a protean national character.

This study has raised and discussed at some length a number of critical issues, but the significant focus of the study lies in its utility. It is hoped that the issues discussed in this study will be of such value that they will be seriously considered in Saudi Arabia and that it may lead to improvement in the role and functions of Saudi media. Plans, strategy, and recommendations of this study may inaugurate a new era in mass communications, with structures, systems, and policies based on new concepts, scientific research findings, higher standards, and innovative ideas suitable to the times we live in.

Further, this study can serve as a resource for other media scholars who are committed to solving Saudi media problems. I believe this study represents a material contribution to scholarship, one which, it is hoped, will be
used to good advantage by my colleagues in mass communication as they too attempt to develop theories, strategies, and models.

**Scope**

Saudi Arabia occupies a singular position in world history. It is the only Middle East country that has never undergone Western occupation; its population is wholly Moslem and it is the religious center for the world's Moslem population; its social structure is predominantly tribal. Saudi culture is ancient and its traditions are strong. This is a deeply devout and conservative nation. Unfortunately, it also suffers widespread illiteracy.

These special conditions require special consideration in a study such as this. It is neither acceptable nor appropriate arbitrarily to apply Western theoretical assumptions to Saudi mass media. The study will therefore take into careful account conditions unique to Saudi Arabia.

The study's scope is limited to Saudi radio, television, daily newspapers, and to weekly magazines with a general readership. These in fact are the Saudi mass media. The study ignores specialized publications and cinema, for cinema is proscribed and specialized publications reach only small, specialized groups and interests. A minor but unavoidable drawback of the study may be its relative paucity of hard data regarding Saudi media; however, there are very few resources for amassing such information.
hope my own Saudi media experience and my interview with Saudi media officials will do much to rectify this deficiency.

Assumptions

This study's principal assumptions are as follows:

1. The Arab countries either misunderstand or exploit mass media's power to affect a populace.

2. If mass media are treated like a consumer commodity, and if they are treated like any other government department involving land, goods, and services, they will not be effective in the development of a country.

3. If the present structure and system of mass media impede media's use in national development, they will be ineffectively utilized.

4. A lack of professional expertise will produce ineffectual use of media in the nation-building process.

5. Extensive dependence on imported mass media production has a negative influence on media output.

6. In a country with a varied culture and with widespread illiteracy, centralized mass media cannot meet the needs and interests of the people.

7. A mistaken concept of mass media's functions, as well as social and religious restraints, have retarded effective utilization of the media.
Research Questions

The following questions have been formulated on the basis of the Arab world's popular conception of mass media function and use, and on the present function, structure, systems, and use of the Saudi mass media. It is hoped that the ensuing chapters of this study will provide applicable as well as theoretical answers to these questions.

1. How do Arab governments as a whole perceive the media's function?
   A. To what extent do Arab governments control the mass media?
   B. Do the governments consider the primary function of the media to be that of a vehicle for politics and entertainment?

2. What are the major functions of the mass media in Saudi Arabia?
   A. To what degree are the media production designed to promote national development?
   B. To what extent are the Saudi media utilized to communicate and promote religion, culture, and traditions?
   C. How are the media used to develop political philosophy?
   D. What role do they play in presenting entertainment?

3. What is the Saudi government's relationship to Saudi radio, television, and press?
   A. How does the Ministry of Information's administrative structure influence the role of the mass media?
   B. Do governmental policy statements as guidelines affect the use of the mass media?

4. What is the present status of electronic media programming and press stories?
   A. What sources are used for Saudi media production?
   B. To what extent is there a reliance on foreign news agencies?
   C. To what degree are programs and stories produced on the local level?

5. What steps can be taken to improve the mass media in Saudi Arabia?
A. Will locally-produced programs based on local needs increase the mass media's power to effect favorably the Saudi people?
B. Will less dependence on foreign communication software result in media systems more accurately attuned to Saudi needs?
C. Is a combination of local and centralized broadcasting systems going to enhance Saudi media's usefulness as a developmental tool?
D. Will attention to the necessity for increased media professionalism and training enhance the use of Saudi media in national development?
E. Is establishment of feedback and audience research a basic requirement for Saudi mass media messages to be produced and directed according to the people's needs and interests?

6. Is it feasible and appropriate to apply to Saudi development the mass communications theory and research findings that concern development in other Third World countries?

7. What should the Saudi Supreme Council of Mass Communications do to improve the effect of the media?
   A. Should it adopt the stance of supervisory body only?
   B. Should it play an effective role in improving the produced quality?

8. What strategies and tactics can Saudi mass media use to encourage national development and social awareness?

Methodology

I had wanted to conduct field research in Saudi Arabia to explore how mass media are used by consumers as well as by those who direct the media, and in this way to evaluate the effect of media on Saudi society. Audience analysis is highly valuable to media research. However, my hopes to engage in field research faded early. Rigorous, scientifically-grounded audience analysis, a practical and
effective method, simply will not work in Saudi Arabia. There are several reasons why.

First, the Saudi illiteracy level stands at about 70 percent; over half the population know nothing about the Saudi press. Second, there is no official population count in Saudi Arabia; since the nature of Saudi society has thus far precluded an exact census, population figures are based on rough estimations. Third, Saudi television is not country-wide; many areas have no television at all and in some areas of the north and south it has been only recently introduced. Fourth, it is hard for villagers and nomads to appreciate the importance of field research, and their cooperation is unpredictable. They may for instance believe the government is conducting the research, and hence modify their responses in an effort to influence the results. And results such as these are, obviously, unreliable.

Finally, it is almost impossible to design a valid random sampling technique. A telephone survey, for instance, will not work. Many parts of the country have no telephones, and exact information is unavailable regarding the number of telephones—and who owns them—in major cities. And even if a researcher does attempt to gather a telephone sample, he will immediately be confronted with a cultural barrier: it is impermissible for Saudi women to speak to strangers. Thus, a telephone survey would exclude women. Moreover, Saudi men are extremely reluctant to
respond to questions from strangers. If a study is to be scientific, then clearly this kind of field research is out of the question.

It ought to be mentioned, though, that one study has been completed that claims to have applied audience analysis: Douglas Boyd's 1972 doctoral dissertation, "An Historical and Descriptive Analysis of the Evolution and Development of Saudi Arabian Television: 1963-1972." Actually, what Boyd did was choose and then supervise five Saudi television employees who interviewed 125 Riyadh men. Boyd does not mention how he selected his sample, nor whether the men were indeed representative of the Saudi television audience. And women, of course, are excluded from the sample. It seems, in fact, that he applied no accepted sampling procedures; thus his results must be considered invalid. However, my own enthusiasm for field research in audience analysis was undermined for the very same reasons that make Boyd's study unreliable. I have been forced to conclude that the time has not yet come for valid Saudi audience analysis. Therefore this study explores several avenues of information.

The research methodology that will be used is eclectic in nature; that is, several approaches will be combined so that, functioning as a unit, they will enable us to answer the questions previously stated. First, comparisons between research findings developed by representative media scholars
as contrasted with actual practices in Saudi Arabia will be drawn.

Secondly, in order to examine the content and functions of Saudi radio, television, newspapers and magazines, I obtained broadcasting program schedules, or "cycles," and issues of each popular, non-specialized Saudi newspaper and magazine for the first four months of 1402 A.H. (that is, October 28, 1981 to February 24, 1982). Sections 2 and 3 of Chapter 7 offer a detailed explanation of the procedures used for analysis and assessment of the media's impact on Saudi society. It is assumed that this critical evaluation will lead to the development of new conceptual approaches and a re-thinking of Saudi media structures and systems.

Thirdly, this study is also partially empirical research; with interviews as a basis, I have explored the perceptions held by selected groups of Saudi mass media directors. The purpose of the interviews was to gather the following information: the directors' opinions regarding mass media's role in development; the basis for decision-making in mass media; obstacles to effective use of Saudi media and requirements for improvement. Twenty key decision-makers took part in the interviews; they were asked open and close-ended questions. Procedures for conducting the interviews are described in Chapter 9, which also presents the research findings.
Data Collection and Source Materials

The data collection methods this study uses are the following:

Books

Books about the role of mass media in national development are a major source for this study. I have read widely in the vast number of books available, and been careful to select the most appropriate materials to incorporate into this study, concentrating on books about Saudi mass media and Saudi culture, education, society, and economics.

Reports and Papers

UNESCO and other agencies, as well as Communications scholars, have produced numerous reports and papers on mass media in developing countries.

Articles

Scholarly publications (such as the Journal of Communications, the Journal of Broadcasting, Journalism Quarterly, and many others) were given strong consideration as source material. In addition, I have searched out many useful newspaper and magazine articles.
Saudi Daily Newspapers and Weekly Magazines

Believing that only a close overview of Saudi newspapers and magazines can provide a clear conception of their function, since 1978 I have subscribed to the seven major Saudi papers and to the two major magazines; these publications are examined in this study.

Policies and Regulations

During my field trips to Saudi Arabia, I collected useful data. The Ministry of Information provided copies of regulations controlling the Saudi press, and I obtained television and radio program schedules. These schedules are printed for three-month seasons, or "cycles," as they are known in Saudi Arabia.

Interviews

Two field trips during the summers of 1981 and 1982 permitted me the opportunity to conduct interviews with several Arab authorities and media directors. I focused primarily on Saudi Arabia as a case study. Three Saudi Ministers, including the Minister, Deputy Minister, and Assistant Deputy Ministers of Information; the directors-general and the directors of television and radio; and the directors-general and editors-in-chief of Saudi newspapers and magazines, granted interviews. While these personal interviews lend my study additional authenticity, a more important rationale for them is that they allowed
considerable exploration of open and close-ended questions about Saudi media's function and use.
NOTES


CHAPTER 2

SAUDI ARABIA: AN OVERVIEW

Introduction

Media never exist in a vacuum; they are integrally part of the society they serve. Thus it is impossible adequately to understand a country's mass media systems without also understanding the interrelationship and interdependency of media with the social, cultural, political, and economic elements that a nation comprises. Because this study examines Saudi Arabia's present mass media structure and function, and the media's role in Saudi national development, and in an effort to aid the reader's comprehension of the major section of this study, it seems appropriate at the outset to present a brief overview of Saudi history, geography, education, and economics. Moreover, background regarding Saudi society is also imperative if we are to understand how Saudi mass media operate. This chapter will not therefore deal with historical detail, but will highlight the basic facts of the Saudi land, history, political structure, education, as well as social conditions. It is hoped that this overview will provide the reader useful perspectives from which to approach succeeding chapters.
Geography

The kingdom of Saudi Arabia occupies about four-fifths of the Arabian Peninsula—an area roughly equivalent to that portion of the United States east of the Mississippi. But because some of the country's borders remain vaguely defined, the exact area is unknown. Reputable estimates vary between 864,000 and 869,090 square miles; the official Saudi government estimate stands at 865,000 square miles. Saudi Arabia shares boundaries with Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait to the north; with Bahrein, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and the Gulf to the east; with Oman and North and South Yemen to the south. The Red Sea defines the western border. Population density averages five or six persons per square mile.

Saudi Arabia is a desert land. Sand covers most of the surface, forming three great deserts: the Nafud, the Dahna, and the Rub' Al-Khali, or Empty Quarter, which itself occupies 23,000 square miles (Figure 1). But Saudi geography offers more than desert monotony. In the western part of the country, rugged mountains cut through the level landscape in a chain running parallel to the Red Sea coast. Higher mountains rise in Asir, where peaks reach over 9000 feet, then decline west of Mecca to 8000 feet, and to 3000 at Medina. The Tuwayq Mountains, averaging 4000 to 6000 feet, lie across the Najud in central Saudi Arabia. Lava beds appear in the west central section. Population
Figure 1. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
distribution patterns vary widely among cities and towns of the eastern and western coastal areas, the interior oases, and the vast, nearly barren deserts.

There are no permanent rivers in Saudi Arabia, and little rainfall. The climate in most of the country is relentlessly parched; summer temperatures average 112°F. High humidity is found on the Gulf and Red Sea coasts, and winter frosts and freezing weather occur in the interior. Although annual rainfall averages no more than two to four inches, the Asir highlands along the southern coast of the Red Sea do receive enough rain to permit a degree of non-irrigated cultivation.²

Excluding the great Rub' Al-Khali, Saudi Arabia consists of five major geographical regions. In Hijaz, the mountainous western region, are found the cities of Jiddah, Mekkah, Medina, and Taif, as well as many smaller cities and towns. Mekkah and Medina are holy cities; Mekkah, of course, is the birthplace of Islam and the religious center for Moslems throughout the world.

Najd is the central plateau. Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia and one of its largest cities, is located here. The wealthiest part of the country is the eastern region. Here is the site of Saudi Arabia's massive accumulations of oil. The extensive Hasa oasis is in the eastern region, as well as the cities of Dammam, Hufuf, Al-Khober, and Dharan.
Agriculture flourishes in the southern region. Saudi Arabia's highest mountains are in Asir, and there are numerous towns and villages, such as Abha, Jizan, Najran, and Khamis Mistayat. The southern region's annual ten inches of rainfall make agriculture feasible.

The northern region is the Nafud, Saudi Arabia's largest desert. The chief cities here are Tabok, Ha'il, Al Jawf, and Sakaka.

**Historical Background**

The demanding, austere land of the Arabian Peninsula was populated mostly by Nomadic tribes through the end of the seventh century. Only some trading centers—Mekkah and Medina in Hijaz, and a few tribes in the southeast—were known to the rest of the world. Mekkah was the birthplace in 570 of the Prophet Mohammed, Islam's founder. Medina is the city where the Prophet was able to preach his new religion in relative safety after he was driven out of Mekkah. Before Islam's founding, however, the Arabian Peninsula lacked any semblance of national character or purpose; it was divided by numerous rival tribal factions and by a variety of external influences. And prior to the advent of Islam to Arabia,

The primitive religion of the desert was restricted to the worship of trees and streams and stones in which the deity was supposed to reside.... Nomads naturally had no temples or priesthhoods; they usually carried their gods with them in a tent or tabernacle, and consulted them by casting lots with arrows, while their kahins
(high priests) or soothsayers delivered oracles in short rhymed sentences.3

But from its inception Islam proved a tenacious and unifying spiritual force. By the time of the Prophet's death in 633, the conversion of the nomadic tribes was complete.

The following two centuries saw the Arabian conquest of the middle east extend as far as France to the west, India to the east. This expansion caused a shift of the center of power from Mekkah to Baghdad. As a result of the shift, Arabia lapsed back into pre-Islamic obscurantism and arcane religious practices. Tribal loyalties again took precedence over national consciousness, factionalism grew, and raiding parties terrorized the countryside. The quality of life deteriorated to what it had been before the Prophet's birth. These unstable conditions prevailed until 1902, when Abdul Aziz Al' Sa'ud took Riyadh from Mohammed Ibn Rashid, leader of the Shammar tribe in Ha'il. Al Sa'ud's victory marked the beginning of the present Saudi Arabian state.

The Sa'ud dynasty's origins, however, are much older. In the eighteenth century Mohammed Ibn Sa'ud allied with Mohammed Ibn Abdul-Wahhab, a noted religious leader eager to revive Islam. In 1744 Mohammed Ibn Sa'ud and Ibn Abdul-Wahhab met at Ibn Saud's home in Ad-Dir'iyah. Here the political leader and the religious leader agreed to join forces and work together to restore the authentic Islam faith to the people of the Arabian Peninsula.
Within six years Mohammed Ibn Sa'ud and Ibn Abdul Wahhab had conquered Najd (the central region of Saudi Arabia). Years of strife followed for the House of Sa'ud in its struggle to consolidate the Peninsula. In 1891 Ibn Rashid's forces seized the greater part of Najd, including Riyadh, Ibn Sa'ud's stronghold. Forced to flee the city, Ibn Sa'ud and his son Abdul Aziz, who was to be the future king of Arabia, settled first with the Murra tribes on the outskirts of the Rub' Al-Khali. Later they lived in exile in Kuwait.

The nation that we now know as Saudi Arabia actually began in 1902, when Abdul Aziz Ibn Abul Rahman Ibn Sa'ud, the boy who fled Riyadh with his father in 1891, recaptured Riyadh from Ibn Rashid. By 1914 Ibn Sa'ud had re-taken most of Najd; the territory under his control extended to the Al-Hasa district in the eastern part of the Peninsula. To the west lay Hijaz.

Hijaz, where the holy cities Mekkah and Medina are located, was ruled by the Hussein (Hashemite) family. Naturally, Ibn Sa'ud wanted this territory. A bitter military rivalry existed between Ibn Sa'ud and Shareif Hussein over the area which separates Najd from Hijaz. In fact, during World War I, Sharif Hussein revolted, with British support, against the Ottoman Empire and proclaimed himself King of Arabs and Caliph of Islam. Following the war, the British became less enthusiastic in their support for Hussein; even so, they were instrumental in keeping
peace between him and Ibn Sa'ud. It was at best a tenuous peace, and it was not to last. Once Ibn Sa'ud had annexed Asir to the south and gained control of Ha'il, the Rashid stronghold to the north, he attacked and captured Hijaz (at present the western region of Saudi Arabia) in 1924. By 1932 Ibn Sa'ud's control of most of the Peninsula was complete; he proclaimed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

When King Sa'ud won control of Saudi Arabia he made himself monarch and based his new state's political and legal systems on the Koran and the Hadith (a collection of sayings of the Prophet). Religion and politics, then, were to work in tandem. There was no written constitution.6 King Sa'ud now began his evolution from medieval desert warrior into modern statesman.

The Question of Tribal Unification

How did King Abdul Aziz Ibn Sa'ud manage almost singlehandedly to unify the Arabian Peninsula, a vast area peopled by many tribes, each with its discrete culture and way of life? What forces did he marshall to accomplish the unification of the land that is now Saudi Arabia?

Ibn Sa'ud's remarkable success becomes perhaps less astonishing if we recognize that since the seventh century Islam has remained a constant in the lives of all Moslems. All citizens of the Arabian Peninsula are Moslem. Even though the tribes returned to factionalism and to some primitive pre-Islamic practices two hundred or so years
after the Prophet's death, their sincerity and enthusiasm regarding Islam (admittedly, in many instances a debased form of Islam) actually increased. Indeed, Moslems have always been a notably devout people; they don't take their religion lightly.

For example, Moslems believe that war in the name of Islam—holy war—is both necessary and admirable where Islam is to be established or revived. The devout Moslem is at any time willing to sacrifice his life for the Islamic cause. And it is this force—the individual Moslem's deep commitment to his faith—that King Ibu Sa'ud turned to account in order to obtain his victory and to unify a diverse tribal society under his rule.

Three elements were of inestimable value to Ibn Sa'ud in his quest. First, the time was ripe for an Islamic religious revival as he moved toward consolidation of his power. Second, religious obscurantism had created a situation that cried out for clarity. Third, Ibn Sa'ud knew how to motivate people to accept him and to fight with him; he was an inspired and inspiring leader. He understood how to mobilize and direct the immense power of "Al Jihad," Sacred War, to persuade Moslems to support him in his efforts to establish this entity called "Saudi Arabia." In short, Ibn Sa'ud was the right man in the right place at the right time.
Smelzer's research in collective behavior has shown that wish-fulfillment can be a basis upon which to mobilize and motivate people in economic, political, and religious spheres. As Smelzer has noted,

The religious sphere in which we study the phenomenon of revivalism is a revival which involves an enthusiastic redefinition of religious methods, but not a challenge to basic religious values.7

In fact Ibn Sa'ud's call for revival and for rectification of Islamic instructions regarding Moslem responsibilities and duties came at just such a critical juncture in Islam's history, a time when violations of the Islamic Code and become rife and when Islam itself was in imminent danger of becoming a matter for idiosyncratic interpretation rather than the universal guide to living that the Prophet had intended it to be. The faithful were confused. Theologically speaking, Moslems were at loose ends. Thus they were eager to welcome a leader like Ibn Sa'ud who could offer them, once again, firm political instructions and religious principles with which to structure their lives. It was only natural that they would enthusiastically support him in his call for Islamic revival and in his wars against Sharif Hussein and other tribal leaders.

Indeed, "Islam" was Ibn Sa'ud's most potent ally. In a letter written January 17, 1928 to the British political agent in Bahrein, Ib Sa'ud himself characterized his new government as one that:
...has been established in this wide desert, which with its power brought all forces that are in it under its control and managed its administration by virtue of the social teachings of the religion.8

It is clear that religion has been a major element in the establishment of Saudi Arabia. Islam remains a motive force among the Saudi people, and continue to figure significantly in the shaping of the nation's future.

Population

(In the absence of a current and accurate census, I have unavoidably had to resort to less recent information.) In 1970 the Saudi population was estimated at 4.75 million, with a growth rate of 2 to 2.3 percent. The 1967 United Nations Yearbook sets the figure at 6,990,000, but the first (and last) official Saudi Census, taken in 1974, indicates that the number is 7,012,642.9 However, it is difficult to confirm this number. The precise number of inhabitants of Saudi Arabia is unknown; tradition and culture create obstacles to accurate census-taking, and the nomadic way of life of the Bedouin herdsmen present another barrier. It is probably safe to say that the Saudi population numbers around seven million, with an additional more than 1,500,000 foreign workers.

Except for the foreigners, the population is Moslem. Tribal culture predominates heavily, although some variations do exist. The citizens of Hijaz, for example, who through trade and pilgrimage have continual contact with
people from other parts of the world, are quite cosmopolitan both in outlook and way of life. In dramatic contrast, the citizens of Najd, the tribes south of Taif, and the northern tribes are rural and insular. Differences in customs, traditions, and ways of living are apparent throughout the country. The warp of the Saudi social fabric, however, is the extended family or tribe to which members maintain strong loyalty.

**Government**

Saudi Arabia is a monarchy in which power is centralized; the King is at the center of the political system. Islamic law (Shari'a and Sunnah) is the source of authority in Saudi Arabia; thus Islam provides the ideological basis of government. The country's religious leadership has always controlled the judicial system.

No legislation occurs except by royal decree, and until a few years ago no written constitution existed, nor were there written laws to guide the nation's internal and external affairs. But the extraordinary development of recent years created the need for more formal and complex systems of law. The Saudi government therefore began, within the purview of Islamic law, to enact and promulgate new regulatory and administrative laws. One such law, for example, was instituted by royal decree October 19, 1982, to form and regulate policy for the mass media.
Saudi Arabia is divided into five major administrative regions, each headed by an appointed governor who is a member of the royal family (Figure 2). As Harrington has noted,

...of all the agencies and organized bodies of the government of Saudi Arabia, the Council of Ministers is by far the most potent. It derives the power directly from the King. It can examine almost any matters in the Kingdom."^10

In 1953 the necessity for a general governing body such as this was recognized and it was thus created, with King Sa'ud at its head as Prime Minister.

At present, the powerful Council of Ministers consists of King Fahd, who is both President and Prime Minister; Crown Prince Abdullah, who is First Vice-President and First Deputy Prime Minister (and head of the National Guard as well); Prince Sultan, Second Deputy Prime Minister (and also the Minister of Defense). The ministers of the twenty Saudi Ministries and two Ministers of State complete the Council (see chart, Figure 2). The constitution of the Council of 1954 and 1958 directed Council to meet once monthly, or whenever the King called them to meet. Today's Council meets weekly to vote on whatever matters are presented to it. Majority rules, but no decision is final without the sanction of the King.

As in any developing nation, prosperity has been one concomitant of progress, but problems are another. The government of Saudi Arabia has evolved from the relatively
The Saudi Council of Ministers

Figure 2. The Saudi Council of Ministers. Source: Fouad Al-Farsy, Saudi Arabia, a Case Study in Development (London: Stacey International, 1978).
simplistic monarchy of King Sa'ud's early reign into a far more complex entity. It is heartening that the Saudi monarchy has had the wisdom to institute a system of government capable of responding to a society that is at once tradition-bound and changing daily.

**Education**

No contemporary nation can fulfill its aspirations without giving careful attention to the education of its people. Education has become a foremost consideration of the Saudi government, and with excellent reasons: for hundreds of years widespread illiteracy has severely undermined development in the Arabian Peninsula. Until quite recently, only a very few Saudis were able to read the Kur'an. Fewer than these had mastered the basics of writing well enough to handle the correspondence required by trade; these people lived mainly in the western areas, where Jiddah, a seaport, and Mekkah, the pilgrimage site, encouraged some degree of intellectual sophistication.

Forty years ago not even one primary school existed in Saudi Arabia. Although King Sa'ud decreed the establishment of the Directorate of Education in 1924, it is actually only since 1953 that a nationwide system of formal education has been in place, administered by the Ministry of Education. Much growth in all aspects of education has occurred since then, particularly during the 1960's, when the move toward nationwide literacy acquired great impetus.
Three major institutions are now responsible for education in Saudi Arabia: the Ministry of Education, the Girls' Education Administration, and the Ministry of Higher Education. All education is free to Saudi citizens, and the three institutions provide all school materials. The number of schools in Saudi Arabia, as well as enrollment figures, have increased dramatically as a result of the government's having given special emphasis and priority to education. In 1972, 582,774 girls and boys attended elementary, intermediate, and secondary schools; by 1981 that number had reached 1,287,183. In 1972, enrollment at the seven universities and two women's colleges stood at 9471; by 1981 it had grown to 56,252.11

The Third Development Plan (for 1980-85) projects that the number of students at all levels will increase by nearly two million by 1985. The government plans to spend SR 128,337 million during the 1980-85 period for both general and higher education.12 The extraordinary implication of this statistic is that by 1985, when the Third Development Plan will have been fully implemented, 99% of the total capital allocated to development of human resources will have been devoted to the expansion of education.

Even though the Saudi literacy rate remains relatively low, it has grown remarkably quickly. In 1960 literacy was estimated at 6% of the population, but by 1980 it had risen
to 25%. Such figures augur optimistically for the future of education in Saudi Arabia.

The Economy

Prior to the 1960's, Saudi Arabia was one of the world's most poverty-stricken nations. Several factors account for its poverty. For one thing, the country's harsh geography argued against development. Rugged mountain ranges to the west and south, and a vast, arid plateau to the east and north militated against agriculture, building, travel, and communication. Moreover, illiteracy encouraged the cyclical nature of poverty; illiterate, insular people are shut off from most new ideas and often hostile to the ones they do learn about. Further, antiquated agricultural methods sapped the ever-diminishing arable land of its vigor. During the 1940's and 1950's most Saudis were either nomadic herdsmen, or subsistence farmers scratching out a meager living on the 0.2% of the country's cultivated land. The urban economies of the pilgrimage cities Mekkah and Medina, and of the seaports Jiddah and Hijaz, were more prosperous.

Saudi economic hopes were raised by the discovery of oil in the early 1930's, but they were dashed soon thereafter. Oil brought little new revenue. What money was available was quickly exhausted by the many demands of a newly established, needy country and its citizens. Furthermore, the oil producing companies monopolized oil management, prices, and profits. Saudi Arabia was in no position to
protest these inequities, for it lacked people who understood modern methods of production, management, and finance.

Oil now constitutes 99% of Saudi Arabia's exports, and these exports, in turn, provide over 90% of the country's revenue. And as a result of the enormous increase in demand for oil production, Saudi Arabia's economic dependence on oil has become absolute.

Since the 1970's the country has become "the world's third largest oil producer and first exporter, and it has 25% of world reserves." In 1974 the petroleum industry comprised 83% of the Saudi Gross Domestic Product (GDP). More recently, though, this sector of the GDP has leveled off at about 66% as a consequence of the growth of other industries. Construction, for example, has expanded to become the second largest sector, accounting for almost 13% of the GDP. Government services amount to 5%, and transportation and communication come to 4.5%. Agriculture remains the smallest sector of the GDP, accounting for only 1% in 1977.

Oil is obviously fundamental to Saudi Arabia's economic growth. However, lest it seem that oil is the only element of the country's economy worth considering, it is appropriate to examine Saudi budgeting and fiscal planning in order to present a clearer view of the increasing intricacies of the Saudi economy.
In Saudi Fiscal Year 1975-76, expenditure nationally exceeded revenue for the first time in many years. According to a Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency Report, actual revenues for that year were SR 101,170 million—compared with the SR 95,840 million budgeted, and its actual expenditure totalled SR 77,480 million out of a budgeted SR 110,935 million. Nevertheless, the amount actually spent was a long way ahead of the previous fiscal year, when expenditure totalled only 35,000 million riyals even though revenue was still about the same at SR 100,100 million.

For 1976-77, expenditure was fixed at exactly the same as the previous year: SR 110,935 million, and projected revenue at the same figure. Expenditure was maintained at the same level for 1977-78, but in 1978-79 it rose to SR 147,530 million. Revenue and expenditure for 1979-80 were projected to balance at SR 160,000 million.16

The unusually rapid fifteen-fold increase in oil revenues requires sophisticated and rigorous fiscal planning. To deal with revenues that rose in seven years from SR 5.53 billion to SR 86.91 billion,17 the Saudi government has responded by establishing three ambitious five-year Development Plans—for 1970-75, 1975-80, and 1980-85. Moreover, since it is appreciated that oil is a non-renewable resource, the government directs long-term efforts toward the development of non-petroleum-based industries. The certainty that oil reserves will one day
become depleted provides strong impetus for the government to use its current oil revenue in all aspects of national development. The implementation in 1970 of the First Development Plan marked the beginning of genuine modernization for Saudi Arabia. The nation broke sharply with its muddled economic past and began the long march toward progress.

The First Development Plan had two primary objectives. First, through manpower planning and investment within the social infrastructure, the Plan was to accelerate development of human resources. Second, it was to diversify the Saudi structure of production, thereby diminishing the country's future dependence on oil as its main source of revenue. The government allocated SR 32.20 billion to this first Plan, 45% of which was to be used for capital projects. The government or public sector took the major portion of the allocations; 23% went for defense, 19% for public administration.¹⁸

Officially speaking, the greatest progress that was achieved during the First Development Plan was the complete change in the rate of obtaining oil revenue; the oil sector of the GDP increased from 54.4% in 1970 to 79.3% in 1975. More important in the long run, perhaps, was that this Plan furnished a priceless learning experience for Saudi planners. No longer would the complexities of estimating,
budgeting, financing, and implementing seem so formidable to them.

The implementation of the Second Development Plan began in 1975. Its total cost was SR 498 billion ($142 billion), or about nine times that of the first Plan. The second Plan's objectives included diversification of the economy; creation of an infrastructure upon which to build an economy less dependent on oil; rapid development of manpower resources; and individual development of each of the five major regions based on their distinctive human and geographical characteristics. The Plan called for an increase of the private sector's share of the GDP from 11% in 1975 to 15% in 1980. Annual growth of the GDP was projected at 10.2%. 19 Under the second Plan, the largest allocations were made to infrastructure (SR 113 million) and to investment in production. Education was allocated SR 80,123.9 million; defense received SR 78,156.5 million. The remainder went to aid, food subsidies, and the general reserve fund. 20

The most salient feature of progress during this second five-year period was the GDP's average annual growth rate. Its aggregate increase was 8.04%; the non-oil sector's average was 15.13%. But a problem emerged during these five years: a troublesome shortage of Saudi manpower. 21

The shortage resulted in heavy dependence on foreign workers. They flocked from many countries to Saudi Arabia,
and their numbers eventually would expand to two million. In view of this dependence, the Third Development Plan (1980-85) attempts to limit the growth of the number of foreign workers and concentrates on maximizing use of domestic and foreign skilled labor. Thus the emphasis on building a sound infrastructure which was the measure of success in the Second Development Plan has shifted, to some extent, to production investment in industry, agriculture, mining, education and training, and to reduction of the growth of foreign manpower while increasing the Saudi labor force.

The current Plan sets at SR 783 billion ($250 billion) the total government expenditure for civilian development, administration, subsidies, and emergency reserves. And as reported by Business Week,

In 1985, when this plan is completed, the Saudis expect their economy to be developing so generally that the country will be positioned to continue its prosperity even when, eventually, its oil is used up.

It is hoped this outline of the Saudi Arabian economy will have strongly suggested that while the country clearly has the money for development, it lacks the necessary indigenous skilled workers. Because of its wealth, Saudi Arabia has been able in only a few years to evolve from a medieval into a modern nation. Its present infrastructure—the imposing new buildings, the airports, the highway system—is ample proof of its progress. The shortage of manpower remains a major hurdle to the nation's development,
but the Third Development Plan wisely addresses the education and training of the Saudi people. This is a critical step in strengthening their grasp of their role in development; it can help generate a heightened awareness on their part of what the nation means to them and what they mean to the nation.
NOTES


2Ibid.


13Middle East Yearbook 1979, p. 191.

14Ibid., p. 192.


19 Middle East Yearbook 1979, p. 191.


22 Ibid., p. 16.

CHAPTER 3

MASS MEDIA IN SAUDI ARABIA: BACKGROUND

Introduction

Even though I believe it is axiomatic that "what is past is prologue," the purpose of this study is not primarily to examine the history of Saudi mass media. For one thing, that information is already available, so that yet another historical study would contribute little to scholarship. What is more, Saudi media history is quite short—especially the history of broadcasting. Hence only a brief outline of the Saudi mass media will be offered here as a background for the reader.

The Press before the Sa'udi Regime

The history of the press in the country begins in Hijaz (now the western province)—before the country was unified in 1924 under Saudi rule. The lineage of the present Saudi press extends, then, to the Hijazi press, which began in 1908.

The Press During Ottoman Rule

The earliest newspapers were established when Hijaz was under Ottoman rule, which lasted until 1915. Hijaz was the first newspaper; a Turkish language paper, it began in 1908 as the official publication of the state. In 1909 Shams Al
Haqiaq, a Turkish language weekly paper, appeared in Mekkah. In the same year four other newspapers began publication: Al-Islah Al-Hijazi, a weekly paper in Jiddah, and Safa'a Al-Hijaz, Al-Rageeb, and Al-Medina Al-Monawarah in Medina. It is worth noting that all these newspapers were written and edited by Turks, Syrians, and others of non-indigenous origin.¹

In 1916 Sharif Hussein, the Hashemite king, succeeded in overthrowing the Ottoman rulers of Hijaz and ejected them from the area. With this turn of events, all six newspapers ceased publication. When we reflect that the existence and continuity of mass media in the Third World at that time—and indeed even quite recently—depended on their loyalty to the government in power, the newspapers' abrupt disappearance is not surprising. However, with Sharif Hussein as king and leader of the Hashemite government in Hijaz, a number of new loyalist newspapers appeared to take their place.

The Press During Hashemite Rule

The new papers began publication in 1916. King Sharif Hussein published Al-Qibla, the first gazette of the newly independent kingdom of Al-Hijaz; its editor was Muhib Al-Din Khatib, a Syrian.² Al-Hijaz, the second newspaper to begin publication during the Hashemite period, appeared in Medina on October 7, 1916. In 1919 Al-Falah began in Mekkah; its publisher was the Syrian Omar Shakir. Barreed
Al-Hijaz was published in 1924 in Jiddah; it was the first newspaper in Jiddah's history. By this time, Ibn Sa'ud had occupied all the cities of Hijaz except Jiddah. Barreed Al-Hijaz is noteworthy also for having been the first newspaper run by a native-born Hijazi writer (Mohammad Saleh Nasif). The other papers that appeared during this period were written and staffed by non-indigenous Hijazis.

The Saudi Press

With the conquest of Hijaz by King Abdul Aziz bin Sa'ud in 1924, the Hashemite rule ended. King Sa'ud founded the new kingdom which eight years later he would declare the united, independent nation of Saudi Arabia. And under King Sa'ud's leadership, a new era opened for Saudi journalism. A number of newspapers appeared during the emergence of Saudi Arabia as a political entity; these papers would be the cornerstone in the development of the Saudi mass media establishment of today.

In 1924, Umm Al Qura, the new nation's first official gazette, was published by the Saudi government. The hand-printed, four-page weekly specialized in religious and literary articles. Umm Al Qura was the sole Saudi newspaper in existence from 1925 to 1932. The only other publication during this period was the monthly (later to be fortnightly) Majallat Al Islah, which began in 1928 and ended two years later.
Several publications emerged in Hijaz during the thirties. The first of these, Sawt Al Hijaz, was published in 1932 at Mekkah. This semi-weekly newspaper was discontinued during World War II. It reappeared in 1946 under a new name, Al-Bilad Al-Saudiah, as a literary magazine, but in 1952 it again became a newspaper—Saudi Arabia's first daily. In 1936, Al Manhal Magazine appeared in Medina. A literary journal, this magazine later moved to Jiddah. In 1937 the weekly Al-Medina Al-Monawarah began publication; during the fifties it grew into a daily paper. Both Al-Bilad Al-Saudiah and Al-Medina Al-Monawarah moved their offices to Jiddah, shortening their names to Al-Bilad and Al-Medina. The monthly magazine Al-Nid'aa Al-Islami appeared in 1938, but at the beginning of World War II it ceased publication.

The post-war period saw the establishment of several more publications in Hijaz; most of them were primarily literary, historical, religious, and other such specialized periodicals rather than news vehicles. In fact, no press of any description existed in Saudi Arabia except in the Hijaz region until 1953, when Al-Yamamah became the first periodical published in Riyadh (in Saudi Arabia's central province). Al Yamamah began as a monthly; by the beginning of 1955 it was produced weekly. The second publication in Riyadh was Al-Jazirah; it started as a weekly newspaper in 1964 and by 1971 had become a daily. In 1965 a third
newspaper, *Al-Riyadh*, was established in Riyadh. The first paper to appear in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia was *Akhbar Al Dahran*, which began at Dharan in 1954; however, it folded after a few years. To date, no publications have been established in the northern and southern provinces.

During the sixties, other magazines and newspapers were published which today remain among Saudi Arabia's best known publications. One of these is *Okaz*, a Taif weekly in 1960, and a daily newspaper since 1964 when its offices were moved to Jiddah. The daily *Al-Nadwah* began in Mekkah in 1960. And in 1969 *Al-Yawm*, published in Dammam, became a daily newspaper.

In addition to the publications mentioned thus far, there are several periodicals, specialized publications, and other published materials which have been omitted from this discussion of the Saudi press, either because they were not popular, or they vanished forever soon after they appeared, or because they merged with one of the newspapers that has been mentioned. Table 1 offers a breakdown of the most popular Saudi newspapers, weekly magazines, and monthly periodicals.

It should be borne in mind that all newspapers, magazines, and monthlies were privately owned before 1963. In that year the Saudi government found it expedient to disenfranchise all publications except for some of the specialized periodicals, and transferred publication
TABLE 1
THE MOST POPULAR SAUDI PRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Newspapers</th>
<th>Date Established</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Place of Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al-Bilad</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Jiddah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Medlnah</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Jiddah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Nadwah</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Mekkah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukaz</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Jiddah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Riyadh</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Riyadh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Jazivah</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Riyadh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Yawm</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Dammam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeklies</th>
<th>Date Established</th>
<th>Place of Publication</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ummal Qura</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Mekkah</td>
<td>Official Gazette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Yamamah</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Riyadh</td>
<td>Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQra'a</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Jiddah</td>
<td>Social &amp; Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Dawah</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Riyadh</td>
<td>Religious Magazine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthlies</th>
<th>Date Established</th>
<th>Place of Publication</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al-Manhal</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Jiddah</td>
<td>Literary and Culture Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Arab</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Riyadh</td>
<td>History and Culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: A copy of the Saudi publications obtained from the General Directorate of Press and Publications, Ministry of Information, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
privileges to public establishments. With this transfer, the government issued regulations for publication which ensured its power to control the print media.

**Broadcasting**

The press in Saudi Arabia has encountered a number of difficulties, but one problem it has not been forced to face is the active animosity of the conservative religious element in Saudi society. Broadcasting, on the other hand, has from its beginning met with angry rejection and open hostility from these people. "Radio, films, singing equipment, etc., were thought by religious people in Saudi Arabia to be forms of perverse instruments of entertainment and were strongly objected to during the thirties, forties, and fifties."4 Although the Saudi government tried hard through reasonable means to convince religious conservatives that modern broadcasting was a necessity in Saudi society, they refused to agree with or accept the government's arguments for establishing any form of broadcasting. The government attempted to explain to them that Islam has no restrictions against radio and that radio is in no way subversive of Islam, but the attempt was futile. The conservatives' position merely stiffened; their objections continued.

In order that reason might prevail, the Saudi government finally resorted to the exercise of its authority to establish what it viewed as necessary for the nation's
well-being. Over the objections of the religious conservatives, then, radio broadcasting began in Saudi Arabia—but it was not the peaceful beginning the government had hoped for. Several incidents of violence occurred between the government and the protesting reactionaries. These incidents marred the history of broadcasting in Saudi Arabia, and shook the country itself, but once radio was finally established the violence faded. It was a tenuous peace, however, and in 1965, when television arrived in Saudi Arabia, the conservatives' strident outcries broke out anew. Both radio and television are by now firmly established in the country, but most religious conservatives continue to regard these media as tools of evil that will destroy Islam and Saudi Arabian society. They cannot conceive, and refuse to be persuaded, that radio and television can work to strengthen both the nation and its religion.

The protests notwithstanding, in 1949 the Saudi government established a low-powered (about three kilowatts) short-wave radio station in Jiddah. The basic purpose of "Radio Mekkah," as the station was called, was to broadcast government news and Islamic programs. Underpowered, underequipped, understaffed, and not audible in areas beyond Hijaz, Radio Mekkah was the only Saudi station in the country—a somewhat dubious beginning for the electronic media, but at least it was a beginning. In the early years
During the early stages of Saudi broadcasting the subject matter of radio programs was quite limited. As mentioned above, government news, religious and literary programs filled most of the air time. The performance, presentation, and appeal of these programs were weak; the religious, political, and social tenor of the times worked against popular acceptance of the programs, and the lack of competent people in the broadcasting field led to their ineffectiveness.

Even so, by 1950 UNESCO was able to report that there were 9000 receiver sets operating in Saudi Arabia.⁶ Saudi radio developed gradually under the Directorate General of Broadcasting, Press, and Publications. (This body was established in 1953 and, ten years later, elevated to Ministry status.) The three-kilowatt transmitters were replaced by ten-kilowatt and then fifty-kilowatt transmitters. And as a result of the growth of the economy and the improvement in education, in the sixties the country began to enjoy not only stronger transmission, but increased hours of broadcasting (seventeen hours daily by 1965) with more diversified, higher quality programming.⁷ By 1970, one-kilowatt transmitters had been installed at Medina, Abha, Jizan, Tabuk, Hail, and Buraydah, which meant that Saudi radio now extended to almost all parts of the country.⁸
In 1964 Saudi Arabia's first radio news service was established in Riyadh, broadcasting sixteen hours a day over one fifty-kilowatt medium-wave and two fifty-kilowatt short-wave transmitters. Radio stations in Jiddah and Riyadh improved both technically and with regard to program quality. By the late sixties the stations had become audible to an international as well as domestic audience. In 1980 there were approximately 3,055,000 radio receivers in Saudi Arabia.9*

Beginning in the 1970's, the Saudi government built in Riyadh a large broadcasting complex comprising fourteen studios, each equipped with the latest in radio communications technology. The government also saw to it that the Jiddah station was similarly equipped. Saudi radio has achieved technological success, but the quality of its programs continues to need improvement. Finally, it should be noted here that since this study does not attempt to offer a complete record of Saudi Arabian broadcasting, I have not discussed the radio external service, which broadcasts programs in several languages.

Television

The history of television in Saudi Arabia, though shorter than that of radio, is similarly chequered. Since

*(Numbers here are estimated; there is no official record nor has there been a survey of Saudi radio and television receivers.)
its inception, Saudi television has faced vociferous objections from religious conservatives. Although the advent of television was heartily welcomed by the educated and by the young, the conservatives were--predictably--hostile and violent toward this new communications medium. When Saudi television first aired in 1965, it was met by violence from the conservative element, even though the government had diplomatically filled its television broadcasting time with a heavy concentration of religious programming.

Apparently no government strategy works; today the religious conservatives continue to reject television with disturbingly fanatical fervor. It is difficult to comprehend what there is about television that so exercises these people. They base their objections on idiosyncratic interpretations of Islam, arbitrarily citing passages from the Kuran to "prove" their point. But parochialism offers little to a developing nation. If the purpose of religion is to enrich the human spirit, then surely we have a right to question whether these conservatives are, as they profess, working in Islam's best interests. Succeeding chapters of this study will discuss more fully the ways in which the religious conservative element has hindered mass media's evolution and effectiveness in Saudi Arabia.

Despite the obstacles presented by the conservatives, on July 17, 1965 Saudi television began transmitting a black
and white picture from two-kilowatt stations in Jiddah and Riyadh. The stations covered between 80 and 100 square kilometers in those cities and the areas that surround them. In the beginning, Saudi television lacked both quantity and quality. The two stations were staffed by only sixty-eight people who had neither experience nor expertise in the medium. Luckily, however, Saudi television received expert advice and assistance from NBC International, a United States company which contracted with the Saudi government to build, operate, and maintain Saudi television facilities. This arrangement was of great benefit to Saudi television in its early years.

During the subsequent decade the evolution of Saudi television continued. In addition to the first two stations at Riyadh and Jiddah, three more stations were built—at Medina, Qassim, and Dammam—and equipped with the latest technical facilities. Then, in order to extend the scale of transmission, the Saudi government built several relay stations at sites throughout the country. More programs were offered, of better quality. According to a Ministry of Information report I was able to obtain, national manpower in the television industry grew from 68 in 1965 to 428 in 1975. And in 1977, a new television station was established at Abha, in the southern region of the country, with a chain of relay stations that would cover the widest area possible with television transmission.
Color transmission opened a new era for Saudi television on September 24, 1976. Stations were equipped to transmit in SECAM, except for the Dammam station, which can transmit in both SECAM and PAL. A further technical development is the transmitters that broadcast the Riyadh signal by way of a leased INTELSAT satellite transponder to twenty ground stations at various locations throughout the kingdom.

However,

...the most important achievement is, as a report of the Ministry of Information says, the completion of the centralized broadcasting of the Riyadh television station and the linking up of all stations through the medium of the [backbone] cable which connects Dammam with the western province.10

Upon determining to centralize television in Riyadh, the Saudi government constructed a technologically sophisticated central television complex there; it is now regarded as the largest and most advanced television center in the Middle East. The cost of this complex was SR 1,200 billion. It was ready for use by the end of 1982 and will be formally inaugurated within the first few months of 1983.11 Even with the vast and successful expansion of transmission, however, some parts of the country still are unable to receive television. But Saudi Arabia intends to expand its broadcasting services still further; in order to achieve wider coverage, it has designed plans to build and launch a satellite for its own exclusive use.

This chapter has omitted a detailed discussion of Saudi television programs. To put the matter quite briefly,
improvement in programs has not been commensurate with technical advances. Both quality and quantity of local programs are inferior, which has resulted in far too heavy dependence on imported programs. The next chapters will examine radio and television programs currently available to Saudi viewers.
NOTES


Al-Shamikh, pp. 108-10, 152-54.

Shobaili, p. 114.


Saudi Arabian Television: A synopsis, 1980. Presented to the author by Dr. Saleh bin Nasir, Deputy Minister for Radio and Television. Most of the information in the "Television" section of this chapter is based on this synopsis, which was prepared by the Ministry of Information.

Interview with Saleh bin Nasir, Riyadh, August, 1982.
CHAPTER 4
THE USE OF MASS MEDIA IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: ARAB WORLD

As will be explained in Chapter 6, the outcome of most communications research indicates that the mass media are potentially powerful forces for change and development. I wish it were accurate to report that developing countries are exploiting this potential to its fullest extent, but in fact this is far from the case. Two circumstances are at the heart of this unfortunate situation; either the nations' planners misconceive the role of mass media in development, and/or the governments of these countries exploit the media for purposes that do not serve the interests of development and advancement—purposes that indeed retard growth.

It is true that some countries do recognize the value of mass media in national development. It is most frustrating to discover, however, that although many governments of underdeveloped nations may see the importance of mass media, they use the media only to further their own political goals, and, secondly, as a source of entertainment. Wilbur Schramm writes that

The governments of the Third World countries are not unaware of the power and value of the mass media, but at the same time they realize that the media can be very important in maintaining popular support and in encouraging people to obey the government, they also seem to concentrate their use of this power in the areas

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of transmitting orders from the ruling elite to the general population, instead of using it to permit the masses of the people to participate in national government and in development planning.¹

It is really no exaggeration to suggest that in many parts of the Third World, the mass media do function as "the opiate of the people."

Misconceptions and Misuse

Without question, many developing countries (including the Arab countries whose use of media I was able to observe firsthand in the summer of 1981) make inappropriate use of their mass media. In these countries the media are allowed to serve mainly two purposes: propaganda and entertainment. Mahmoud El-Sherif has noted that "the Arab mass media have been used in certain cases to legitimize undemocratic measures by certain governments." El-Sherif observes too that a neutral and objective study of the results of governments' control of the Arab media--on balance--was used more for limited political ends than for social and economic development.² These governments take an exceedingly limited--and limiting--view of mass media, believing that media's primary task is to disseminate propaganda, that their secondary function is to entertain. Third World mass media devote minimal attention to cultural and intellectual matters. The result of this unimaginative approach to mass media is that the media have been rendered impotent to advance development in the very countries that so
assiduously seek it. One problem is that media function in these countries is one-way only: from the countries' rulers and their development planners to the people. Numerous studies (not to mention common sense) show that one-way communication is ineffective. Rogers, for example, tells us that:

Self-development implies a different role for communication than the usual top-down development approach of the past. Technical information about development problems and possibilities and about appropriate innovations is sought by local systems from the central government. The role of government development agencies, then, is mainly to communicate in answer to these locally initiated requests, rather than to design and conduct top-down communication campaigns. Key elements in self-development approaches are participation, mass mobilization, and group efficacy, with the main responsibility for development planning and execution being at the local level. The main roles of mass communication in self-development may be summarized as (1) providing technical information about development problems and possibilities and about appropriate innovations, in answer to local requests, and (2) circulating information about the self-development accomplishments of local groups so that other such groups may profit from their experience and perhaps be challenged to achieve a similar performance.  

Rogers' approach seems workable as well as sensible. One wonders, in fact, why more developing nations have not adopted it eagerly. But the reality, unfortunately, is that a search among Arab nations for applications of Rogers' media concept is destined to end in disappointment; mass media function in these countries is one-way only, with communication directed from the government to the people.

In Third World nations mass media are wholly or partially the property of the government in power, which
means that the media in most of these countries are in effect little more than mouthpieces for the government's message. I want to make it clear here, however, that I have no intention of arguing the merits of free media as opposed to controlled media; that is a subject for another, very long discussion. Moreover, some communications scholars believe that government monopoly on media has advantages; it can serve to maintain the cultural integrity of countries with tribal backgrounds and high rates of illiteracy. Other scholars disagree, of course, believing instead that monopoly by its very nature limits media's potential. But this study treats the function of mass media, not their political foundation.

Generally speaking, the nature of governmental restraints on media may be explained by four major philosophical approaches. The first of these is the authoritarian view, which emerged out of the absolute power of medieval and post-medieval monarchies. The purpose of newspapers that were established under monarchies of this kind was to serve as instruments for effecting government policies. It is rather natural that this authoritarian approach to the press should have carried over into the present day and been extended to cover all the mass media.4

The second, or libertarian view, has its roots in the work of nineteenth-century thinkers such as John Stuart
Mill, who believed in the "natural rights of man." The libertarian view regards the media as vital to man's discovery of truth; it says that as long as people are given free access to truth, their natural powers of reasoning will enable them to recognize it. Libertarian thinkers hold that privately-owned media keep watch on government in order to be sure it operates in the best interests of the people; thus the media function as the people's advocate rather than as the government's. Apart from barring blatant obscenity, indecency, and wartime sedition, the libertarian approach allows no restrictions on the media.5

In the early 1900's the view arose in England and the United States that although people ought to be able to reason their way to the truth, it is possible for irresponsible media to lead them astray. Thus the media are responsible to society as well as to themselves. This philosophy of social responsibility represents a less sanguine, though perhaps more realistic appraisal than the libertarian approach of the relationship between media and the people, and between media and the government. Social responsibility demands professional ethics on the part of media practitioners, for the media must police themselves lest government step in to do it. 6

The last of the four philosophical positions is the Soviet-totalitarian view, which has developed out of the ideas of Hegel, Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. The aims of this
approach are quite simple; it holds that the media exist solely to further the leadership of the Communist Party and to advance the Soviet socialist system, as it is defined by Party leaders. Only Party members have access to the media, and media ownership is public. In the Soviet-totalitarian system, media output is strictly controlled. Media may criticize Party tactics of the moment, but not the Party's ultimate goals; since it is often notably perilous in totalitarian regimes to attempt objectively to make this distinction, what usually happens in practice is that the media closely follow the Party line.  

Newspapers and broadcasting in all parts of the world apply one or more of these four views. In Third World countries, especially those of Asia and Africa, the mass media operate according to the totalitarian or authoritarian theories. In some instances it is a combination of both. For instance, when broadcasting is entirely owned by the government, newspapers and magazines may not be, but are nevertheless partly controlled by the government through licensing laws, other legal procedures, and by financial means. Governments in developing countries control their mass media through what are rather euphemistically known as "ministries of information." The actual function of these ministries is to ensure that the citizens are well aware of their governments' intentions, and to picture governments in the most flattering light possible. Thus, bellying their
titles, the ministries really function merely as image-builders for the regimes they serve. In some countries, fear of authoritarian reaction has effectively prevented their mass media from communicating anything less than laudatory regarding their governments and their leaders. It seems only too apparent that "the concept of the watchdog function of the media acting for the public against the government is manifest only in limited ways in the Arab world."\textsuperscript{8}

Repressive circumstances such as I have described continue to prevail for a number of reasons. As I have mentioned, leaders and planners misconceive the function of media in national development. Wilbur Schramm has emphasized that the media should not be used merely to transmit orders from a ruling elite to its charges, but as a channel of communication through which the people can participate in national government and in development planning.\textsuperscript{9} It is only too clear that one-way communication has presented a formidable obstacle to the mass media's effectiveness in the development process. And not only do planners fail to comprehend that communication is a social process, they confuse communication itself with the technology of communication; thus the impressive new media complexes, the imposing transmission towers, the intriguing computer terminals become for some planners the end rather than the means to communication. As El-Sherif
has written, "The mass media have become for many Arab States not only a means to social and economic development, but an end in themselves, a symbol of independence and prestige." This confusion may be understandable in countries where technology is still a novelty, but it fails to advance development.

According to a study by Everett Rogers, the lack of authentic contact and understanding between the source of communication and the receiver is likely to nullify the effects of whatever is transmitted through media. Lack of feedback, Rogers says, results in "remedying where there is no pain." He notes that:

The inadequate communication between elite and masses may...lead to conflict in which the frustrated masses seek to communicate their needs by more violent expression. Perhaps the high rate of political instability in less developed countries in the 1960's...is a manifestation of the communication gap between elite and masses. One reason for the frequent failure of elite-directed programs of change is that we know so little about the traditional audience."

It should be obvious that a successful process of development and change requires that it fulfill the needs of the people; meeting those needs requires authentic, down-top feedback, and participation of the people in the decision-making process. Unfortunately, although communications research strongly indicates the integral role of mass media in modernization, and urges that mass media be given the attention they deserve, the problem is that some, perhaps most, governments of developing nations intentionally or
unintentionally ignore the media's importance in development. And even when these governments do attempt to make wise use of their media, they fail, because they have not learned how to use media in attractive, effective ways. As Rogers has written:

There has been considerable neglect of the mass media by national planners in the less developed nations, even though these communication channels may well prove to be one of the sharpest tools in the developer's kit.

Rogers remarks also that only in developing nations like Red China and Cuba have national planners viewed mass media development as really central to carrying their country forward in a hurry. They utilize the mass media, often in combination with media forums, as an integral tool of government policy to enlist their populations in mass campaigns.¹²

**Media Centralization**

Yet another problem in most developing nations is that their mass media are centralized in the capitals or major cities; this means that rural areas are neglected. Thus:

Mass media messages in less developed countries are of low interest and relevancy to rural receivers because of the strong urban orientation of the population; this is especially so because most of the mass media institutions are typically located in the capital city.¹³

Centralization of the mass media (particularly of newspapers) in major cities causes rural areas to remain isolated from the modernization process. Rural areas have been ignored not only by the planners in developing countries, but also by the media, which are supposed to help rural citizens to interact with the move toward
modernization. It is obvious that this cavalier attitude toward rural people is one reason for the movement of much of the rural population to cities where development and modern facilities are concentrated. In fact, this population shift is a problem that faces Saudi Arabia today; the past fifteen years have witnessed a massive migration of rural and village people to the cities. Dr. Ghazi Al Gosaibi, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Industry and Electricity, has told me that the Saudi government believes this migration works against the development process. "We desire that people stay in their villages," he says. Dr. Al Gosaibi acknowledges, though, that the Saudi mass media have not been used wisely to persuade people it is to their advantage to remain in their villages. Saudi officials recognize that the population shift to the cities presents a problem; however, their treatment of the problem has lacked any real methodology that could address all aspects of it, so that to date the migration continues unabated.

A UNESCO study has determined that most Third World countries' newspapers are centralized in their capitals. In Saudi Arabia, for example, six of the seven daily newspapers are published in Riyadh and Jiddah, the two major cities. There is a similar situation in the other Arab countries; in Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and Tunisia, all daily newspapers are published in the capital cities. Vincent Farace has observed that in developing countries the nature
of communication is distinctly urban. "Even where the urban area has a fairly well developed mass media network," Farace writes, "its content, programming, and distribution tend to ignore the needs and wishes of the rural peasant." If it is surprising that the circumstances Farace describes are so widespread in developing countries, it is even more surprising that planners continue to countenance the situation; for when we recognize that rural areas are by virtue of their agricultural resources fundamental to a nation's economy, then special attention to these areas and to the people who live in them becomes not merely important, but positively essential for successful development. It is indisputable that, as Syed Rahin has written:

Only if the brainpower and laborpower of those living in rural areas are also mobilized for national development can rapid development be achieved.  

It is clear that centralization of the mass media in cities contributes heavily to the continuing state of isolation of rural areas. What is more, centralization retards knowledge about these areas, knowledge which is essential if media messages are to be effective. Centralization of media is responsible for a vicious cycle of ignorance; centralization encourages isolation of rural people, isolation fosters ignorance among them, and ignorance means that they cannot grasp the media's message, and that thus they remain unprepared to participate in development. Though the leaders of Third World nations
profess to want their rural citizens' participation, in reality they do little of substance to encourage it. Those who direct the mass media in the Third World must take the trouble to learn what will interest the rural citizens, what kinds of programs will stimulate them to participate willingly and intelligently in the growth of their countries. Otherwise, the media—and the governments—will have ignored a vital resource for progress.

In a 1966 meeting in Bangkok of UNESCO, the members issued a statement to the effect that communication between the planners, their agents, and the people would ensure the success of social and economic development plans. UNESCO said, moreover, that properly utilized broadcasting can lead people to recognize the need for change, that broadcasting would arouse and broaden the interests of the people, and that broadcasting would enable the people to create the psychological and intellectual conditions so necessary for the training and mobilization of human resources in an underdeveloped country. Communications scholars and media experts applauded UNESCO's statement and gave it their support. Schramm, for instance, said that "localness is a strong attribute of the mass media, and without a local field staff, the media are not likely to know such things about small localities they serve." It is folly to fail to incorporate local culture into the use of media, for the
result will be more than merely ineffective; it may well be strongly negative.

It is generally accurate to say that the centralization of the mass media in major cities of the Third World, and the failure to make wise use of the media in national development, are the result of two factors; these countries' governments do not grasp the potential of media as a force in development and change, and there are not enough competent people in the media field. Those are the major factors; in addition, governments have limited media function to propaganda and imported entertainment. As El-Sherif writes,

Unfortunately, and because the means of communication in the Arab countries were and still are owned and controlled, overtly or covertly, by Arab governments, these means have been used in certain instances for negative purposes, and in the absence of a free competition for quality, certain branches of the media, like television, not only failed in discharging their social responsibility, but were turned into proponents of harmful pattern of behavior, and even moral decadence. 21

Moreover, the failure is also partly the responsibility of planners who, having disregarded their mass media as tools for growth, omit them from their development plans. It is indeed unfortunate that so many analysts, policy-makers, and development planners know so little about the effects of mass communication on development. If these people would take the pains to find out more, the nations they serve would be in far less danger of being overrun by the cultural invasion from the West.
The Cultural Invasion

When we move from the media concept held by most governments of developing nations, to the content of the mass media in these countries, another major problem emerges. At present, all developing nations have at least two or three varieties of mass media; some countries, particularly the wealthier ones such as Saudi Arabia, possess the very latest in sophisticated media technology, which allows them to expand their media's domestic and international transmission. The problem, then, is not the availability of hardware, but the media's content.

The issue for development is media content. That is, what is the nature of the programs that are transmitted? How should the content of mass media be planned to sustain real growth? Obviously the effects of media on a country's development cannot be the result only of the forms of media; they are primarily a consequence of the content.

During my visit to the Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, in 1981, I was given the opportunity to observe their mass media, particularly television, very closely. It quickly became evident that a high percentage of their media content is produced outside of where it is transmitted. Most of the research in media content bears out my observations; the fact is that in most developing nations the content, or message, of the mass media, especially of television, is imported from foreign cultures, chiefly from
the United States. This study devotes special attention to television because of its potentially dramatic impact on illiterate or semi-literate audiences, and because, of all the media, television is the most obviously modern, and the one in which international influence is at a maximum.

The ability of television to bring about changes in a society is immeasurable. Television can be a frightening force; the Orwellian possibilities that can result from irresponsible exercise of its power should give us all pause. But if its power is wisely channeled, television can be of immense benefit to a society. We know that the kind and quality of information which is transmitted to a group of people will have profound and far-reaching influence on them; research has revealed, unfortunately, that most developing societies are undergoing a "cultural invasion." I have determined to use this term rather than "cross-cultural communication," the term generally favored by communications scholars, because it seems to me more accurate; that is, a great many ideas and a veritable glut of information is directed from advanced countries to developing countries, but there is very little reciprocity. There has been some discussion regarding the possibility of two-way cultural exchange, but at this time it seems clear that developing nations exert little cultural influence on advanced societies. For one thing, most Third World nations are technologically backward; they lack the technology and
the productivity with which to transfer their culture to other nations, most of whom are in any case not particularly receptive to foreign cultures. For another, most Third World countries rely heavily on western nations for most of their needs, which of course include media programs and information. Moreover, advancements in western industry and technology allow western nations to impose their culture on the Third World. Finally, and perhaps most important, most Third World governments, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, expend their resources to protect their positions within the country; although it is probably typical of bureaucrats everywhere to be more concerned about the permanence of their positions than about the development of their country, this bias is particularly destructive to the interests of Third World nations.

As a result of the technological inferiority of developing countries, most of them lack competent people to operate the mechanisms of media transmission and to produce programs independently. This is why nations of the Third World are almost entirely dependent on western media. Tunstal observes that:

In most of the world’s countries, the media are only there at all, on the present scale, as a result of imports in which the American media (with some British support) predominate. One major influence of American imported media lies in the styles and patterns which most other countries in the world have adopted and copied. This influence includes the very definition of what a newspaper, or a feature film, or a television set is.23
Indeed, it was the United States companies, predominately NBC International, that contracted from the beginning for the establishment of broadcasting in these countries, including Saudi Arabia. The strong American media presence in the Third World has naturally resulted in dependence on American-produced programs—a dependence which has so influenced media content in these countries that fifty percent of it is a product of western society. Because of this high dependence on foreign media production, the Arab media can be more destructive and constructive. El-Sherif strongly criticizes television in the Arab world for destroying traditional values, and for its adverse effects on the behavior of children and the morals of the young. El-Sherif attributes these ill effects to the cheap, Western-oriented programs imported from Europe and North America.24

As I have said, television is the sturdiest vehicle to advance the cultural invasion of the Third World. Television offers the viewer a wealth of information about Western culture—far more than it brings him about his own culture. Most television programs are imported from the West, and the majority of these are produced in the United States. At present, the typical weekly viewing schedule of a Third World citizen may include such programs as Ben Casey, Perry Mason, Hazel, The Six-Million Dollar Man, Hawaii Five-O, Naked City, Gunsmoke, and The Beverly
Hillbillies. I do not pretend to be a TV critic, and while it is tempting to make judgements about the quality of most of these programs, I will content myself with pointing out the incongruity of a situation in which a citizen of, say, Taif is more familiar with the cultural aspects of the American West than he is with the history and the traditions of some parts of Saudi Arabia.

Many aspects of American culture which these programs project have found their way into the daily lives of Third-World citizens, most of whom are ill-prepared to distinguish what is useful and productive in western society from what is worthless. It is not merely a theory that, as Tunstal writes:

Authentic, traditional local culture in many parts of the world is being battered out of existence by the indiscriminate dumping of slick commercial and media products, mainly from the United States.25

"Dumping" is a fitting word; there is grave danger that this media barrage may be turning Third World societies into cultural refuse dumps.

There is no doubt that the large collection of distinctive cultures that we lump under the "Third World" rubric presents an open market for western products; thus it is easy to infer that these countries are under heavy Western influence. It is important to keep in mind, however, that it is the Third World governments who must bear the major responsibility for their media's having become tools of Western culture. It is the governments,
then, more than the Western media agencies, who deserve censure, for instead of insisting on national media production, they are content to let their countries rely on imports. Al-Zobair too has noted that dependence on foreign production presents a major problem for the Arab media. Al-Zobair is convinced that the dependence is what has prevented the Arab media from becoming assets to development. He believes it results from the concept held by Arab authorities, who view media mainly as tools of propaganda and entertainment. Another Arab editor confirms Al-Zobair's opinions:

Another negative aspect of television in the Arab countries is the time, money, and effort it allocates to entertainment at the expense of programs dedicated to education and development. This unfortunate state of affairs can be illustrated by the fact that a well developed country like West Germany uses four percent of television time in broadcasting programs of an educational nature, whereas the figure for most developing countries does not even attain 2 percent.26

One of the critical errors made by developing nations is that they envision modernization strictly as a Western phenomenon: "If it's new, it must be American." This view has led them to depend on the West not only for their media programs, but for almost all their needs—from matches to fighter planes. I am convinced that such dependence compounds rather than remedies the problems of Third World nations. It has become obvious that Western influence has begun to weaken markedly the cultures of these countries. The immature, ill-conceived imitation of Western culture,
the absence of creativity, and the discouragement of local
talent are common characteristics of most developing
societies, and the reason for their continued prevalence is
dependence on imported, foreign-produced programs.

But it is not just television that relies on imported
programs; all the mass media in developing countries remain
almost totally dependent on western media production,
including the press, which still relies on the services of
the five international news agencies. Reuters, Tass, Agence
France Presse, the Associated Press, and United Press
International dominate the news field in the Third World.
But the fact is, as Leonard Sussman writes, "these news
agencies primarily advance the economic, political, and
cultural interests of their home countries." 27 Reuters,
for example, is a British agency whose natural moral
obligation is to its own country's government. Agence
France Presse has a strongly French bias because of its
constitution; it evidences an obligation to the French
government and culture. Tass is a mouthpiece for the
government of the Soviet Union. And the American news
services, United Press International and the Associated
Press, which are traditionally resistant to any form of
government pressure, nevertheless approach the news from a
distinctly American perspective. Stephenson has discussed
the fact that newspapers must adjust themselves to the
operating procedures of the news agencies:
Truth is difficult to find, and newspapers are merely buried in their own cultural milieus, communicating what they can within the limits each culture sets.  

It is in fact reasonable to perceive these news agencies as "cultural imperialists," imposing western culture and political viewpoints on the underdeveloped countries they serve. This form of imperialism may be benign in intent, but its effects are nevertheless pernicious.

It is clear that the lack of competent people in the media field, the political restraints, and the availability of the services of western news agencies have combined to create a situation in which the media in developing countries are weak and dependent, and that therefore these countries have become open markets for western culture, political ideas--indeed, for almost anything that western nations see fit to export. For example, the United States Information Service, which is famous for providing developing countries with media services, has an ulterior purpose in providing those services:

The USIA tries to influence public attitudes in other nations in support of American foreign policy objectives. One of its methods is to make itself as useful as possible to the media in a host country. To the extent wanted by the host country, USIA provides it with goods and services, ranging from encyclopedias to special VOA short-wave feeds in African languages, from sound-effects record libraries to advice on how to solve technical and organizational broadcasting problems, from help in recording folksongs in the hinterland to assistance in conducting seminars on mass communication.  

Dependence on imported, foreign-made media production is virtually the most serious problem facing Third World
nations. It is an urgent problem and it must be solved quickly, for the distinctive cultures of these countries are in imminent danger of being destroyed. A solution must be sought if these nations truly want, as they profess, to be culturally and politically independent.

I hope this chapter has not left the impression that I object to the free exchange of information between developing and developed nations. I am in fact enthusiastically in favor of judiciously importing foreign-made programs, for the media facilitate the communication process among societies everywhere, which can only be to the good; further, the spread of mass media throughout the world means that very few areas will live in isolation any longer. As matters currently stand, the mass media are doing far more harm than good in developing nations. Herbert Schiller too has voiced his concern regarding:

The cultural integrity of weak societies whose national, regional, local, or tribal heritages are beginning to be menaced with extinction by the expansion of modern electronic communications, television in particular, emanating from a few power centers in the industrialized world.30

To summarize briefly the major emphasis of this chapter: The mass media in developing countries, including Saudi Arabia and other parts of the Arab World, exist almost solely for top-down transmission of orders and for entertainment. In addition, because they rely on western media agencies and on imported programs, the mass media serve as tools of a cultural invasion. Third World cultures
are weakening, and they are in real danger of extinction. Nothing can restore a society's identity once it has been forfeited. No amount of "modernization" can disguise the fact that a nation has become a cultural cipher. Saudi Arabia and many other Third World countries have a unique cultural heritage, which is steeped in time and rich with tradition. What an offense against humane values it would be to let "progress" destroy them.
NOTES


10Mahmoud El-Sherif, "The Arab Mass Media."


13Berlo, op. III-3.

14Interview with Dr. Ghazi Al-Gosaibi, Minister of Industry and Electricity, Taif, 1981.

Notes made during a trip to these countries.


Schramm and Lerner, pp. 1-3.

Schramm, p. 124.

Mahmoud El-Sherif, "The Arab Mass Media."


Ibid., p. 17.

Mahmoud El-Sherif, "The Arab Mass Media."

Jeremy Tunstal, p. 57.

Mahmoud El-Sherif, "The Arab Mass Media."


European Broadcasting Review, 93B, September 1965, p. 27.

CHAPTER 5
SAUDI SOCIETY AND DEVELOPMENT: CHARACTERISTICS AND CHANGE

Introduction

Aristotle, perhaps the earliest "media specialist," has taught us that any message we wish to transmit must be based on a firm grasp of human nature in general and of the particular audience to whom the message is directed. Without this understanding, the message is doomed from the start to fall on deaf ears. It is therefore essential that those people who control and direct mass media be knowledgeable about and appreciative of their society's culture, traditions, values, and needs, for lack of such knowledge renders the media ineffective. To understand a country's mass media systems and how they operate, it is necessary also to relate them to the country's social, political, and economic structures. In fact, analysis of the society's structure and characteristics is imperative if we are to learn how to direct media's function wisely. Because people are the targets and consumers of mass media, knowing the audience is the real substance of media function.

Chapter 2 presented a brief historical, political, and economic background on Saudi Arabia. This chapter will concentrate on Saudi society, offering a general
understanding of its basic elements and the impact of
development on it. It is hoped such understanding may lead
to a realization of exactly what is required of Saudi mass
media if they are to work effectively as tools of Saudi
development. This realization can be germane not only to
Saudi Arabia, but to any society, for wherever people who
direct the media understand the environment in which they
operate, the success of media is assured. Indeed, it can be
said that when mass media in developing nations fail to be
effective, it is in large part due to a misunderstanding of
their function and of their societal nature.

The following discussion is based on written sources
that treat Saudi society, on conversations with many Saudis
from a variety of regions and tribes, and, in the main, on
my own experience as a member of Saudi society. The
difficulty here is that, as Walpole has stated, "reliable
information on family life and other social indicators is...
subject to error and uncertainty."1 "Society" is of
course a slippery term; when the term is applied to the
continually shifting, changing body of individuals who
compose Saudi Arabia, its ambiguities become only too
apparent. My intention here is to attempt to clarify the
term's meaning as it applies to Saudi Arabia, keeping in
mind that what "Saudi society" meant yesterday means
something quite different today, and that what it will mean
tomorrow may be something else altogether.
General Characteristics of Saudi Society

Saudi Arabian society is a complex and protean combination, the elements of which are as varied as the people it consists of—who may be nomadic herdsmen or village farmers, or sophisticated, often highly educated dwellers in modern cities and suburbs. Within little more than two generations, the country has undergone profound changes, the effects of which have been both salutary and detrimental.

It is only quite recently, in fact, that Saudi Arabia was introduced to the outside world. Fifty years ago it was an almost completely isolated, tribal country. Only the pilgrimage cities, Mekkah and Medina, were open to outsiders. Life in Saudi Arabia was hard, impoverished, and violent. Before the 1940's, a state (in the modern political sense) did not exist on the Arabian Peninsula, for after the illustrious early years of Islam the Peninsula's inhabitants lived for centuries in provincialism and isolation. During these years the entire area was governed, as El Mallakh has written, by a "compartmentalized mentality"—a result mainly of the "prevailing state of geographical insulation."³

The dominant social units were—and to some extent remain—the tribe and the family. Prior to the 1950's, the population of Saudi Arabia was almost wholly nomadic; it was thus a dispersed society, its people roaming the countryside
for water and pasture. And, as in any tribal society, the binding elements were ties of kinship and recognition of mutual obligations within the kin group. All members of a kin group shared in its status and enjoyed, mutually, the sense of identification which the group provided. The status of one's kin group was a key determinant of social position.

It is possible rather accurately to distinguish four social patterns in the society that existed thirty years ago—before the transformation of Saudi society began. The first of these patterns consists of the Bedouin nomads, wide-ranging wanderers who herded the animals owned by their constituent families. Second is the semi-nomadic tribespeople who moved around in a familiar territory in hopes of finding pasture. Seminomadic people create what can be termed "half-settled" communities; they may establish themselves permanently in one place, but there is always the very real possibility they will return to the nomadic life. Villagers constitute the third social pattern. They lived in huts or farmhouses, and their village organization was based on the local territorial unit—the town or village itself—as well as on kinship. Unlike nomadic and seminomadic people, the villagers depended on small, privately conducted agriculture.

Kin relations were particularly important in villages, for entire sections of villages could consist of families
who considered themselves related through a common male ancestor. Twenty years ago these three groups accounted for 95% of the Saudi population. Kinship was the primary principle of social organization; generally speaking, the social position of an individual in any of the groups was determined by his membership in a particular extended family and by its position within a larger kin group.5

Townspeople make up the fourth social pattern. Before the 50's, only a handful of towns existed in Saudi Arabia, mainly in the Hijaz region. Of these, Mekkah, Medina, and the seaport Jiddah were the most well known. Today not all the inhabitants of these towns are descendants of the indigenous Arab tribes; many are of Turkish, Indian, Afghan, Indonesian, and other ancestry—descendants of people who once traveled as pilgrims to the holy cities, or of traders. A few of these travelers remained in Saudi Arabia, establishing families and businesses. In this region social organization was based in part on occupational and commercial relationships, but even so, the family was fundamental.

Saudi society, which until fifty years ago had never known a central government, presents a number of unique characteristics. Strong family ties have created a society which is celebrated for its courage, generosity, and loyalty. However, other, less admirable traits have emerged from the same source, so that Saudi society is also marked
by bellicosity, particularism, tribal fanaticism, and a self-serving spirit. It seems that the strong emphasis on family ties which engenders and preserves the good effects in this society also perpetuates the negative ones. Indeed, these negative aspects may be considered the most serious hindrance to the country's progress. As Walpole writes,

The individual's loyalty to his family overrides most other obligations. Ascribed status generally outweighs personal achievements in regulating social relationships. One's honor and dignity are tied to the good repute of his kin group and especially to that of the group's women.⁶

Clearly, personal relationships dominate in the Saudi social structure. The individual's strongest allegiances are to his family (defined as a group of kin), to his tribe, and to Islam. Such a structure has arisen naturally in a country which for many centuries consisted of numerous tiny sheikdoms governed by separate tribal traditions, and which was isolated from the rest of the world. Before the unification of Saudi Arabia in 1932 into one state, there was no larger political entity that could lend structure to the whole society. Therefore, as Rentz has noted, people tended to think of themselves not as citizens of a nation but as members of a tribe or as inhabitants of a region—Hijaz, for example, or Najd or Asir.⁷ Unification of the country has not fully changed this mindset among the Saudi people, but considerable headway has been made toward developing in them a sense of national identity.
Saudi Society Today

It is true that Saudi society at present

...is the product of the interaction of four interrelated elements: an environment marked by a fundamental scarcity of the basic means to sustain life; a communal structure built around the family; a great religion, Islam, forming with the family the twin institutional pillars of the society; and a dynasty, the House of Saud, which has given the country both its name and its strongest central political authority.8

However, a transformation of this society has been underway since the 1940's and the earlier closed, static social structure has become more open. Two factors have hastened this process in Saudi Arabia; the discovery of oil has led to increasingly closer contact with outside cultures and with the western approach to industrialization, and huge oil revenues have allowed Saudi Arabia to take material advantage of what the outside world has to offer.

The unification of Saudi Arabia and the exploitation of its oil—with the resulting revenues—has transformed the country's socio-economic structure. As a consequence, "the autonomy of pastoral and agriculture kin groups has lessened, and that of individuals has increased, as they have opportunities (in urban areas) to earn cash wages and acquire material possessions."9 Even before the Saudi economic revolution of the early 70's, a massive and continuous movement of people had begun from the deserts and villages to the cities, towns, and urban centers. Such a migration is typical of a developing nation, whose rural citizens are drawn to the cities by the promise of jobs,
educational opportunity, and, of course, money. Furthermore, city life in itself must seem very attractive—luxurious and easy—to the average rural dweller in a developing nation, accustomed as he is to unremitting labor for small reward.

The United Nations Yearbook for 1970 sets the Saudi population at 85 to 95 percent Bedouin.10 But since 1970 that percentage has dropped drastically; a recently published study states that perhaps only five percent of the population remain fully nomadic.11 Today the great majority of Saudis live in urban areas. This dramatic shift to urban life, plus the new receptivity to other cultures and to media, have immense impact on the traditions, values, and social lives of the Saudi people. The family is still an important social unit and family ties are still very strong, but their strength has diminished except among people who continue to live in the villages, and among the few remaining nomads.

It is obvious that most Saudi social values, traditions, and behavior have changed. While it is expected that change accelerates in time, the changes which have come to Saudi Arabia have happened so fast as to imperil the social fabric. Before the price of oil increased in the 70's, change had been a natural process. The oil revenues have generated both economic and social change, resulting in extensive programs in education and communication as well as
in other areas. Social upheavals have occurred throughout the country. The combination of money, education, travel, trade, and the mass media has brought ideas and influences to Saudi Arabia which are entirely foreign to its society and its history. In the past decade the process of urbanization has moved at breathtaking speed, so that Saudi Arabia is now suffering the consequences of the inevitable conflict between its traditional values and modern ways--most of which are incompatible with the old. Today's unfortunate reality is that the sudden and unplanned opening of Saudi society to foreign cultures, and the media barrage of new information, have caused many Saudi values to deteriorate.

Because the average personal income has continued to increase since the 70's, a middle class has emerged--a class heretofore almost unknown in Saudi Arabia.

Until after World War II there was no middle class in Saudi Arabia except for one or two score commercial families concentrated in port towns. Many of these traders were of non-Saudi origin and maintained commercial ties with firms in their ancestral homes. They were Muslim, however, and were assimilated into local society.12

Oil provided both opportunity and impetus for development of a new middle class. Prior to the discovery of oil, lineage and occupation had been the main criteria of social status, but as Lipsky has noted, the oil industry and the modern influences it has brought to bear on Saudi society are injecting new values into the country. Wealth
and material position, therefore, have become important criteria of status. 13

Within the brief two decades that have passed since money began flowing from the great reservoir of Saudi oil, all aspects of Saudi life have been dramatically altered. From the inception in 1970 of the most ambitious development plans ever devised, Saudi Arabia has been undergoing an economic, social, and cultural revolution. The sweeping changes that have taken place have had strong impact—positive impact with regard to material development, negative impact with regard to Saudi culture, traditions, and values. Caught in the midst of rapid change, the Saudi people find themselves at once enlightened and perplexed. Confusion reigns.

Actually, since the Saudi development plans first began, it has been clear that the Saudi government's purpose has not been simply to modernize without regard to cultural and social values, as has happened in so many other developing countries. The government's view is given formal expression in the first, second, and third development plans, which have as their first objective the maintenance of the moral and religious values of Islam. 14 What causes the confusion is the sudden transformation, the spread of wealth, the nearly two million foreigners who work in Saudi Arabia, the extensive increase of education, the contact with other cultures, the imported media programs, and the
quick industrial/technical revolution which has occurred in a nation that is nearly 70 percent illiterate.

The Saudi people now find themselves living in ways that contrast sharply with the very recent past. Conflict between the old and the new, between indigenous and foreign has become a commonplace of life. Perhaps this sounds like a call for a return to the "good old days" of a nomadic society, but such is not the case. The issue here is not whether one is for or against the past or the present, but rather, what serves the country best. And it is obvious that people everywhere are enthusiastic about developing their countries into twentieth-century nations but people also differ in their concept of what development is and in their ways of approaching it. There are numerous concepts of development; the one I like most was stated by the Director-General of UNESCO:

Development is multi-dimensional, and not confined merely to economic growth; economy, culture, education, science, and technology are specific aspects, of course, but complementary and inseparable ... [But] in order to develop, a society must remain true to itself, draw its strength from its own culture and ways of thought and action, and set itself objectives consonant with its values and felt needs.15

Unfortunately, most developing countries, Saudi Arabia among them, seem unaware of this concept, or else they simply ignore it. Thus their development processes are mostly imported, and seldom generated according to the values and felt needs of their societies. The phenomenon I term
"imported development" has a number of phases; some are positive, some are negative, some build, and some destroy.

I believe there are two kinds of planned development. One kind (the kind that operates in Saudi Arabia) seeks quick, dramatic results; often those who design these plans concern themselves only with positive results and tend to ignore the negative. In the long run this kind of planning is detrimental to the nation in question, for a glossy surface can obscure a multitude of problems.

The second, more preferable method takes into consideration all the elements that compose a society—religion, culture, education, the economy, the social and political structure—and rather than ignore negative factors in hopes they will somehow disappear, it regards them as an important part of the planning process. This method of planning is more complex and may take longer, but its good results will be permanent.

An ambitious nation, Saudi Arabia wants to use the great oil resources for fast development. This has been the aim of the Saudi government, which made a commitment to assimilate the twentieth century's scientific and technological legacy and at the time to avoid disruptive permutations in the indigenous traditional fabric of Saudi social life and custom.16 The commitment is to what is desired, but in practice, what has happened in Saudi Arabia is what Lippit has called transmitted change, or
evolutionary change that occurs without deliberate guidance.17

Fueled by the enthusiasm of Saudi leaders, the nation invested huge sums in development. The first two development plans, however, concentrated on material development—highways, airports, new buildings, and other such construction—and gave little consideration to the Saudi people, who must be the real target of development. A look at the development plans, which were devised by Americans and Saudis, shows that they make little attempt to seek an equilibrium between material progress and arousing the people to accept and participate consciously in development.

Any nation that wants to develop—that is, that wants to improve the quality of life of its people—must do so itself, although not necessarily without assistance. Science and certain technology can be borrowed, imported, and adapted from abroad, but ultimately creativity from within is the only answer, for development, essentially, is not a matter of technology or gross national product but the growth of a new consciousness, the movement of the human mind, the uplifting of the human spirit, the infusion of human confidence.18

Here indeed is the basis for any development, but in Third World countries, it is based on imported ideas, materials, and foreign labor. And the result for Saudi Arabia is that its development depends on importation.

Take trade as an example. Trade in Saudi Arabia is based entirely on importation. Saudis compete with one another to be distribution agents for American, Japanese,
European, and other foreign companies in Saudi Arabia. In short, most Saudis view importation and distribution of foreign products as the quick road to wealth.

And they are right, in a limited sense; that is, if we consider personal gain as the first priority and national interest as the last. Unfortunately, this self-centered attitude, or personalism, is all too common among the Saudi people. As Professor Ibrahim Natto of Saudi Arabia's University of Petroleum and Minerals has said, "People feel they must race to make money before the oil is gone. They place it outside, in Brazil, London, New York, and other places, so it will grow." Personalism has arisen in Saudi Arabia because of the absence of national awareness; the concentration on material development has proceeded with lightning speed, but it has failed to create a sense of nationhood in a tribal society that is becoming a political state.

It is perhaps only natural that the members of a tribal society should respond in this very personal, individual way to the money that has suddenly filled their hands. I am reminded of a television news broadcast in the United States not long ago. A group of angry American auto workers were destroying some new Japanese cars. The workers were furious at the Japanese invasion of their market. Why buy Japanese, they were asking, when we already have American cars? Although a number of things contributed to these workers'
anger, its primary cause was the insult to their sense of national pride. It is this sense that needs to be fostered among the Saudi people.

**Channels of Social Awareness**

Saudi Arabia's unchecked, total dependence on importation has resulted in social and cultural problems. One reason for these problems is that Saudi national development has not explored all possible means to create a socially and responsible population. Among these means, of course, are education and mass communications; their wise use will mean a society that is responsibly involved in development.

The conclusions drawn from a 1966 UNESCO meeting in Bangkok imply that communication between the planners, their agents, and the people will ensure the success of social and economic development plans; that properly utilized broadcasting can lead people to recognize the need for positive change; that broadcasting will arouse and broaden the interests of the people; and that it will enable them to apply those ideas within their context. UNESCO, however, hoped that broadcasting would help to "create the psychological and intellectual condition so necessary for the training and mobilization of human resources in the country."20

UNESCO's concept has been notably absent during Saudi Arabia's development process. What is more, many
unfortunate results have emerged out of ignoring or misunderstanding mass media's potential to enhance and facilitate development.

One problem that Saudi Arabia faces is manpower, and it is the result not only of a shortage of workers, but also of not having first recognized the need to bring about a healthy transformation in attitudes and patterns of living. No one stopped to realize, apparently, that native Saudis traditionally consider manual labor demeaning, nor that they are lath to do any work except in administration. The Third Development Plan (1980-1985) gives this problem official attention. And actually, the manpower shortage continues because of the absence of mass media's influence. Because the media are such potent forces for solving problems such as this one, it is fair to say that if the Saudi media had been put to work on the manpower shortage when development first began, there would no longer be a shortage.

The Saudi government has enthusiastically spent its enormous revenues for development that is directed to every aspect of the nation. But two essential factors were left out when the money started to flow: the Saudi psychology, and the feelings of individual Saudis about national responsibility and traditions. As an example, take what I have called personalism, the dominant attitude in most Saudis. The government recognized agriculture and industry as essential sectors which must be given special attention,
and as a result designed an incentive plan for private enterprise. The plan includes free land, interest-free loans, subsidized farm equipment, and agricultural and industrial subsidies that may be as high as 50 percent of the total cost. The government has been most generous, but although these subsidies have been helpful to industry and agriculture, they have not produced the results the government hoped for. The reason for incomplete success is that the recipients of all these subsidies treat them as windfall income. Here is strong indication that where social responsibility and awareness are lacking, money alone contributes little to the development process. There must first be a revolution of social conscience in the average Saudi citizen. Planning Minister Hisham Nazer has spoken of the need, beginning with the Third Plan period, to inculcate "citizenship" in Saudis: a sense of their responsibility to the state.21

Obvious problems that face Saudi Arabia and that dominate its value system are personalism; particularism; lack of social and national responsibility; and loyalty to tribe, kin, and lineage rather than to the nation as a whole. Dr. Ghazi Al-Gosaibi, Minister of Industry and Electricity, mentioned to me that he had overheard King Faisal tell a journalist, "I see many Otaibis, Motairis, Ghamidis, and other people who belong to their tribes, but I see few Saudis."22 What the King meant, of course, is
that the loyalties of most Saudis still lie with their tribes rather than with the nation. And a sense of nationhood is one of Saudi Arabia's most pressing needs. The lack of this sense has led to, among other things, nepotism. Dr. Ibrahim Al-Awaji (now Deputy Minister of the Interior) states that "objective considerations are of secondary importance in determining the selection of employees and in arousing the necessary cooperation within the organization. It is common to see many friends and relatives of top officials working in their ministries, departments, and divisions."23 Nepotism, of course, has long been a curse of Third World bureaucracies.

Although Saudi Arabia possesses state-of-the-art mass media technology, the Saudi media have not participated to an appreciable extent in development. In fact, the omission of mass communications from Saudi development plans, and the total dependence on importation, have not only exacerbated existing problems, but created new ones as well. As Syed Rahim observes,

Mass communication is an essential part of the life support system of a nation and of society. . . . In fact, it is widely believed that most problems in society can be related to a failure of communication. Therefore, the solutions, or at least some part of them, for an infinite array of society's problems, are believed to reside in communication.24

Social awareness, national responsibility, motivation, and mobilization of the people are the fundamentals of genuine development, and they are what has been missing in
Saudi development. The mass media are crucial to development, but Saudi media have failed to realize it. Saudi development is marred by total dependence on importation, including imported manpower. Dependence, the facile and rapid spread of wealth, the absence of communication—all these have combined to create high personal expectations without real participation in nation-building.

Saudi Arabia's material progress is obvious, but the basic element of development, the Saudi people themselves, have merely been observing their country's movement forward, always with an eye to personal gain. No doubt the low levels of social awareness and national responsibility are to blame for this attitude. But it must not be allowed to continue.

Mass communication, utilized wisely, can solve problems such as these. Considering the magnitude of development in Saudi Arabia, it is urgent to motivate and mobilize the Saudi people in ways that ensure their active participation; the tools are at hand: radio, television, newspapers, and magazines.

But so far the Saudi mass media have themselves been part of the problem because of their reliance on imported programs. A rapid, generous infusion of money has developed the country materially, but the cognitive investment has been slow and scanty. This has led to artificial situations
out of which have emerged a number of unpleasant consequences for Saudi culture and tradition. It is true that, as Karen House writes,

Money has brought a heavy dose of Western materialism to this Islamic land. . . . In only twenty years the country has lost many of its traditions. With three-fourths of all Saudis under thirty years of age, many do not really know their own culture. They are a generation being raised on American cars and video cassettes of American movies.

House goes on to say that “such foreign influences, which began to reach a wealthy few several decades ago, have spread to the mass of Saudis since the oil price leap of 1973.”25

House puts the matter accurately and succinctly. It is imperative that attention be paid the Saudi people. Increasing the literacy rate and teaching basic skills are required for development, but the goals are not enough. The most important elements in national development are social awareness, intellectual growth, and a sense of national responsibility.

In summary, within a very short time Saudi society has experienced a quantum leap from poverty to wealth. Changes have occurred in every area of Saudi life, and they have occurred precipitately; Saudi Arabia has foregone the advantages of a gradual process of development. The speed with which the society has changed has created some positive results, but it has also brought about cultural inconsistencies and other problems. The sudden access of
wealth to Saudi Arabia has helped people improve many aspects of their lives, particularly with regard to their material standard of living. However, the same wealth has led to the establishment of artificial situations.

Most Saudis have little formal education, and illiteracy is high. In the past few years these people have been exposed to vast new knowledge. The problem here is that many of them are unable to make sense of it in a way that is consonant with their traditions and culture. It demands much of an educated population to be able to sift through the new and choose what will be of enduring value; the majority of Saudis today simply lack this ability. Illiterate people learn from what they see and hear; the typical Saudi's knowledge and experience have not prepared him to deal intelligently with the plethora of newness which daily dazzles him. He really has no basis with which to approach, for example, imported programs presented by the mass media. His education therefore is at present more imitative than cognitive, for he lacks the intellectual resources with which to make wise distinctions between what is valuable to himself and his country, and what may in the end be pernicious.
NOTES


20Schramm and Lerner, pp. 1-3.


22Dr. Ghazi Al-Gosaibi, private interview, Taif, August, 1981.


CHAPTER 6

MASS COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT: SCHOLARLY VIEWS

Introduction

The progress of a nation depends first and foremost on the progress of its people. Unless it develops their spirit and human potentialities, it cannot develop much else materially, economically, politically, or culturally. The basic problem of most of the underdeveloped countries is not a poverty of natural resources but the underdevelopment of human resources. Hence their first task must be to build up their human capital. To put it in more human terms, that means improving the education, skills, and hopefulness, and thus the mental and physical health, of their men, women, and children.¹

In our enthusiasm for science and technology, for the tangible evidence of modern development, we tend sometimes, as Harbison suggests above, to overlook the importance of people in a nation's evolution. But there is no doubt that human resources must serve as the cornerstone for any kind of development. A moment's reflection reveals that the success or failure of development cannot be attributed to the thing under development; it is people who cause success or failure. People—their education, attitudes, skills, training, and level of awareness—are basic to the successful growth of a nation. Therefore, if a nation is to be materially improved, it is necessary first to bring about changes in its people which will encourage them to accept

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the need for development and to participate intelligently and effectively in it.

Because people are the most important resources in development, and because communication is the means by which human beings share knowledge, experience, motivation, and ideas, since the 1940's the role of mass communications in development has become widely acknowledged as an essential subject. We have seen the publication of countless books, articles, reports, studies, theses, and theories devoted to this subject. Universities and communications scholars throughout the world publish their findings; an endless stream of reports flows from world agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank. The major portion of this plethora of published material concerns "mass media as means"--the effect of mass communications on development and change. The following questions are exhaustively addressed:

What kind of effects has mass communications on development?
What is the extent of such effects?
How do the effects occur?
To what extent is mass communication necessary in development?
What is the nature of its power?

This chapter will briefly discuss the phenomenon of mass communications in the development of nations. However, a review of the major theories of mass media and development
is required at the outset as a basis for understanding this study. Even though the purpose of the study is to examine the mass media of one developing nation in particular, Saudi Arabia, knowledge of media's role in general is fundamental to understanding the problems of Saudi media.

The Role of Mass Media in Development

Communications scholars differ regarding the extent of the impact of mass communications on development and change; they disagree too over the question of whether mass communications should be seen as a dependent or an independent variable. There is common ground, however, among the various theoretical camps: they all agree that there is vast potential for mass communications in the development process.

During the past two decades, the role of mass communications in the development of Third World nations has been widely discussed and debated. Among the contributors to this continuing dialogue are Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm, Ithiel de Sola Pool, Lucian W. Pye, Paul Spector, Paul J. Deutschmann, R. Vincent Parace, Elihu Katz, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Herbert Hyman, Everett M. Rogers, and John T. McNelly. Other participants in the discussion are Frederick Frey, A. H. Khan, H. D. Lasswell, Allan Wells, F. W. Matson, Ralph Neill, Edwin Parker, Dwight Allen, and George M. Foster. The wide-ranging scholarship that these names represent, and the direct involvement of UNESCO and other
world agencies in a plan to improve mass media as development tools, have played a significant part in the rapid improvement and expansion of mass media, especially broadcasting, in some of the developing countries.

Early work that addressed the phenomenon of a relationship between development and communication focused on mass media messages—how they could be used to create a sense of national identity, to foster attitudes favorable to modernization, or to fulfill specific goals of particular campaigns, such as family planning, disease prevention, and agricultural development projects. Other studies in communications and development concentrated on the potential effects of the content of general entertainment or news media in broadening intellectual horizons of the undereducated, and in inculcating modern attitudes into an ancient, tradition-bound culture.

Since the pioneering work of Lerner and Schramm, communications has been almost universally envisioned as an essential force in national development. Using information based on the limited resources of developing countries and on the fact of existing mass illiteracy, scholars have hypothesized that improvement of the broadcasting systems would help to boost both formal and informal education, and would thereby increase development input.² Schramm enthusiastically emphasized that:
Mass communication serves as the great multiplier in development, the device that can spread the requisite knowledge and attitudes immeasurably more quickly and widely than ever before.  

Communications scholars have approached the relationship of communications to the development process from a variety of perspectives. Although, as I mentioned earlier, differences do exist among these scholars, none has denied or rejected the idea that communications does influence development; the differences focus, rather, on the degree of influence. It is in fact possible to categorize the scholarly points of view as: (1) the enthusiastic, or positive position; (2) the conditional position; and (3) the null position. A discussion of each of these positions follows. 

The Positive Position

Scholars in this category have viewed communications as an essential, directly effective tool for development and for achieving other national purposes as well. Schramm, along with the governments of some developing nations (particularly those that are supported by UNESCO), has believed the mass media to be essential and basic to every aspect of development and change. An early study by Daniel Lerner, one of the United States' leading communications scholars, adopts a similarly positive position. Lerner states that:

The modernization process begins with new public communication...[and] the diffusion of new ideas and new
information which stimulate people to want to behave in new ways. Dwight W. Allen and Philip Christensen share the opinion that mass communications is not merely an auxiliary element of development, but a fundamental source of it. Allen and Christensen believe that mass communications can and should be used to improve the quality of life in developing countries, with particular emphasis on the fields of nutrition, maternal/child health care, population control, and basic intellectual skill development among rural populations and underdeveloped urban communities. The proposed mechanism for achieving this objective is modern communications techniques, particularly the mass media. Communications technology can directly reach both individuals and specific groups within these populations and at the same time can supply the more traditional channels of communications operating within a community with new sources of information.

The United Nations in fact has adopted both the positive and the conditional positions, but the majority of United Nations studies and research is most compatible with the positive position. A study done on behalf of the United Nations, using cross-national data, has confirmed that a strong correlation exists between media development and economic level, urbanization, industrialization, and literacy.

Allan Wells cites Lerner and Deutschmann as being among those scholars who have taken a positive view of the effect of media on development. The arguments he advances may be summarized with three major points. First, media alter the psychology of the masses and thereby weaken traditionalism.
Second, changes in communications systems correlate with changes in behavior, and, third, they trigger the modernization process necessary for economic growth. 7

The research and subsequent findings of a great many communications scholars have led them to become strong advocates of the positive position. In fact, the result of a UNICEF-sponsored two-week international workshop held in December 1976 in Tanzania was that its twenty-six participants emphasized that:

any attempt to implement a basic services programme without the necessary communications inputs would be useless, and that communications research and planning had to be undertaken from the very beginning.8

The Conditional Position

Not all communications scholars are in full accord with the positive position. Those who are more cautious espouse the conditional position, which correlates the positive effects of mass communication (primarily mass media) on change and development with a variety of antecedent and co-efficient variables. Some communications literature suggests that mass media effects are a consequence of other factors. The conditional position holds that:

The dissemination of messages by the media does not assure attention, learning, attitude change, or action; that social and cultural factors can mediate, muffle, or even nullify media messages.9

The conditional position also advances the so-called "two-step" notion, which is to say that the media message can work and reach the masses through the good offices of
opinion leaders. Katz and Lazarsfeld, for example, believe that ideas flow from the media to opinion leaders and through them to the general public.  

The conditional view denies that mass communications operates as an independent factor which can by itself have a strong effect on development. According to those who have adopted this position, whatever effects mass media are capable of producing, they are produced jointly with other determining forces. Two of these forces are of major importance; Schramm defines them as "the individual's personality resources and his group relationship," or the cognitive states of people in a society.

Other researchers too have found a relationship between mass media exposure and other factors. As an example, Deutschmann's study of Saucio, a less-developed village in the Colombian Andes, describes interrelationships among media exposure, literacy, age, farm size, general knowledgeability, and the timing of acceptance of a given change. However, it is very difficult to establish a cause-effect relationship between media exposure and these other variables. Keith, Yadav, and Ascroft are of the opinion that studies regarding the effects of mass media on the process of change and development are neither conclusive nor definite. They assert that little is known about the relationships between mass media exposure and other elements of modernization. These investigators stress further that
while we know little about the relationship of media exposure to these elements, we are even less certain of the degree to which existing findings may be generalizable across nations. Keith, Yadav, and Ascroft believe that the intervening effect of mass media exposure is greater and more consistent with respect to behavioral consequences than to attitudinal consequences. These researchers have stressed the general, observable relationship rather than the cause-effect relationship; thus they emphasize the intervening effects of mass media on such things as agricultural innovativeness, health, motivation to achieve, and educational aspirations—social phenomena which are also significantly affected by many other antecedent variables such as education, functional literacy, cosmopolitanism, standard of living, age, income, social participation, and social status.

Vincent Farace's research takes its place on this same scholarly continuum. His approach, however, may be somewhat more realistic than that of Keith, Yadav, and Ascroft; Farace has in fact expressed some reservations regarding their findings (as well as the findings of others) on the relationship of mass media to development. Farace's view of development is that it is a function of a multi-faceted system, and that mass communications is only one of these facets. He enumerates nine aspects of development: the political system, health and nourishment, agricultural
productivity, climate, cultural factors, economic factors, population characteristics, and mass media.

In my opinion, probably the most useful view to adopt is the one that seems most reasonable, realistic, and practicable. That is to say, the mass media quite clearly can be significant tools for development, but it is equally clear that they are not the beginning and the end of development. Neither the positive nor the conditional position rejects this rather obvious fact. The disparity that exists between these positions is a question, really, of whether the mass media play the entire role in the development process, or whether it is more accurate to define the media as one important element among other, perhaps equally important elements.

And as it turns out, these two schools of scholarly thought are not in so much disagreement with one another as they had once seemed; it was more a matter of misunderstanding. Happily, the points at issue were to a great extent cleared up during the East-West Center discussions in early January 1975. During the course of that conference, scholars who had previously been advancing a hard-line positive position softened their approach somewhat, agreeing that the task of mass communications can be defined "as a part of the broader system of change and growth."15
The Null Position

Proponents of the null position have taken only a minor part in the debate over the role of mass communication in development. The position is extreme, which militates against its validity.

The null position questions the validity of the communications theories which emerged during the sixties and seventies, and it calls for a drastic change in our thinking about mass communications' role. Specifically, proponents of the null position insist that media have little or no effect on the development process. This radical approach says that economics is the operative factor in development; in this view, other factors such as education, cultural growth, political stability, and mass communications are either irrelevant, or, at best, wholly dependent on economic development. The null position was adopted by some newcomers to the field during the 70's, and it has been applied by planners in some developing countries.

As Pool has noted, this position is most warmly welcomed by non-communist nations, where literacy and the education of children receive major emphasis and mass media get relatively scanty attention. Pool cites McNelly regarding the cause of this attitude:

Officials in some developing countries even suspect that mass communications can retard national progress distracting the citizenry's attention from constructive matters toward frivolity or disruptive political or social agitation.
It is my hope, of course, to dissuade the reader from agreeing with the null position. And in the face of so much strong evidence of multiple relationships between mass media and development, the null position does appear difficult to defend. Most communications scholars believe, and research findings have effectively proved, that mass media's role in development and change is indeed quite significant. The majority of scholars, then, reject the null position, considering it at best too extreme and at worst simply wrong. John McNelly, for one, rejects both the claim that the media are crucial to all aspects of development and the counter-claim that they are irrelevant to development.19

The more recent studies in communication and development have in fact further emphasized mass media's role. It has been established to nearly everyone's satisfaction that mass media are important not merely as auxiliary tools for development, but as essential forces in stimulating a people's awareness and acceptance of the need for change, and in mobilizing them to create change successfully. Farace has described mass media in developing nations as "playing essentially the same role as the nervous system does in our physiological system." Farace continually stresses that "communication--particularly mass communication--acts as a kind of social lubricant."20

I believe it is certain, based on the research that has been completed so far, that mass communication is crucial to
development and modernization, particularly when planners take steps to see that it is incorporated wisely into the development process. It needs to be said, however, that development planners should not expect overnight miracles from mass media. The media are indeed powerful forces for change, but their influence is subtle and their effects cumulative. The media lack the dramatic immediacy of, say, the bomb to change a society, or of a radical shift in a nation's economic condition or political structure. By the same token, though, development planners whose understanding of the media is limited to using them merely as a means of propaganda, entertainment, and top-down transmission of information and directives really defeat their own purposes. In order to make full use of the immense potential of mass media, communications scholars and development planners must continue rigorously to address these questions: Do the mass media play an effective role in development? How do developing nations use their mass media?

Ideally, study of the "positive" and "conditional" positions I have described in this chapter can be used to profitable advantage by planners in under-developed nations. But the depressing reality is that this wealth of useful information has been either misunderstood, or exploited for personal aggrandizement, by the ruling cliques of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The result is that instead of functioning to enhance these countries' ability to assume a
respected position among progressive nations, their media have fallen victim to a degree to under-use, misuse, and abuse that has rendered them nearly impotent. The following chapter will examine more fully the current state of mass media in Saudi Arabia.
NOTES


7Wells, pp. 84-85.


11Berlo, p. 2.

12Berlo, p. IV-4.

13Berlo, p. IV-5.


CHAPTER 7
CURRENT CONDITIONS AND FUNCTIONS OF SAUDI MASS MEDIA: BROADCASTING AND THE PRESS

I. Introduction

Before we can understand the functions of a nation's mass media, it is necessary first to understand thoroughly the origin of that nation's conception of its media's messages, structures, systems, and policies. This chapter will therefore discuss and analyze three basic factors which are considered the essential foundation for understanding: (1) the official conception of Saudi mass media messages; (2) current conditions and information regarding Saudi media; (3) these media's present function.

Thus, in an attempt to explore the official Saudi conception of mass media function and to describe and analyze the conditions and functions of Saudi media, this chapter will fashion its argument on a foundation of five elements.

First, I have conducted several personal interviews with Saudi mass media directors, including the Minister of Information. The interviews made use of both closed and open-ended questions; this chapter will discuss the former and the following chapter will discuss the latter. The
interviews were an attempt to explore the directors' views on several topics: media's theoretical function, media's function in current practice, circulation, personnel, and obstacles to media's use in national development.

Second, in order to examine the contents of Saudi newspapers and magazines, I obtained issues of each publication for the first four months of 1982. I will study newspapers published on randomly selected days during this four-month period. The magazines are published weekly; I will randomly select one issue a month of each magazine for a representative four-month sample. Television and radio schedules are prepared for four-month seasons, or cycles; these schedules will be examined also. The detailed perusal will provide a firm idea of how much dependence there is on foreign production, and of what the present function of Saudi media is. We can also begin here to see whether the media have a significant role in development.

Next, this chapter will incorporate official regulations, pamphlets, data, and reports prepared by the Saudi government concerning mass media.

Fourth, books and articles on the Saudi media will be used to complete the view of current conditions. Unfortunately, as I mentioned earlier, most of this material focuses on the historical aspects of media, and these are of little relevance to this study.
Last, my own experience as a journalist who worked for several years on two Saudi newspapers, one magazine, and in radio is germane.

The Official Conception of Mass Media Use

It goes without saying that if media are misused, mismanaged, and misunderstood, their potential as significant tools in change and development diminishes to such an extent that they can exert little positive influence on the society they serve. Furthermore, without clearly articulated objectives and wise guidance to meet those objectives, the media will be no more than toys—a species of noisemaker—for developing countries.

However, before I begin to describe how the mass media in Saudi Arabia have been perceived officially, how they have been used, and what role they play, it is important to emphasize that Saudi Arabia is socially, religiously, economically, and politically unique, and that it is unwise to apply media theories to it haphazardly. Theories that are appropriate to one nation may well be unsuitable for another; given the vast social and cultural differences among Third World countries, it would be foolish to decide that a theory which works well in one nation will therefore work equally well in another. Thus, I have not sought Western-based media concepts, which in many ways would be unsuitable to conditions in Saudi Arabia, but I am instead looking for a different concept—one that takes into account
Saudi Arabia's special nature. This new concept is the major concern of my study; once the problems of Saudi media are diagnosed and solutions are found for them, the concept will be readily implemented.

Since the 1960's Saudi Arabia has been engaged in a movement to reform, develop, and modernize all aspects of Saudi life. Starting practically from zero, the country has moved rapidly toward modernization in every direction. With its massive oil revenues as a foundation, Saudi Arabia has been able to effect great improvements in its infrastructures. Within only a few years, this isolated, tribal, desert land has evolved into a twentieth-century nation. Surface change is obvious in every part of Saudi Arabia. Good roads, modern airports, busy factories, new schools, supermarkets, highrise buildings—all these things are witness to the Saudi government's enthusiasm for transforming its country into a modern state. But what about the Saudi people, who are the basic element of any attempt at development?

In fact, when we realize that, as mentioned earlier, there are almost two million foreign workers in Saudi Arabia, and that development has been built entirely on imported material, it becomes clear that most Saudi citizens have been merely consumers of the fruits of development rather than participants in the development process itself. This is not to say that the citizens are necessarily to
blame; in view of their having so suddenly found themselves facing unexpected wealth as well as rapid change in every aspect of their lives without a transitional period in which to prepare for all this newness, it is understandable that they behave like children in a toy store. But as we move toward the twenty-first century, it becomes imperative that serious thought and planning take the place of this frivolous approach to change.

For what is happening now in our country may be only change, and not real development. Or, given the absence of the Saudi people's participation in the development process, perhaps we should call it "dependent development."

I addressed these issues in an interview with Dr. Ghazi Al-Gosaibi, Minister for Industry and Electricity. Dr. Al-Gosaibi said that though it may be acceptable in theory for Saudi Arabia to put development "on hold" until all its citizens achieve a suitable level of awareness and become capable of full participation, it is not feasible in practice. "We have to begin," he said, "even if it means we must depend heavily on importation. Awareness and participation on the people's part will come gradually."

Although from a strictly pragmatic point of view there is much to be said for Dr. Al-Gosaibi's opinion, my position is that the development process must strike a balance between material growth and human advancement in order to avoid cultural conflict and to obtain the people's
understanding, awareness, and willing participation. This does not mean "putting development on hold." As the theories discussed in Chapter 6 show, people are the backbone of development; therefore all development agencies ought to work cooperatively in parallel ways to ensure the best results.

Even though Saudi Arabia expresses official recognition that the human element deserves full attention, there has been more focus on material development than on people. In practice, Saudi government agencies have not fully utilized every available means for the cognitive development of the people. As Schramm observes,

Communication must be used to induce greater efforts on all social, political, and economic fronts. The essential functions are as follows: to contribute to the feeling of nation-ness, and permit participation in national planning.... The media should provide the people with role-models of their new parts and should prepare the people to play their role as a nation among nations. Finally, the media should help teach necessary skills--by which is meant more advanced skills than currently exist--and extend the effective market; that is, stimulate demand.²

As communications research and study have more than adequately proved, mass communications is not just one important element in successful development, but, indeed, it is a basic requirement. Therefore, postponing or ignoring the information needs of the citizens, who constitute the very essence of the development process, will surely cripple development attempts. As Lerner writes, "No modern society
functions efficiently without a developed system of mass media.\textsuperscript{3}

The question at issue here is whether these modern concepts of the role of mass media in development and innovation exist in Saudi Arabia. Are the Saudi mass media used in ways that promote the development process?

The answer, probably, is No. For the fact is that Saudi Arabia conceives of mass media's purpose in exactly the same way that other Arab nations do, which is to say that nowhere in the Arab world are the media officially conceived or understood as a powerful tool in development. One reason may be that mass media—especially the electronic media—were established during difficult and unstable social and political conditions. These circumstances may account for the media's having been employed mainly for two purposes: politics and entertainment. And even now, the Arab world's basic mistake with respect to mass communication and development is its failure to grasp communications as a social process, which means that media's use continues to be limited to politics and entertainment.

In Saudi Arabia the government agency directly or indirectly responsible for mass media's control and direction is the Ministry of Information. Since its establishment in 1962, the Ministry has been responsible for setting up the rules for Saudi media. In examining the media concept held by the Ministry, as representative of the
Saudi government, the first problem that emerges is that the Ministry has no established, written policy to guide the mass media. The only way, then, that we can focus on the official media concept is by attempting a general understanding of what Saudi officials—the country's decision-makers—believe the functions of media ought to be, and to study the content of Saudi media, which in one way or another reflects what the officials think. This is a roundabout method of getting to the facts, but it is the only method available, and it may in the end prove more accurate than a statement of official policy could ever be.

During an interview with Abdulrahman Shobaili, Fahed Sudairi, former Deputy Minister for Information Affairs, stated that the general objectives of the Ministry of Information "externally" are "to assure the transmission of factual information to the world, to combat outside propaganda against Saudi Arabia, and to help promote Saudi Arabian foreign policy and the position it takes." The objectives of the Ministry inside Saudi Arabia, Mr. Sudairi said, are "to assure the transmission of factual information to the public..., to protect the public from misinformation..., to maintain the existing standards of morality and good taste, and to secure the means to carry these objectives out."4

It should be noted here that these objectives are essentially political, and that their political nature
reflects the prevailing conception in Saudi Arabia of how mass media should be used. It is of course quite important that these objectives be well served by the mass media, particularly when we take into consideration the instability of political, social, educational, and religious conditions in the Middle East. But the media can do so much more. They need not be restricted only to these objectives, or to serving political and entertainment purposes. It is vital that the power and potential of mass media be recognized and then wisely channeled.

Incomplete understanding and misconceptions regarding media's role and function are not limited to Saudi Arabia, but are also prevalent in other Arab nations. As in most developing countries, the media in many Middle East nations are either exploited for political gain and used to transmit imported entertainment, or they serve to issue unattractively presented directives and information.

Materially speaking, however, the Saudi mass media are quite advanced; the latest in media technology has been imported. In fact, the Saudi media, television in particular, are considered the most technologically advanced in the Middle East. It is unquestionable that the most modern technology is essential to assure excellence in the expansion of media services, and the Saudi government is to be commended for obtaining this technology. But what about the content of the Saudi media? Technology alone can do
nothing; without content, the most advanced media equipment has no effect. For the spirit of the media is their content, and the effects of media can be measured and judged only by what they transmit.

However, before embarking on a discussion of the various conditions and problems which have presented obstacles to the enrichment of the Saudi media's content and prevented their effective use in national development, it should be emphasized that the official conception of mass media is in large part to blame for their ineffectiveness.

In an effort to examine the basic concept held by Saudi mass media authorities regarding the kinds of messages that ought to be transmitted to the public, I conducted a number of interviews with Saudi media officials. For example, I asked Dr. Mohammed Abdu Yamani, Minister of Information, how he conceives mass media operations and messages, or in other words, what kind of messages he thinks the public should receive. Dr. Yamani replied that "complete truth is the basic element for any media message which aims at fully obtaining the goal that it is designed for." He continued,

This is the scientific concept of mass media, but in practice, the nature of media messages is subject to external factors that impose standards which, when it comes to dealing with real events, are different from those of the scientific concept.  

In his written replies to my questions, Dr. Yamani failed to explain what he meant by "the full goal that [the media message] is designed for"; in the absence of written
objectives for Saudi media, we can assume that it means any objective that seems useful at any given moment.* My interpretation of what Dr. Yamani means by "external factors" is that they are the political, social, and religious conditions which influence the Saudi media.** The truth seems to be that there is no clear, specific official concept of media's role and purpose. What does exist is a confusion of international with national media function, and more confusion over whether the media should be used for propaganda or for national development. Indeed, it may be that propaganda itself is considered synonymous with development. I myself do not insist that the mass media should operate in one particular way or another; my position is that when media are clearly understood, and correctly used, they can play a variety of roles.

Because of the vague, unspecific official concept of mass media in Saudi Arabia, it is difficult to apply any of the well-known four theories discussed in Chapter 4 of this study. The Saudi mass media are not susceptible to the authoritarian, libertarian, or totalitarian theories. The libertarian and social responsibility theories can be excluded immediately from any study of mass media in the

*It should be noted that this interview was conducted before the issuance of the Strategy of Communication of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oct. 18, 1982.

**Unclear and vague answers were too often the outcome of my interviews with Saudi media authorities. I rarely received a specific answer to a question.
Arab world, because these theories have never been applied there. But do either of the other two theories fit the Saudi mass media? Again, no—or not precisely. Saudi mass media can be placed somewhere between the authoritarian and the totalitarian theories. As I explained in Chapter 4, under the totalitarian system mass media are entirely state-owned; under the authoritarian system the media support and advance government policies and the government controls the media either directly or indirectly through licensing, legal action, or financial means.

Through its Ministry of Information, the Saudi government has applied all of these authoritarian measures to the mass media; it is inaccurate to say, though, that Saudi media operate entirely under the authoritarian system. The Saudi government does not centrally control newspapers and magazines, but it does control newspapers by means of licensing, legal action, and financial means, and broadcasting is wholly the property of the State, operating under government direction. Although, as mentioned earlier, there is no written policy to guide Saudi Arabia's mass media, all instrumentalities operating within the country are required to advance objectives that are in line with government policy. Based on my study of the Saudi media, and on interviews with media directors, I can confidently classify the Saudi system as a combination of authoritarian
and totalitarian principles. In other words, the Saudi mass media function under an "authoritarian" system.

It is not a matter here of whether these systems are or are not suitable for Saudi Arabia. That the Western media may apply one or more of these theories by no means dictates that the Saudi media (or the media of any other developing countries) should imitate them. Each country has its own unique conditions, and it seldom follows that what is appropriate for one country is necessarily appropriate for another. It should always be taken into consideration that there are enormous cultural, educational, social, political, and economic differences between the West and most developing nations. Of course, as most media theorists have proved, media freedom is the basic requirement for a "free marketplace" of ideas and information. But although freedom may work perfectly in a nation that is politically and economically stable, technologically independent, and free from illiteracy, tribal conflict, and manpower problems, it may not be suitable in a nation where the opposite conditions prevail. Therefore, in some Third World countries, Saudi Arabia among them, it may be desirable and necessary that the media be used to encourage popular sympathy with the government, for the volatile combination of high illiteracy rates, strong tribal loyalties, and ideological pressure exerted by developed nations can be
dangerous to governments. The point is that propaganda should not be the mass media's main function.

The basic problems of Saudi mass media can be defined by external and internal factors which both determine and are responsible for Saudi media function. Externally, problems are imposed by social and religious conditions; these conditions will be discussed at length in following chapters. "Internal factors" means the environment in which the media operate; this comprises multiple elements, from media decision-makers and their conception of media's uses and purposes, to current knowledge of the field and production capability. Without question, the misconceptions about media function, the scarcity of current knowledge, and the weaknesses in production capability all exacerbate Saudi Arabia's media problems. In my opinion, the lack of knowledge and the production capability are caused by the misconceptions. But if the Saudi media have been perceived since their establishment as a powerful tool for creating national opinion, protected from outside influences and favorable to government purposes, this should not be the only perception of media, particularly since present conditions in the country are quite different from conditions of fifty years ago when unification was just beginning. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has been engaged in massive development efforts in every area; this definitely
requires a new concept of media function in order to utilize mass media as a powerful means to development.

Moreover, it is only quite recently that written objectives have been established for the Saudi mass media. On October 18, 1982, as this study was being prepared, the Saudi Supreme Council of Communication, which was formed by royal decree in 1981, issued the "Strategy of Communication of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." The Strategy stated the objectives according to which the Saudi media were to function. Before the Strategy was issued, the mass media had no specific, written objectives and were more or less at the mercy of Saudi media leaders' idiosyncratic interpretations of government policies for the country. As I mentioned earlier, this absence of specific, written objectives and guidelines is in fact largely responsible for the confused situation that now prevails with respect to the mass media.

In the interview with Dr. Yamani, Minister for Information, I was unable to elicit a complete answer as to whether specific objectives existed. I asked if there were plans for the Saudi media to achieve specific objectives by means of their content. Dr. Yamani answered that the media are characterized by three distinguishing attributes that have been incorporated into Saudi development plans. These three attributes, he said, are the basis for any media work "we achieve." The attributes are (1) the morality of the
media message; (2) immediate transmission of media messages in a clear and fully truthful manner; and (3) actually facing the issues and problems.

In Dr. Yamani's view, these three features are the basic policy for Saudi media goals. Although it is true that these three attributes are admirable, and that they ought to be part of any mass media system, they are not really the specific sort of objectives that the media in a developing nation should aspire to reach if they are to work toward national development. Actually, the Saudi media have continued in this confused condition, not only because of misconceptions and the lack of written objectives, policy, or guidance, but because there is confusion about these elements—confusion clearly reflected in the way Saudi media officials deal with the media and its content.

I also conducted interviews with several newspaper editors, during which I asked them whether they have written policies or objectives concerning what their newspapers ought to publish. The editors replied that there are no such written objectives to guide the papers. Instead, they depend on their experience with the government and on instructions they receive from time to time from the Ministry of Information. The answers I received from the editors-in-chief may be summarized as follows:

Saudi newspapers' function has been based on serving the government's objectives—whatever they may be—both nationally and internationally. The editors understand these objectives through their experience in the Saudi
press establishments, which are considered a sort of auxiliary of the government system, through letters they occasionally receive from the Ministry of Information, which plays the fundamental role in directing press functions, and through occasional meetings with the Minister of Information or with the highest echelons of government, ordinarily the King or the Crown Prince.7

Thus, personal decisions made by Saudi media directors, which are based on their own experience of government and on their understanding of the government's general policy, provide the fundamental directions for media function. This personal, rather haphazard approach may well be the explanation for the ineffective use of the Saudi mass media and for their dependence on foreign media production.*

As Dr. Salih bin Nasser, Assistant Deputy Minister for Saudi Broadcasting, told me, the Saudi media operate in an atmosphere of uncertainty.8 Having to direct their media according to their own understanding of political and social conditions creates a heavy burden for media directors. They know only too well that they are fallible, that their comprehension is subject to error, and this knowledge makes it difficult to be freely creative. And, as a Saudi journalist said to me, in order to be on the safe side, the media tend to be pro-status quo rather than change-facilitating.

If the Saudi media are to be used effectively, what is needed is an entirely different concept of what information

*As Chapter 9 will show, the Saudi media editors and directors whom I interviewed stated that their personal decisions direct media messages.
is and of how it is used by the people. For information is not a commodity to be produced and then transferred to consumers in a top-down or lateral direction; it is a reciprocal process, and a medium that fails to engage in reciprocity communicates no more than the sound of one hand clapping.

The Ministry of Information

The Saudi media came under the control of a centralized government agency for the first time in 1953. At that time the Saudi government established by royal decree what was called "The General Directorate of Broadcasting, Press, and Publication." This body was formed to organize, coordinate, control, and supervise broadcasting, the press, publications, and all other mass media means, and to publish propaganda and informational books and pamphlets. However, as a result of the country's growth and the expansion of its mass media services, and as a result of realizing the importance of the mass media as a political means, in 1962 the Directorate was elevated by royal decree to the full status of Ministry of Information.

Since then, the Ministry has functioned within the framework of the government subject to its rules and regulations. For example, the regulations that apply to the Ministries of Commerce or Agriculture also apply to the Ministry of Information. But unlike the other agencies, the Ministry of Information controls a powerful tool that not
only shapes national opinion, but that also is vital to the entire process of development and change. Even so, the Ministry has been treated just like the other government agencies, each of which deals only with a specific element of the Saudi population. This treatment reveals that the Ministry of Information has not received the special priority that a body of such pervasive influence deserves.

This study assumes that the kind of treatment the Ministry of Information receives is one of the major obstacles that hinder the Saudi media's effectiveness. For example, it is true that media people are a different breed from people whose work deals with a specific subject and a specific portion of the population. Those who work in media are different because their product is directed to the entire Saudi population, which encompasses a vast variety of educational, cultural, age, and economic factors. To deal successfully with all aspects of the population means that the media carry a heavy social, political, and cultural burden. It requires talent, creative ability, and flexibility of mind in order to attract, address, and then affect the various elements of a society, and this is what makes the work of media people unique. Another thing that marks media people as different from their counterparts in other government agencies is their attitude toward constraints of time and location. A civil servant who works for the Ministry of Agriculture is required to accomplish a
given task during specific work hours. Media people's work is not restricted in this way; unless the nature of media function is misunderstood, media work goes on at all times and in all places. And because media leaders command such potentially powerful tools to affect public opinion, they can be regarded as opinion leaders. It is shortsighted, then, to treat journalists, broadcasters, and other media workers just like employees in the other agencies.

Actually, the role of media personnel has been underestimated not only in Saudi Arabia, but as explained in Chapter 4, in most other Arab countries as well. This inaccurate grasp of media workers' role is directly related to the widely held misconception with respect to the role of mass media in social, economic, and cultural change and in national development. For the reasons I have enumerated, Saudi Arabia now encounters low worker productivity among media workers, reluctance on the part of competent people to work in media, and heavy dependence on foreign media production. The following chapter will discuss these conditions at greater length.

In 1982 Al Jazirah criticized the discouraging salaries paid to Saudi broadcasting personnel, and the dependence on foreign production. In reply to this criticism, the Saudi Minister for Information said that it is impossible to change the status of broadcasting personnel; their salaries are controlled by government regulations and regulatory
rates. The Ministry of Information can do nothing to change the status, for that would entail actions that are not in accord with Civil Service Bureau regulations.\(^9\)

The problem in structure and function of the Ministry of Information. The Ministry of Information is the government agency directly responsible for all Saudi broadcasting, press, publications, and all other media which reach the public. The Ministry also is responsible for supervising and directing Saudi propaganda efforts in foreign countries. The Ministry functions bureaucratically; its public representative is the Minister for Information, who is responsible for what the mass media do. The Minister acts as the government's spokesman; he makes final and direct decisions regarding what is to be transmitted through broadcasting, and indirect decisions regarding what is published in newspapers and magazines.

In 1982 the Ministry of Information staff numbered 2,188; this included personnel in Riyadh and in Ministry offices in other Saudi cities and abroad. Of the total number of Ministry workers, 555 are non-Saudis, which means that 26 percent are foreigners. In the same year there were 1,020 vacant jobs.\(^{10}\)*

It is assumed in this study that the structure of Saudi mass media has affected the quality of their output in a

*The number of Ministry staff does not include menial workers, of whom there are 421.
passive way. The structure of the Ministry of Information is based on what Gerald Goldhaber calls "tall organization"; this is organization in which power and decision-making are centered in the hands of a few people, such as the Minister and his deputies (see chart, page 149). In my view, this closed system of the Ministry of Information came as the result of applying the rules and regulations of other government agencies to the Ministry, even though the nature of these other agencies is very different. As mentioned above, the Ministry of Information deals with all levels of Saudi society; other agencies treat discrete subjects and groups of people. Furthermore, the absence of a clear written policy and guidelines that would draw specific boundaries for media function has encouraged "tall" structure, rather than horizontal organization more suitable to an environment in which creativity is required.

The fact is that mass media, which work round the clock, need endless input; this in turn demands a special kind of creativity. Restrictions, routine, and centralized decision-making not only are out of place in mass media, but they significantly hamper the media's effective use. And lest this discussion be perceived as a request for applying the libertarian theory to a developing country that is not yet ready for it, let me hasten to say that such is not the case. What is needed here is written guidance for the Saudi media.
Figure 3. The Structure of the Ministry of Information. Source: Obtained by this writer from the Deputy Minister for Information Affair's Office, Riyadh, 1981.
Generally speaking, the main function of the Ministry of Information is still, as Shobaili writes, "to control, supervise, and finance all of the informational projects, and radio and television broadcasting, to guide the press establishments, and to issue and produce informational books and motion pictures," as well as to conduct propaganda campaigns inside and outside the country, and to censor foreign publications.

II. Broadcasting: Present Conditions and Future Plans

Despite the social and religious restraints that have presented obstacles since broadcasting began in Saudi Arabia, it has grown rapidly and become technologically advanced. The latest in sophisticated technology has allowed Saudi broadcasting to expand its coverage and program quantity in a relatively short time.

Central radio and television broadcasting is wholly owned by the government. The system is non-commercial; there are no private broadcasting stations in Saudi Arabia. Since broadcasting is government owned and controlled, it is financed by the Ministry of Finance and National Economy. The annual and other long-range budgets are prepared by the Ministry of Information and submitted to the Ministry of Finance, which receives similar budget proposals from other Ministries and national agencies. The Ministry of Finance has the authority to accept, subtract from, or reject what is in the budget proposal. As Dr. Saleh bin Nasser,
Assistant Deputy Minister for Information, told me, herein lies one of the problems for Saudi mass media. Dr. Nasser said that the Ministry of Finance lacks a complete understanding of the nature of broadcasting, so that it deals with the Ministry of Information's budget in exactly the same way that it deals with the other Ministries' budgets. People in the Ministry of Finance, said Dr. Nasser, seem unable to distinguish between welfare programs and television programs. Thus they cannot accept that, for example, one television film may cost more than three million dollars when another film, perhaps of lesser quality, costs only half a million. Naturally, broadcasting suffers from the arbitrary treatment it receives within the framework of this rigid financial concept.\(^{13}\)

After the Ministry of Finance and National Economy approves the annual budgets for all the Ministries and government agencies, including that of the Ministry of Information, they are discussed by the Saudi Council of Ministers. Finally the budgets are signed by the King.

Radio Broadcasting

Radio broadcasts are provided to Saudi Arabia by three major services. The National Service, which is one of the main concerns of this study, airs for twenty-two hours each day. The Holy Koran Service airs twelve hours daily, and the Call of Islam Service is directed in eight languages to non-Arabic speakers in Islamic and other countries.
At present Saudi radio is staffed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Saudi employees</th>
<th>Non-Saudi employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Office of the Ass't. Dpty. Minister for Television and Radio; the General Directorate of Radio; Riyadh Radio and Medina Studio</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiddah Radio</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mekkah Studio</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>347</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,1514</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown above, about 33 percent of the radio staff are non-Saudis. It should be noted here, however, that the staff strength is not adequate for effective radio program production. This is especially true when we consider that more than forty percent of the radio staff are office workers.

The exact number of radio receivers in Saudi Arabia at this time is unknown, but Political Handbook of the World estimates that in 1980 there were approximately 3,055,000 receivers operating. According to statistical data provided me by the Foreign Trade Department of the Saudi Ministry of Commerce, in 1977 Saudi Arabia imported a total of 1,265,246 radio sets, of which 496,262 came from Japan (see Table, next page). In 1981, 3,227,247 radios were imported, 1,368,163 from Japan alone. As the table shows,

*The total number of staff excludes 137 menial employees.*
TABLE 2

NUMBER OF RADIO SETS IMPORTED BY SAUDI ARABIA FROM

1977 to 1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Radio Sets</th>
<th>Cost in</th>
<th>Number of Radio Sets</th>
<th>Cost in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Saudi</td>
<td></td>
<td>Saudi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Riyals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Riyals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>768,984</td>
<td>231,184,641</td>
<td>496,262</td>
<td>147,260,341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>960,283</td>
<td>295,374,753</td>
<td>654,305</td>
<td>199,687,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1,147,342</td>
<td>335,051,530</td>
<td>905,132</td>
<td>267,588,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1,485,422</td>
<td>384,041,977</td>
<td>1,211,526</td>
<td>334,111,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1,859,084</td>
<td>394,072,735</td>
<td>1,368,163</td>
<td>333,993,857</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Obtained and translated by this writer, Foreign Trade Department, the Ministry of Commerce, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Summer, 1982.

the number of imported radio receivers increased within five years by about 60 percent. The increase may have been due to several factors. For one thing, radio reception does not depend on main-supply electricity, and receivers are inexpensive. For another, there has been an increase in the Saudi people's interest in receiving information and entertainment. This widening of interests is the result of advances in education.

During the past five years the number of radio sets imported by Saudi Arabia was 10,856,503, for a total cost of SR2,922,367,493, or about $834,962,000. What these figures mean is that each Saudi citizen now owns two radio receivers; the Saudi ratio of radios per person is among the
highest in the world. However, since figures for population and for the number of receivers already in use remain estimates only, a calculation of the number of radio sets per hundred people would be less than accurate.

**Future Plans**

The Saudi government is very concerned about expanding radio services. According to the Saudi Third Development Plan (1980-85), a new radio station is expected to begin transmission in 1984-85 from Dariyah. This will extend coverage for the medium wave National Service and Holy Koran Service to the whole of Saudi Arabia's central region; nighttime coverage for these two Services will be extended to the entire kingdom. The Dariyah station will also allow coverage of the Riyadh area for the FM National Service, and will extend coverage of the short wave Call of Islam Service to more foreign countries.16

Another new radio station is now under construction at Jizan, in the southern province of Saudi Arabia. It will begin transmission, as noted in the Third Plan, in 1983. This new station will cover the southern area of the country, and transmit overseas broadcasts to East Africa and southern Arabia. The Third Plan also states that the local radio network will be extended through twenty-five small transmitting stations which are to be constructed in various parts of the kingdom, commencing in 1982-83.17
Radio Programs

The expansion of Saudi broadcasting transmission to cover as much of the country as possible and to be heard outside the country as well has, as I mentioned earlier in this study, been given special attention. The great emphasis on expansion of broadcasting services has unfortunately not been accompanied by equally deliberate attention to improvement of the quality of the programs that are broadcast. It is quite true that, as Boyd observes, "the Ministry of Information was not primarily concerned about programming, as it was deeply involved in day-to-day operations and expansion of the system." The prevailing philosophy in broadcasting seems to be to "first let our voice be heard, then consider what the voice says." This attitude may have some surface value, but voice alone, without a deliberate effort to have it speak a message of substance, can be distorted; it can degenerate to mere noise. I do not suggest that Saudi radio programs are devoid of meaning, but there is much room for improvement in them. Radio programs in Saudi Arabia now are without question of higher quality than was available when radio was first established, but they have not improved at the rate that technology has improved. Dr. Saleh bin Nasser told me that two problems which detract from the quality of Saudi radio programs are the lack of competent specialists in the media field, and the fact that media personnel do not
receive the material and creative privileges that should be due them.19

It is worthy of note that most Saudi radio programs are produced locally. News broadcasts are the exceptions because of the heavy dependence on international news agencies.

Based on my experience as a writer for two radio programs during late 1977 and early 1978, and on my examination of the Saudi radio program season, or "cycle," for four months of 1982, it appears that Saudi radio production is distinctive. A high percentage of the programs are written and presented by people who are not part of the radio staff. Instead, they are religious writers, fiction writers, and newspaper writers, or they are from other government agencies and they are paid for what they write. Although the writers of most radio programs do have skill in writing, they don't have sufficient knowledge of the nature of radio. Therefore they write and present their programs in an old-fashioned style that considers direct address the way to present programs. The effect, usually, is unimaginative and tedious.

It is not unusual for programs to be written by people outside the broadcasting staff, nor is it theoretically or practically unacceptable, but the programs ought to be offered in an appealing format to ensure attracting, holding, and affecting the audience. For when these three
aspects of broadcasting are absent or weak, then programs forfeit their purpose and meaning.

Saudi National Radio broadcasts twenty and a half hours daily, or about 142 hours weekly. Saudi radio programs are usually scheduled for four-month programs seasons, or, as they are called in Saudi Arabia, "program cycles." There are three such cycles yearly; each lasts four months.

In an effort to examine closely the Saudi radio programs, I obtained the schedules and other materials for "Radio program cycle for Jimada Alu'ola 1402 A.H.", which covers the time period from 1-5-1402 to 30-8-1402 A.H. These dates correspond to February 24-June 21, 1982.20

A lengthy procedure is required to prepare a radio and television program cycle in Saudi Arabia. What happens in the preparation is as follows: First, a committee known as "The Mutual Committee of the Radio Program Cycle" is responsible for preparing the cycle. This committee ordinarily consists of directors from Riyadh Radio, Jiddah Radio, and Call of Islam Radio, as well as division heads from these three networks. The committee's task is primarily to discuss continuing programs and proposed new programs for the program cycles. As a rule, new programs in each cycle do not exceed four percent of the total number of weekly broadcast hours. For example, in the radio cycle under study here (Jimada Aln'ola), only 3 percent of the weekly hours are given over to new programs. The vast
majority of radio programs are continued from the previous cycle. Some of the new programs in the cycle were listed in earlier cycles, then cancelled for a while, and are now listed again.

Examination of the programs reveals that what Saudi radio clearly needs is creativity and newness. What it has, though, is antiquated methods of production, and bureaucracy.

After the Mutual Committee makes its final decision regarding the programs that will be aired during the program cycle, the whole program package must then be submitted to the Ministry of Information's High Committee of Programs. The High Committee consists of the Deputy Minister for Administrative Affairs in the Ministry of Information, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Radio and Television, the Director General of Saudi Radio, and the Program Counselor. With all due respect to the abilities and competence of the members of the High Committee, it is nevertheless true that (at least during the time I have spent making this study) none of them possesses a degree in the mass media field; thus special knowledge of the field is not represented.

However, the Committee debates and discusses the merits of what the Mutual Committee has decided, and it exercises its right to accept, omit, refuse, or add whatever strikes the members as necessary. After the High Committee comes to its final decision, the program package it has settled on is
submitted to the Minister of Information, whose decision with respect to programming is final.

The process does not end with the Minister of Information's decision, however. Now the season's program package, signed by him, is returned to the Deputy Minister for Information, who sends it to the Assistant Deputy Minister for Radio and Television. He returns it to the Director General of Radio, who sends it to the radio directors. They return the package to the various division heads, who implement the information. Each person who has a responsible part in this long process—from the bottom to the top and then back down again—must attach a signed letter to the person next in line.

This complicated process has been established to prepare the Saudi radio program cycles, but the operative question here is: What is the basis on which programming decisions are made? The question is of major concern to this study. Does anyone do audience analysis? Is there field research? Most important, do Saudi programs get any kind of feedback? Practically and theoretically, feedback is the foundation for producing programs that reflect and serve the needs of their audience. But the Assistant Deputy Minister for Radio and Television acknowledges that there is no scientific method by which to obtain feedback from the Saudi broadcasting audience; a few letters are occasionally volunteered by members of the audience, and sometimes the
press comments about programs, but this is really the extent of feedback.  

It is obvious, then, that radio programs are solely the product of the concepts, knowledge, and understanding that obtain among the authorities in broadcasting and the Ministry of Information. The circumstance creates one of the Saudi media's most critical problems; it will be discussed in forthcoming chapters. There are no theories of mass media that suggest media can attract an audience they fail to understand.

Types of radio programs. According to the Saudi radio program cycle for Jimada Alu'ola 1402 A.H. (February 1982), Saudi National Radio broadcasts the following types of programs weekly (see Table 2, next page).

The Saudi program cycle under study here includes only the affirmative programs which are written and prepared by the radio staff and outside writers. These programs must be approved by the program committees and the Minister of Information; for this reason the total number of hours included in the program cycle is less than the number of hours (142) which are in fact broadcast by Saudi National Radio. The regular religious programs, and music, are omitted from the cycle. For example, Saudi radio begins and ends its programs with readings from the Koran and words of the Prophet. Prayer time occurs five times daily for Muslims; radio announces each prayer time and broadcasts the
## TABLE 3

**TYPES OF RADIO PROGRAMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Types</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Percents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>18:29</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News, Including the Brief News</td>
<td>16:40</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varieties</td>
<td>14:00</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>13:35</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>12:35</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive Programs</td>
<td>7:44</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folklore</td>
<td>2:10</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game Shows</td>
<td>2:10</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \text{Total: 98:33} \]

\[ \text{68%} \]

*This table was calculated from the Saudi Radio programs cycle.*

call to prayer, with readings from the Koran and the words of the Prophet. Each Friday, the Muslim holy day, radio broadcasts the call to prayer and the prayer address; these broadcasts are transmitted directly from the holy cities Mekkah and Medina. Thus, religious programs occupy over 6 percent of the time shown in the table above. These programs can amount to approximately 15 percent of total weekly programs, especially when we calculate the time
allocated to religious messages during prayer times, and to the beginning and end of the daily radio programs.

Music is not included in the program cycle either. It is left to coordinating department personnel in radio to choose the music that will be aired. Usually music is inserted between the affirmative programs. I have observed that there are one to three songs between programs; therefore music can occupy approximately 18 percent of Saudi air time.

The breakdown of the various types of Saudi radio programs is as follows:

- General information and news 32%
- Culture 15%
- Light entertainment: variety, music, songs 38%
- Religion 15%

100%

It is worth noting that educational and rural programs amount to less than 2 percent of the total. These are the kinds of programs that are urgently needed in a developing country such as Saudi Arabia, but as the table shows, Saudi radio has given first priority (38 percent) to entertainment. This confirms the research findings of mass media scholars that were mentioned in Chapters 4 and 6: mass media in most developing countries function mainly as vehicles of propaganda and entertainment. Although it is of course true that entertainment is an important element of
mass media, it should not, at least in developing countries, be the dominant one. In the case of Saudi radio, I believe that the reasons for so much emphasis on entertainment are these: (1) Saudi radio authorities' rather limited understanding of what ought to be broadcast; (2) the absence of public entertainment in Saudi Arabia; (3) the lack of clearly stated guidance for programming; and (4) the paucity of specialized, competent radio personnel. And again, there is the matter of imitation; although it may be true that entertainment dominates radio programming in Western nations, there is no reason for this to hold true in developing nations where illiteracy is high and social awareness remains minimal. Mere entertainment will not serve either development or awareness; it may well retard both. It is possible, however, to produce programs that are both entertaining and didactic—that teach and delight—and that are at the same time vehicles for development. Based on my study of the Saudi programs, this is precisely what does not occur.

The second programming priority is information and news (32 percent). It is to Saudi radio's credit that it keeps its audience domestically and internationally well informed. Emphasis on this category of programs is a requisite for a developing country. The news that is broadcast on Saudi radio is half domestic, half international. With respect to international news, radio depends heavily on the
international news agencies. Saudi radio is subject to a high degree of censorship, also, so that what it broadcasts conforms with government policy nationally and internationally.

We should note here that the general information and news category excludes what are called "directive programs." These programs form 5 percent of the weekly total, and they are usually written and prepared by other government agencies, whose purpose is to make known what work they are engaged in.* These programs tend to be quite dry, for their form is mainly direct address; they lack the attractive features which would make them appealing to an audience. The Assistant Deputy Minister for Radio and Television told me that these programs form the only relationship between broadcasting and other government agencies which deal directly with Saudi Arabia's development.22 Here is further evidence that broadcasting is not used effectively in the development process. Dr. Ghazi Al-Gosaibi, Minister for Industry and Electricity, told me that there is really no lack of good ideas for programs, but that the programs need to be produced in attractive ways in order to be influential.23 All its drawbacks notwithstanding, however, Saudi radio deserves praise for having managed to introduce the varied and far-flung elements of Saudi society

*In 1978 I wrote and produced a weekly radio program for the Civil Service Bureau.
to the larger world, and for having opened a window through which Saudi citizens may view their own country.

**Television Broadcasting**

As discussed earlier, the Saudi government has strongly emphasized the expansion of television transmission. Since Saudi television began its first transmission eighteen years ago from the Riyadh and Jiddah stations to cover an area of between 80 and 100 square kilometers, transmission has been widened. With the building of more stations and relays, coverage now extends to about fifty percent of the country. Some parts of Saudi Arabia still are without television, however, either because electricity is as yet unavailable, or because the harsh topography makes transmission too difficult.

As mentioned in Chapter 3 of this study, Saudi television has met distinctly different responses from two distinctly different groups. From the beginning, one group has looked upon television as an evil which will destroy Saudi society; the other has welcomed television warmly, seeing it as a social and intellectual lifeline for a previously isolated public. At the very least, television has offered information and entertainment to this once deprived audience. Even today, when television has become part of the fabric of Saudi life, it still remains a point at issue between these two groups.
In the early days of transmission, Saudi television was regional. It began transmitting programs from the western and central provinces; later the eastern province acquired transmission. But the Ministry of Information decided that television transmission should be centralized in Riyadh. Centralization has advantages and disadvantages; they will be discussed in a later chapter. As explained earlier, the structure and system of Saudi television are exactly like those of Saudi radio.

At present television broadcasts on one channel, but another channel is expected to begin transmission during 1983.\textsuperscript{24} Local programs are produced at three stations: Riyadh, Jiddah, and Dammam. In addition, there are fifteen local relay stations which sometimes participate in production. By making use of the coaxial grids of the postal service, telephone, and telegraph, television is able to reach nearly half the Saudi population.

Construction of the Riyadh Central Television Complex has been completed, and the Complex is now functioning. This Complex, which cost SR 1,200 billion (about $343 million), is the largest and most advanced television facility in the region. According to a Ministry of Information report,

The Complex consists of three transmission studio units. Annexed to them are telecine, video, and control rooms. There will be two channels on which programs can be transmitted. There are three news studios, with annexes for video, film, and general administration.
The report mentions also that there are five production studios, and that the Complex is built according to the most modern architectural design. The film building houses a film production studio in addition to technical facilities, a film processing laboratory, and production and exhibition halls. There is also an 800-seat theater in the Complex. And in addition to these major features, there are numerous other buildings for a variety of purposes.

The Central Television Complex is important to Saudi Arabia, and the nation is justifiably proud of such an elaborate television facility. Like any other mass medium, however, television is ordinarily judged by its production, or output, and by its ability to attract and affect an audience—not by its luxurious physical facilities. It is certainly true that physical facilities are important, but buildings and machines can do nothing by themselves; there must be competent, specialized people to maintain and operate them. I have been told that the Ministry of Information lacks sufficient qualified people to man the Complex. So it seems that what we have here is the irony of an elaborate, state-of-the-art central television complex without enough people who know how to use it to produce good local programs. Ironies like this are common in developing nations where the ancient and the modern are in close, abrasive contact with one another, where there has been no period of transition to create a psychological and
intellectual buffer between the old and the new. Douglas mentions that

Since the setting up of the television stations and setting up the TV equipment were the dominant thought for Saudi officials, the content or programs were a secondary matter.26

This unfortunately remains the reality today for Saudi television. Although it is clear that programs should be given first priority and major attention, most Saudi television programs now are either imported material, or unappealing, amateurish local efforts. I will discuss this problem at more length later.

Future plans for Saudi television. Because of Saudi Arabia's unique geography and vast size (estimated at 869,000 square miles), Saudi officials have concluded that in order for television broadcasting to achieve 100 percent coverage of the country, the only effective method is the satellite system. According to the Third Development Plan (1980-85), the Saudi television satellite will cover the entire Arabian Gulf area. The Plan states that the satellite television system will be completed in 1984-85, and that another new television complex, to be constructed in Jiddah, will begin transmission during the period covered by the Fourth Development Plan (1985-1990).

Television receiver sets. It is at present impossible to know precisely the number of television sets per thousand Saudi citizens since, as stated in the "Radio" section of this study, neither the Saudi population nor the number of
receivers is definitely known. The Political Handbook of the World for 1981 estimates 310,000 television receivers in Saudi Arabia as of 1980. However, in (1981) 1,382,444 sets were imported, and in (1977) 1,157,112 sets were imported. Thus, importation of television sets increased in four years by about 20 percent; the increase is doubtless the result of the expansion of television services which occurred because of the establishment during this time of new stations and relays in the southern and northern provinces of Saudi Arabia, and because of the improvement in economic conditions for the Saudi people. Another reason, of course, for the expansion is that television is Saudi Arabia’s only public entertainment medium. In total, in the five years from 1977 to 1981, Saudi Arabia imported 7,536,133 television sets at a cost of SR 4,937,651,854, or about $1,410,757,673 (see Table 4, next page).

Even so, a 30 percent increase of television sets is expected after the completion in 1984-84 of the satellite system; then transmission will cover the entire country instead of merely half of it. Indeed, the expansion of broadcasting transmission has been one of the Saudi government’s important goals. The goal will soon be fully realized, but program quality remains the real issue, and as yet there is no real answer.

Television staff. Broadcasting staff and the programs themselves present the major problems for Saudi television;
## TABLE 4
NUMBER OF T.V. SETS IMPORTED BY SAUDI ARABIA FROM 1977 TO 1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>T.V. Sets Imported from all over the World</th>
<th>T.V. Sets Imported from Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of T.V. Sets</td>
<td>Cost in Saudi Riyals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>753,447</td>
<td>370,014,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>824,640</td>
<td>395,083,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1,094,189</td>
<td>588,117,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>857,527</td>
<td>651,874,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>721,086</td>
<td>716,227,801</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Obtained and translated by this writer, Foreign Trade Department, the Ministry of Commerce, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Summer, 1982.

these problems have not yet been addressed with due care and deliberation. Staff and programming are the basic elements of mass media's existence; hence, when this is where the difficulties lie, they are the most obvious symptoms of media's weakness. Currently, Saudi television employs only 563 people, of whom 103 are non-Saudis. This means that 23 percent of the Saudi television staff are foreigners. The total staff breaks down as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Saudis</th>
<th>Non-Saudis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jiddah station</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mekkah station</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Directorate of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television and other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stations in the country</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>460</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that almost 30 percent of the television staff are involved in producing the programs, but these people are also officials whose duties include daily office work.

Obviously, this small cadre of television workers is far below the number required to produce attractive, effective broadcasting. Furthermore, as the Assistant Deputy Minister for Television and Radio told me, 70 percent of the staff have very minimal training for the work they do, or even no training at all. Dr. Bin Nasser said that

It has been realized that the lack of media-specialized, trained, competent people is one of the most serious barriers hindering effective use of our broadcasting. But we have been unable to do much about it because of economic, political, religious, social, and other restraints that handicap broadcasting.

In order to achieve the government's commendably ambitious goals for improvement both in quantity and quality of broadcasting, the problems of broadcasting must be studied carefully. In a later chapter, this study will suggest solutions.

**Televisión programs.** This section will be concerned mainly with the programs on television, since television
holds a singular position among the mass media. Without doubt, television possesses the greatest potential for attracting and influencing audiences, and so it has been given much attention by most mass communications scholars and mass media experts.

The effects of television can be calculated only by examining its content, not by extolling the virtues of its physical facilities and advanced technology. And if television's influence on developed societies is great, then its influence on developing societies must be many times greater. Therefore it is necessary that the governments of developing countries give this fascinating, entertaining, possibly dangerous new medium the attention it deserves, for, as research findings have amply shown, television can play a part in solving problems of national unity and development. Without more attention, it may well happen that television will create new problems for Saudi Arabia rather than help to solve old ones.

However, before beginning an examination of Saudi television's content in an attempt to explain its function, it is necessary to offer a clearer idea of just what television programs are available in Saudi Arabia.

Central Saudi Television broadcasts about seventy hours weekly. Like the radio programs, the schedule of Saudi television programs is divided into three four-month segments called "television program cycles," or seasons. I
will discuss here the program cycle for Jimada Alu'ola 1402 A.H., or February 1982;\(^{32}\) this cycle begins the First of Jimada Alu'ola 1402 A.H., or February 24, 1982, and ends the Thirtieth of Sha'ban, or June 21, 1982. In this cycle television transmission begins on Saturday and Sunday at 9 a.m. and ends at 11:30 a.m. Transmission begins again at 4:30 p.m. and ends around midnight (there is no fixed time for broadcasting to end). On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday television programs are transmitted from 4:30 p.m. until midnight. On Thursday and Friday, the Saudi weekend, programs begin at 9 a.m. and run until past midnight. Closing time for Saudi television is not specified precisely; it depends on the availability of program materials and on local news events. The time allocated for Arabic news on television is thirty minutes, but it can run as long as an hour, depending on what newsworthy events happen to be occurring. The longer news period has in fact become the rule rather than the exception.

According to the television program cycle under discussion here from February 24, 1982 to June 21, 1982 the types of programs are as follows:

- General Information \(6\%\)
- Culture \(4\%\)
- Sports (including wrestling)* \(3\%\)

*This does not include live sports events, such as soccer game or other national or international sports events.
Directive programs      7%
Religion                15%
Education               5%
Children's programs (including imported cartoon films) 10
Variety and songs       11%
Films and series (almost all imported) 20%
News (including news in English and newbrief)** 9%
Reading from the Koran at the beginning and end of programs, prayers during prayer time, and program presentation 10%

Generally speaking, Saudi television programs can be classified as follows:

Culture and education  9%
News and information  15%
Religion              15%
Directive and children's programs (including cartoons) 17%
Light entertainment (including sports)  34%

This breakdown of programs reveals that entertainment is Saudi television's main function. As I have said, using television as an entertainment means is not unusual in developing countries, especially in those of the Arab world. And perhaps it is because some developing countries, including Saudi Arabia, tend to imitate advanced Western

**Time allocated for news varies between 30 minutes to an hour, depending on news events.
nations, even though such imitation may be highly inappropriate. We should remember that the invention of television occurred after the Western nations had become developed, so that the use of television for educational purposes and for development was not a priority for them. Moreover, in Western nations educational, political, and social awareness do not present problems as they do in the Third World. It is natural, therefore, that Western nations give more attention to entertainment, even though the "wasteland" of television continues to be decried by many Western thinkers.

But, as Wells has observed, developing countries do not become modern in the same way the already industrialized nations did.

There is a sequencing of the new and disparate elements of "modernity" that is radically different from that experienced in the past by the now advanced countries. Television now comes to the poor countries before factories or trans-country highways, and washing machines arrive in the modern sector before the amenity of uncontaminated piped water becomes widespread.  

This indiscriminate imitation is a major cause for the ineffectiveness of the mass media in national development. Another factor, as Al-Zobair Safe Al-Islam told me, is that in the Arab world the media have been perceived more as a political means than as a means to development, so that media personnel have emphasized entertainment as a way to avoid trouble and controversy.
But since its beginnings, Saudi television has been envisioned primarily as an entertainment medium. In his study of Saudi television, Boyd Douglas observes that "the programming on Saudi Arabian television is essentially entertainment oriented." Douglas remarks further that

Little attempt was made to provide viewers with programs of an educational nature, for various reasons: the lack of production personnel and facilities, the absence of a programming philosophy by those who were responsible for programming, and the ease with which outside entertainment programming could be purchased.35

The reasons Boyd advances may explain why the share of cultural and educational programs on Saudi television is only 9 percent.

The percentage of directive and children's programs (17 percent) is impressive, but an examination of their content is disappointing. A large portion of these programs is produced outside Saudi Arabia, and the programs are not compatible with local culture and needs. They consist mainly of cartoons and other Western-made programs; the few locally produced programs offer little that would appeal to an audience. For example, a person will stand stiffly, staring at the camera, saying "Disobeying traffic rules will endanger your life." Or, "This way of living is good for you; that way is bad." No attempts are made to enliven these programs, no one seems to have grasped the concept of production values, and simple psychology tells us that this rudimentary sort of production cannot attract viewers and that it is therefore unconvincing and ineffective.
My own observation of Saudi television news reveals that it consists of two parts: local and international. Often the local news is written by the Saudi news agency; television shows pictures of important events, and the written news is handed to an announcer who functions as a "talking head," merely reading aloud whatever has been given him. Editorial comment, journalistic interpretation, and criticism are not allowed on Saudi television, and there are no live reports. International news is entirely the product of the international news agencies.

Religious programs are given special attention—more than in other Mideast countries—in Saudi Arabia. One reason is that Saudi Arabia is the site of Islam's most holy cities, Mekkah and Medina. Another reason is that Saudi religious leaders, who are anti-television, insist that the medium be used as a tool of religion. The fact is that because Saudi Arabia is an entirely Muslim country, religious programming deserves the attention it receives. Quantity, however, is not the issue here; adequate time is allotted to religious programs, but their quality is inferior. Quantity without quality results in vacuousness, and it can even do harm.

In discussions with journalists and other educated people in the country, I learned that people's complaints about religious programs center mainly on the way they are produced. The nature of television is quite different from
the nature of face-to-face communication, but Saudi television seems not to have learned this elementary fact. If a television program fails to make use of psychology-based modern tactics and techniques that attract and hold the audience, then people will turn deaf ears and blind eyes to it. Saudi religious programs, and other locally produced programs, are speech oriented. If a man appears on the screen giving orders and information as though he were speaking before a corporate board meeting, the effect is dull, dry, and unappealing. In order for a program to hold its audience, it is vital to arouse interest at the outset, and then maintain the level of interest. There are numerous methods by which to attract and hold a television audience, but it seems Saudi television is reluctant to learn about them.

Apart from the relatively few locally produced programs, Saudi television depends heavily on imported programs, most of which are only for entertainment. During my study of the television program cycle mentioned above (Jimada Al'Ola 1402 A.H., or February 1982), it was exceedingly difficult as well as impractical to calculate the percentage of imported programs, because local programs are mixed with the imported ones. A major part of what is produced locally is a collection culled from the television archives where both imported and local programs are stored. "TV Magazine," for example, is a locally produced variety program, but we can't
call it 100 percent local production because "TV Magazine" combines imported and local program materials. Other locally produced programs, such as "Al-Wan" ("Colors Program"), or "Assahrah Al Maftohah" ("Night Show") are similarly combined. Such programs are also entertainment oriented. However, almost all films and series are imported from abroad, mainly from other Arab countries, Egypt in particular. A reasonably accurate estimate of the ratio of imported television programs to locally produced programs is 45 to 55 percent, give or take 5 percent.

The imported programs are mostly entertainment, and the local programs offer mostly news, sports, religion, culture, and information, along with speech-oriented shows and some entertainment. Ideas for the local programs are essentially sound and imaginative, the sort of ideas that can arouse interest. Unfortunately, these programs usually fail to sustain interest because their basis is primarily dry, directive speech, which bores an audience.

Saudi television's most glaring problem, then, is the lack of satisfactory local programs produced by creative, enthusiastic professional methods that utilize techniques developed especially for this medium. It is ironic that a country which possesses so much impressive television technology should still be producing programs of such amateurish quality.
According to the data set forth in this study, authorities in the Ministry of Information have attributed this problem to Saudi Arabia's social and religious restrictions. Although it is possible the authorities are correct in part, these restrictions by no means make professional, attractive production impossible. It is both possible and practical to create high-quality television programs that will satisfy conservative religious groups as well as technocrats. What is needed is imagination, creativity, and, most of all, competent, well-trained media professionals who conceive of television as something more than a vehicle for entertainment and speech-making—professionals who, in other words, know how to make the medium productive.

Do we intend to be a naive and sentimental people or a complex one? The content of Saudi television must include more substance than the present mishmash of shallow films and programs about love, popular music, and tedious talk. Programs must address and satisfy the interests of the public, or Saudi television will continue to function only as background noise.

In an article written for Al-Jazirah, Dr. Mohammed Abdu, the Minister of Information, states that Saudi television has failed to achieve optimal levels because of the absence of women. Dr. Abdu writes that because Islam bars women from appearing on television, local television is unable to
produce its own programs, and that under these circumstances it is necessary to depend on imported programs.36

Of course women can be an important element in television production, but with all due respect to Dr. Abdu (and to women), it is also true that appealing programs can be produced without women. For example, some very popular American television programs, such as CBS's "Sixty Minutes" and ABC's "This Week" have no women.

It is the society that determines the content of its television. In Western society women are part of public life, hence it is natural to see them on television. In Saudi Arabia, for religious, cultural, and social reasons, women's lives are more circumspect, and at this point in the country's history it would be inappropriate for Saudi women to appear on the screen. It is the medium's responsibility to adapt to its social, political, religious, and cultural environment—and to adapt with verve and imagination rather than producing a makeshift product. That is, it is possible for television to produce creative, appealing programs within the constraints set by the society it serves.

Unfortunately, developing countries have been heavily influenced by the West, mainly as a result of its technological advancement.

The developing countries [Saudi Arabia among them] thought that once anything Western in origin and context was introduced into their societies it was a symbol of modernity. In most developing societies that embraced the Western model, to be apparently Western in outfit and outlook meant to be a modern and superior man. But
to identify oneself with anything indigenous meant primitivism and uncouthness. This led to a greater dependence on foreign media products; heavy importation and reliance on Western media programs became the order of media practices.\textsuperscript{37}

Because of this misplaced admiration for all things Western, the Saudi media, especially television, have become dependent on imported programs. It may be true that television in most developing countries was introduced because of its novelty, for prestige and for political purposes. In fact, this perception of television as emblematic of "progress" may well be the answer to the question of why television fails to play a significant role in the development of some Third World nations.

The idea that broadcasting, particularly television broadcasting, should be a means to mobilize a population to cooperate in development ventures and to promote education and social development is apparently not clearly understood by Saudi Arabia's broadcasting authorities. Entertainment programs have been given (perhaps unintentionally) special emphasis, mainly because, as Boyd points out, there has been no pattern of intentional use of television to persuade viewers or to rally the populace to a specific cause.\textsuperscript{38} But Saudi audiences are dissatisfied with their television; in 1978 they began replacing television with videotapes. Within a few years 583 videotape rental centers and copy shops for Saudi consumers had appeared.\textsuperscript{39} The rapid and widespread growth of these centers has come about for an
obvious reason: Saudi television does not satisfy its audience. Officially, the use of videotapes is a problem, particularly when we consider that the illiteracy rate is over 65 percent. The Ministry of Information has therefore prohibited more videotape centers from opening.40

"Video Invasion," an article published in the Saudi weekly magazine Al-Yamamah, states that within five years videotape has become a familiar phenomenon of Saudi daily life; the kingdom is one of the first Middle East nations to buy and use videotape. The article goes on to say that statistics indicate the number of videotapes per capita in Saudi Arabia is the highest in the world: 1:20. The article considers the videotape phenomenon worthy of thorough study. Al-Yamamah in fact conducted a survey of the Saudi population to ascertain the reason for the popularity and widespread use of tapes in Saudi Arabia; it concluded that the main reason is the inferior quality of Saudi television programs.41

This article is one of the most cogent and useful pieces done by the Saudi press concerning the interests of the Saudi public. And, based on my own observations and on discussions with my Saudi friends and relatives, I can only agree with the survey's conclusions: the widespread use of videotape is proof positive of the weakness of Saudi television.
Before we begin the next chapter, it is worthwhile to reiterate several points. Saudi broadcasting has had a number of positive effects on the nation. For one thing, it has given Saudi citizens a window on the rest of the world. Secondly, broadcasting is closing the "dialectic gap" that exists among the provinces, and thus contributing toward national unity. Broadcasting has also begun to engender intellectual stirrings that may change the insular, reactionary habits of mind that still obtain among some previously isolated Saudi citizens. These effects, however, salutary as they are, tend to come about almost automatically wherever broadcasting is established. What we need in Saudi Arabia, according to this study, is a more aggressive approach on all broadcasting fronts: personnel training, production, organizational structure. With intelligent methods and all deliberate speed, we must seek solutions to the problems in these areas; for only after these solutions have been implemented will it be possible for Saudi Arabia to take advantage of broadcasting in ways that assure its effective participation in achieving the ambitions of a modern state.

III. The Saudi Press

The content of a newspaper, magazine, or any other mass medium is determined by the political, social, and economic environment in which the medium operates. Moreover, the medium's financial condition, its structure, system, and its
manpower are underlying factors which also determine its output. This study assumes that the content and the function of Saudi Arabia's press are the result of all these factors. Therefore, prior to beginning an examination of the Saudi press and how it functions, it is necessary first to describe current conditions with regard to the press. This discussion will be restricted to the major, popular newspapers and magazines; it will omit specialized publications.

Press Ownership and Relationship of the Press to Government

In 1963, private, individual ownership of Saudi newspapers and magazines was transferred by the government to shared ownership; since that time all major publications have been national establishments. Each press establishment is owned by shareholders who are approved by the Saudi government. According to the Saudi Press Regulation of 1963, "The Ministry of Information has the right to reject any individual or group of applicants"\(^{42}\) who applies for a license to publish. Further, the Ministry of Information also has the right to dissolve a press establishment; in this event the license will be revoked by a decree from the Prime Minister.\(^{43}\)

Under the Press Regulation, the Director-General and the Editor-in-Chief of each establishment must be approved by the Ministry of Information. The establishments' shareholders elect these officers; no attempt is made to be
sure that they have been trained and educated in the field, and as often as not it happens that their education has been in fields other than the press. The Ministry of Information has the right to accept, reject, or dismiss any Director-General or Editor-in-Chief of a Saudi newspaper or magazine. Thus, the government is responsible for Saudi press systems and structures, and it directs the press establishments. Although the press, unlike broadcasting, is not directly owned, operated, and censored by government, it nevertheless functions under official control. The Saudi press operates under the authoritarian system; the Ministry of Information controls it by means of licensing and subsidies, and by exercising its right to discontinue publication of a newspaper or magazine, and to discharge or punish journalists or other members of the press establishment, or press establishment owners.

The Regulation of Printed Materials and Publications, issued by royal decree February 17, 1982, further refines and emphasizes the relationship of the Saudi press to the government. This new law gives the Ministry of Information even more power to control and direct the press.* According to the law, (See Appendix A) the Ministry of Information has the following rights:

Article 32: The Ministry of Information has the right to withdraw a license if the newspaper or

*I obtained and translated the Regulation of Printed Materials and Publications.
publication ceases publication for a continuous period which exceeds three months or if it continues publication sporadically and irregularly.

Article 33: The Ministry of Information has the right to confiscate or destroy any issue of any newspaper published in the Kingdom without reimbursement if it contains what may affect negatively the religious feeling or peace or general morals or general regulations. The responsible party will be punished according to law.

Article 34: The Ministry of Information has the right to stop any publication in the Kingdom for a period which does not exceed thirty days. Any extension must be approved by the Prime Minister.44

This Regulation provides the basic reference for the operation of the Saudi press. More completely than any other document, the Regulation determines the press's obligations and responsibilities to the government. But no specific, clear guidance for press function has been offered either by the government or by the press establishments themselves; thus the press functions in an atmosphere of confusion and apprehension. The editors-in-chief of Saudi newspapers and magazines, who, according to the Regulation of Printed Materials, bear full responsibility for what is printed in their publications, must work under the pressure of fear—fear that what they publish may be interpreted as negative toward the interests of religion, peace, or general morality. Perhaps the fear that seems to prevail explains not only why Saudi newspapers are so dependent on the international news agencies, but also why the papers appear
to function merely as vehicles to carry government-approved news, and articles about official government plans and meetings, sports, the fine arts, and other such subjects without becoming involved in deep analysis, investigation, or discussion of issues and events.

This is not to suggest, however, that the weaknesses of the Saudi press are caused solely by the press laws. The press establishments themselves are also responsible for this weakness; as I will explain at more length in the following pages.

Financial Resources

The two major financial resources of the Saudi press are government subsidies and advertising. The government gives annual subsidies to the Saudi press establishments. Article 31 of the 1982 Regulation of Printed Materials and Publications states that:

The Ministry of Information has the right to establish annual subscription fees for newspapers, magazines, and publications as well as the price of a single issue just as it has the right to administer matters of advertisement and its rates.45

Government subsidies to the press are a very considerable financial resource; this money is in fact what enables the press to continue operation. One purpose of government subsidies, of course, is to confirm government control of the press; but another, more enlightened purpose of the subsidies is to obviate the press's need to resort to foreign agencies for financial support, and to prevent the
press from accepting funds from foreign sources. Foreign funding could mean that a newspaper or magazine would be biased in favor of the source of the funding.

Article 35 (A) of the Regulation for Printed Materials and Publications states that:

Neither a publication nor its employees are permitted by law to accept bribes from foreign sources directly or indirectly, within or without the Kingdom.46

A publication which violates this Article is confiscated; in addition, the person responsible for the violation is subject to punishment of a year in prison, and/or a fine of SR 30,000.47 (See Appendix A).

With respect to advertising, I was told by most of the directors-general of the Saudi press establishments that government subsidies do not exceed a fourth of the income the press receives from advertising. However, Saudi newspapers and magazines must operate within numerous restrictions regarding the advertisements they publish; they cannot accept advertising simply on the basis that it increases their income. What is more, the press is not free to set advertising rates. As mentioned above, the Ministry of Information has the right to administer advertising matters, including rates. The Ministry is thus empowered in order to guard against direct or indirect outside influence on the press. Article 35 (B) of the 1982 Press Regulation states that "advertisements for foreign countries or institutions, governmental or private, are not permitted
unless approved by the Ministry of Information." And Item (C) of the same Article states that "investigative reports of an advertising nature are not permitted publication unless they indicate clearly their nature." There are both positive and negative aspects, however, to these financial restrictions on the press. The positive element is that the Saudi government, by applying these restrictions, ensures that the press is protected from the influence of foreign advertisers who might make use of the persuasive power of money to intervene in Saudi press function to serve their own political or social purposes, and to the detriment of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government is probably wise not to put naive trust in the good will of foreign advertisers. But on the other hand, as a result of government restrictions on advertising, the Saudi press must continue to be financially dependent on the government. This dependence does not encourage excellence in journalism; as long as the press establishments can be sure of receiving government subsidies, there is little impetus to improve the quality of their publications' content. The profit motive is a strong stimulant for any business; in the case of Saudi newspapers and magazines, the need to make more money would be an incentive for them to seek new markets, increase their circulation, and, most important, to improve their content in order to compete with one another. It would be all to the good if the Saudi government would offer clear guidance
to the press regarding what is acceptable in advertising
with respect to politics, society, and religion; with
explicitly stated guidelines as a foundation, the government
could then give the press establishments freedom to compete
in such a way as both to serve their own financial interests
and to participate in national development by increasing the
social awareness of the Saudi people. It is almost
inevitable that more freedom, judiciously offered, will
encourage in the Saudi press a stronger sense of
responsibility, and will create an atmosphere in which
journalistic skill and integrity can flourish.

At present, the financial condition of the Saudi press
is relatively good.* Press establishments have purchased
and imported the latest in technology for their newspapers
and magazines; as a result, the press's output has
increased. Its content, though, still requires much
improvement.

Structure

As explained earlier, a medium's structure and system
strongly influence its content and function. The structure
of the Saudi press was set up by the National Press
Establishments Law, issued in 1963 (1383 A.H.) by royal

*I tried to obtain the annual budget for any of the
press establishments; none agreed to give me its budget,
because each considers the budget a matter of great secrecy
which must not be revealed to anyone outside the establishment.
decree. According to this law (and reflected now in the structure of the Saudi press), every press establishment must apply the "tall" system of organization. Hence there are three top positions in each establishment: Director-General, Vice Director-General, and Editor-in-Chief. These three positions are occupied by shareholding members, or owners, of the press establishments; they must be approved by the Ministry of Information. Unfortunately, when a person is chosen to fill one of these positions, neither the Press Law nor the press establishments themselves takes into consideration his qualifications for the job, his knowledge of the field, or his education. In fact, the only qualifications necessary are that the person be one of the establishment's shareholders, and that he be acceptable to the Ministry of Information. Furthermore, the offices of Director-General and Vice Director-General are part-time jobs. With the exception of the Al-Jazirah and the O'Kaz press establishments, whose directors-general work full time, all other directors-general of the Saudi press occupy their positions on a part-time basis; these people hold other jobs in government or business.

There are two divisions to the structure of the Saudi press: Administration and Editing (see chart, next page). The tasks of the director-general are to administer the Division of Administration and to supervise its subdivisions. Actually, the duties of the director-general,
Figure 4. Administrative Organization of the Saudi Press Establishments.

Note: The design of this chart is based on interviews and visits to the Saudi Arabian press establishments during my research trip to Saudi Arabia in Summer and Fall 1982.

** Usually part-time job.

*** Some Saudi newspapers have Vice Editors-in-Chief instead of Editing Managers; some of them have both.
according to the Saudi Law for National Press Establishments of 1963, are mainly

to supervise the administration of the establishment, to call special meetings of the members, and to present the establishments to the public administratively and financially.

The Director General does not intervene in editing affairs.

In general, Saudi press establishments are small organizations; staffing in either the administrative or the editing divisions does not exceed one hundred employees, and sometimes it is fewer than that. During my visits in the summers of 1981 and 1982 to the Saudi press establishments, I observed that each establishment's administrative division has, as the chart shows, five subdivisions: Accounting, Cashier, Advertising, Printing Affairs, and Circulation. Each subdivision is staffed by two to five persons; some of these staff positions are part-time, and most of the staff members are non-Saudis.

The editing divisions are each headed by an editor-in-chief who must be approved by the Ministry of Information; the editor-in-chief assumes full responsibility for everything that is printed in his publication. He is also responsible to the Ministry of Information for what is printed; thus, should government officials judge published material to be offensive on social, political, or religious grounds, the editor-in-chief will be charged with dereliction.
However, the structure of the subdivisions of each editing division is typical of that of most newspapers and magazines anywhere in the world. The titles of these subdivisions have an impressive ring; an inside look at the subdivisions, however, will swiftly lay to rest any rosy first impressions. Each subdivision has a staff of no more than two persons; one is more common, and some of the subdivisions don't have even one full-time employee. The manpower situation, clearly, is dismal. The reasons for this will be discussed in the next section.

**Staffing of the Saudi Press**

Generally speaking, the major development problem faced by Saudi Arabia is lack of manpower. It is a problem of worrisome magnitude and complexity. Naturally the lack of manpower also affects the Saudi mass media, particularly the press, but here the problem shows a different aspect.

For one thing, the Saudi press establishments underpay their employees. This was perhaps more markedly true during the sixties and seventies. It is difficult, therefore, to attract people to the field; only rarely do competent, talented people enter a field that can promise them little by way of material gain. Lucian Pye has pointed out that journalists in most developing countries tend to be so underpaid that they are extremely unlikely to feel that they represent an independent force capable of criticizing and
judging those who hold political power. Pye's observations certainly hold true in Saudi Arabia.

Secondly, in the absence of measures to ensure the futures of journalists, a journalist can be fired at any time his director-general or editor-in-chief sees fit to do so. A journalist's professional future with the Saudi press is far too tenuous; most people cannot in good conscience enter the field wholeheartedly, and in fact a high percentage (about 65 percent) of the Saudi press staff are part-time journalists (see Table 5, next page). Most people working as journalists in the editing divisions of Saudi press establishments also engage in other occupations or attend school. High school and college students write for the Saudi press, as well as employees of the Ministries and other government agencies. I myself worked as a journalist during my high school and college years.

Most Saudi press personnel, then, lack experience in and knowledge of the field. They are attracted to journalism because of its novelty, because writing for a newspaper or magazine offers them a measure of prestige, and because it is a source of extra income. The majority come from middle or lower class families.

Thirdly, in most developing countries, it is taking one's professional life in one's hands to be a journalist; just one mistake in judgement—one error that the government interprets as unacceptable—and the journalist is in
### TABLE 5
**STAFF OF SAUDI PRESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Saudis</th>
<th>Non-Saudis</th>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>Specialized in Mass Media</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newspaper:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Jazirah**</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Riyadh</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Medina</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Bilad</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Nadwah</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Yawm</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Kaz***</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Magazines:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Yamamah</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aqraa</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Figures I obtained from the Saudi press establishments.*

*This table includes only the people who work in editing affairs; it omits staff of the administrative division and technical workers in printing affairs. Note that almost all technical workers are non-Saudis.*

**Al-Jazirah sent me a list of all its employees in the administrative and editing divisions. The list makes no distinction between full and part-time jobs, so it is difficult to know exactly who staffs the editing division.*

***The data I received from O'Kaz includes 17 full-time, 32 part-time employees; 20 are unaccounted for. Perhaps they are technical staff.*
trouble. Journalism has not yet been widely accepted in Saudi Arabia as a respectable career, so that most Saudi journalists ply their trade as an avocation; they happen to be skilled at writing, so they happen to be journalists. The few genuine journalists in Saudi Arabia usually don't remain in journalism, for there are many more lucrative jobs that seek their talents. These people may go to work for the Saudi government, or they may open their own businesses in the world of commerce.

All the factors that have been discussed so far combine to produce inferior newspapers and magazines, published mostly by undermanned, unspecialized, and incompetent staffs. As the next chapter will explain, these problems have materially obstructed effective use of the Saudi press in national development.

**Circulation: Figures and Problems**

As I mentioned earlier, one of the most difficult problems I have faced in gathering data from the Saudi press establishments was obtaining circulation figures for Saudi newspapers and magazines. The figures are not published, and no one, not even the Ministry of Information, knows a Saudi newspaper's circulation figures except its director-general and editor-in-chief. Astonishingly, press authorities consider circulation figures top secret—and many obstacles confront an outsider who tries to become privy to this information.
Actually, the secrecy that surrounds circulation figures probably explains why most of what is written about them is based on estimates. I tried my best to obtain exact circulation figures for every Saudi newspaper and magazine that is included in this study, but no one was willing to give me the accurate figure for his publication. Perhaps the numbers are a matter of embarrassment; circulation is quite low—nothing an editor-in-chief would be proud to announce. Furthermore, the press establishments want to keep their circulation figures secret from one another; this may be an attempt to be competitive, albeit in a rather negative way. In fact, every Saudi editor-in-chief whom I met insisted that the circulation for his newspaper was higher than that of any other newspaper. However, after extracting multiple promises from me that the figures would be kept secret, the editors-in-chief finally gave them to me—with a few reservations. Rather than offering precise figures, an editor-in-chief would say, for example, that circulation is between 60,000 and 65,000.

Despite the lack of precision, the circulation figures that appear on the following page probably are the most accurate figures ever published for Saudi newspapers and magazines. After intense effort on my part to obtain the figures and then painstakingly to calculate them, it is safe to say that these figures represent the closest it is possible to come to the exact figures for Saudi Arabia's
major publications. As Table 6 shows, circulation is very low; the highest is 100,000—and this in a country with 7,000,000 indigenous people and 2,000,000 foreigners. Moreover, government agencies, the Ministry of Information in particular, account for about 50 percent of the subscriptions. This is called "official subscription"; its purpose is to help out the Saudi press establishments financially. Thus, only half the newspapers and magazines that are published are sold to the public. 51

The low circulations cannot be attributed to any technical inferiority in the Saudi press, because the press establishments possess sophisticated, state-of-the-art printing technology. There is in fact plenty of money available to all the Saudi mass media; it is their content that must be improved. During my interviews with the Saudi editors-in-chief, they said that their publications' limited circulation was due to several things: lack of transportation, harsh terrain, mistrust on the part of the public, illiteracy, and other problems of a social, political, or religious nature. 52

It is true that these problems exist, but they are not insurmountable. I am convinced that low circulation results because the content of the Saudi press does not attract and appeal to readers; these publications' style, format, and approach to the news and the issues are unimaginative, hackneyed—in short, the Saudi press lacks the professional
TABLE 6
THE CIRCULATION FIGURES OF THE MAJOR SAUDI DAILY NEWSPAPERS AND WEEKLY MAGAZINES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Place of Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily Newspapers:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Jazirah</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>Riyadh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Riyadh</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>Riyadh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Yawm</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>Dammam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Kaz</td>
<td>62,000</td>
<td>Jiddah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Medina</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>Jiddah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Nadwah</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>Mekkah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Bilad</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>Jiddah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Magazines:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Yamamah</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>Riyadh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aqraa</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>Jiddah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Obtained from the Saudi National Press establishments.

touch. As will be explained later, the press is largely dependent on the international news agencies, and it operates merely to report national and international news. No attempt is made to investigate issues and events deeply; in reality it is more accurate to say that the press tries not to involve itself. Perhaps these shortcomings explain
the flood of foreign publications that now inundates Saudi Arabia.

Foreign Publications in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has only seven major daily newspapers and two major weekly magazines. However, the country receives 181 newspapers and magazines in Arabic from other countries, mainly Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt. A statistical report provided by the Director-General of the Directorate of Publications reveals an even more startling figure: another 1035 newspapers and magazines in non-Arabic languages also enter the country (see Table 7, next page). The Arabic and non-Arabic publications that blanket Saudi Arabia cover a variety of subject matter, from politics, economics, and society to medicine, literature, children, women's interests, sports, and many others.

In his letter to me, the Director-General of the Directorate for Publications said that precise circulation figures for these foreign publications are unknown, but that the figures for most of them vary at around 7,000. It is clear what has happened: the Saudis who form the readership for foreign publications—especially for the Arabic newspapers and magazines published in France—are finding them of richer and more credible substance than Saudi publications. In addition to their content, the style and format of the foreign newspapers and magazines are more attractive. An editor-in-chief of one of the Saudi dailies
### TABLE 7
FOREIGN NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES IN SAUDI ARABIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab countries*</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France and England**</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab countries</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab countries</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>Urdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Urdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillipines</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Korean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*The publications from Arab countries come mostly from Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt.

**Because of social and political conditions in the Arab world, some Arab journalists publish newspapers and magazines in Arabic in London and Paris.
told me there is a real credibility gap, particularly with respect to the news, in Saudi media. He suggested this may be the reason people favor BBC Radio and the foreign press.54

The Saudi Press: Content and Functions

In order fully to examine the content of the major Saudi newspapers and magazines, I obtained issues of each popular, non-specialized Saudi newspaper and magazine for the first four months of 1402 A.H. These issues cover the period from 1 Moharram to 30 Rabie' Thani 1402, or October 28, 1981 to February 24, 1982. The main reason for selecting this particular period of time was that there are no special days within it that affect the content of the Saudi papers.

In Saudi Arabia there are three occasions during the year to which the Saudi mass media must adapt. The budget for the Saudi fiscal year is published in Rajab (April/May); on this occasion the Saudi media must shift their emphasis to fiscal matters, giving space and airtime to presentation, explanation, and praise of the budget. The second special occasion is Ramadan (June/July), the holy month in which Moslems must fast until sunset; during Ramadan the media emphasize religious matters. The third occasion is "Thu Alhijah" (September/October), a time for Moslem pilgrims from all over the world to visit Mekkah, the holy city. During this period there is greater concentration on religion by the Saudi papers--indeed, by the entire
population—than at any other time during the year. The period from October to February, then, seems most auspicious for an examination of the press. This discussion covers nine major publications: seven daily newspapers and two weekly magazines.

Most daily newspapers do not publish on Friday, the second day of the Saudi weekend, and an Islamic holy day. Al-Riyadh, Al-Bilad, Al-Yawm, and Al-Nadwah do not appear on Friday. This is quite different from European and American customs; in Europe and the United States, newspapers give special attention to weekends by increasing the number of features and pages in order to please their readers, who have more time to read on weekends. One reason Saudi papers don't publish on weekends is that, as mentioned earlier, fifty percent of their circulation consists of "official subscription" (that is, government subscription), and the government agencies are closed on weekends. A second reason is that reading is not one of the more popular pastimes among Saudis, particularly on weekends, which they prefer to spend with friends and relatives, engaging in every activity except reading. Thirdly, the newspaper staff themselves want weekends off. Lately, however, some of the Saudi newspapers have departed from this tradition; thus Al-Jazirah and Al-Medina, for example, appear on all seven days of the week.
However, because most of the papers do not publish on Friday, I chose to use the six-day, Saturday through Thursday publishing schedule for this examination of the press. I collected 96 issues of each of the seven daily newspapers for the sixteen weeks from October 28, 1981 to February 24, 1982, for a total of 672 issues. In order to examine the content in more detail, this large number needed to be reduced; a representative sample seemed appropriate. The procedure for selecting the sample was as follows: I first chose every other week, from the first through the fifteenth, or eight weeks in all. Then I picked two newspaper issues from each week, Saturday's issue because it begins the week, and Thursday's issue because it ends the week. As a rule, Saturday issues report the important issues and events which took place during the weekend; Thursday papers, published on the last working day, give special attention to local features. Sixteen issues, then, were selected from each newspaper, for a total of 112. As for the two major Saudi weekly magazines published during the period, all of them (32) were examined.

Before beginning a discussion of such elements of the major newspapers as function, dependence on foreign news agencies, writing style, and emphases of their content, a description of the papers will offer a general idea of their imitative character and lack of creativeness.
When the Saudi press began, the Egyptian press was used as a model for matters of style and function. This came about because the Egyptian press enjoyed great popularity in the region during the fifties and sixties. The Saudi press adopted the literary writing style of the Egyptians; in fact, literary features have dominated the content of the Saudi press. Perhaps this is because literature is a safer area than politically, socially, and economically sensitive topics. But although the literary style has not been completely abandoned, in recent years its use has diminished somewhat; from my point of view as an inside observer, it appears there is a trend in Saudi papers to move closer to an up-to-date concept of what a daily newspaper ought to be—in other words, to practice genuine journalism. The definition of "journalist," though, as yet remains vague in Saudi Arabia. William Rugh has observed that:

Much of the content of the Arab media is created not by professional journalists in the modern sense, but by educated Arabs who have careers outside the mass media.55

Journalists who specialize in a particular subject have so far not appeared in the Saudi press; the Saudi reporter, typically, is perforce a generalist.

Based on information obtained during several visits to the Saudi press establishments during the course of my research, and on my experience as an editor and as an observer of my country, it is fair to say that the Saudi press is technically advanced. As stated earlier, the
establishments can afford to import the latest in printing equipment; this has enabled them to expand their six or eight-page newspapers to twenty-eight pages each day. This new technology has radically affected the format of newspapers, and in terms of content, the effect of technology has been to shift emphasis from local literature and features to international news, which is gathered by the international agencies.

A look at the newspapers under examination here reveals that they run from 16 to 28 pages daily, with a page size of 23 by 17 inches. Al-Jazirah and Al-Riyadh have 28 pages, O'Kaz 18, Al-Medina 24, Al-Yawm 20, Al-Nadwah and Al-Bilad 16 pages. The subject matter of all the papers is very similar. The topics covered are the following:

- politics
- economics
- society
- sports
- literature and culture
- fine arts
- women's matters
- medicine
- religion

And of course advertising occupies much of the newspapers' printed space.
These topics are the fundamental subject matter of Saudi newspapers. The emphasis a particular topic receives varies from one paper to another. For example, Al-Riyadh devotes more attention than any of the other newspapers to women's news. Interestingly, a woman is one of the managing editors of Al-Riyadh. It is the only Saudi newspaper which has separate division for women; the employees in this division are women whose primary concern is with women's interests. They write and edit a weekly four-page supplement called "Al Bait Walmojtama," or "The Home and Society." An example of a different kind of emphasis is Al-Medina, which stresses Islamic news. The emphasis on religion is perhaps natural in a newspaper whose name means "the prophet city".

Sports is a major topic for all Saudi newspapers; they each devote one to two pages daily to sports, with an additional two to four-page weekly sports supplement. The emphasis on sports is not required by sports events that occur in Saudi Arabia, for these are few; it is probably true, instead, that the absence of public recreation whets the people's appetite for sports elsewhere, and they follow reports of it avidly. The young people of Saudi Arabia are particularly enthusiastic about sports, especially soccer. Most of the editors-in-chief whom I talked with said that the sports pages are the most readable sections of their newspapers. Moreover, the Saudi press has in general given special emphasis to sports since it is a topic which does
not require involvement in sensitive matters; like literature, sports is a "safe" topic. However, as one of the editors-in-chief told me, "our press circulation has become dependent on the amount of space we give to sports." 56

My review of 112 issues of Saudi newspapers reveals further that the front page prints the most important political news, with a mixture of national and international news, editorials, and advertisements. Not all of the papers position their editorials on the front page; the editorials in *Al-Medina* and *Al-Jazirah* appear on their second and third pages, respectively. As a rule the lead story on the front page concerns Saudi government leaders. The relative importance of events, then, is not the basis for ranking news stories; the position of the person is what determines a story's ranking.

Furthermore, the "who, what, where, when and why" system of reporting, familiar to Western journalists, is not used by Saudi newspapers to treat local news; this approach is in fact secondary in Saudi journalism. "Who" is what is important, and "who" is the basis for ranking stories. The result is that Saudi front pages tend often to seem out of touch with reality. For instance, should a major earthquake occur in Saudi Arabia, or war break out somewhere in the world, and should at the same time a leader of Saudi government call an official meeting in his office, then the
day's lead story will be the meeting. William Rugh states that:

If the King makes a public statement or takes a public action, such as making a trip or receiving important visitors, that news will be the top story on all front pages. 57

Perhaps this is responsible journalism of a kind; the question, however, is, to whom is it responsible? The only reasonable conclusion is that journalism of this sort is meant, first, to serve the interests of the government, and second, to protect the interests of the press establishments.

My review of the 112 newspaper issues shows also that the importance attributed to the subject being reported can be measured by the space allocated to it. Not unexpectedly, local and international news is given the most space, and it is considered the most important. As I stated earlier, the front page is usually a melange of matters the Saudi press regards important: local and international news, and advertisements. It should be noted here that although advertising is a partial source of revenue for the newspapers, and although the ads themselves appear throughout the papers as well as on four to eight pages devoted strictly to advertising, this study does not include advertising. The reason for the omission is that, except in the most tangential sense, advertising is not considered one of the media's functions in development.
The amount of space given to national and international news varies from newspaper to newspaper. *Al-Jazirah*, for instance, devotes four full pages to international news; two of these pages report political and economic news, and the other two deal in lighter news stories from around the world. We can observe a similar emphasis in *Al-Riyadh*; this paper also gives four pages to international news, and two of them are filled with news reports and articles taken (and translated) from newspapers and magazines in Europe and the United States. *Al-Bilad* and *Al-Nadwah*, both sixteen-page papers, give six pages each to international news. Surprisingly, although these two papers publish fewer pages than the other Saudi papers, they give more attention to international news. Their emphasis on international news may explain why their circulation is the lowest (see Table 5) among Saudi newspapers. Here we see confirmation of what the mass communications theorist mentioned in Chapter 6 has said: the audience for media is most interested in the medium which gives attention to them by featuring news and topics related to their needs and their environment. Examination of *Al-Bilad* and *Al-Nadwah* reveals that sixty percent of the news they publish is international; clearly, these papers would profit by the application of some basic communications theory.

The other Saudi dailies, *Al-Medina* with a circulation of 60,000, *O'Kaz* with 62,000, and *Al-Yawm* with 75,000 (see
Table 6), give two pages (in addition to their front pages) each day to international news.

All Saudi newspapers except Al-Nadwah, which as a rule does not mention its news sources, print the origin, date, and source at the beginning of their news stories. My examination of the Saudi papers shows that the main sources for international news are the big four international news agencies, Reuters, Agence France Presse, United Press International, and the Associated Press. Because of political and ideological differences between Saudi Arabia and the Soviet Union, the Saudi press is prohibited from subscribing to Tass. The press also subscribes to Arab news agencies, the most important of which is KUNA, the Kuwait News Agency. The Monitoring Division of the press, which adapts news reports from radio, is another source. However, radio's part in the printed news amounts to little more than five percent for most papers; Al-Nadwah, which depends on radio for up to ten percent of its news, is the exception.

Because the Saudi papers subscribe to the international and Arab news agencies, they receive a daily surfeit of news from around the world. But the newspaper issues under study here show that Agence France Presse is in first place as an international news source; perhaps this is because it provides its news services in Arabic, which enables the Saudi papers to read and print without taking time to translate. Reuters is second, possibly because it has given
much attention to coverage of Arab and Islamic issues. Moreover, Reuters was the first of the major news agencies to operate freely within the Arab countries; Reuters gained its foothold during the British occupation. The Associated Press too plays an important role in the Saudi press, particularly in terms of photography. Almost eighty percent of the international news photographs published by Saudi newspapers comes from the Associated Press. It frequently happens that while a news story may be attributed to Agence France Presse, the photograph that accompanies the story is attributed to the Associated Press.

The sample issues under study here show that Arab news agencies contribute no more than about eight percent of the international news. KUNA, however, occupies first place among the Arab agencies in providing foreign news to Saudi papers, especially news about the Arab Gulf. The official Saudi news agency seems to be active only with respect to official local news; based on my study of the sample issues, the Saudi news agency does not play a significant role in international news gathering.

Although some of the Saudi newspapers, among them Al-Riyadh, O'Kaz, Al-Jazirah, and Al-Medina, have recently begun in a limited way to employ correspondents in Arab and other world capitals, there is no evidence in the issues I examined that these correspondents provide major international news stories. A possible reason for the
correspondents' meager showing is that they lack the up-to-date technical facilities enjoyed by the international news agencies. In addition, as the Saudi editors-in-chief told me, most of the correspondents are part-time, non-Saudi employees.58 The purpose of these few correspondents seems to be to provide their newspapers occasional interviews with officials and to translate reports from the Western press.

The 112 issues I studied make it only too clear how heavily the Saudi press depends on the international news agencies for foreign news. The sample shows that even news about the Middle East, the region of which Saudi Arabia is part, comes entirely by way of the international agencies.

According to the amount of space given to international news, my estimate is that foreign news forms approximately 35 percent of the content of Saudi newspapers, excluding advertisements. Moreover, about 85 percent of the foreign news comes, as mentioned above, by way of the four international agencies and the other Arab agencies. The directors-general and editors-in-chief whom I interviewed stated that their media are 80 percent dependent on the international news agencies.

It was a surprise to find that international news—especially political news—is emphasized more heavily than local news. The emphasis is probably the result of two things. First, the Saudi press has few competent
journalists who can produce a consistent supply of local news; in the absence of local news it is natural that Saudi papers print more of the easy-to-get foreign news. Second, Saudi Arabia is part of the Middle East, a particularly turbulent region with respect to religion and economics; political problems and wars are the order of the day here. Because the Saudi press is government-controlled, it is reluctant to involve itself in these sensitive areas. Of these two factors (scarcity of journalists and reluctance to get involved), probably the latter is the more important; this is true not only for the Saudi media, but for all media in the Arab world.

Based on the newspaper issues under study here, Saudi newspapers devote two full pages, in addition to what appears on the front page, to local news, most of it reports about government activities and projects. Minor local news is spread throughout the paper, with a concentration on the last page. And different newspapers give varying amounts of space to local news. Al-Medina, for example, gives more attention to local news than the other Saudi papers; Al-Jazirah is second in local coverage. Generally speaking, local news accounts for approximately 30 percent of Saudi newspapers' content. The two main sources for local news are the Saudi Official News Agency and the papers' own reporters.
The primary purpose of local news in the Saudi press, however, is to give publicity to government activities and achievements. What this shows is that a mixed understanding of what news is exists among Saudi newspapers. Is it to be news, or is it to be commentary? It is common to see news reports—even headlines—bestowing praise; to those of us who are accustomed to good modern journalism, which distinguishes sharply between straight reporting and other, more opinion-centered elements of a newspaper, the editorializing that marks Saudi news reporting seems inappropriate. William Rugh has observed that:

There [is] scarcely any distinction between news and editorial matters....Arab editors do not follow the ideal of contemporary American journalism, which is strictly separate news and commentary.60

Rugh's observation certainly holds true with the Saudi papers; the reader typically is hard put to know how much of a news report is fact, how much is opinion. This confusion cannot work in the interests of clear communication.

The Saudi newspapers are all very similar to one another, particularly in terms of local and international news. The similarity, of course, comes about because all the papers share the same main news sources. As a result of the press's dependence on the foreign news agencies for international news and on, in large part, the Saudi news agency for local news, the same stories appear in each paper. And so little attention is given to re-writing that the stories may even appear in the same words. It seems
that each newspaper selects the stories it wants from the wire reports, then simply prints them verbatim. It is hoped that at some point in the process of putting out a newspaper, someone is responsible for reading what is so hastily printed. But if a reader were to be confronted with seven major dailies, all of which print much the same stories in much the same words, he might justifiably wonder just who's in charge at the newspaper offices. The sad fact is that, as Rugh says,

In Saudi Arabia the daily newspapers differ in content from each other only in the amount of space they give to secondary stories and non-political items.61

My examination of the newspaper issues reveals, as mentioned earlier, that sports is the topic third in importance and emphasis. Saudi papers give almost a full page to sports every day, with an additional two to four-page weekly sports supplement. The content of the sports pages is not merely local; a good deal of it, attributed to the foreign news agencies, comprises sports reports from around the world. Sports make up about 15 percent of Saudi papers.

No more than about 10 percent of the printspace is given to culture, literature, and the fine arts. Traditionally, Saudi newspapers devote one page each week to women's matters, another weekly page to economics, one to medicine, and one to the arts. These are feature pages; they offer advice to the readers, and articles that are usually
authored by unspecialized writers from both inside and outside the country. About 10 percent of the Saudi papers' content is occupied by the feature pages.

Al-Yamamah and Agra, the two major Saudi magazines under review here, are politically oriented. Approximately 75 percent of the content of these magazines is political reports, most of them from the international news agencies. Abdullah Mana'a, Editor-in-Chief of Agra, told me that 90 percent of the content of the Saudi press, news in particular, is taken from the international agencies.22 Here it should be mentioned that Al-Yamamah is published by the Al-Yamamah press establishment, which also publishes the daily newspaper Al-Riyadh, and that Agra is published by the Al-Bilad establishment, which publishes the daily Al-Bilad. The structure, management, and conditions are similar for both newspapers and magazines, so that most facts that apply to the daily papers also apply to the magazines.

The only difference, in fact, between the magazines and the papers is in the amount of space they give to local and international news. The newspapers naturally give most emphasis and space to news in general; the Saudi magazines, on the other hand, are far less interested in news and give it almost no attention. Only two of Al-Yamamah's ninety-eight pages are devoted to local news, and only two of Agra's eighty-six pages. The local news that is reported
in these pages is mostly government news which has been copied from the daily papers. It is worth noting here that each week Al-Yamamah devotes five to six pages to a selected topic related to important local issues such as economics, culture, education, and religion. Under the title of "Issue of the Week," Al-Yamamah selects one subject to be discussed by a variety of people: officials who have decision-making power regarding the subject, people who have some unique relationship to the subject, and educated Saudis whose opinions are respected. Some of the topics covered by "Issue of the Week" include the video invasion of Saudi culture, the growing sense of nationhood, Saudi women's issues, environmental problems, the school curriculums. Al-Yamamah should be given great credit, in my opinion, for these six pages; they are in fact a pioneering effort to involve the press in nation-building and public awareness.

As mentioned earlier, my review of the 32 issues of Al-Yamamah and Agraα shows that the two magazines' content is a combination of a variety of categories: politics, economics, society, religion, fine arts, and literature. Politics dominate the magazines' printspace. Judging by the space devoted to political reports and articles, politics dominates the content of both magazines. Like the newspapers, the Saudi magazines are very conscious of the possible perils involved in discussing local politics; they give most space to political problems in the Middle East,
and the next greatest amount of space goes to world politics. Among the magazines' other features, sports and literary articles dominate.

It is generally accurate to say that the following are the major reporting functions of the Saudi press: international politics (especially in the Middle East); official news, particularly reports of government activities and projects; articles dealing with social issues; literary articles; and entertainment (including sports). With the exception of in-depth coverage of local politics, this brief catalogue of what is to be found in Saudi newspapers sounds similar to the content of newspapers everywhere. But as we have seen, the depth of reporting in Saudi newspapers is in reality quite limited.

Saudi press regulations have further limited the press's ability to compete in the business of gathering up-to-the-minute news, and to investigate political, social, and economic issues and events with a meaningful degree of depth. Article 7 of the 1982 regulation for printed materials and publications prohibits the following:

f - The publication of regulations, agreements, treaties, or official governmental statements, before their official announcement, as long as it was done without the approval of proper authorities.

g - All that infringes on the honor of presidents of countries or heads of diplomatic missions who are accredited by the kingdom or harms relations with such countries.

h - All that is attributed of false news to officials of the state; institutions, and local organizations,
public and private, or to individuals for the sole purpose of harming them or undermining their authority or infringing upon their honor.\textsuperscript{63} (See Appendix A.)

In other words, Article 7 abolishes one of the most important functions of the press: constructive criticism. Freedom to criticize—-that is, to analyze and interpret issues and to offer alternative points of view—is vital if the media are to serve development and the public interest. Actually, the restrictions imposed by Article 7's list of prohibitions probably explain why Saudi journalists do little investigative reporting and why their news stories tend to feature the activities only of the elite. Sheik So-and-So's trip to Riyadh and Deputy-Minister Someone's visit to Jiddah both have their place in the news; a casual reader of the Saudi papers, however, receives the impression that a very few people, whose names appear again and again, are the only ones who count. Unless a citizen finds himself, or people like him, featured in his country's media, he may feel alienated; he is unlikely to believe that his role in nation-building is even noticed, much less important.\textsuperscript{64}

The emphasis given by the Saudi press to international political and economic news gathered by the international agencies is the result of three factors: the official concept that prevails with respect to media function; the lack of clearly stated, specific guidelines for the media; and the scarcity of specialized, competent staff. Khaled
Al-Malik, Al-Jazirah's Editor-in-Chief, told me that there are no written strategies or policies to direct newspapers, but that they are guided instead by the ambitions and goals of Saudi Arabia--by what is officially perceived as good for the country. Operating within this framework keeps the Saudi press in line with official policies. In Saudi Arabia, as in other Arab countries, the press must operate under a concept which holds that media function primarily as vehicles for entertainment and politics. Mr. Al-Malik said that Al-Jazirah's supreme objectives are:

- to serve the country and its people, to reflect to people everywhere a bright and fine picture of the upgrading which has taken place in our country, and to clarify the position of our government regarding Arab and Moslem issues.

William Rugh has classified the Saudi press as a loyalist press which "does not question the major policies of the regime or attack the personalities at the top of the national leadership." But the Western concept of press freedom is not what the press in a new, developing nation needs; rather, it should be, as John Lent has written,

- deliberately guided, for its main functions include not only giving news but also taking part in the national effort and contributing towards the building of a nation.

Obviously, as Al-Riyadh's editor-in-chief said, the problem of the mass media in developing countries is that the media have been perceived as political agents more than as agents for development.
Five factors determine the function of the Saudi press: press regulations, prevailing social and political conditions, the editors-in-chief's understanding of media's role, the lack of competent professional journalists, and religion; an analysis of these factors follows in the next chapter. As mentioned earlier, the Saudi press has had no specific guidelines to determine its objectives—nothing behind "serving the public interest," which ambiguous phrase is, of course, subject to multiple interpretations that depend on one's personal understanding of what the public interest may be. The Saudi press regulations, moreover, are only a list of prohibitions, rather than guidance toward objectives that would serve the nation's development. Thus, as the editors-in-chief of O'Kaz and Al-Medina told me, what determines the direction of Saudi papers is their editors-in-chief's personal grasp of Saudi political and social traditions.70 No doubt this is why what Rugh calls the "loyalist press" tends to be passive, avoids many critical issues, is editorially slow to react to events, and tends to be muted in its commentaries.71

It is probably because of the uncertain conditions under which the Saudi press operates that it is relatively uninterested in active social engineering. Certainly the press is less than intrigued with media's potential for social change.
As matters now stand, the Saudi press tends to encourage the status quo; for any number of reasons, the press is intellectually lazy. But the Saudi press can be a bold force for change. Chapter 9 will examine how Saudi mass media directors perceive the functions and requirements of media in Saudi Arabia, and the obstacles to media's effective use.
NOTES

1Interview with Dr. Ghazi Al-Gosaibi, Minister for Industry and Electricity, Taif, August 12, 1981.

2Schramm, p. 69.


5Interview with Dr. Mohammed Abdu Yamani, Minister for Information, Riyadh, Summer 1981.

6Private interview, Jiddah, Summer 1981.


8Private interview, Riyadh, Summer 1982.


10Data supplied by the Deputy Minister for Information Affairs Office, Riyadh, Summer 1982.


12A. Shobaili, pp. 35-36.


14Data provided by the Assistant Deputy Minister for Administration in the Ministry of Information, Riyadh, Summer 1981.


17 Ibid.


19 Private interview, Riyadh, Summer 1982.

20 Radio programs for a four-month cycle, program materials, and letters were provided by Dr. Saleh bin Nasser, Assistant Deputy Minister for Radio and Television, Riyadh, Summer 1982.

21 Ibid.

22 Private interview, Riyadh, Summer 1982.

23 Private interview, Taif, Summer 1981.

24 Private interview with the Assistant Deputy Minister for Radio and Television, Riyadh, Summer 1982.

25 Saudi Arabian Television: A Synopsis (Provided by the Assistant Deputy Minister for Radio and Television, Riyadh, Summer 1982).


28 Arthur S. Banks and William Overstreet, p. 419.

29 A statistical report was provided me by the Foreign Trade Department, Ministry of Commerce, Riyadh, Summer 1982.

30 Figures provided by the Assistant Deputy Minister for Administration, Ministry of Information, Riyadh, Summer 1981.


32 The framework of the program cycle was provided by the Assistant Deputy Minister for Radio and Television, Riyadh, Summer 1982.

33 Wells, p. 5.

35Boyd, p. 233.

36Al-Jazirah, October 11, 1982, 3674, p. 27.


38Boyd, p. 235.


40Ibid.

41Al-Yamamah, Aug. 8, 1981, pp. 3-5.

42Ministry of Information, Regulation of Press Regulations, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

43Ibid.

44The Regulation of Printed Materials and Publications 1982, provided by Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Rashid, Assistant Deputy Minister for the Press and Publications, translated by me, Riyadh, Summer 1982.

45Ibid.

46Ibid.


48Ibid.

49Ibid.


52Interviews with editors-in-chief of the major Saudi newspapers and magazines, Riyadh, Jiddah, Summer, 1981.

Turki Al-Sodairi, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Riyadh, private interview, Riyadh, Summer 1981.


Abdullah Al-Mana'a, Editor-in-Chief of Aqraa, private interview, December, 1982, Jiddah.

Rugh, p. 76.

Interviews with Saudi Editor-in-Chief, Riyadh, Jiddah, Summer 1981.

Al-Medina's issues showed that a considerable amount of international news came from its own correspondents, more than other Saudi newspapers.

Rugh, p. 17.

Ibid., p. 75.


Khaled Al-Malik, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Jazirah, private interview, Riyadh, Summer 1981.

Ibid.

Rugh, p. 74.

70 Turki Al-Sodairi, private interview, Summer 1981, Riyadh.

71 Hashim Abdu and Mohammed Ahmad Mahmmod, Editors-in-Chief of O'Kaz and Al-Medina, respectively, private interview, Jiddah, Summer 1981.

72 Rugh, p. 75.
CHAPTER 8

SUPREME COUNCIL OF MASS COMMUNICATION: THE FACT, THE HOPES

Introduction

As preceding chapters have indicated, the ambitious development plans of Saudi Arabia are aimed at guiding the country out of the Middle Ages into the twentieth century. Notable success has come quickly; Saudi Arabia has undergone radical changes within the past thirty years in nearly every area of life. But development of the country has been based heavily on foreign manpower and on importation of goods. Furthermore, the rapid development has not been accompanied by deliberate, extensive campaigns to heighten the Saudi people's cognitive development and social awareness in ways that would ensure their genuine, willing participation in the development process.

If a nation's people are the essential elements in its development, then surely its people must be its first concern. In Saudi Arabia, however, planners have failed to strike a balance between material and human development; rather, they have concentrated most of their efforts on material development and seem for the most part merely to hope that human development will catch up.

I agree with Dr. Ghazi Al-Gosaibi, who says that the key to development is people. Development, he observes, is like...
love and happiness in that it is not a commodity to be purchased with money; similarly, socially conscious, educated, patriotic human beings cannot be purchased.¹ Without attention to the human element, the development process can be no more than a hodgepodge of ideas with little basis in reality. For successful development, therefore, it is urgent to explore every possible channel which may lead to heightened social awareness among the Saudi people—channels such as educational institutions and the mass media.

Judging from the Saudi media's content, and based on the analysis of the questionnaires (see preceding chapters), the Saudi mass media have not been put to effective use in the nation's development. The media have indeed functioned as a window on the world, and they have raised the people's level of expectation. Unfortunately, the media have done little to raise the level of achievement.

A new development, which occurred during the course of writing this dissertation, was the establishment in 1981 of the Saudi Supreme Council of Mass Communications. The Council has spent its first year preparing regulatory rules and its new media policy. As yet it is far too early to gauge the effect of the Council on the Saudi mass media; it has been successful, however, in designing and publishing the new policy. Although the policy was issued after this study was completed, I was able to examine a copy of it
that was sent me by Mr. Al-Abdan, the Council's Secretary-General. The establishment of the Council gives evidence that the Saudi government seems to understand the importance of media and that it realizes problems exist. This chapter will discuss briefly the establishment of the Council, its members, its objectives, and the media policy it has devised.

**Establishment of the Council**

Saudi Arabia's Supreme Council of Mass Communications was formed by royal decree (No. 2022/8) July 13, 1981, to be the highest mass communications government body, connected directly to the Saudi Council of Ministers. It appears this Council was formed because the government has begun to grasp the importance of reforming the media so that their full potential as tools for development could be realized.

This new movement with regard to the Saudi media seems to have the force of a government edict; it may re-direct the media to become attractive to the people and effective in development. Although the Supreme Council was formed only recently, it was able to design a new policy for the media. This policy is really a first for the Saudi media; it will be discussed later.

Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz, Minister of the Interior, is president of the Council; the Minister of Information is vice-president. The Council's eight other members were selected from various other ministries and from among well-
known writers of literature. These members include the
Foreign Ministry's Deputy Minister of Political Affairs; the
Ministry of Education's Deputy Minister of Information
Affairs; the Deputy Minister of Higher Education; the
president of Mohammad bin Sa'ud University; and two members
who are writers.*

The most pressing question regarding these men is: what
were the criteria for selecting them? I wrote Prince Nayef
bin Abdul Aziz for an answer to this question. He responded
that the criteria were as follows:

1. Mental capability and informational sensitivity.
2. The relatedness of each member's field to the matter
   of information, whether inside or outside the
   Kingdom.
3. The experience and extent of each member's
   cooperation in the area of information. ²

Actually, these criteria for choosing members of the
Council are excellent in theory. In order to expand the
Council in terms both of quantity and quality, though, I
believe other members should be added, at the same time
taking into consideration their professions and their
knowledge of the media field. In addition, new divisions of
the Council should be created which will sponsor audience
research and analyze audience feedback. These measures will

*Data provided by Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Abdan, Secretary-
General, Supreme Council of Communication, Riyadh, Fall
1982.
be of immense political, social, and educational benefit to Saudi Arabia, and they will be proposed at greater length in the next chapter.

Goals of the Supreme Council of Communication

In response to a question about the council's major goals, the Council's president, Prince Nayef, wrote me the following:

The Supreme Council of Communication was formed for the accomplishment of the following goals:

1. To establish an information policy which achieves the general goals of the Kingdom and emanates from the Islamic law.

2. To pursue the execution of this information policy upon its adoption by the Cabinet, and make the necessary recommendations and changes that become evident upon the application of the policy.

3. To supervise all the informational programs (mass media contents) which are designed for auditory, visual, or reading comprehensions within the Kingdom and without.

4. To supervise all mass communications inside and outside the Kingdom, governmental or private, and to guide the media so as to achieve the desired goals.3

What these goals signify, however, is that the Council's main task is to supervise and guide the mass media without
involving itself in the executive operations; these are left to the Ministry of Information. As Prince Nayef mentioned, the Council will play a significant role in directing the Saudi media and improving their content in order to achieve the goals of Saudi media policy and the aspirations of the nation.4

**Information Policy in Saudi Arabia**

Because there was no written policy to guide the Saudi mass media, since their establishment the media have been operating in an atmosphere of uncertainty. It is to be hoped that the policy recently published by the Supreme Council will clear away the uncertainty so that our media will be able to function according to specific guidelines.

The Council's policy, published October 1982, comprises thirty comprehensive articles. A look at this document gives the impression that its application will indeed improve the output of Saudi mass media (see Appendix B), particularly since the policy encourages and requires Saudi media to concentrate on local production. For this is really what the media need, notwithstanding the opinions of the media directors (see preceding chapter) who blame the lack of professionals, the religious and social conditions for their media's weakness. It is perfectly possible for our media to be attractive and effective within the framework of current conditions. Before that happens,
though, the structure and concept of the Saudi media should be corrected.

The information policy devised and issued by the Supreme Council is based on religious, political, social, cultural, and educational elements. These five elements are seen as the media's main functions if the potential of media is to be realized through the nation's development. The new information policy is defined as follows:

The information policy refers to the principles of information in Saudi Arabia. This policy emanates from Islam, in doctrine and law, which is the national religion. It aims at establishing belief in God, raising the intellectual, cultural, and perceptual level of the citizen, and dealing with social problems. It seeks to stress the concept of obedience to God, His prophet, and the legal guardian. It urges people to respect the law and to carry it out contently. It includes the broad outlines which govern Saudi information, thus accomplishing the goals by means of education, guidance, news and entertainment. This policy is considered a part of the country's general policy.5 (See Appendix B).

The policy emphasizes that Saudi mass media must protect and serve the Islamic religion and the Saudi culture. Articles II and III state that the Saudi mass media will oppose all destructive currents, atheistic inclinations, materialistic philosophies, and all attempts to distract Moslems from their beliefs. The media will further expose falsehoods and danger to individuals and to society, and will stand up to any challenge which is not in accord with the general policy of the country. And Article III further enjoins all mass media to seek to serve Saudi society by consolidating its precious Islamic values, firmly fixing its
honored Arabic traditions, keeping its gracious inherited customs, and standing in opposition to anything that spoils its purity.6*

It is clear that these goals will encourage local production, thereby lessening Saudi media's present dependence on foreign media production. This is especially true of the policy stated in Article VI: all the mass media will seek to strengthen the bond among the citizens by informing them of the numerous parts of their country and the significant aspects pertaining to them, thus demonstrating the complementary nature of these regions.7 But the goals of Article VI cannot be achieved if the Saudi media continue to rely on foreign production.

Another, highly praiseworthy aspect of the new policy is the special attention it gives to women and children. It mandates that the Saudi media recognize that the family is the essential unit of society and give it the attention it deserves. Moreover, the media are enjoined to offer guidance, educational, and recreational programs for children.8 Here it is especially noteworthy that the new emphasis on family and children's programming requires that the programs be based on scientific and educational principles, and that they be directed by highly specialized personnel.9 The Saudi media already offer "educational" and "family" programs, but the terms are, to say the least, 

*Appendix B gives all the Articles.
very loosely applied; what is needed is to upgrade these programs so that they will be worthy of their titles.

It is important too that the Saudi media will be dealing with the role of women in society, and with the problems of adolescence. The Supreme Council's policy wisely insists that the media provide special programs geared to assist the Saudi woman in performing her role in society. And with regard to teenagers, the policy calls for programs to be designed that will offer them guidance in religion and life. Obviously the Council recognizes that the trials of adolescence have been compounded by the nation's headlong rush into the twentieth century; it is to be commended for initiating these steps to ensure that the youth of Saudi Arabia retain their traditions and values.

Generally speaking, this policy works deliberately to solve most of the major problems that have hampered Saudi mass media for so long—problems which have militated against effective use of the media in creating social awareness and building the nation. What makes the policy so valuable is that it has as its foundation the religious, political, and social conditions of Saudi Arabia. These are the things the media must deal with intelligently if they are to be creatively productive.

But as we have seen, in most developing countries the media equate "successful" with "Western," and therefore are much more imitative than creative. Somehow it must be
brought home to the directors of Saudi media that the Saudi society is itself unique, that there is much to explore in it, much to learn from it. Once the directors come to appreciate how much their own nation has to offer, the way will be open for creativity to take the place of imitation.

Happily, the Council's new policy also takes into consideration that in order to be effective, programs must be produced in ways that appeal to their audience. There is no way to ensure production of attractive, appealing media content without competent, specialized staff. It is essential that the Saudi media move away from their present stage of makeshift efforts and reliance on imported programs toward a new stage that offers appealing and effective local programming. There is no way to achieve this end without professional staff. The Council's policy therefore "affirms the importance of expert human resources capable of accomplishing the goals of Saudi mass communication, and of entrusting those resources with training and necessary adjustment."

I have offered a brief view of the most important features of the Saudi mass media policy. As of this chapter's writing, the policy was only four months old, so it is as yet impossible to examine its effects on Saudi media function or operation. However, the policy should be viewed as basic guidance for Saudi media. But it remains to be seen whether the media will be able to carry out its
objectives. It is my feeling that the objectives can be achieved.

As explained in previous chapters, the major problems that face Saudi media are these: misunderstanding of the role and functions of mass media; immature imitation of Western media style and format; lack of professional staff; dependence on foreign production; and social and religious conditions. But these problems can be overcome.

To start with, the concept must be corrected; media professionals will do this. Second, the time is ripe for recruiting these professionals. There are now three mass communications departments in Saudi universities, and a number of Saudi students are studying media abroad; the question here is whether professionals will be encouraged to direct the media even though the present directors are not professionals. Third, reduction in importation of foreign media software will undoubtedly stimulate growth of Saudi print and of local broadcasting facilities. Fourth, although the media directors point to current social and religious conditions as major obstacles, these conditions do not present insoluble problems, particularly since the media itself are a product of the same society in which these conditions prevail. The next chapter will offer a practical strategy to increase the effectiveness of Saudi media.

Article XXVIII of the information policy states that the essential element for improvement of the mass media is
professional staff. It is suggested here that expanding the Council's membership to include media professionals will increase the Council's potential to improve the media's content. The present members were chosen, as mentioned above, based on the relatedness of their fields to mass media. There are other important fields, however, which are not represented in the Council—fields such as social affairs, agricultural development, industry, and health. In addition, experts in psychology, mass media and development, the press, educational communication, and international communication also should be part of the membership. The inclusion of a wide variety of experts will make the Council even more productive. And what is perhaps even more important is that members be carefully selected on the basis of their knowledge and ability rather than their official positions.
NOTES

1Dr. Ghazi Al-Gosaibi, Minister for Industry and Electricity, private interview, Taif, summer 1981.

2Letter from Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz, Minister of the Interior and President of the Supreme Council of Communication, translated by me, January 1983.

3Ibid.

4Ibid.

5The Mass Media Policy in Saudi Arabia, provided in a letter from Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Abdan, Secretary-General, Supreme Council of Mass Communication, January 3, 1983.

6The Mass Media Policy in Saudi Arabia, Articles I and II, translated by me.

7Ibid., Article VI.

8Ibid., Articles VIII and IX.

9Ibid., Article IX.

10Ibid., Article X.

11Ibid., Article XI.

12Ibid., Article XIV.

13Ibid., Article XXVIII.
CHAPTER 9

ANALYSIS OF MASS MEDIA DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS:
ROLES, REQUIREMENTS, OBSTACLES

Introduction

This chapter reports and analyzes the findings of what is, to the best of my knowledge, the first empirical research of its kind with respect to mass media in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the basis of this chapter is my interest in securing information as mentioned in Chapter 1, about the following aspects of Saudi media:

1. Saudi media directors' concepts of mass media function.
2. The present function of Saudi mass media.
3. The media directors' opinions about the role of Saudi mass media in national development.
4. The basis of decision-making regarding mass media.
5. Saudi media's dependence on foreign production.
6. Obstacles which have hindered effective use of Saudi media.
7. Basic requirements for Saudi media.

During my research trip to Saudi Arabia in December 1982, a total of twenty Saudi directors of mass media were interviewed within a fifteen-day period. These twenty people include the Deputy Minister of Information; two
Assistant Deputy Ministers of Information; the Director-General of Saudi television; the Director-General for radio; the Directors of the Riyadh and Jiddah radio stations; Directors-General and Editors-in-Chief of Al-Jazirah, Al-Riyadh, O'Kaz, and Al-Bilad; the Editors-in-Chief of Al-Medina, Al-Yawm, and Al-Nadwah; and the Editors-in-Chief of Al-Yamamah and Agraah, the weekly magazines. The interviews, thus, cover the major popular mass media in Saudi Arabia.

No sampling procedure was necessary; the reason for restricting the interviews to these twenty media directors is that they are the people who control and manage media, and who make decisions about the media's output. Perhaps more to the point, I restricted the interviews to these authorities because, in view of the organizational structure and system of the Saudi media, where the head of a media institution is the key person in day-to-day operations, such a procedure seemed the most suitable course to take. Since power is centered in the hands of the media directors, and most of the members of the staff merely carry out the directors' policies, it would have been pointless to include samples of entire staffs in my interviews.

The interviews were conducted in the main Saudi cities where the media are located: Riyadh, Jiddah, and Dammam. A great asset in obtaining the full cooperation of the media directors was my own relationship with them—one that goes back many years to my early work in Saudi media.
Methodology

This is qualitative research in which the interview technique, because of its suitability to this study, was used as a data collecting method. Indeed, I first devised open-ended questions and used them in interviews during July and August 1981. Initially I had believed that open-ended questions were the most appropriate technique, for they allow the researcher to probe responses further. However, after the same twenty Saudi media directors (and, in addition, the Saudi Minister of Information and the Minister of Electricity and Industry) were asked these questions, their answers turned out to be essentially irrelevant to the intention of my research. Most of the answers, moreover, were unclear and vague. Although in fact some of these answers have been utilized in preceding chapters, it was easy to see that the answers to close-ended questions would be more reliable.

Therefore, using the Likert scale, I designed twenty-three statements (although these are declarative statements, they imply close-ended questions), each of which is numbered (see Appendix C). This seemed the suitable form for eliciting clear, relevant answers. One problem that emerged from this procedure was that this kind of question is unfamiliar to Saudis, or at least unpopular with them. Therefore I had to explain to the respondents the manner in which the statements are constructed. The statements were
first written in English, under the supervision of my adviser and graduate committee, and then I translated them into Arabic (see Appendix D) for the benefit of the interviewees, most of whom neither speak nor read English.

Each media director was given two copies of the questionnaire, one in English and the other in Arabic. Only two respondents answered the questions in Arabic. Before the questionnaire was given to the directors, they each received a letter of introduction which detailed for them the purpose of the interview and which solicited their genuine cooperation. Each interview lasted between ten and fifteen minutes, but only one of the directors agreed to answer the questions at the time they were presented to him. The others were reluctant to do so; they preferred to return the questionnaire at a later time. Although a few of the respondents returned the questionnaire to me the day after they received it, some took as long as a week to return it. Immediate action is not popular in Saudi Arabia. In fact, judging from my experience and observations there, the refrain most often heard by citizens seeking action of any kind from Saudi officialdom is "Come back tomorrow." The words indicate a noxious phenomenon which has grown into a problem for government functioning, and which is a subject of widespread frustration and complaint among the Saudi people. Apparently the delaying tactic is seen as a mark of prestige in some echelons of the bureaucracy; this may
account for why some respondents required a week to return a questionnaire that could be filled out in ten minutes. Fortunately, however, I finally did receive all the questionnaires I had distributed, and was able to proceed with the analysis of them.

It is noteworthy that although none of the Saudi media directors who were interviewed has a degree in mass communications, they all realize, as the analysis that follows will show, that the lack of specialized, competent people in Saudi media is a major obstacle to the media's effective use. It is a hopeful sign that the directors recognize the shortcomings that plague their media, for once the cause of a problem is known, then it is possible to offer workable solutions.

Another interesting aspect of these interviews is that the directors agree that the Ministry of Information should be set apart from the other government agencies. They believe the Ministry should be organized into a self-contained government establishment, and that this change will result in an improvement in the quality of Saudi media production. A director-general of one of the Saudi daily newspapers wrote in the "general comments" section of the questionnaire that "Saudi media should not be looked at as one body--and certainly not a government body--but rather as a group of independent entities." Many members of the
general staff of the newspapers and magazines, however, showed little enthusiasm for this matter.

Analyzing Data

The responses by Saudi directors of radio, television, the seven daily newspapers, and the two major weekly magazines were coded and keypunched into a computer program. The data were analyzed with the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program. I analyzed the data according to seven categories: concept, role of media in national development, audience needs, media credibility, media dependency, obstacles that hinder media, and requirements for improvement.

Some of the questions, therefore, are clustered and analyzed according to the subjects they concern, regardless of the question's number. Thus, for example, research questions 1, 2, and 3 are concerned with ascertaining the concept Saudi mass media directors hold regarding media's role in the development process. Questions 4, 5, and 16 are designed to discover whether the Saudi media play a significant role in the country's development. Questions 6, 10, and 19 seek to determine whether Saudi media messages and content are based on field research among audiences, or whether content is really the result of personal decisions made by media directors and staff. Questions 7 and 8 are concerned with the credibility of Saudi media and whether the Saudi audience is satisfied with their media's
production. Question 9 probes whether media directors recognize that knowledge of audience needs is fundamental to effective use of media. Questions 11, 12, 13, 20, and 21 treat Saudi mass media's dependence on foreign media production, the reasons for the dependence, and its effects on Saudi audiences. Question 14 is designed to find out whether the organizational structure of Saudi media presents a problem, and whether the structure should be changed. Question 15 deals with Saudi authorities' concept of media function. Question 18 tries to ascertain the primary function of Saudi mass media. Question 22 is designed to determine what the greatest obstacles are to Saudi media, and Question 23 deals with what the media most need in order to improve.

Results and Discussion

Research questions 1, 2, and 3 are concerned with the concept held by Saudi media directors and managers concerning how media should function in the development process. The responses to these questions show overwhelming (100 percent) agreement that mass media do in general play a significant role in national development. Table 8 presents the number and percentage of responses to these three questions. The table includes the following information about each question: the number (n) and percentage (%) of responses in each of five categories (strongly agree, agree, don't know, disagree, strongly disagree), and the total
number of responses. The third category, "don't know," is not included in Table 5 because none of the respondents checked it.

Analysis of Table 8's data reveals that the categories "disagree," "don't know," and "strongly disagree" were either not checked at all, or checked so infrequently as to be insignificant; therefore these categories have been omitted from the analysis. The categories "strongly agree" and "agree" form the basis of analysis for Table 8.

Responses to Question 1 show that Saudi mass media directors indeed do understand the importance of media in the development process; they all agree that mass media play a significant role in development and change. Regarding the second question, a high percentage (95 percent) of the media directors believe that the development process will be incomplete without the help of mass media. And 100 percent of the respondents agree that mass media can encourage and mobilize people to accept and participate in change and development. These responses indicate that the people who direct the Saudi mass media on the basis of prevailing political, social, and religious conditions believe strongly in the ability of media to be very significant tools for development. We must nevertheless ask whether this natural ability of the Saudi media has been used to advantage in promoting development and encouraging the people's participation in it. Actually, what is indicated by the
**TABLE 8**

SAUDI MASS MEDIA DIRECTORS' CONCEPT OF MEDIA'S ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The mass media, in general, play a significant role in change and national development.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The development process and change will be incomplete without help from mass media.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mass media are able to encourage and mobilize people to accept and participate in change and development.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
responses to these three questions about the role of media in development is one of this study's major assumptions: the Saudi media have not been utilized as fully as they should be in the country's development.

Table 9 reveals that 55 percent of the media directors who responded do not think their media have taken a significant role in Saudi national development, and that approximately 40 percent of the directors do believe that the media participate effectively in development. Analysis of the data in Table 9 shows that 55 percent disagree that Saudi media participate in national development, 35 percent agree, and 10 percent don't know. However, have the media done what they should to speed development? The number of respondents who agree or disagree with the second question is very close; 45 percent agree the media have failed to be effective in speeding development, and 45 percent disagree. Only one person checked "don't know." But at the same time, the answers to Question 16 indicate that 45 percent believe the media had little influence on the Saudi people's participation in development during the past two five-year plans. Thirty-five percent agree with Question 16; 10 percent don't know.

Generally speaking, there are no major differences among the media directors with regard to Saudi media's role in development. The reason for the relatively large "don't know" response to Question 16 may be that the directors feel
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DK</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Saudi mass media participate in the national development process.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Saudi mass media have not done what they should to speed development.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The Saudi mass media were an important factor in encouraging Saudis to</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participate in the development process during the past two five-year plans for national development.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that the answers to these questions are beyond their scope, particularly since, as we will find in the analysis of forthcoming data, there has been no research on audience feedback.

A look at Table 8 clearly shows overwhelming agreement among the respondents concerning the role of mass media in development in general. But Table 9 reveals major differences of opinion regarding media's role in Saudi development in particular; most of the respondents believe the Saudi media have not been assets to development. Why the discrepancy?

It is essentially too early to answer this question at this point, when the analysis of the responses has not been completed, but a brief discussion may be appropriate here. The fact is that the great difference between the media directors' concept and its application is not surprising. As one of the editors-in-chief said, it is not easy to apply one's concept, for there are many factors that may prevent a concept, no matter how useful and valid it may be, from being implemented. The difference between the ideal and the reality of Saudi media function results from a variety of conditions that have impeded application of valuable concepts. Among the obstacles that so impede Saudi media are the lack of channels between the media and the government planning agencies (and the channels that are available are often bureaucracy-choked), the general
The insufficiency of the official concept of media's role in development, the crying need for competent specialists in the media field, and the Saudi media's heavy reliance on foreign media production. Given such circumstances, the natural consequence is that the Saudi mass media operate at a severe disadvantage and cannot function to any significant extent in nation-building.

In order to ascertain that the Saudi media's role in development is meager, the media directors were asked the following question:

Question 17: How do you view Saudi mass media in its present role as a tool for national development?

The directors responded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Weak</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A quick count of these responses shows that no one checked "excellent" and that "don't know" is insignificant; thus it was decided to omit these categories from the analysis. The analysis, then, covers the categories "very good," "good," "very weak," and "weak." The responses show that 50 percent
of the directors view their media as weak tools for national development; 45 percent are satisfied with their media's present role in Saudi Arabia's development. These results confirm the assumption that media's dominant functions in most developing countries are propaganda and important entertainments—an assumption advanced by the research studies of Schiller, Katz, Berlo, Wells, and others.

If indeed the Saudi mass media are viewed, as the data show, as inefficient tools for development, then what is the primary function of these media? In order to find an answer, the directors were asked the following question:

**Question 18:** What is the primary function of mass media? Is it: entertainment, propaganda, information, culture, or other?

The responses to this question are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propaganda</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other--Please Specify</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the media directors believe that Saudi media are weak tools for development, the responses above show that 75 percent of the directors checked information and culture as the media's major functions. Their opinion may
be the result of the fact that these media give considerable attention, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, to literature—prose and poetry—in addition to the foreign news they gather from the international news agencies. Most of the respondents do not think entertainment and propaganda are the Saudi media's primary functions; only 55 percent checked these categories. According to the data shown above, the respondents consider information, culture, propaganda, and entertainment—in that order—the media's main functions. The question here is whether these aspects of media are based on the needs of the Saudi audience and on requirements for development, or are they decided by the media directors and staff? The foundation for Saudi media's functions will be discussed next.

**Audience Needs and the Media**

Statement 6 seeks to know whether personal decisions of media directors and staff are the basis for the kinds of messages Saudi media transmit. The responses to this statement reveal that 75 percent of the directors agree that personal decisions indeed are the basis of media output. However, Table 10 omits the categories "strongly disagree" and "don't know," since no one checked them; for ease in reporting the results of the analysis of Table 10, the categories "strongly agree" and "agree" are combined.

Table 10 shows that 75 percent of the respondents agree that personal decisions form the bases for media output;
TABLE 10

MEDIA MESSAGES AND PERSONAL DECISIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Decisions regarding the kinds of media messages that should be transmitted to the Saudi audience are based on personal decisions of the media directors and staff.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

only 25 percent think there may be some other basis. Perhaps the absence of field research among the Saudi audience explains data here; that is, no one actually knows what the audience wants; hence it is not possible to direct the media in such a way as to satisfy the audience.

Decisions about media messages are at present based on the personal assumptions of media personnel, and on letters that are volunteered occasionally by members of the audience. Question 19 asked the respondents: What major method is used to ascertain the needs of Saudi audiences in order to direct the media output in a way which serves the audience's needs? Are their needs known by means of:

- annual field research among the audience?
- letters from the audience?
- assumptions based on the fact that we as media personnel are part of society?
- all of the above?
- none of the above?

The only categories checked were "letters" and "assumptions"; therefore it is quite clear that these are the only means by which to ascertain the audience's needs. Eighty-five percent agree that letters are used to find out what the audience wants, and 95 percent say that assumptions are the primary means. What the data reveal correlates with the results in the previous table which show that Saudi media messages are based on decisions made by media directors and staff. These circumstances very well may explain why Saudi media are ineffective; when media transmit messages which are based on assumptions rather than on hard facts about what the audience needs, that audience is likely to be inattentive.

John Balcomb writes that:

effective communication depends on knowing one's audience. In social development, this is not just a matter of knowing that audience's ability to understand a particular message, oral, visual, or written, framed in a particular way. It is also a matter of knowing their needs and aspirations as they themselves perceive them, for a message that does not relate to their "felt needs" will fall on deaf ears.2

Actually, when we attempt to apply Balcomb's view to the Saudi media, we immediately find that most of the media's messages have little connection with the audience's "felt needs."
And in addition to the fact that decisions of the media directors and staff are the basis for media output, what the directors actually believe regarding this problem is different from what happens in practice. When they were asked Question 9, if "knowing the audience's needs is fundamental to effective use of the mass media," they answered as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The categories "disagree" and "strongly disagree" were omitted because no one checked them.)

Ninety-five percent of the respondents agree that knowledge of audience needs is fundamental to media's effective use; only one person checked "don't know." The almost unanimous agreement here reflects clearly that what the people who direct and manage Saudi Arabia's mass media believe about media's function is different from what they practice. The explanation for this discrepancy may be that they think their assumptions are sufficient, given that the directors themselves are part of Saudi society. In addition, it is a rather pervasive habit of mind in
developing countries to look on the members of a society as an undifferentiated mass who think and act alike, and/or to see them as who do not really know what they need or like. One of the editors-in-chief mentioned that there are two reasons it is difficult to conduct audience field research in developing countries. One reason is the many problems with education and with the social structure; illiteracy is widespread, and the social structure, complex to begin with, is undergoing changes that increase its complexity. Thus the media in developing countries must play the role of educator in order to direct the society in ways that serve the public interest. The second reason indicated by the editor-in-chief is the lack of competent people who understand the means by which to conduct field research.\(^3\)

If, as the data have shown, field research has not been undertaken to find what the needs of the Saudi audience are, then what about the audience's reaction to what the media transmits? Is audience reaction taken into consideration by those who direct the media? Has field research been conducted in an effort to know what the audience reaction is?

The answer, decidedly, is No.

Statement 10: Conducting field research in order to understand the reaction of Saudi audiences to their media does not occur at the present time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis omits "strongly disagree" and "disagree" because they were not checked. The responses show that the great majority (85 percent) of those questioned agree that their media have not conducted field research in audience reaction. Fifteen percent are unaware whether this kind of research goes on. As a result of the lack of field research data, Saudi mass media messages have so far been sender-based rather than receiver-based.

**Media Credibility**

An essential requirement for attracting, holding, and then influencing audiences is the mass media's perceived credibility. When the media's performance is perceived as not credible, the audience naturally becomes suspicious; it will switch to another media source and reject what it suspects or outright disbelieves. This is probably the reason that Saudi Arabia is, as discussed in the preceding chapter, such a ripe market for foreign media. Even the directors who were interviewed here call their media's credibility into question. Analysis of the data in Table 11
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DK</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel that our audience does not trust our mass media.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The audience for Saudi media is not satisfied with what the media</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presents it.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
shows that 50 percent of the respondents believe the audience for Saudi mass media does not trust its media; 45 percent disagree, and only 5 percent don't know.

Question 8 asks whether the Saudi audience is dissatisfied with what the media offer. Fifty-five percent of the respondents agree that the audience is dissatisfied, 40 percent believe the audience is satisfied, and one person checked "don't know." Thus, those who make the decisions about what Saudi media present are the very ones who call the credibility of media messages into question. The real issue here is this: if, as Table 11 shows, the media directors themselves recognize that there is widespread mistrust of their media among the audience, then why do they not take steps to correct the media's lack of credibility? There is no immediate, direct answer, but a look at the forthcoming data analysis will allow the reader to figure out the answer for himself.

**Dependence on Foreign Media Production**

As explained in the previous chapter, in general Saudi mass media depend heavily on foreign media production. In fact, this unhealthy phenomenon of reliance on foreign production has accompanied the development of mass media in most Third World nations. Among the media scholars who have recognized the seriousness of such dependence is Herbert Schiller, who writes:
Once a developing society gets caught up in the impersonal imperatives of television operations, its broadcast structure rapidly becomes a vehicle for material produced outside its territory with an outlook and a character generally irrelevant, if not injurious, to its development orientation. 4

With the exception of Saudi radio, as the respondents noted on the questionnaires, the Saudi media have depended very heavily on foreign media production. Table 12 presents the number and percentage of responses with respect to this issue. The table omits "don't know" because this category was not checked. Analysis of Table 12's data shows that 60 percent of the respondents agree that their media's output relies heavily on foreign media production. Only 35 percent of the respondents disagree, and these are mainly the directors of radio. And as for statement 12, a great many (65 percent) of the respondents agree that foreign news agencies are the major sources for international news. An unexpectedly high percentage (35 percent) of the respondents, however, disagree. This response was unexpected for four reasons. For one thing, as described in the previous chapter, the Saudi media subscribe to the big four international news agencies (the Associated Press, United Press International, Reuters, and Agence France Presse) as well as some Arab agencies. Second, during my open-ended interviews with the Saudi media directors, they told me that their media rely on the international agencies for foreign news. Moreover, my examination of the content of the Saudi press shows that a great percentage of its
**TABLE 12**

**DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN MEDIA PRODUCTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Saudi mass media output depends heavily on foreign media production.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The foreign news agencies are the Saudi media’s main sources for international news.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One of the respondents failed to answer.*
foreign news comes from the international agencies. Finally, the responses to Question 20 make it quite certain that over 70 percent of the Saudi media's foreign news is obtained from the international agencies.

The respondents were asked what percentage of the international news comes from the international and other foreign agencies, and given percentage categories to choose from. The responses are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And as the data show, 70 to 85 percent of the directors agree there is heavy reliance on the foreign news agencies. Eight out of twenty respondents say that 70 percent of Saudi Arabia's international news comes from foreign news agencies; six say that 85 percent of the foreign news comes from these agencies. Only five respondents think the percentage is lower.
This far too heavy reliance on foreign media production partially explains why this study has assumed that the Saudi media have failed to be utilized effectively in national development; it may also explain why the Saudi media directors themselves think their media are ineffective tools. For in terms of news reporting, the Western capitals are in fact its designers. The four international agencies serve as models for news format, content, and style. It is important to understand, however, that as Katz has observed, when the media in developing countries present news and pictures provided by the big four agencies, this does not make for one world. Far from it, the problem is how to get a news team from a given country to a place in which that country is interested to see the story from its point of view.5

Further, it needs to be realized that the foreign news agencies reflect and emphasize their opinions, ideas, culture, and ideology. As Sussman points out, "The Western services--UPI, Reuters, and AFP--primarily advance the economic and cultural interests of their home countries."6

The truth is that continued reliance on foreign media will, without doubt, fragment Saudi Arabia's culture, impair its development, and bastardize its ideology. A Saudi editor-in-chief said that the dependence on foreign media production and foreign journalists is a major problem for the Saudi press, which has become a vehicle for a variety of foreign cultures, opinions, and ideologies, and that this has undoubtedly had adverse effects on Saudi audiences.7
It is most unfortunate that the Saudi media have assumed this mixed character; what they need is to develop a definable character of their own.

The next—and highly appropriate—issue here concerns the reasons for the Saudi media's dependence on foreign production. In order to know these reasons, the respondents were asked the following:

Statement 21: Please check each item below that you believe is responsible for Saudi media's dependence on foreign media production.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Lack of professional personnel</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Lack of technological expertise</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Lack of human resources in general</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Widespread appeal of foreign media production</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-The necessity of foreign media production in national development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Budgetary constraints</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Social constraints</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Political constraints</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Other; please specify</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of these responses shows that only four categories can be considered significant. Seventy percent of the respondents believe that the lack of professional
personnel in Saudi Arabia is responsible for the media's dependence on foreign media production; that lack is, obviously, a major problem. Forty percent of the respondents blame social constraints for the media's reliance on foreign production. In addition to these responses, another large percentage (25 percent) of the directors think that the appeal of foreign production is the responsible factor. No doubt the main reason imported production is so appealing is that local production is inferior in quality and much less attractive. Another 25 percent of the respondents think that political constraints prevent the Saudi media from operating independent of foreign production.

Justifications are often advanced for this dependence on imported media production. It is said that "a window on the world" has been opened, that it is all to the good that a developing country learn about other cultures. However, as Rogers, Sussman, Katz, Wells, and other communications scholars have observed, the final result of such dependence will be more harmful than beneficial. This is particularly true when we understand that imported media production originated in nations whose culture and ideology often are irrelevant to, and sometimes genuinely dangerous to the best interests of the developing country.

Although this study assumed that one result of the Saudi media' reliance on imported production (particularly
television) is that it produces negative effects on the culture, traditions, and customs of the country, the Saudi media directors who were interviewed disagreed. They were asked the following statement:

Statement 13: As a result of the Saudi mass media's dependence on foreign media production, the Saudi media participate negatively in changing Saudi culture, traditions, and customs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures above show that 55 percent of the respondents do not believe that dependence on foreign media production has a negative impact on Saudi culture. Thirty-five percent, however, agree that Saudi culture has been negatively affected. Only 10 percent checked "don't know."

That half the respondents disagree with statement 13 may be due to an idea which is prevalent among some Saudis, especially the youth, and others who are attracted by Western culture and advancement. These people seem to think that imitation of whatever is Western is the correct way to be "modern." But, as this study implies, Saudis must learn
that it is possible both to be modern and to remain Saudi, and it should be part of the Saudi media's responsibility to explain to their audience that this is so. For the fact is that media messages which are not based on the audience's needs, but which instead cater to their more superficial desires, have slim chance of being positively effective. It must be kept in mind that, as Schiller has said, foreign media production is not created with the requirements of the importing nation in view, and that, if anything, it presents images and styles of life that are widely out of keeping with the social necessities of a developing country.\textsuperscript{8} It is abundantly clear that excessive importation of foreign media production and reliance on the international news agencies will discourage Saudi national talent and creativity.

**Obstacles to the Effectiveness of Saudi Media**

This section examines the major obstacles to the effective use of Saudi media in creating social awareness and in nation building. Actually, although the Saudi government itself appears to welcome constructive criticism, during my discussion with the director of Saudi media I observed that candid, direct questions about the obstacles and constraints surrounding the media were regarded as politically sensitive. The media directors showed no enthusiasm about answering these questions. Perhaps these
circumstances explain why "don't know" was checked so often in Table 12.

Analysis of Table 13's data shows that 60 percent of the respondents believe that the misunderstanding on the part of Saudi officials regarding the role of mass media has created a major obstacle to mass media's effectiveness as tools for development. Only 15 percent disagree, and fully a quarter of the respondents checked "don't know." When they were asked to check any of the five items (A through E) mentioned in statement 22, they chose lack of professional personnel (70 percent) and religious conditions as the major hindrances to Saudi media. Twenty percent disagree that lack of professional personnel is a major problem, and 10 percent checked "don't know." Sixty percent of the respondents view religious conditions as a significant hindrance to effective use of the media; 30 percent disagree. Ten percent checked "don't know."

It would be foolish to blame religion itself for any problems the media suffer. The difficulty lies with how religious leaders interpret Islam. It is quite true, as Iyad Madani, Director-General of O'Kaz, said, that religious conditions do form one of the Saudi media's most troublesome problems--"not because of anything built into Islamic teachings, but rather, because of the current Ulama* interpretation.9

*Ulama means the religious leaders.
### TABLE 13

**OBSTACLES TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SAUDI MEDIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DK</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. One of the major obstacles to effective use of the Saudi mass media in national development is the misunderstanding on the part of official authorities of media's role.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Please check the item below which you believe has most retarded the effective use of Saudi mass media in national development.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Social conditions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Political conditions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Religious conditions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Lack of professional personnel</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Financial conditions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Social conditions too are seen as an obstacle. Responses in Table 13 reveal that 45 percent of the directors think that social conditions have retarded the Saudi media. Forty percent disagree, and 15 percent "don't know." It would appear that it is the responsibility of the Saudi media to adapt and respond to the changing social conditions of their country.

Political conditions seem not to have been considered an important problem. Forty percent agree that political conditions do create a barrier for media; 40 percent disagree. Twenty percent chose "don't know." Again, it seems that the respondents look on politically-oriented questions as loaded, and approach them in a gingerly fashion.

With respect to item "E," "financial conditions," fully three-fourths of the respondents disagree that money—or lack of it—has created problems for the media. Only 25 percent say that financial conditions are a problem, and no one "didn't know." These data strongly suggest that financial conditions do not figure as a major obstacle.

**Basic Requirements for Improvement**

Judging from the analysis of the data that has been completed so far, it is probably obvious that if the Saudi media are to undergo improvement, what is most needed is that they become more than just several voices among a myriad of other voices in Saudi Arabia. They need to evolve
into genuine tools for development and social awareness—well-created tools that help to foster good workmanship. Therefore, the media directors were asked about basic requirements that will increase their media's effectiveness in shaping the nation.

The data in Table 14 show high enthusiasm on the respondents' part for new structure, system, and for changes in regulations. The directors consider that these areas are in greatest need of improvement.

Analysis of Table 14's data shows that most of the respondents (80 percent) believe the present structure of their media needs to be changed; they are, of course, particularly concerned with the Ministry of Information, which controls and supervises Saudi media, and which is treated like all the other public service ministries, even though its services and its character are quite different from those of the other ministries. No doubt this concern accounts for agreement among 80 percent of the respondents that the quality of Saudi media production will improve with the formulation of an independent governing body. Only one person checked "don't know," and 15 percent disagree that their media's status should be changed. The point of view of this 15 percent, I am told, is that the media should not be regarded as a public utility.

The scarcity of professional people in media is the dominant problem, and what Saudi media need most is to solve
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DK</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. Formulation of an independent governing body (like Petromine, the</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>airlines, and other government establishments) for the Saudi media will</td>
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<tr>
<td>improve the quality of Saudi media production.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Please check each item you believe is most needed for improvement of</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Saudi mass media.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Professional people in media.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. More money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. New regulations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Other; please specify</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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it. The table shows overwhelming agreement (95 percent) that professionals are needed; only one person checked "don't know."

Sixty percent of the respondents believe that more money is required if the media are to improve (Item B); 35 percent disagree, and 5 percent checked "don't know." With respect to Item C, the need for new regulations, a high percentage (75 percent) of the respondents agree there is a great need for new regulations; 14 percent disagree, and 10 percent checked "don't know."

It appears then that professional personnel, new structure, and new regulations are what the Saudi mass media directors agree will improve their media's effectiveness for use in the development and civilization of their country. These findings confirm the major assumptions of my study.

Thus far, the analysis of data in this chapter has shown that the Saudi media directors themselves recognize that their media have not been of much use in national development. Although the Saudi media are technologically quite advanced, although they possess the latest equipment in the press and broadcasting fields, the equipment has been sadly underutilized. It is rash to assume that the mere presence of newspapers, radio, and television in a country guarantees their participation in that country's growth. The real measure—the only measure—of the value of media' presence is in what they present to their audience.
In Saudi Arabia, as the foregoing examination of data has shown, numerous factors have worked to hinder the Saudi media from being used to best advantage. The official concept of media's role, the organizational structure, the system under which media operate, religious conditions, reliance on imported media production, the lack of professional people, centralization—all these things have created obstacles. But now that the major problems have been clearly outlined, it is to be hoped that workable solutions will be implemented.
NOTES

1Iyad Madani, Director-General, O'Kaz, Saudi daily newspaper.

2Hashen Abdu, Editor-in-Chief, O'Kaz, private interview, Jiddah, summer 1981.


4Turki Al-Sodairi, Editor-in-Chief, Al-Riyadh, private interview, Riyadh, summer 1981.


7L. R. Sussman, p. 5.

8Hashem Abdu, private interview, Jiddah, summer 1981.

9Herbert I. Schiller, p. 67.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION, PROPOSED MEDIA STRATEGY, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, it appears that a complex of interrelated elements has been at work to prevent the Saudi media from being used effectively in the development process. Although it is true, as explained in Chapters 2 and 5, that development has advanced rapidly during the past fifteen years, media reform is now urgently needed to complete Saudi Arabia's development process.

Chapters 2 and 5 show that the development of the past fifteen years is in fact the result of three things. One of these is the enormous oil revenues which have made Saudi Arabia one of the world's wealthiest nations. Another is the Saudi government's enthusiasm for development. Third is foreign labor; about two million foreigners now work in Saudi Arabia.

People, of course, are the real basis for innovation and development. Most of the Saudi people have been transferred from tents to villas, from camels to Cadillacs, but while these tangible benefits are important, they do not represent authentic development. What is required is a modeling of attitude that will motivate the Saudi people to participate in and accept responsibility for their own nation's
development. According to scholarly views presented in Chapter 6, the mass media can provide strong impetus to this effort by encouraging enthusiasm for development and increasing social awareness among the Saudi population.

In response to research questions 3 and 4, Chapter 7, which studies and analyzes the current conditions and functions of Saudi mass media, has shown that the Saudi media, particularly television, have not been successful tools for development and social awareness. They have existed as little more than vehicles for official information, directives, and imported entertainment. It is true that the Saudi media do serve in areas such as culture, general information, and education, but these are only minor functions. My findings regarding Saudi media content were confirmed by the Saudi media directors. Chapter 9 ("Analysis of Mass Media Directors' Perceptions") shows that 55 percent of the media directors do not believe that they have taken a significant role in Saudi national development. And even though the media are equipped, as explained in Chapter 3, with the most advanced technology, they still have failed to rise significantly to the challenge of development.

In fact, their failure is the result of six major obstacles. One of these is the concept of mass media's function. It was assumed in this study that the Arab governments have misunderstood and or exploited mass
media's power to affect a populace. As shown in Chapter 4, Arab governments make inappropriate use of their mass media. In these countries the media serve mainly two purposes: propaganda and entertainment. Saudi Arabia's government is no different. Therefore, the Saudi perception of mass media use, as explained in Chapters 3 and 7, is associated with sender-based communication systems, the premise of which is that information suppliers determine what information to supply and how the public will use it. This system assumes that people are passive receivers who accept whatever is given them; it also considers people an undifferentiated mass who think and act alike and who do not know what they need and like. Saudi media directors confirm that the sender-based system prevails in Saudi media. Moreover, as shown in Chapter 9, 75 percent of the respondents agree that the media directors' personal decisions form the basis for media output. This sender-based concept is, in fact, popular throughout the Arab world in general, and much of the blame for the Saudi media's failure can be ascribed to it. Undoubtedly the Saudi government realizes that the media can be powerful forces, but as conditions now stand (as explained in Chapter 7), the Saudi media can be compared to a slumbering giant. The objective here is to wake, harness, and direct it to work for the good of the nation.

Furthermore, with respect to Research Question 3, Chapters 7 and 9 reveal that another reason for the media's
lack of success is their structure. The Saudi media, especially radio and television, are controlled by the Saudi government through the Ministry of Information. Government control of the media in a new and developing nation is not the issue; the problem is that the Ministry of Information, like any other government department, is subject to typical government routine and authoritarian practices. Thus, as explained in Chapter 9, the Ministry of Information cannot, for example, employ or promote people or initiate programs without following all the regulations that apply equally to the other ministries. The difficulty with this is that while the other ministries deal with specific people and specific interests (commerce, agriculture, education, industry, and so on), the mass media reach the entire population—a mixture of different ages, incomes, social classes, educational levels, and even dialects. Furthermore, the Ministry of Information deals with a wide variety of interests: economics, culture, politics—there is scarcely an area of human activity that the mass media do not in some way treat.

Based on the responses to Research Question 5 (A), concerning the effects of locally-produced programs, Chapter 6 shows that media are not effective if their messages do not meet the people's needs. Therefore, a third obstacle is the centralization of Saudi broadcasting. Saudi Arabia covers a vast geographical area divided into five huge
provinces. Even though the government has established television stations in each province, the central radio and television stations located in the capital are really the main sources for domestic broadcasting services. As explained in Chapter 4, this centralization does not offer a way to utilize broadcasting to best advantage; when we recognize that the characteristics of the targeted audience are unknown in terms of their society, traditions, culture, and psychology, then it is clear as Schramm, Royers, Katz, and others have found, that the message offered by the media will have little effect (see Chapter 6).

There is no scholarly consensus, however, regarding whether centralized or local systems are preferable; the issue is controversial. Some say that a centralized media system can help unify and homogenize a population; others insist that local systems encourage the feeling of belonging that citizens of a nation need, and that local broadcasting can bring about smooth cultural transition. Therefore, this chapter will propose a combined system.

Fourth is the lack of professional staff in the Saudi media. My field research in Saudi Arabia revealed, as presented in Chapter 9, that about 80 percent of Saudi media employees are academically and technologically under-qualified for their jobs. And although the Saudi media directors whom I met are not themselves specialists, fully 95 percent of them, as shown in Chapter 9, believe that
professional people are what is most needed for improving our media. And the truth is, as explained in Section 3 of Chapter 9, that most Saudi journalists are journalists only because of their ability to write and because there is no one else to do it; they are in effect journalists by default. Typically, the Saudi journalist has no special knowledge of the subject he writes about. Moreover, a high percentage of local radio and television programs are written, produced, and directed by people whose reputations as authors are well-known, but who are amateurs in broadcasting. With all due respect to what they have accomplished, it is nonetheless true that they lack the technical and academic expertise required by today's media professionals. Seventy percent of the respondents, as explained in Chapter 9, believe that lack of professional personnel in Saudi media is responsible for the weakness of media. Because this lack is such a serious defect in Saudi media, we should seek immediately to correct the weaknesses in administration and production.

The fifth hurdle is dependence. In response to Research Question 4, regarding the present status of mass media, Chapters 7 and 9 show that far too high a percentage of Saudi media's (especially television's) output is imported. What this means is that a great deal of the media content which is read, heard, and viewed by Saudi citizens has been produced in foreign cultures with different needs and alien
ideologies. And unfortunately, the Saudi audience likes the imported content more than what is produced locally, since, as mentioned by the Saudi media directors in Chapter 7, local production is not nearly so appealing. But the imported content is incompatible with Saudi culture and needs, and hence seldom functions in the interests of Saudi Arabia's development. However, as pointed out earlier, media content that is not patterned to suit the culture of its audience will not be effective. In my opinion, by reforming the media's structure and turning their operation over to professionals, it will be possible to protect Saudi Arabia from the cultural invasion.

Finally, there is the religious factor. According to the results of my interviews, as set forth in Chapter 7, the Saudi media directors believe that the religious factor is a major barrier to their media's function. Of course, religion itself is not the problem. But, as is well known, throughout the ages, in both Eastern and Western nations, some religious leaders have presented obstacles to progress. In Europe's Middle Ages, for example, alchemists were thought to be doing the work of the devil. Later, the Church denounced Copernicus and Galileo. Some religious leaders feared and deplored the new "technology" of the Renaissance and persecuted its enthusiasts. Even today theology and science often conflict; one recent example is the controversy regarding the ethics of genetic engineering.
As the foregoing examples show, the practice of religion is not always commensurate with its ideals. Islam, for example, does not forbid education for women. But in Saudi Arabia, education of women began only as recently as 1962, and religious leaders opposed it even then. It required time as well as heavy pressure from the government before they began to accept this new social policy. We can see, then, that Islam is not the problem, but as has been revealed in Chapter 3, the mass media are a natural target for these religious leaders. The Saudi government has convinced them that they must accept the presence of media; even so, they continue to demand that media's function be solely religious.

Conservative religious leaders fear the effects of mass media on Saudi society, and they are not entirely wrong to do so. But the media can be used to enrich Saudi spiritual life. However, rather than produce religious programs that do nothing more, as is the situation now, than preach (and, it perhaps should be added, bore), religious leaders might consider the use of modern production techniques to convey their message in more palatable, more enthusiastically accepted forms.

It will be difficult to use the Saudi media in nation-building and social awareness without first solving these six major problems.
As explained in Chapters 3 and 7, since the establishment of Saudi mass media there has been no policy to guide them. As mentioned in Chapter 8, it is only quite recently—during the writing of this study—that the Saudi Supreme Council of Mass Communication established a new media policy.

However, a look at the new policy reveals that it commits the Saudi media to (1) promote and emphasize the Islamic religion; to (2) play a significant role in the process of development; and to (3) protect the national and cultural identity of the country. These are the major requirements for Saudi media; what is more important right now is to see that the written word becomes common practice through modern media techniques.

For a developing country such as Saudi Arabia, it is vital that the mass media operate under the guidance of a balanced, comprehensive program. As Chapter 9 reveals, the Saudi media directors agree that a number of objectives must be achieved before we can say that the Saudi mass media have been put to effective use in development. One such objective is to strengthen religious foundations and encourage cultural unity; one way to meet this goal is through more intellectual interchange between Saudi officials and the Saudi public with respect to social, economic, and cultural policies. Secondly, as Chapter 6 shows, the media can motivate the public to accept new
ideas--and to distinguish good ideas from those that are merely "modern." Moreover, the media can encourage attitudes among the Saudi people which contribute to development. And most communications scholars, among them Berlo, Wells, Lerner, Pye, and Katz, agree that development projects and social services, such as vocational and agricultural training, or public health projects, can all be supported by the media. Finally, the media in a developing country can help to foster the work ethic; they can cause people--particularly young people--to understand the necessity to participate in development, and help prepare new generations to take an informed, enthusiastic part in development programs.

These objectives can be achieved if the directors of Saudi media come to understand that serious thought does not equate with boredom. The dry, directive, and tedious programming that now fills Saudi radio and television must be changed. Musical programs, drama--even comedy can convey serious messages in appealing forms.

Furthermore, some alterations in attitude and in operation may ensure that in order the objectives will be achieved. For one thing, the mass media can implement methods by which to know what the Saudi people need, and then make certain that those needs are expressed; that is, the media can provide citizens access to communication systems and serve as a feedback channel to government with
respect to development plans and ambitions. Secondly, based on the analysis in Chapters 7 and 9, it seems that horizontal and vertical communication linkage can be made available at all levels of society. As Schramm observes in Chapter 4, a one-way communication system—even with the addition of feedback means—is insufficient. What is needed is channels through which people at all levels of Saudi society can communicate with one another.

It is quite clear, as noted by the scholars cited in Chapters 4 and 6, that a broadcasting agency which lacks credibility—which its audience perceives as dubious—is unlikely to be able to mobilize people effectively. By the same token, a mass medium which fails to base its message on the needs of its audience—which neglects to gather or ignores audience feedback—may be tempted to adopt a directive tone. During the previous several decades in developing countries, however, as the research findings in Chapter 4 amply show, communication flow from "ups" to "downs" has achieved no significant results. However, as explained in Chapter 3, during the past thirty or so years, the Saudi government has emphasized expansion of the Saudi media services; at present, media services extend to nearly every area of the country, and in 1984 Saudi television will reach all of Saudi Arabia by satellite. And yet the message flow is still from up to down. It seems appropriate now for Saudi media to take full advantage of the excellent
technology that is already in place, and produce appealing, professional programs that convey serious messages to a receptive audience.

**Proposed Model for Broadcasting Establishment**

Based on the findings of this study, it seems clear that reform is needed for Saudi media. As mentioned above, the Saudi media continue to implement a sender-based system of communication. But yesterday is past, times change, and change accelerates in time. Contemporary nations no longer exist in isolation. New technologies have extended the possibilities of distributing radio and television programs over extensive areas embracing a number of sovereign states and people of different cultures and ideologies. Competition goes on among many countries to invade other countries culturally, using modern mass media techniques of persuasion and blandishment. In Saudi Arabia, as shown in Table 7, Chapter 7, hundreds of newspapers and magazines blanket the country, Saudi citizens are exposed to media messages from near and far.

Moreover, although twenty years ago the Saudi media may have been satisfactory for the isolated country described in Chapter 2, a country to which they were a novelty, today's circumstances are different. As a result of their recently acquired wealth, travel to other countries and interaction with different cultures and new ideas have become commonplace for most Saudis, and daily the number of Saudis
who travel abroad increases. What is more, hundreds of thousands of foreigners work in Saudi Arabia. Videotape has found its way into nearly every Saudi household. More advanced countries, the United States and the Soviet Union in particular, vie with one another over the free flow of information, using their satellites to cover all the world. In fact, there is much concern on the part of thoughtful observers that Saudi culture, traditions, and ideology are in danger of being replaced.

However, plans can be designed and implemented to save the national culture and character before it is too late. The Saudi mass media, like media anywhere, have the potential to serve and preserve Saudi society, but as Schramm and Katz observe, this potential will never be realized unless the media produce their own content, making use of every available modern technique to be appealing, credible, and effective. If the Saudi media do not implement firm corrective measures to improve their content, then the audience is not to be faulted for turning to media messages from other sources.

But although it is time to reform the content of Saudi media, this study assumes in Chapter 1 that before reform of content occurs, there must first be reform of media structure, system, and management. Reforming media content, then, in such a way as to serve Saudi Arabia's present and future national interests, should begin with reform of the
body which leads the media. However, as explained in Chapter 3, the Saudi mass media are controlled by the Ministry of Information, and the Ministry operates according to the same government regulations and routines that apply to other ministries, even though its tasks are quite different.

If, as mentioned earlier, the nation of Saudi Arabia wishes to work in the best interests of development, then the present situation with regard to mass media should be changed. This study therefore proposes a restructuring of the Ministry of Information that will offer the mass media—particularly broadcasting—greater autonomy, with freedom from inappropriate and oppressive government routines. In hopes that the Saudi media will improve to the point that they can indeed achieve the national objectives of social awareness and development, I propose a new mass media strategy.

The strategy begins with broadcasting. As the media directors cited in Chapter 7 themselves believe, the current structure of Saudi broadcasting has made it impossible for radio and television to play a significant role in development. Moreover, while the country itself has been undergoing rapid progress, broadcasting has fallen farther and farther behind. This study assumes, and the analysis in Chapters 7 and 9 confirms, that the present structure is one of the major barriers to effective broadcasting. The media
directors also agree that in order to make the best use of broadcasting, the structure should be changed to a self-contained government establishment which is insofar as possible independent of government hierarchy and regulations. The new strategy that I am proposing also suggests a combined system of local and centralized broadcasting. And, based on Chapter 9's findings with respect to the Saudi press, I am suggesting urgently needed reform for Saudi newspapers and magazines.

Before we examine the details of the proposed strategy, however, it is necessary first to explain its basis. In fact it is founded on several elements:

1. The present restricted functional nature of the Ministry of Information as explained in Chapter 7.
2. The current functions of the Saudi media which, as analysis has shown, do not fully serve nation building.
3. The desire on the part of Saudi media directors themselves to change the Ministry of Information's structure. Table 13 in Chapter 9 reveals that 80 percent of the directors would like the media to operate more autonomously under a government establishment with its own system and policy.
4. The nature of broadcasting, which makes it impossible for radio and television to be effective
when they are subject to routine and restrictive regulations.

5. The emphasis that most mass communications scholars (such as Schramm, Rogers, Jaworski, Katz, Schiller, Berlo, and others) place on the importance to local media production of knowing the needs of the audience. In addition, the opinion of most of these scholars that centralization of mass media is not beneficial to developing countries.

6. The great size of Saudi Arabia, and the variety of traditions and needs among the media audience.

7. Political, social, and educational conditions in Saudi Arabia. These conditions in fact require that the government supervise the country's mass media. Of course, government-supervised media are anathema to many Western media experts and communications scholars who hold that full freedom of the mass media is the key to their success. But it may be desirable and necessary in developing countries that the media be used to encourage popular sympathy with the government, for the volatile combination of high illiteracy rates, strong tribal loyalties, and ideological pressure exerted by developed nations can be pernicious to stable government.

8. The success of self-contained government establishments such as Saudi Arabia Airlines and
Petromine. Here is strong evidence that such structure would improve the function of Saudi broadcasting.

In order to achieve more productive utilization of our mass media and to achieve the new policy goals of the Saudi Supreme Council of Mass Communication, the following proposed strategy is offered in the hope its implementation will lead to more creative, more effective mass media for Saudi Arabia.

Based on what this study has shown so far, it is clearly now in the best interests of Saudi Arabia's development to transfer Saudi broadcasting to a self-contained government establishment. This is an establishment that will operate according to its own well-defined regulations. It is possible that the Supreme Council, in cooperation with mass media experts, can formulate these regulations so that they will be suitable to broadcasting operations and in agreement with the government's general policy.

Under the supervision of the Supreme Council of Mass Communication, the broadcasting establishment will be able to function away from ordinary government routines and heirarchy. These routines which are appropriate to other government agencies present a major hindrance to broadcasting, especially in terms of employment, promotion, program production, training, and other administrative and technical procedures. Thus, under this new system,
broadcasting will avoid many of the bureaucratic restrictions that apply to other agencies. And this is as it should be, for broadcasting requires a different sort of treatment; broadcasting services address the entire population regardless of social class, education, gender, or age. It would appear that transferring Saudi broadcasting to a self-contained government establishment is the first important step in shaping the Saudi media into productive, powerful agents of development. In this connection, Jaworski argues that "reform of information suggests something more than transforming the conditions of ownership and management; it also means a change of mentality by the professionals."¹ But first things first. Changing the organizational structure and management will insure enough flexibility for movement into the direction of new ideas.

Broadcasting is given special attention in this study because of its importance to Saudi Arabia. For one thing, illiteracy, as we have noted, is high in Saudi Arabia, and broadcasting does not require an educated audience in order to be effective. Second, tribal loyalty remains strong in Saudi Arabia, and broadcasting has the potential to help solve problems created by this loyalty. Katz too recognizes the power of broadcasting; he writes that broadcasting should contribute to the process of integration, helping to forge a nation from regional, tribal, and ethnic loyalties. . . . Broadcasting should contribute to socioeconomic development, helping to motivate and to instruct in the problems that beset the peasant population of developing countries.²
It is vital, therefore, to reform our Saudi broadcasting so that it can indeed make the contributions Katz mentions.

Third, television transmission will cover the entire country by 1984. This means that new, mostly rural audiences will be reached for the first time; thus, Saudi television should direct its production to meet the needs of this new audience. Fourth, the Saudi government has no power to control or censor neighboring countries' broadcasting; if these foreign broadcasts are more appealing than what Saudi radio and television offer, then the Saudi audience will naturally prefer them.

For all of the reasons mentioned above, and because broadcasting has such potential to speed and refine the development process, Saudi broadcasting must be given special attention. Reform measures will ensure broadcasting's use in building the nation and will enhance its competitiveness with foreign radio and television. As stated earlier, we must first transfer broadcasting to a self-contained government establishment so that it can function in relative autonomy, free of bureaucratic routines.

All this does not mean, of course, that the present Ministry of Information should cease the regular operations it has always carried out. After the creating of a public establishment, however, a modification of the Ministry will be appropriate. One appealing possibility is to change the
name of the Ministry of Information to the Ministry of Culture and Publication. This body will continue to be responsible for supervising printed materials published within the country, for following what is published about Saudi Arabia outside, censoring publications that enter the country, publishing informative books and pamphlets concerning the country and its activities, and, by means of subsidies and cooperation, encouraging Saudi authors to write and publish books and articles that enrich the public's general knowledge of social, economic, literary, cultural, and other topics. Further, in cooperation with the proposed public broadcasting establishment and other Saudi ministries, the Ministry of Culture and Publications should produce documentary films. The current literary clubs should be this Ministry's responsibility. Other tasks of the Ministry could include supervising the Saudi Information Attache' abroad, supervising videotape dealers and motion pictures, overseeing public and private libraries, and operating book fairs. These are but a few examples of the many useful purposes the new Ministry of Culture and Publications can serve.

The proposed model has been created with the expectation that its implementation will improve and increase national production of media content, thereby increasing the Saudi media's ability to cooperate with foreign production and concomitantly diminishing the need to import media software.
I realize, of course, that the model cannot become reality until a new concept takes root regarding the role of communication in development. And it must be understood from the outset that receiver-based communication systems are far more effective than sender-based systems. For "if information is conceived of as something people create from their message environment and put to use in ways they find most appropriate, then the focus of media reform strategies must shift from message senders to message receivers."³ This concept is really the foundation of the strategy I am proposing.

However, the model omits details of the administrative and technical organizational structures because Saudi broadcasting already possesses the basic administrative requirements, as well as highly advanced technology. Therefore, since the Saudi government has accomplished a great deal by establishing broadcasting stations and facilities in the provinces, the proposed model focuses on the primary elements of broadcasting production. A drawing of the model appears on the next page. An explanation of the basic units follows.

The Supreme Council

As explained in Chapter 8, the Supreme Council of Mass Communication is a regulatory body formed to supervise and guide all the means of mass communication in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the broadcasting establishment I have proposed will
Figure 5. The Proposed Strategic Model.
*West, South, North and East Regions
operate under the Council's supervision. In cooperation with the Council, mass media experts from the broadcasting establishment should formulate regulations for it which ensure high achievement in broadcasting services. What "regulation" means here is financial and administrative regulations that concern such matters as responsibilities, employment, training, and promotion, and other areas, and which lead to a foundation of skilled administrators and media professionals not restricted by the usual bureaucratic routines typical of most government agencies. Broadcasting functions will be guided by the Council—in accordance, of course, with the national interest, and also with the research findings of a research and analysis center (the functions of which will be explained shortly).

Once these ideas are put into practice, the Supreme Council's newly published media policy can be carried out. Actually, it is my belief that the policy is suitable for implementation immediately, particularly if broadcasting will emphasize local production.

The President

The self-contained broadcasting establishment will be headed by a president chosen from the membership of the Supreme Council of Mass Communication. It is extremely important that the president of the broadcasting establishment be qualified for the job, because one of the weaknesses of Saudi broadcasting, as we have seen, is the
lack of professionals on its staff, even at the highest levels. As noted earlier, the media differ from other social sectors in that they address the whole society; thus they have the potential to be either destructive or constructive. Therefore, without knowledgeable, trained leadership, the media may unintentionally be turned into destructive elements of Saudi society.

It is important too that broadcasting decisions not be made arbitrarily, simply on the basis of the president's own likes and dislikes; instead, decision-making should have at its foundation two things: the Council's own policy objectives, and analysis of data provided the Research Center from the Feedback and Development Departments, the assistants to the president, and the director of radio and television.

The horizontal and vertical communications system seems suitable to Saudi Arabia. For one thing, it will comfortably fit the political facts of life, and for another, it will assure better utilization of broadcasting. Therefore, the model has been constructed according to this system. It allows the various audiences (rural, urban, elite), the government, and the official agencies to participate in designing broadcasting output. In order to achieve full participation, the following units will be the basic parts of the broadcasting establishment:
Feedback unit. Mass communication flow should be based on the flow of feedback; feedback is the foundation upon which mass media messages should be designed. For without feedback from the audience, there is no way to know what it needs and no way to direct media messages according to those needs. It is unquestionable that "mass communication systems designed to promote national development should not only be responsive to citizen information needs and uses, but should, in fact, be based on such needs and uses." Therefore, this model's feedback unit will have an important role in designing and directing broadcasting's content in accord with the audience's needs. The feedback unit should be staffed with competent personnel who know how to conduct audience surveys and gather information.

Feedback staff will conduct surveys and gather information from the urban and rural audiences and the elite community. It needs to be understood that the interests and needs of these three groups differ, and that, for instance, messages which are directed to city dwellers may have little relevance for rural people. As Schramm observes,

In a country like the United Kingdom, the national radio operated on three channels, at different cultural levels. This solution may not be possible for many developing countries, but they must somehow allocate their radio time by function and content. Should there be special stations for the rural regions? Should there be special stations for light entertainment? Should there be special educational stations? Should all these functions be combined in a single station or network? These are not easy decisions, and it is sometimes hard to know whether one has made them wisely."
Schramm of course understands that media messages should meet the needs of the audience, but he does not offer solutions. But for Saudi Arabia, a solution that will serve the varied needs and interests of the Saudi audience lies in the adoption of the model I am proposing.

At present, unfortunately, Saudi mass media are urban-based. It must be realized that rural areas are also important—perhaps even more important than the cities because agriculture is essential to the country's economic survival. Furthermore, since rural areas are in most need of development, it is only logical that the media give special attention to them. The way to understand the interests and needs of the rural audience will be through the regional feedback unit, in cooperation and coordination (arrows, A1) with the central feedback unit.

**Development unit.** The main task of the development unit will be to gather information from the other government ministries, social services, and planning agencies. The ministries and official agencies should provide the development unit with data about their projects, services, and problems; the planning agencies should share their plans for development. With this information about what has been done in Saudi Arabia, what is yet to be done, and what kind of problems there are, the media professionals will be able to direct their media's content accordingly. For example, if local teenagers are creating a problem with careless
driving and disobedience to traffic laws, the media can cooperate with the traffic bureau to create social awareness regarding the dangers of careless driving. That is, the media can produce an effective social message. But what is meant by "effective message" is not a "talking head" on the television screen ordering the audience, "Don't speed. Speed kills." This is the kind of "persuasion" now practiced by our media.

The kind of messages that should be conveyed by modern media is based on modern production techniques and modern ways of learning what the audience will listen to and enjoy seeing. One way, for example, to warn the audience of the dangers in careless driving would be to produce a brief television vignette which actually shows what happens when people speed: the fun of speeding down a highway, the regret and sorrow after a fatal accident. Here the adolescent's real feelings are taken into account, which is a far more persuasive approach than the arbitrary, authoritarian method commonly used. Few people of any age respond well to direct orders.

There are numerous other areas in which the mass media can be effective. They can emphasize the Saudi audience's sense of national and social responsibility; they can encourage birth registration; they can stress the importance of national production. For the mass media are able to "canalize existing attitudes and thus affect human attitudes
and behavior." But if the Saudi media continue to address their audience in their typical dry, directive way, and if they fail to cooperate with official agencies and social services in order to improve their content, there is no way they can be useful in the country's development.

**Research and analysis center.** The creation of a center for audience research and analysis is essential for media to be able to relate their programs to the needs, interests, and problems of Saudi society and the national interest. This center should be staffed with skilled, professional personnel. It will receive data for analysis from both the Feedback Unit and the Development Unit, as arrows B1 and B2 indicate. In addition, the center should work closely with program planners and other media professionals. The research results and findings will be the foundation for broadcasting and other mass media to base their messages on. Unfortunately, to date there has been no audience research center in Saudi Arabia, so that (as 75 percent of the media directors agree) media messages are based on personal decision (see Chapter 9). At present, Saudi programs are produced arbitrarily, and lack of authentic contact and understanding between the media and their audience tends to nullify the message.

Research findings should be sent to the president of the public broadcasting establishment and to the Supreme Council of Mass Communication for policy and decision-making.
Findings should also be sent to program planners, to be implemented into directing television and radio messages, in cooperation and coordination with the program production units.

Effective media messages must be genuine, because genuine messages speak to the needs and interests of the various indigenous elements the audience comprises. This does not mean we must close the door to imported programs, only that they should be kept to a minimum. Nor should the imported programs be merely comedies, adventure stories, and sports events; they should be selected and aired on the basis of what they can add to nation building.

Training center. Professionals, as this study has demonstrated, are what the mass media need most. Without professional staff, the media will not be able to speak effectively. As shown in Chapter 9, 70 percent of the media directors believe that Saudi Arabia's lack of professional media staff is a major obstacle, and fully 95 percent of the directors feel that competent professionals are what our media need for improvement. It is therefore urgent to equip Saudi media with professional people who are capable of producing media messages that appeal to and influence audiences. So the model calls for a training center to be attached to the broadcasting establishment. In cooperation with the communications departments at Saudi universities, this center will recruit and train broadcasting personnel.
Local television stations. Because effective mass media require local media production based on the needs and interests of the audience, and because its needs vary from region to region and among rural and urban audiences, the model calls for local television stations.

As explained in Chapter 3, Saudi television began with local stations; the Ministry of Information established stations in Jiddah and Medinah in the western region, Riyadh and Buraydah in the central region, Dammam in the east, and Abha in the south. At first, each station transmitted separately, but later, television transmission was centralized in the capital, Riyadh.

It is only in developing nations that broadcasting is centralized in capital cities. The problem with centralization is that it ignores rural needs. The philosophy behind centralization in most developing countries seems to be the realization that media are a strong force for national unity. It is right to use media to reinforce unity; however, total centralization of mass media, particularly television, will prevent full utilization of the media in the development process. It is very difficult for a centralized broadcasting system to fulfill all the needs of a population that contains such a vast number of variables. Therefore, in order that our broadcasting may play a strong, positive role in the building of our nation, and at the same time reinforce
national unity, I am proposing a combined system of local and centralized broadcasting, to work on a two-circle system.

We have seen that the success and effectiveness of mass media depend to a great extent on understanding the culture, traditions, needs, and interests of the message's target. To put it another way, the task of mass media should stem from whatever significant behavioral changes are needed within the local community. To be successful, then, local stations are a requirement in a big country like Saudi Arabia.

But what about the role of media in reinforcing a country's unity? In fact, to date there is no scholarly concensus as to whether a centralized or local system is preferable; the issue remains controversial. What is known is that a centralized system can help unity and homogenize a population, especially a tribal population, while local systems stimulate the feeling of belonging that citizens of a nation need, bring about smooth cultural transition, and are required for effectiveness.

Both systems, then, have their advantages and disadvantages. It is true that although local broadcasting systems ensure their medium's effectiveness, at the same time they tend to encourage regional isolation. I doubt either centralized or local broadcasting will help much to speed the development process. As Rahim and Middleton
observe, "Messages in support of regional development all emanating from centralized national media channels would be ineffective because the nature of the sources would inherently contradict the message." And as mentioned above, local broadcasting systems will play a significant role in development--much more so than centralized systems--but it is at the expense of unity.

It is clearly time for a new solution. With respect to Saudi Arabia, I believe the answer lies in what was earlier called the two-circle broadcasting system. Rather than depend strictly on local systems at the expense of Saudi unity, or on a centralized system at the expense of effectiveness, the Saudi government can combine the two systems.

The Two-Circle System

By applying this system, centralized television in Riyadh will send its programs through the local stations in the western, southern, northern, and eastern regions, as indicated in the model; local stations should be able to produce programs that stem from their communities.

The combined system makes it imperative to proportion time given to local programs and to those emanating from
Riyadh. For example, a sixty-forty ratio seems sound: 60 percent centralized programs, 40 percent local. This ratio will help reserve the country's unity and at the same time ensure that local needs are met by the media. In addition, some of the locally produced programs can be sent to the centralized system to be re-transmitted to other regions.

The model calls for establishing feedback units at every local station, each unit to be staffed with community researchers who gather and supply data both to the local stations and to the feedback center at the centralized broadcasting station in the capital. Local feedback ensures that programming will be relevant and interesting to the audience it reaches.

The successful implementation of this proposed strategy will depend on several things. Professionals must be recruited and dependency on foreign production must diminish. Moreover, there must be an overall change in the concept of mass media so that they will no longer be used mainly as entertainment or conceived as "up-to-down" tools; rather, they will be utilized fully to encourage social awareness and promote development. This positive utilization cannot be achieved without producing local programs for local people which are based (as the model emphasizes) on feedback and research analysis.

It is thus essential that we encourage local media production to ensure this model's successful implementation.
It is important to understand that local programming will not be effective merely because it is local. Locally produced Saudi programs must be of a quality that is competitive with any other locally produced programs. I am confident that the adoption of this model will open the way to excellence in local production, and will make broadcasting an influential presence in rural Saudi Arabia. The new system combines all the virtues of both forms of broadcasting and eliminates many of their drawbacks. And what is most important is that the combined system will add immeasurably to mass media's effectiveness in Saudi national development.

**Recommendations for the Saudi Press**

Although the Saudi newspapers belong to national establishments, which means that they are semi-private media, they are, as this study suggests, in no better condition than is broadcasting. As explained earlier, the press relies heavily on the international news agencies for news, reports, and even for articles. The newspapers too lack competent, specialized staff. Press function in Saudi Arabia is based on imitation of foreign newspapers; Saudi papers do not creatively take into consideration the needs of their readers, or participate in nation-building.

As we have seen in Chapter 9, the Saudi directors-general and editors-in-chief admit that their papers are inferior, but they attribute the weakness to the absence of
clear guidance and policy for the press, the press law restrictions, the lack of professionals, and social and religious restraints. It may be true that these factors are responsible for the atmosphere of uncertainty in which the Saudi press operates, but it is also true that the press establishments are themselves responsible for having failed to staff their newspapers and magazines with creative people who can produce publications that evidence good journalism and that at the same time operate within the nation's social, political, and religious framework. The fact is that the Saudi press owes it to the Saudi people—and to itself—to make the effort to create quality publications, for the character of a nation's press is an index to the character of the nation.

Based on Chapter 7's description of the press's content, and from my point of view as an observer of the Saudi media, it is clear the newspapers have seldom been put to effective use in the country's development. These papers emphasize local official activities, and political news which comes to them through the international agencies, rather than provide thought-provoking content. And even in reporting local events, as mentioned in Chapter 7 and as Willard Beling notes, Saudi reports "[do] not probe much below the surface, but only say, for example, that a meeting [has] taken place—without even disclosing any details of the agenda."8
As matters now stand, the Saudi press tends to encourage the status quo; for any number of reasons, the press is intellectually lazy. But the Saudi press can be a bold force for nation-building and change. In order for our press to become more attractive, effective, and potent tools for development, this study also recommends the following:

First, although the press law requires the editor-in-chief of a Saudi newspaper or magazine to be one of the owners of the press establishment, this should not be the only standard of selection. An editor-in-chief should be a competent specialist in journalism, and also socially responsible, patriotic, and sensitive to religious matters. If an editor-in-chief possesses all these attributes, then let him be an owner too, but let us not mistake ownership for competent journalism.

Second, as discussed in Chapter 7, most of the directors-general of Saudi press establishments work part-time on the newspapers, full-time elsewhere. It must be realized that the press is not merely a funnel for official and international news; newspapers are public opinion leaders with significant force in a nation's advancement. Therefore, the press requires highly skilled administrators who are able to devote sufficient time to it—and people who are willing to bear the responsibility of their office.

Third, the concept of the press's function must be altered. At present, the directors of the Saudi press view
it as a vehicle for political news, most of which is generated by foreign sources, and for entertainment. It seems this attitude has developed out of imitating developed nations. But in developing countries the situation is different, so that this sort of imitation has become more harmful than beneficial. It needs to be realized, as Wells has noted, that developing countries do not become modern in the same way that the already industrialized nations did.

There is a sequencing of the new and disparate elements of 'modernity' that is radically different from that experienced in the past by the advanced countries. Television now comes to the developing countries before factories or trans-country highways, and washing machines arrive in the modern sector before the amenity of uncontaminated piped water becomes widespread.9

The Saudi press must recognize its educational, cultural, constructive, and motivational role in the developing society it serves, and seek modern techniques with which to act in this role.

Fourth, the Saudi press must staff itself with competent, specialized people. It is no longer enough that a journalist should be anyone who happens to know how to write, which is at present customary in the Arab world. Journalism is much more simply knowing how to write; to be a journalist requires talent, intelligence, and specialization. After all, no one can be a physician without studying medicine, and no one can be a psychologist without studying psychology. How can one expect to become a successful journalist without specializing in the subject he
plans to write about? At present, a Saudi journalist typically writes about everything—politics, economics, society, and whatever other topics happen to arise.

This generalism is a major reason for the poor quality of our press. And yet, when I discussed the problem with the Saudi editors-in-chief, most of them insisted that specialization is not important for journalists; they justified this opinion by citing well-known Arab journalists who have no academic training in journalism. But where is it written that the press in other Arab countries is superior to ours? Studies concerning the Arab press, including the Saudi press, as well as my own observations during visits to the Arab countries, reveal that none of the Arab presses differ from one another except to the degree that they imitate the Western press. Another difficulty is that the Arab universities which teach mass media are as yet unable to prepare good journalists. If there are no famous Arab journalists who are products of the universities' mass media departments, then this is either because the departments are weak or because the press directors' own concept of journalism has denied them opportunity.

But things are different in developed countries. As most of the media studies show, and as the editors-in-chief cited in Chapter 9 agree, professional expertise is the primary requirement for journalists and the success of Western media has professionalism as its foundation. This
is what we should imitate, not content. The times demand competent, professional staff for the Saudi press. We have seen in Chapter 7 that most of the Saudi press staff work part-time, and that they either hold other jobs or go to school; these conditions are inimical to the development of a productive, creative Saudi press which can function independently of the international news agencies. As mentioned in preceding chapters, there are Saudi newspapers and magazines without more than ten full-time staff positions. Furthermore, most Saudi journalists exhibit an astonishing naiv'ete' regarding the power of the press; they seem unable to understand that being entrusted with the power to send information to a widely varied audience—and what is more, to control that information—entails commensurate responsibility. Some journalists are apparently not even aware that the press's power can make or break individual careers. It is urgent, then, that press reform begin now, and that it begin from the inside.

Fifth, we must diminish Saudi newspaper's disproportionately heavy reliance on the international news services. This dependence is harmful, because what the news agencies provide is largely irrelevant to the pressing problems of nation-building, and because national talent and creativity are discouraged. Surprisingly, during my interviews with the Saudi editors-in-chief, they seemed to regard subscription to the international agencies as a sign
of success and progress. But it must be recognized that the international agencies retain a strong national character despite the international nature of their operations, and that, as mentioned in Chapter 4, they tend to advance the interests of their own countries. Further, it is difficult to expect the foreign agencies to advance the interests and needs of Saudi society, because their staff have different ideological, political, and economic biases. The Saudi press must learn to speak to the Saudi people about matters of moment to Saudi Arabia.

Sixth, in order to build a firm foundation for its functions, the Saudi press needs to establish feedback units in the central and branch offices, or to cooperate with broadcasting's proposed feedback and audience research center. Feedback and audience research will ensure that press messages are directed to the interests of their audience, rather than depend on personal decisions of those who manage the press. Several wrong assumptions seem to prevail in the Saudi press: it is assumed that the audience is capable of receiving, but incapable of responding; that people are passive receivers; that one person is able to know the needs of an entire society. It is quite true that, as Jawaharlal Nehru said, "if we wish to convince people, we have to use their language as far as we can—not language in the narrow sense of the word, but the language of the mind."10 If Saudi newspapers wish to be respected opinion
leaders and movers in the nation's development, they must learn the "language of the mind"; the way to learn it is through feedback and audience research.

Seventh, it is true that government press subsidies aim at enabling the press to operate without financial problems and without having to resort to bribes or illegal financial resources outside the country. These subsidies, however, have made the Saudi press financially dependent, a fact which discourages creativity and competition. Initially, when the press was just beginning, the subsidies were essential, but they are no longer necessary. And if the government sees subsidies as a means of legitimatizing its supervision of the press, then it should be pointed out that the government always has the right to supervise the press, with or without subsidizing it. What is needed is a clear and specific policy for the press to follow, and this has been offered by the Supreme Council of Communication. It is now the press's responsibility to implement this policy. The Council should take steps to be certain that the press does function in accordance with the policy.

Furthermore, there are many ways besides subsidies in which the government can help the press. For one thing, the government buys advertising; in order to encourage productivity and creativeness, government advertising should go to the successful newspapers and magazines—the ones that prove they can both attract readers and serve the nation's
development. This approach is certain to stir competition among newspapers and magazines. Another means of help is to facilitate transportation for Saudi journalists so that they can move as fast and freely as their work requires. For example, journalists should be given priority airline reservations and should be exempt from paying airfares. In addition, press circulation can be facilitated by creating circulation bureaus, or by establishing early morning flights to bring same-day newspaper delivery to all regions of the country. Moreover, the government should encourage the training of Saudi journalists within the country or abroad. These indirect financial supports will lead to two benefits. First, competent journalists will be staffing the newspapers and circulation will extend nationwide; second, the press will be motivated toward improving itself.

Eighth, the shareholding membership of the Saudi press establishment should be increased to include professional full-time journalists. This will encourage them to remain in journalism and work enthusiastically to improve their newspapers. Surely it will be an improvement over the current system of ownership, in which press owners are businessmen or official people with no relationship to journalism except the money they put into the press establishment. Most of them have little genuine interest in the establishment's success.
Ninth, the press ought to be free from government control except that of the Saudi Supreme Council of Communication and the Ministry of Culture and Publications, as suggested earlier. The Council can supervise the press to see that it functions in accord with the established mass media policy. It seem appropriate that the Council, or the government as a whole, form a press committee that will take action if a newspaper publishes something that contradicts the policy or the religious, social, or political interests. Only this committee should have the right to judge whether a newspaper, magazine, or individual journalists has erred. This approach will put an end to the uncertainty under which the press currently labors, never knowing exactly who needs to be satisfied, what needs to be obeyed. Most of the Saudi press directors I interviewed pointed to this uncertainty as one of their major problems.

The foregoing suggestions are based on the findings of this study and on the social and political facts of Saudi Arabia. It is possible that communications scholars and journalists from other countries—especially Western countries—will take exception to them. I have given scant attention, for example, to "freedom of the press," which of course has long been the rallying cry of Western journalism; furthermore, I applaud a certain amount of government supervision of the press. But it must be remembered that the purpose of this study is to suggest ways for the Saudi
mass media to advance Saudi development. My solutions to the problems of the Saudi press, then, are offered in the same spirit; while these solutions may not be optimal for journalism in general, they are, I hope, what is best for Saudi journalism in particular.
NOTES


4Ibid., p. 34.


6Ibid., p. 53.


8Beling, p. 135.

9Wells, p. 5.

10Jawaharlal Nehru, in Samover and Porter, p. 145.
APPENDIX A

THE REGULATIONS OF PRINTED MATERIALS AND PUBLICATIONS
APPENDIX A

"Royal Decree for Printed Material and Publications"

Royal Decree No M/17 on 13/4/1402 A.H.

(February 7, 1982)

By the Grace of God,

We Khaled Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Sa'ud the King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, after reviewing the articles 19 and 20 of the Law of the Council of Ministers No 38 on 22/10/1377 A.H. And after reviewing the printing and printed materials which issued by a royal decree No 15 on 8/81/1378 A.H. And after reviewing the resolution of the Council of Ministers No 65 on 23/31/1407 A.H.

We decree the following:

First, agreement on regulations for printed material and publications in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Second, the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers, each in terms of what pertains to him, must implement this decree of ours.

Signed

Khaled

The Legal System for Printing and Publishing

Article 1: The following must conform to the rules of this legal system:

a. Printing presses.
b. Printed matter and newspapers.
c. Bookstores which engage in the sale of books and newspapers.
d. Places of business for design, photography, and calligraphy.
e. Places of business for printing, recording, selling and renting of films, records, and duplicating tapes.
f. Institutes for artistic production.
g. Offices of news agencies and information correspondents.
h. Offices for advertising, publicity and public relations.
i. Publication and distribution houses.

Definitions

Article 2: The following terms, wherever they appear in this legal system, are defined thusly:

a. Printing press: any apparatus equipped for printing of words, figures, or pictures on paper, clothing or any other material for the purpose of circulation.
b. Printer: official responsible for the printing press regardless of whether he is the owner or one represents him.
c. Printed matter: any device for expressing the real or symbolic in what is printed by mechanical or chemical
means regardless of whether its original is written, drawn, photographed, or oral if the objective is to adopt it for circulation.

d. **Newspaper**: any periodic publication which appears regularly at specified times such as newspapers, magazines, and bulletins.

e. **Journalism**: profession for the writing/editing and issuance of journalistic publications.

f. **Journalist**: anyone who adopts journalism as a profession and pursues it professionally or semi-professionally. Journalistic work includes writing and production of newspapers, editing of articles and supplying news, results of investigations, articles, pictures, and drawings.

g. **Bookstore**: place of business which engages in the display and sale of publications among them books, newspapers, and magazines.

h. **Public library**: library which is under any government body.

i. **Publication house**: institution which undertakes the preparation, production, distribution, and marketing of publications.

j. **Publisher**: whoever undertakes to publish some intellectual production for himself or others and offers it for circulation with or without compensation; it includes editor-in-chief, producer of broadcast
materials, office director of a news agency, and information correspondents.

k. Director: administrative official responsible for any of the activities aforementioned in the first article of this legal system.

l. Distributor: person who undertakes to offer publications for circulation regardless of whether they were published in or outside the kingdom.

m. Ministry: Ministry of Information

Licensing

Article 3: The opening of any places of offices or practicing of any professional activity indicated in Article 1 of this legal system is not permitted except after obtaining a license from the Ministry of Information; this licensing does not prevent the seeking of any other licenses which other observed regulations require.

Article 4: It is necessary that whoever is granted licensing for any work or activity aforementioned in Article 1 and the responsible office director fulfill the following conditions:

a. to be a Saudi citizen with legal capacity; it is permissible to exclude foreign information correspondents from the requirement of citizenship by a decision from the Minister of Information.

b. not to be less than 25 years of age; the Ministry of Information has the right to decrease the age
requirement for specific activities to no less than 20 years.

c. to be of good character and reputation without a criminal record or conviction for immorality or dishonesty as long as he has not been rehabilitated in accordance with the regulations and instructions related to it.

d. any other condition which the Ministry considers necessary for the practice of a professional activity in itself.

Article 5: In addition to the conditions mentioned in the preceeding article, it is necessary that every publisher and director of a printing press and office for publicity and public relations must be the holder of professional qualifications acceptable to the Ministry. The Minister of Information may grant an exemption from this condition to one who qualifies with appropriate or equivalent experience.

Article 6: The printing of any publication which is against the law or public morals in the kingdom is prohibited.
Article (7):

The printing, publishing, or circulation of printed matter which contains any of the following:

a. All that violates any basic law or infringes upon the sanctity of Islam and its tolerant law or offends public morality.

b. All that is incompatible with state security and public order.

c. All that infringes upon directives and regulations with its secretiveness except when special permission is granted by the competent authorities.

d. Reports and news which infringes upon the safety of the Saudi Arabian armed forces except after the approval of proper authorities.

c. All that is intended to expose armed forces personnel or its weapons and equipment to danger.

f. The publication of regulations, agreements, treaties, or official governmental statements, before their official announcement, as long as it was done without the approval of proper authorities.

g. All that infringes on the honor of presidents of countries or heads of diplomatic missions who are accredited by the Kingdom or harms relations with such countries.

h. All that is attributed of false news to officials of the state, institutions, and local organizations, public and private, or to individuals for the sole of purpose of
harming them or undermining their authority or infringing upon their honor.
i. Calling for destructive ideologies, shaking public confidence, and spreading divisiveness among citizens.
j. All that leads to the advocacy of or calling for criminal behavior or instigating attacks upon others in any way.
k. All that is defamatory or slanderous to individuals.
l. Extortion by threatening any person (physical or juridical) by publishing any secret with the intent to compel compensatory payment, real or incorporeal, or to force providing benefit to the perpetrator or any other person, or to prevent the exercise of legal rights.
Article 8: There should be compiled in every (printing) press a special paginated record affixed with the Ministry's seal. All relevant data should be recorded in it, especially titles of books prepared for publication, names of authors and publishers (if available), their addresses, and the number of copies requested for printing. It is also incumbent upon the director of the printing press to make available such a record to the appropriate inspectors upon request.

Article 9: There should be recorded on the first page of each publication printed internally the title of the publication, name of the author, the publisher, if available, date of publication and the number of the printing press.

Article 10: The publisher and author are responsible for any violation that may appear in a publication if it is circulated prior to obtaining approval. If either of the two pleads ignorance, then the director of the press becomes responsible; if he pleads ignorance on behalf of the press, then the distributor or whoever is in possession of the publication is responsible.

Article 11: Every author, publisher, or distributor who desires to print a publication for circulation must present
two copies of it to the Ministry for its approval before printing or offering it for circulation. The Ministry within a thirty day period from the date of submission of the request will either approve the publication by affixing its seal on the two copies submitted and return one of them to the person concerned or reject it with a statement of reasons. A complaint against the rejection decision may be lodged with the Minister of Information whose decision in this case is final.

Article 12: (a) One author, publisher, or distributor must, before circulating any publication printed in the Kingdom, deposit in the National Publishing House in Riyadh five free copies of books and three free copies of other matter; the deposit should be made immediately upon their publication. As for newspapers the deposit should be made within three days of their publication.

External Publications

Article 13: Publications arriving from outside the country must be devoid of any prohibited items specified in this law.

Article 14: No publication arriving from outside the country is allowed circulation except after submitting two
copies of its to the Ministry for its approval. The Ministry, under normal circumstances, will either approve the publication within a period of thirty days from the date of submission by affixing a seal on the two copies, one of which is returned to the official concerned or will reject it with a statement of reasons. A complaint against the rejection decision may be lodged with the Minister of Information whose decision in this case is final:
(b) The revocation of newspapers and periodicals arriving from outside will be applied in accordance within the instructions which are issued by the Minister of Information.

Article 15: The Ministry has the right in facilitating permission for circulation to develop an agreement with the official concerned to remove objectionable pages or to blot out what it deems necessary in an appropriate way.

Article 16: The Ministry has the right to confiscate any prohibited or unapproved publication and to destroy it without compensation or to retain it or give permission to re-export it. The Minister of Information has the right to determine whether compensation is to be arranged in the event of retention of a publication.
Article 17: Every Saudi who has publication printed outside of the country to deposit in the National Publishing House in Riyadh five free copies of books and three copies of other printed matter immediately upon their publication.

Article 18: An exception to what preceded is the censorship by the Ministry of any publications procured by universities, public libraries, and government agencies, provided that the Ministry of Information is specifically advised of such procurement. However, it is not permitted to circulate any publication for information as long as it has not been originally authorized for circulation.

Article 19: The Minister of Information of his representative to issue individual licenses, permanent or temporary, to allow researchers to examine unlicensed publications.

**Literary Rights**

Article 20: One rights of authorship, printing, translation and publication are safeguarded for all Saudis owners, their heirs, and the authors of these publications printed inside the Kingdom and for the national subjects of states whose laws safeguard such a right for Saudis.
Article 21: The Ministry must prevent any infringement upon the aforementioned rights in the preceding article. The committee referred to in Article 40 of this law has the authority to investigate any infringement upon these rights and hand a judgment of compensation to the concerned person for any material and spiritual harm may have befallen him.
The Concerns of the Local Press

Article 22: Licensing for the publication of newspapers is granted in accordance with the rules pertinent to it.

Article 23: Among the aims of local newspapers is the call to the Islamic Religion, noble characteristics, guidance, and raising consciousness to all that comprises goodness, progress, righteousness, the dissemination of culture and knowledge, and objective treatment of matters. Newspapers should comply with the restrictions laid down in this system of rules.

Article 24: The freedom of expressing an opinion by various means of publication is guaranteed within the purview of enacted and religious rules and local newspapers are not subjected to censorship except during emergency circumstances which are determined by the Council of Ministers.

Article 25: Every person has the right to pursue journalistic work in accordance with the provisions of this system of regulations and executive rules.

Article 26: It is not permissible to issue a magazine or publication outside the purview of journalistic institutions.
be it governmental; civil or individual except through licensing by the Minister of Information; this licensing is not granted except with the approval of the prime minister. Exempt from licensing are journals and publications which are issued by universities, institutes, and schools; their publication takes place after an agreement concerning them is reached between the ministry and the concerned party; and the supervision of the publication and the director of the issuing administrative agency are responsible for guaranteeing what is published is in accordance with the provisions of this system of regulations.

Article 27: Whoever applies to obtain in his own name a license, as aforementioned in the preceding article, must fulfill the conditions laid down in the fourth and fifth articles of this system of rules.

Article 28: Whoever applies for a license to issue a journal or a publication in accordance with the two preceding articles must submit the following statement:

(a) The name of the editor-in-chief with a statement of his qualifications; the Ministry has the right to accept or reject him.

(b) The name of the journal or publication, place and dates of publication, and the subjects and specialties to be dealt with.
(c) The language(s) in which it is to be published.
(d) The name of the printing press in which it will be printed, and the name and address of its owner.
(e) Any other information requested by the Ministry.

Furthermore, the Ministry should be supplied with information about modification made in these statements.

**Article 29:** The names of the licensed official and editor-in-chief, place of publication and date of publication and subscription, as well as the name of the press in which it was printed, should appear in clear form in a conspicuous place in the newspaper.

**Article 30:** The name of any previously published newspaper which subsequently closed publication cannot be used except after the elapse of at least ten (10) years after it has ceased publication as long as those who are affiliated with it or their heirs do not give up the name; likewise, the name cannot be adopted for a newspaper or a new printed matter which leads to confusion with the name of another.

**Article 31:** The Ministry has the right to establish annual subscription fees for newspapers, magazines, and publications as well as the price of a single issue just as
it has the right to administer matters of advertisement and their rates.

**Article 32:** The Minister of Information has the right to withdraw a license if the newspaper or publication ceases publication for a continuous period which exceeds three months or if it continues publication sporadically and irregularly.

**Article 33:** The Ministry of Information has the right to confiscate or destroy any issue of any newspaper published in the Kingdom without reimbursement of it contained what may affect negatively the religious feeling or peace or general morals or general regulations. The responsible party will be punished according to law.

**Article 34:** The Minister of Information has the right to stop any publication in the Kingdom for a period which does not exceed thirty days. Any extension must be approved by the Prime Minister.

**Article 35:**

A. Neither a publication or its employees are permitted by law to accept bribes from foreign sources directly or indirectly, within or without the Kingdom.
B. Advertisements for foreign countries or institutions, governmental or private, are not permitted unless approved by the Ministry of Information.

C. Investigative reports of an advertising nature are not permitted publication unless they indicate clearly their nature.

Article 36:

A. The editor assumes full responsibility for what is published in his publication.

B. The writer of an article is responsible for what he writes if he signs his legal name or pseudonym. In the absence of the name, the editor will assume responsibility.

Article 37: If a newspaper publishes wrong information, it must publish the corrections, in its first issue after the request is made in the same location of the original publication or in a noticiable location. The following conditions must be observed:

A. Publication will only be of the corrected part.

B. If the corrected publication was not made properly before.

C. The correction must be in the same language of the original publication.

D. The correction must not include the publication of any violation of rules.
Article 38: Without prejudice to any stiffer punishment, a violator of any of these regulations will receive a punishment of one year imprisonment and/or 30,000 Riyals.

Article 39: Upon violation of Article 35A mentioned above, the bribe must be confiscated in addition to the punishment stated in Article 38.

Article 40: Upon a resolution from the Minister of Information, a committee of three members is formed to look into all violations. One of the members must be a legal advisor; and all decisions are made by vote of the majority. Decisions are made after hearing the offender or his representative or any other person the committee deems to summon. All decisions become effective after approval by the Minister of Information.

Article 41: A violator who receives a jail sentence or a charge which exceeds 1,000 Riyals, may file an appeal before the Court of Appeals during the thirty days following this notification of the verdict. The sentence will not be carried out until the Court of Appeals makes its decision.

Article 42: If the nature of a violation is beyond the limits of this code, the Ministry will submit it to the Prime Minister for his consideration and decision.
APPENDIX B

MASS COMMUNICATION POLICY IN SAUDI ARABIA
APPENDIX B

MASS COMMUNICATION POLICY IN SAUDI ARABIA*

INTRODUCTION: The information policy refers to the principles and goals which constitute the foundations and requirements of information in Saudi Arabia. This policy emanates from Islam, in doctrine and law, which is the national religion. It aims at establishing belief in God, raising the intellectual, cultural, and perceptual level in the citizens, and dealing with social problems. It seeks to stress the concept of obedience to God, His Prophet, and the legal guardian. It urges to respect the law and to carry it out contently. It includes the broad outlines which govern the Saudi information; thus accomplishing the goals by means of education, guidance, and recreation. This policy is considered a part of the country's general policy, and is specified in the following articles:

Article I: Saudi information has its obligation to Islam exclusively. It seeks to keep the tradition of this nation, and to exclude all that contradicts God's laws which He gave to the people.

Article II: The Saudi mass communication will oppose all destructive currents, atheistic inclinations, materialistic philosophies, and all attempts to distract the Moslems from their beliefs. It will further expose their falsehood and dangers to the individuals and societies, and will stand up to every challenge which does not agree with the general policy of the country.

Article III: All the information media seek to serve society by consolidating its precious Islamic values; firmly fixing its honored Arabic traditions; keeping its gracious inherited customs; and stand in opposition to everything that spoils its purity and harmony.

Article IV: All mass communication will seek to serve the existing policy of the Kingdom, protecting the primary interests of the citizens first, then the Moslems and Arabs in general. This will be done by the adoption of this policy and its presentation with full documentation, supported by precedence and facts.

Article V: All the mass communication will seek to present the unique and distinctive characteristics of Saudi Arabia on the national and international levels, emphasizing its stability and safety, and progress in various domains by embracing Islam as the
constitution of the government and the law of life, placing upon her shoulders the responsibility of serve the Islamic sacred places.

**Article VI**: All the mass communication will seek to strengthen the bond among the citizens by informing them of the numerous parts of their country and the significant aspects pertaining to them, thus demonstrating the complementary nature of these regions.

**Article VII**: All the mass communication will seek to enhance the loyalty to the country, bringing to light the capabilities and potential bestowed upon it, and reminding them of the greatness of its past and present. As the citizen is made aware of his responsibility to his country, he will be urged to contribute to its progress, advancement, and protection.

**Article VIII**: The Saudi mass communication will give the family its due attention, being the essential unit in the society, and the first school where children learn and are guided, where their personalities are developed and enriched.

**Article IX**: The Saudi mass communication affirms the relationship between today's child and tomorrow's environment. Thus, attention will be given to the guidance, educational, and recreational programs
for children. The programs will be based on educational and scientific principles, and directed by highly specialized personnel.

**Article X:** Recognizing the innate quality which the woman has, and the duty which God has given her, the mass communication will provide special programs which will assist the woman in performing her innate duty in society.

**Article XI:** The Saudi mass communication will give special consideration to the teenagers, realizing the importance of the period of adolescence. Thus special programs will be designed to deal with their problems and meet their needs; thus preparing them adequately in religion and behavior.

**Article XII:** The mass communication will seek, through the use of the audio-visual, to be informative in all that pertains to the history of the Kingdom by means of documentaries and recordings within and without the Kingdom.

**Article XIII:** The Saudi mass communication will seek cooperation with educational and social organizations and research centers to conduct communication studies.

**Article XIV:** The mass communication will design programs which will appeal to the highly educated to keep
them abreast of all the educational and intellectual studies and scientific publications.

**Article XV:** The mass communication will seek to promote and encourage scholarship in all fields of specialization. This can be accomplished at a high level of religion, science, awareness, and dedication, having all conditions favorable.

**Article XVI:** Realizing its significant role, the mass communication will deal directly and effectively to abolish illiteracy by adopting educational and scientific principles, dedicating educational programs that meet the needs of every age and mentality.

**Article XVII:** The mass communication in Saudi Arabia are certain that standard Arabic is the vehicle of Islam and the reservoir of its education. Consequently, the following points are emphasized:

1. The authors and writers of programs will be directed to follow closely the rules of grammar and syntax, as well as care for correct expression and pronunciation.

2. The news casters, program directors, and club sponsors will be directed to use standard Arabic, to avoid making mistakes in pronunciation, and conform to the rules of proper execution.

3. To be highly selective, and avoid all that is derogatory or downgrading of standard Arabic.
(4) To raise the level of the programs that use colloquial Arabic gradually, and replace it with simplified standard Arabic.

(5) To actively support all programs, plays, and series which utilize the standard Arabic to make it desirable to the public.

(6) To engage in teaching standard Arabic to the non-Arabic speakers in the Islamic countries, utilizing the most advanced methods and technology.

Article XVIII: The Saudi mass media currently support educational and scientific movements by the following ways:

(1) Encouraging researchers, scientists, and intellectuals in every way possible which includes the publishing of their scholarly works, and giving them opportunities to express their views.

(2) Guiding young talents and encouraging them, and sponsoring them until they reach the desired level.

(3) Holding scholarly discussions and literary and scientific conferences among the educated in the Kingdom, as well as with others outside; thus, presenting the educational and scientific capabilities of the Kingdom.

(4) Encouraging specialized periodicals which are published in Saudi Arabia and the Arab world.
(5) Supporting national publishing houses that they may publish serious Saudi writings, and sponsoring book exhibits, thus demonstrating the rank which Saudi Arabia has attained in the scientific and educational world.

**Article XIX:** The Saudi information media stresses the significance of tradition and the need to revive it. It carries out its part by accomplishing the following:

1. Encouraging the preservation of tradition materially and morally by:
   - Preparing programs identifying its books and their locations.
   - Publishing it at the expense of the government and making it available to everyone.
   - Facilitating the availability of these books to the parties concerned.

2. Resisting every effort which seeks to destroy tradition or scorn it.

3. Encouraging programs which draw on books of tradition, especially in the areas of study, play series and literary biographies.

4. Exhibition masterpieces of tradition, introducing the public to the forefathers'/ancestors' efforts and accomplishments in many fields of knowledge, and inviting them to bridge the gap between the past and the present of this nation.
Article XX: The information media will seek to bring closer all the Moslems by means of introducing the Islamic peoples, their countries, potentials and capabilities; and to instigate cooperation among these countries.

Article XXI: The Saudi information media seeks:

(1) Unity and cooperation among all Arabs, avoiding all antagonistic tendencies.

(2) Defenses of their cases especially the ones dealing with their destinies, urging them to stand up for Islam at every opportunity that avails itself.

Article XXII: The Saudi information media affirms the standing invitation to God among Moslems and others until God inherits the whole earth. Thus the Saudi means of communication participates in this obligation in all wisdom and advice, seeking to communicate with intellect while respecting the privacy of others.

Article XXIII: The Saudi information media, in cooperation with their counterparts in the Islamic world in general, and the Arab world in particular, will seek to adopt a unified program which serves the religious and secular interests of all Moslems, and will attempt to represent their cultural and intellectual unity.
Article XXIV: The Saudi information media affirms its respect of the rights of everyone individually and collectively. Simultaneously, it seeks to create an atmosphere of harmony, unity, and cooperation among all, informing everyone of his direct responsibility for the whole society.

Article XXV: The Saudi information media seeks to be objective in presenting the facts, avoiding exaggerations, valuing the honor of an individual's word and the need to protect it and raise it above every suspicion.

Article XXVI: The Saudi information media desires that freedom of expression be guaranteed within the national goals and values of Islam.

Article XXVII: The Saudi information media advocates respect for the dignity of man; to exercise freedom in his land; to disapprove of every act of violence on individuals or peoples; to fight all expansive intentions; to stand by right, justice, and peace; and to rise against injustice and racism.

Article XXVIII: The Saudi information media affirms the import of human expert resources which is capable of accomplishing the goals of the Saudi means of communication;
and entrusting these resources with training and making necessary adjustments.

Article XXIX: The Saudi information media encourages local production of materials which are in accordane with its policy.

Article XXX: The information media of Saudi Arabia shall comply with this policy and the execution of all its rules and regulations.
APPENDIX C

THE RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Dear Sir:

I am conducting a study regarding the mass media in Saudi Arabia: present function, barriers, and selected strategies for effective use in the national development process.

This research is a part of my doctoral study at The Ohio State University in the United States. Your cooperation is essential if the research is to be valid and useful.

Actually, the most significant aspects of the following questions are to know and explore:

1. Your concept about the function that mass media should do.
2. The present function of the Saudi mass media.
3. Your opinion about the role of the Saudi mass media in the national development.
4. The basis of decision-making regarding the media messages.
5. Saudi mass media dependence on foreign-media production.
6. Barriers which have retarded Saudi media from being used effectively.
7. Basic requirements necessary for Saudi media.

The attached form when completed by you and other directors of our media will help in knowing the present function and problems of the Saudi mass media.

Please respond thoughtfully to the various items according to your present understanding and your personal feelings. Please make sure that the answers accurately represent the reality of Saudi media. The answers are included along with the questions; please just select answers that you believe are accurate and reflect the reality.

In fact, giving an accurate picture of the Saudi mass media and proposing different strategies to them will be based partially on your replies.

However, since the purpose of the study is to obtain accurate and true information about the situation of the mass media in Saudi Arabia, your name should not be signed on the form.

Sincerely,

Said Al-Marithi
These are the questions with their answers. Please select an answer to each question that you believe accurately reflects the reality of the Saudi mass media.

**PART ONE:** Questions one, two, and three are about the mass media in general.

1. The mass media, in general, play a significant role in national development and change.
   - ( ) Strongly Agree
   - ( ) Agree
   - ( ) I Do Not Know
   - ( ) Disagree
   - ( ) Strongly Disagree

2. Development process and change will be incomplete without mass media help.
   - ( ) Strongly Agree
   - ( ) Agree
   - ( ) I Do Not Know
   - ( ) Disagree
   - ( ) Strongly Disagree

3. Mass media are able to encourage and mobilize people to accept and participate in the development process and change.
   - ( ) Strongly Agree
   - ( ) Agree
   - ( ) I Do Not Know
   - ( ) Disagree
   - ( ) Strongly Disagree

**About Saudi Mass Media:

4. Saudi mass media participate in the national development process.
   - ( ) Strongly Agree
   - ( ) Agree
   - ( ) I Do Not Know
   - ( ) Disagree
   - ( ) Strongly Disagree

5. Saudi mass media have not done what they should do in speeding up national development.
   - ( ) Strongly Agree
   - ( ) Agree
   - ( ) I Do Not Know
   - ( ) Disagree
   - ( ) Strongly Disagree

6. Decisions regarding what kind of Saudi media messages should be transmitted to the Saudi audiences are based on personal decisions of the media directors and staff.
   - ( ) Strongly Agree
   - ( ) Agree
   - ( ) I Do Not Know
   - ( ) Disagree
   - ( ) Strongly Disagree
7. I feel that receivers of our mass media do not trust our media.

( ) Strongly Agree  ( ) Disagree
( ) Agree  ( ) Strongly Disagree
( ) I Do Not Know

8. The audiences of Saudi mass media are not satisfied with what the media present to them.

( ) Strongly Agree  ( ) Disagree
( ) Agree  ( ) Strongly Disagree
( ) I Do Not Know

9. Knowing the audience's needs is a fundamental factor for an effective use of the mass media.

( ) Strongly Agree  ( ) Disagree
( ) Agree  ( ) Strongly Disagree
( ) I Do Not Know

10. Conducting field research in order to understand the reaction of Saudi audiences to their media messages does not occur at the present time.

( ) Strongly Agree  ( ) Disagree
( ) Agree  ( ) Strongly Disagree
( ) I Do Not Know

11. Saudi mass media output depends highly on the foreign media production.

( ) Strongly Agree  ( ) Disagree
( ) Agree  ( ) Strongly Disagree
( ) I Do Not Know

12. The foreign news agencies form the main sources for the international news in Saudi mass media.

( ) Strongly Agree  ( ) Disagree
( ) Agree  ( ) Strongly Disagree
( ) I Do Not Know

13. As a result of the Saudi mass media dependence on the foreign media production, the Saudi media participate negatively in changing Saudi culture, traditions, and customs.

( ) Strongly Agree  ( ) Disagree
( ) Agree  ( ) Strongly Disagree
( ) I Do Not Know
14. Formulation of an independent governing body for the Saudi mass media, the same as Saudi petroline, airlines, and other government establishments will result in more improvement in the quality of the Saudi media production.

( ) Strongly Agree
( ) Agree
( ) I Do Not Know

( ) Disagree
( ) Strongly Disagree

15. The misunderstanding of the mass media role by Saudi official authorities is one of the strongest barriers which retards Saudi mass media to be used effectively in national development.

( ) Strongly Agree
( ) Agree
( ) I Do Not Know

( ) Disagree
( ) Strongly Disagree

PART TWO

16. The Saudi mass media was an important factor in encouraging Saudis to participate in the development process during the past two five-year plans of the national development.

( ) Strongly Agree
( ) Agree
( ) I Do Not Know

( ) Disagree
( ) Strongly Disagree

17. How do you view Saudi mass media in its present role as a tool for national development?

( ) Excellent
( ) Very Good
( ) Good
( ) I Do Not Know

( ) Weak
( ) Very Weak

18. What is the primary function for Saudi mass media, is it:

( ) Entertainment
( ) Propaganda
( ) Information

( ) Culture
( ) I Do Not Know

( ) Other, please specify:

19. What major method is used to ascertain the needs of Saudi audiences in order to direct the media output in a way which serves the audience’s needs. Saudi audience’s needs are known by:

( ) An annual field research among the audiences.
( ) Letters from the audiences.
( ) Assumptions based on the fact we as media personnel are part of the society.
( ) All of the above.
( ) None of the above.
20. What percentage of the news transmitted by the Saudi mass media is coming from the international news agencies and other foreign agencies?

( ) 25% ( ) 40% ( ) 55% ( ) 70% ( ) 85% ( ) 100%
( ) Other, please specify: ______________________

21. Please check each item below that you believe is responsible for Saudi media dependence on foreign media production.

( ) Lack of professional personnel.
( ) Lack of technological expertise.
( ) Lack of human resources in general.
( ) Widespread appeal of foreign media production.
( ) The necessity of foreign media production to national development.
( ) Budgetary constraints.
( ) Social constraints.
( ) Political constraints.
( ) Other, please specify: ______________________

22. Please check each item below that you think is the largest barrier which has retarded Saudi mass media to be effectively used in the national development.

A. Social Conditions.
( ) Strongly Agree ( ) Disagree
( ) Agree ( ) Strongly Disagree
( ) I Do Not Know

B. Political Conditions:
( ) Strongly Agree ( ) Disagree
( ) Agree ( ) Strongly Disagree
( ) I Do Not Know

C. Religious Conditions:
( ) Strongly Agree ( ) Disagree
( ) Agree ( ) Strongly Disagree
( ) I Do Not Know

D. Professional Personnel:
( ) Strongly Agree ( ) Disagree
( ) Agree ( ) Strongly Disagree
( ) I Do Not Know

E. Financial Conditions:
( ) Strongly Agree ( ) Disagree
( ) Agree ( ) Strongly Disagree
( ) I Do Not Know
23. Please check each item you believe is the most needed for the Saudi mass media improvement.

A. A Professional People in Media:
   ( ) Strongly Agree  ( ) Disagree
   ( ) Agree          ( ) Strongly Disagree
   ( ) I Do Not Know

B. More Money:
   ( ) Strongly Agree  ( ) Disagree
   ( ) Agree          ( ) Strongly Disagree
   ( ) I Do Not Know

C. New Regulations:
   ( ) Strongly Agree  ( ) Disagree
   ( ) Agree          ( ) Strongly Disagree
   ( ) I Do Not Know

D. Others, Please Specify:
   ____________________________
APPENDIX D

THE RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (ARABIC)
بعد التحية،
في حوارة لمشاهدات إستراتيجيات ونتائج مختلفة من أجل استخدام على حالات ووسائل الإعلام العربية خاصة فيما يتعلق بالتقنية الوطنية. أقيم بالاحياء بدراسة
مهمة الوسائل الإعلامية في المملكة العربية السعودية وذلك فيما يتعلق بالوسائل التي تقام بها في الوقت الحاضر والساحق الذي تتعلق بها.

إن هذا البحث الذي أقيم به من مخرجات الدكتور في جامعة
ولاية أوهايو في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. وفي الحقيقة أن نتاكدك يعتبر أساساً فيما إذا قدر لهذا البحث أن يكون محيقاً وصادقاً ومهما.

إن النتائج النصيرة للأصة التالية تمكن في معرفة واكتشاف التالي:
أولاً: الفهمك الشحيح للوسائل التي يجب أن تقدم بها وسائل الإعلام في المجتمع.

ثانياً: الوظيفة الحالية لوسائل الإعلام السعودي.

ثالثاً: رأيك في القدر الذي تقوم به وسائل الإعلام في التنمية الوطنية بشكل عام.

رابعاً: الأسس التي تتيحها هيئة القرار في الرسالة الإعلامية.

خامساً: استعداد وسائل الإعلام السعودي على الانتاج الإعلامي الخارجي غير المحلي.

سادساً: الصوريات التي تتعين وسائل الإعلام السعودي من الاستخدام الفعال والامثل.

سابعاً: المنسحبات الأساسية التي تحتاجها وسائل الإعلام.

إن جاهزتك بالإضافة إلى اجابات الأخبار الصرفية الأخرى في وسائل إعلامنا على الأصلة
الصرفية سوف يساعد كثيراً على معرفة الوظيفة الحالية لوسائل الإعلام السعودي وذلك المناشئ.

لذا ارجو لو تكررت الأصوات بكل اهتمام على الأصلة المرفقة طبقاً لما بليته عليك
فهمك الحالي للإعلام ولذلك مشاعرك التحصية نحو الوسائل الإعلامية.

وارجو أيضاً التأكد بأن الإجابات فعلاً تمت حققة الإعلام السعودي. هذا ينير تكن
بان الإجابة مرتفعة بالأسقفة. وكل ما أرجو هو اختيار الإجابات التي تنحنون إنها تعكس
حققت وسائل إعلامنا.
وفي الواقع إن إعطاء صورة صادفة عن وسائل الإعلام السعودي وبالتالي إيجاد استراتيجيات مختلفة واحتياج مزايا جديدة التي ستتناسب الأطروحة التي أقوم بكتابة سترتيك هي رد ما على اجابةك.

على أي حال بما أن الفرض من هذه الأسئلة هو تحقيق معلومات صادفة وصحيحة عن وضع وسائل الإعلام السعودي فإن السؤال لا يجب ولن يكتب على الاستمارة المرفقة. كما أن الإجابات ستكون محل اللطف وستكون لأغراض البحث العلمي فقط وليس للنشر والتشابه.

شكرا على تعاونكم وكم مني التحية....

اخركم

سعد العبادي الحارثي
هذه هي الأسئلة متعلقة بالأجابة على فرضيات اختيار الأسئلة التي تعتقد أنها تعكس بصدق

۱ - وسائل الإعلام بشكل عام تلعب دوراً مهماً في التنمية الوطنية والتغيير.
   اوافق بقوة
   اوافق
   لا أعلم
   لا أوافق
   لا أوافق
   لا أوافق

۲ - عمليات التنمية والتغيير سوف لن تكمل بدون وسائل الإعلام.
   اوافق بقوة
   اوافق
   لا أعلم
   لا أوافق
   لا أوافق
   لا أوافق

۳ - وسائل الإعلام تملك القدرة على تشجيع وتحفيز المجتمع للقبول ومن ثم المشاركة في
   عمليات التنمية والتغيير.
   اوافق بقوة
   اوافق
   لا أعلم
   لا أوافق
   لا أوافق
   لا أوافق

- الاستجابة القائمة على الإعلام السعودي

۴ - الإعلام السعودي شارك في عمليات التنمية والتغيير.
   اوافق بقوة
   اوافق
   لا أعلم
   لا أوافق
   لا أوافق
   لا أوافق
5 - الإعلام السعودي لم يقم بما يجب أن يقوم به في التحصيل بعمليات التنمية الوطنية.
أوافق بقوة - 
أوافق - 
لا أعلم - 
لا أوافق ابدا 
لا أوافق - 

6 - قرارات اختيار المواد الإعلامية التي تقدم أو يجب تقديمها للمتلفي السعودى ترتبط في الأساس على الاتجاه التحسي لذوي الهموم ووسائل الإعلام.
أوافق بقوة - 
أوافق - 
لا أعلم - 
لا أوافق ابدا 
لا أوافق - 

7 - اشعر بأن التنقين لوسائل الإعلام لا يثقون فيها.
أوافق بقوة - 
أوافق - 
لا أعلم - 
لا أوافق ابدا 
لا أوافق - 

8 - التنقين لوسائل الإعلام السعودي غير راضين عنها يقدم لهم عبر هذه الوسائل.
أوافق بقوة - 
أوافق - 
لا أعلم - 
لا أوافق ابدا 
لا أوافق - 

9 - معرفة حاجات ورغبات التنقين تعتبر عاملًا أساسيًا في الاستخدام المؤثر والفعال لوسائل الإعلام.
أوافق بقوة - 
أوافق - 
لا أعلم - 
لا أوافق ابدا 
لا أوافق - 

10 -
10 - ليس هناك بحث على ميداني لمعرفة رأى وافقوا، وانطباعات المتلقين السعوديين عن الإعلام السعودي حتى الوقت الحاضر (بمعنى آخر القيمة ببحث على ميداني لمعرفة رأى وافقوا، وانطباعات المتلقين السعوديين عن الإعلام السعودي) لم يصل حتى الآن.

11 - وسائل الإعلام السعودي تعتمد في مواردها بشكل كبير على الأنتاج الإعلامي الخارجي.

12 - وكالات الأنباء العالمية تشكل المصدر الأساسي للأخبار العالمية في وسائل الإعلام السعودي.

13 - شاركت وسائل الإعلام السعودي سبعا من تعليم الحجارة والعادات والتقاليد السعودية وذلك نتيجة لمصادقا في مواردها على الأنتاج الإعلامي المستورد من الخارج.
14- تشكيك مؤسسة حكومية مستقلة لوسائل الإعلام السعودي على غرار مؤسسة بيغريمن والخطوات السعودية وغيرها من المؤسسات الحكومية التي لا ترتبط بالرقميين سوف ينتج عن تحسين كبير في انتاج وسائل الإعلام السعودي.
  -افق بقوة
  -افق
  -لا أعرف
  -لا أوافق

15- مز الفهم لدور وسائل الإعلام في المملكة يعتبر من أكبر العوائق التي تعوق وسائل الإعلام السعودي من الاستخدام الورق والفعال في التنمية الوطنية.
  -افق بقوة
  -وفق
  -لا أعرف
  -لا أوافق
  -لا أوافق

الجزء الثاني:

16- وسائل الإعلام السعودي كانت عاملًا مهمًا في تشجيع السعوديين للمشاركة في عمليات التنمية والتغيير خلال الخطط الحساسة الناصية الأولى والثانية.
  -افق بقوة
  -افق
  -لا أعرف
  -لا أوافق
  -لا أوافق

17- كيف بدي وسائل الإعلام السعودي في دورها الحاضر كوسيلة للتنمية الوطنية.
  -صعبة
  -جيد جدا
  -جيد
  -لا أعرف
  -صعبة جدا
18- ما هي الوظيفة الأساسية التي تقوم بها وسائل الإعلام السعودي؟
- الإخبارية
- الثقافية
- التعليمية
- الثقافية (الأخبار وغيرها)
- الإعلانية
- غير ذلك 
 من فضلك أذكر إذا كان هناك وظيفة أساسية غير ما ذكر أعلاه.

19- ما هي الطريقة الأساسية التي تستخدم معرفة وتحقيق حاجات ورغبات المتعلقين
السعوديين وذلكل توجيه إنتاج وسائل الإعلام في الطريق الذي يخدم هذه الحاجات
والرغبات؟
- بحث ميداني دوري باستغدام طرق الاستماع والاستفتاء، بين المتعلقين السعوديين
- الرسائل التي تأتي من المتعلقين
- اتفاقيات شخصية خاصة وثيقة كسلامات من الإعلام جزء من هذا المجتمع
- كل ما ذكر أعلاه
- ولا واحد مما ذكر أعلاه

20- كم تشكل نسبة أخبار وكالات الأخبار العالمية وكالات الأخبار الفجر سعودية الأخرى
في الإخبار المقدم عبر وسائل الإعلام السعودي؟
من هذه النسبة:
- %25
- %40
- %56
- %70
- %85
- %100
- غير ذلك
 من فضلك أذكر النسبة

21- من فضلك ضع علامة مع ( ) على أي من القرارات التالية في هذا السؤال والتي تعتقد أنها
سببة عن اعتقاد وسائل الإعلام السعودية على الإنتاج الإعلامي الخارجي.
- فهل تعتقدين وسائل الإعلام السعودية على الإنتاج الإعلامي الخارجي بسبب:
22 من فضلك ضع علامة جم على أي من الفقرات التالية والتي تعتقد أنها أكبر عقبة اعاقة:

**أ - ظروف اجتماعية:**

- أوافق
- أوافق بقوة
- لا أعلم
- لا أوافق
- لا أوافق ابدا

**ب - ظروف سياسية:**

- أوافق
- أوافق بقوة
- لا أتعلم
- لا أوافق
- لا أوافق ابدا

**ج - ظروف دينية:**

- أوافق
- أوافق بقوة
- لا أتعلم
- لا أوافق
- لا أوافق ابدا

**د - عدم وجود متصفحين في الاعلام:**

- أوافق
- أوافق بقوة
- لا أتعلم
- لا أوافق
- لا أوافق ابدا

**ه - ظروف مالية:**

- أوافق
- أوافق بقوة
- لا أتعلم
- لا أوافق
- لا أوافق ابدا
أ - الأبواب متخصصين في وسائل إعلام:

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ب - زيادة القدرة البالية:

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ج - إنشاء جديدة:

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اذكر إذا كان هناك اجتهاد آخر تعتقد أن إعلامنا يتحصل عليه غير ما ذكر تجليه من فنى اذكر.

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