

What can ethnography teach us about PSM in the Arab context?

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media and social change

- *A shared knowledge:*
- Media structures are inextricably linked to power/political structures
- Social change, media and political structures.
- 2 deficits in thinking about the question of PSM in the Arab context:

1- Media Centrism

2- Assuming the Audience

- *Private media as Public media*

Deficit 1 - Publicness and media-centrism

- Public service media have to be understood within their larger historical, philosophical and political contexts
- In Europe, PSM has been part of an **‘unfinished project’**: the search for a rational and ethical society
- This project is connected to a whole paradigm/set of ideas, individual rights, citizenship, pluralism, democracy, public good, freedom of expression, etc.
- The Global South, PSM and the problem of **media-centrism**: ‘strategic essentialism’ – how is ‘publicness’ conceptualized?

Deficit 2- assuming audiences

- Evidence from CAMRI research projects on Arab children and Screen media, funded by the AHRC (2013-2015), and the British Academy (2017) persistently showed that:
- Media practitioners, media regulators, media academics, civil society groups all assume the position of Arab children audiences
- Dominance of **quantitative research** and the effects model
- media regulation of children's media content is mainly protectionist, thus overlooking the relationship between provision of appropriate content and participation as well as protection.

Children audiences and PSM as *habitus*

- Ethnography (Beirut, Casablanca, London/ Children 7-12)
- The 1 Week Satellite Schedule Experiment
- London children: [diasporic habitus and publicness]
- Casablanca: [education – lack of a welfare state system]
- Beirut: [sectarianism/context of war]

Private media as public media

- 6 in 10 Arab audiences surveyed in a 2017 Northwestern University study (Jordan, Egypt, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia), said their favourite news organization was privately owned
- Majorities in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia say their favourite news organization is privately owned—nearly all in Lebanon (92%)
- Another study by Al-Jazeera (2017) showed that State television broadcasting in the Arab region amounts to no more than 10% of the available channels. (Taweesi 2017).
- Private Radio in Morocco and **Doing Publicness**

PSM à la DIY

- How can ethnography help us understand the Public media characteristics of privately owned Arab media?
- How are are Arab audiences/users forging new forms of DI Y publicness through the internet and mobile phone technology?
- The answer is: the study of Everyday life and everyday cultural practices using a non-media centric approach