MEDIATING CONFLICT

AL-JAZEERA ENGLISH
AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONCILIATORY MEDIA

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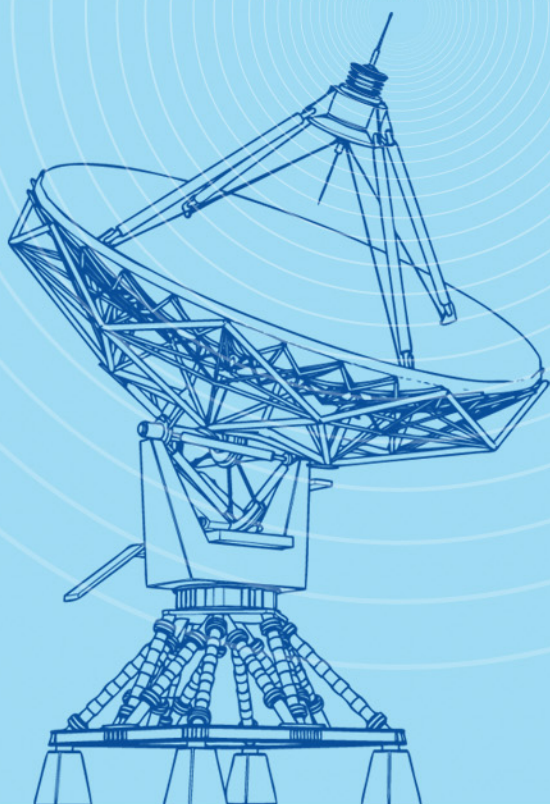University of Southern California

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

About the Authors

Mohammed el-Nawawy is a Knight-Crane endowed chair in the School of Communication at Queens University of Charlotte. His research interests are focused on the new media in the Middle East, particularly satellite channels and the Internet, and their impact on the Arab public sphere. He is also interested in issues of public diplomacy and ways of initiating effective dialogue between the Middle East and the West. He is the author and co-author of three books: *Al-Jazeera: The story of the network that is rattling governments and redefining modern journalism*; *Al-Jazeera: How the free Arab news network scooped the world and changed the Middle East*; and *The Israeli-Egyptian peace process in the reporting of Western journalists*. His upcoming book deals with discussion fora on the mainstream Islamic websites. Dr. el-Nawawy is the senior editor for the *Journal of Middle East Media* and serves on the editorial board of the *Media, War & Conflict* journal. He is also an ex-officio board member on the Arab-U.S. Association for Communication Educators. He has professional journalistic experience in the United States and the Middle East. He was born and raised in Egypt, where he got his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in mass communication at the American University in Cairo. He has a Ph.D in journalism from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, the role that media technologies and actors play in the formation of opinion and social networks is changing and presents many new questions for media scholars. While media technologies have always played an important role in international conflict, today's "network society" has dramatically increased the ways in which media technologies are utilized in conflicts, the number of media organizations producing and disseminating information during conflict, as well as the means to better monitor and understand mediated communications from afar. Accordingly, media organizations are increasingly being treated as "actors" within international conflicts, able to shape and refine opinions of people and even governments.

Since CNN's coverage of the 1991 Gulf War, satellite news broadcasters have popped up around the world, each with a slightly different take on international events. Narratives guiding the public's understanding of events are increasingly and more easily contested, and thus the 'battle' to control the flow of information has become intense, particularly during times of conflict. As competition over the airwaves has increased, it has become especially difficult to discern under what circumstances particular broadcasters have influence, and among what audiences. With a plethora of news organizations broadcasting information around the world, it has become much easier for audiences to tune into the organization that is oftentimes aligned with their opinions and worldviews, a change in the newsscape that calls into question whether news organizations are actually educating audiences or rather providing people with information that is simply used to further their pre-existing opinions and attitudes. This is an especially troubling trend when read in the context of the prevalence and hardening of negative stereotypes about cultural "others."

Al-Jazeera English (AJE), launched in November 2006, presents an interesting test case to examine the role of satellite news in mediating today's international conflicts. Hyped as "the voice of the South," AJE promises to contain the technological capacity and the ideological wherewithal to provide new and productive fora for cross-

cultural communications. According to its proponents, AJE presents a tremendous opportunity for a new direction in the discourse of global newsflows. With its avowed promise of giving a "voice to the voiceless," AJE could represent a new style of news media that challenges existing research regarding transnational media organizations and media and conflict scholarship more broadly. Below are the primary findings of our multi-method, multi-country study of AJE and employees. The findings are based on 597 surveys from the United States, the United Kingdom, Qatar, Kuwait, Malaysia and Indonesia, several focus groups and 31 interviews of AJE employees.

Primary Findings

- **Al-Jazeera English viewers found it to function as a "conciliatory media," which is a media that is more likely to cover contentious issues in a way that contributes to creating an environment that is more conducive to cooperation, negotiation and reconciliation.** Overall, viewers found that AJE was a conciliatory media, and the longer they had been watching AJE, the better they thought it was at fulfilling its conciliatory role. Conciliatory media, a term introduced in this research project, was determined based on how well AJE performed with regard to a number of journalistic criteria, including its ability to create space for the "mediatized recognition" of stories from groups that have been historically and/or are currently disenfranchised, a process that has been found to be an important step in the process towards reconciling cultural tensions.[1] This process of mediatized recognition is at the heart of AJE's mission, and is also reflected in how many of its journalists feel about the organization's work. Moreover, by providing more depth and context to its stories, along with reasoned arguments on all sides of an issue, a conciliatory media is likely to induce more open thinking when it comes to considering other people's perspectives.

- **The more months viewers had been watching AJE, the less dogmatic they were in their thinking**. In this context, dogmatism refers to a "relatively closed cognitive organization of beliefs and disbeliefs about reality, organized around a central set of beliefs about absolute authority which, in turn, provides a framework for patterns of intolerance and qualified tolerance toward others."[2] Previous research has demonstrated a positive correlation between levels of dogmatism and confrontational behavior in conflict

situations.[3] This finding was found to be significant amongst participants who relied heavily on AJE as their primary source for information and political behavior, as well as those who were less dependent on AJE. The lower levels of dogmatism associated with AJE viewership may open up viewers to becoming increasingly capable of navigating issues that have otherwise been seen as irreconcilable. Moreover, lower levels of dogmatism have been found to strongly relate to one's willingness to engage and listen to competing information claims, a consequence that could be exceptionally helpful in combating perceptions of a "Clash of Civilizations." This is particularly significant in light of our finding that viewers considered AJE to be a conciliatory media, and that the longer a viewer had tuned into AJE, the better they thought it was at fulfilling a conciliatory function. Not only did viewers think that AJE was effective at embodying the journalistic standards that we identified as essential for a news outlet to cover contentious issues in socially productive ways, but the longer they watched, the less dogmatic they were, thus providing further evidence that the concept of a conciliatory media can have tangible consequences on how people approach difficult issues.

• **Viewers tune into international news for affirmation rather than information.** On a number of levels, the findings provided evidence that participants were tuning into international news media that they thought would further substantiate their opinions about U.S. policies and culture, and provide them with information regarding the international issues of concern that they felt should be prioritized. For example, the study found a strong relationship between the participants' attitudes toward the U.S. policies and culture and the particular broadcaster they depended on for news and information. Respondents who were dependent on BBC World and especially on CNNI were more supportive of U.S. foreign policy generally. Moreover, those dependent on BBC World were more favorable to American cultural values, while those dependent on CNNI were more likely to support America's war on terror. Participants dependent on CNNI were more likely to support U.S. policy in Iraq and U.S. policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, while those dependent on AJE were more critical of both. In other words, viewers use the media to get affirmed rather than to get informed. For example, the viewers who oppose the U.S. policies in Iraq and Palestine may be more dependent on AJE as a source of information in that it will likely provide them with information to further substantiate their already established

opinion. Similarly, viewers who support the U.S. foreign policy may consider themselves dependent on CNNI since they believe its reporting operates within an ideology that is similar to theirs. Importantly, while viewers likely choose to watch international news broadcasters that will tell stories in ways that reinforce their opinions, we found that the more frequently a participant watched AJE, the less supportive they were of U.S. policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Similarly, the longer a participant had been tuning into AJE, the more critical they were of U.S. policy in Iraq. Thus, while the news media are unlikely to change one's opinion on politically salient issues, it may often be the case that they do reinforce and deepen already held opinions.

This study cautiously approaches the conciliatory potential of AJE and its influence. In terms of news media today, AJE is an anomaly when it comes to its role, mission and identity. It stands out from its competitors in that it presents a challenge to the existing paradigms guiding international news broadcasters. It is neither dominated by geopolitical nor commercial interests, and is the first of its kind to have the resources, mission and journalistic capacity to reach out to ideologically and politically similar audiences throughout the world. It both represents a challenge to "the myth of the mediated centre," while also providing a test case for examining whether the "increased density in media flows… necessarily translates into increased media power."[4] The findings confirm that people are drawn to news media that help them connect with others who share similar stories, a process that provides them with a sense of social stability. Yet, it is also clear that AJE is doing something right. Our finding that AJE was seen as a conciliatory media, and that the longer a viewer watched, the less dogmatic they were in their thinking provides hope in a world in desperate need of much cross-cultural reconciliation. Moving forward, questions of identity construction, promotion and identification are central to analyzing and understanding how media become trusted means for accessing information, and thus influential, in today's media environment.

THE RISE OF MASS-MEDIATED CONFLICT

"The media is a double-edged sword. It can be a frightful weapon
of violence when it propagates messages of intolerance or
disinformation…[or] it can be an instrument of conflict resolution,
when the information it presents is reliable, respects human rights,
and represents diverse views."[5]

The end of the 20th century witnessed dramatic changes in the structure, scope and depth of media across the globe. Not only have the number of media outlets expanded, especially in newly developing countries, but the legal and physical constraints that had previously limited the ability of media organizations to speak freely about sensitive politics have changed, resulting in a proliferation of information in many previously closed societies. Technological change has given people and institutions the ability to instantaneously broadcast local events to the world, while simultaneously watching and learning about far away events and cultures.[6]

Today's expanded role of media in society has presented newly formed challenges, especially in the context of international conflict. While media technologies have always played a role in international conflict, today's "network society" has dramatically increased the ways in which media technologies are utilized in conflicts, the number of media organizations producing and disseminating information during conflict, as well as the means to better monitor and understand mediated communications from afar.[7] It is along these lines that Philip Seib argues that "the connectivity of new media is superseding the traditional connections that have brought identity and structure to global politics."[8] Tumber and Webster (2006) describe the changes in terms of a move from the traditional forms of "industrial war" towards mass-mediated conflicts, or "information wars," placing the varied media outlets and technologies at the center of discussions of how to best navigate and understand contemporary international conflict.[9] In short, they argue that military assets alone no longer govern the outcome of international conflict, and that success and failure are increasingly dependent on controlling the flow of information and the associated "hearts and minds" of the global citizenry.[10] Accordingly, media organizations are

increasingly being treated as "actors" within international conflicts, able to shape and refine opinions of people and even governments.

Moreover, today's expanded access to and competition within the global information sphere have made increasingly clear the different and often competing ways in which the mass media present international events. In 1991, at the outset of the first Gulf War, CNN dominated the global newsflow with its live coverage of the conflict and advanced presentation style. Carried both globally via the CNN satellite channel, as well as rebroadcast by many local and regional news providers, CNN's coverage controlled the narrative which most saw and thought about the conflict. CNN's domination of the world's understanding of the war and its dependence on the U.S. military for access and information, resulted in a relatively large coalition of supporters for the invasion, both amongst governments and people in the region.[11] While counter-narratives existed, they were obscured, and did not carry with them the weight of live and sensationally dramatic images of the Coalition's victory over Saddam Hussein.

Today, rather than having a single network dominating the international newsscape, satellite news broadcasters have popped up around the world, each with a slightly different take on international events. Narratives guiding the public's understanding of events are increasingly and more easily contested, and thus the 'battle' to control the flow of information has become intense, particularly during times of conflict. As competition over the airwaves has increased, it has become especially difficult to discern under what circumstances particular broadcasters have influence, and among what audiences. With a plethora of news organizations broadcasting information around the world, it has become much easier for audiences to tune into the organization that is oftentimes aligned with their opinions and worldviews, a change in the newsscape that calls into question whether news organizations are actually educating audiences or rather providing people with information that is simply used to further their pre-existing opinions and attitudes.

WAR JOURNALISM
AND A CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS

Coverage of today's conflicts is dominated by a style of 'war journalism.' Mass media are both structurally and institutionally inclined to offer "escalation-oriented conflict coverage."[12] As Tehranian (2002) notes, "the world's media are still dominated by state and corporate organizations, tied to the logics of commodity and identity fetishism. Such media generate political or commercial propaganda that constructs hostile images of the Other while creating a 'global fishbowl' whereby the excesses of the world's wealthiest are on tantalizing display to the vast numbers of desperately poor."[13] Along the same lines, Shinar (2003) argues that the media's professional standards, which thrive on drama, sensationalism and emotions, are more compatible with war than with peace: "War provides visuals and images of action. It is associated with heroism and conflict, focuses on the emotional rather than on the rational, and satisfies news-value demands: the present, the unusual, the dramatic, simplicity, action, personalization, and results."[14]

Similarly, Gadi Wolfsfeld (1997) has highlighted several reasons why the media principles are contradictory to the peace principles: "A peace process is complicated; journalists demand simplicity. A peace process takes time to unfold and develop; journalists demand immediate results. Most of the peace process is marked by dull, tedious negotiations; journalists require drama. A successful peace process leads to a reduction in tensions; journalists focus on conflict. Many of the most significant developments within a peace process must take place in secret behind closed doors; journalists demand information and access."[15] Moreover, DayaThussu (2003) argues that the continuous demand for news in an environment that is dominated by 24/7 satellite television had led to "sensationalization and trivialization of often complex stories and a temptation to highlight the entertainment value of news."[16] Knowing that audiences are likely to tune in more often in times of conflict, news media have little incentive to locate and focus on areas of cooperation in conflicts, and often overstate the proclivity for "violence to break out at any moment" in order to maintain viewership and audience attention.[17]

Moreover, rather than speaking to and informing a multiplicity of audiences, today's broadcasters are often mostly targeting particular

segments of people, relying on cultural mores and political and historical myths in contextualizing international events. This reality was made especially clear in the run-up to the 2003 war in Iraq, where American and British media relied on a narrative of national security in justifying the necessity of invading Baghdad while many Arab satellite broadcasters framed the invasion as another example of Western imperialism and colonialism. Recent scholarship found that news media, including new news media (websites) continue to cover war in terms of reflecting the "dominant national frames" as well as the "dominant national public discourses."[18] Thus despite the cosmopolitan hopes of an increasingly global media, media today continue to reflect and speak to particular "national discourses," with little regard to each other.

This phenomenon is perhaps best explained using el-Nawawy and Iskandar's (2003) concept of "contextual objectivity," a term used to describe the necessity of television and media to present stories in a fashion that is somewhat impartial yet sensitive to local sensibilities.[19] Applied in the context of Al-Jazeera's coverage of the war in Iraq, el-Nawawy and Iskandar acknowledge bias, but argue that it is an audience-centered bias that does not deviate from the facts of the event and is no greater than the Western-tilt that is seen in most American media. Simply put, they argue that all media deviate from the standard of objectivity by framing the facts of a given situation in ways that are socially accepted and expected amongst their particular audiences. Interestingly, in their multinational content analysis of six networks' coverage of the war in Iraq, Aday, Livingston and Herbert (2005) found significant evidence to substantiate the existence of such contextual objectivity in both Western and Arab media outlets: "When a network ran an unbalanced story, it was inevitably in the direction consistent with its culture of origin, with Al-Jazeera's violations of the objective norm being critical of the war and the American networks slanting toward a more positive view."[20]

Thus, in times of war, today's mainstream media often tailor their coverage in ways that construct an ideologically aligned narrative that reinforces the attitudes and opinions of their target national or regional audiences. Sadly, this has resulted in "a *de facto* adoption of Samuel Huntington's theory" of an inevitable "Clash of Civilizations."[21] Outlined in 1993 in an article in *Foreign Affairs*, Huntington argues for the existence of "seven or eight" different civilizations whose clashes would "dominate global politics." Huntington contends that, "culture and cultural identities, which at the broadest level are civilization identities, are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold War world."[22] Central to Huntington's clash thesis is the argument that the processes of globalization are increasing the propensity for tension and conflict between civilizations. As traditional sources of

identity – the nation-state in particular – become less cogent, and as cross-cultural interactions become more intense, people will become increasingly bound to their civilizational identity, and thus critical of other civilizations that challenge their social norms and cultural mores. Accordingly, Huntington concludes, "the fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future."[23]

According to Seib (2004), the clash theory had immediate appeal to both newsmakers and policymakers in the West. Huntington's clash thesis offered an explanation for the emergence of a new and uncertain international order, and more importantly, an explanation that was ideologically and structurally similar to that of the Cold War. Huntington isolates a particular confrontation – one between the "Western" and "Islamic" civilizations – that will dominate international politics well into the 21st century. The thesis thus offered Western policymakers and journalists a simple us-versus-them narrative that allowed for the continued binary and simplistic framing that had been so effective at mobilizing the American public during the Cold War.[24]

Combined, this de facto adoption of Huntington's theory presents an additional obstacle to the media's ability to facilitate reconciliation and peace building through televised news. Moreover, it represents "a serious threat to peace in the globalized world of the 21st century."[25] The risk of dependence on international media that likely fosters attitudes of fear and hate underscores the necessity of an approach towards studying the role of media in conflict through the lens of collective identity: "When media representations enter into fields of conflict structured by deep-seated inequalities and entrenched identities, they can become inextricably fused with them, exacerbating intensities and contributing to destructive impacts."[26]

THEORIZING MEDIA AND CONFLICT
CAN MEDIA FACILITATE RECONCILIATION?

The rise of the importance of information in the conduct of war has resulted in increased attention to the role that media institutions and technologies, the principal conduits of information, have in conflict. More specifically, scholarship has turned towards looking at the particular ways in which the different levels of media, i.e. from local to transnational and global, can influence the conduct of and negotiations regarding war. While most acknowledge the increased importance of media in the conduct and outcome of conflict, few have offered systematic theories explaining the conditions governing the direction of the relationship between media and war. In an effort to synthesize existing work on the relationship between media and conflict, Eytan Gilboa (2006) argues for a new framework to examine the relationship between media and conflict, suggesting that scholars need to investigate the specific influence that different media can have at each stage of conflict: prevention, management, resolution and reconciliation. Accordingly, at each level of the conflict, media have specific functions and dysfunctions, all of which collectively influence the public attitudes, negotiations and policies that guide the initiation, conduct and resolution of wars. Some of the functions and dysfunctions of media in the four stages of conflict include: awareness, apprehension, learning, mobilization, instigating opposition, perceptions of legitimacy or illegitimacy, confidence building and destruction, dramatization and sensationalizing, and the creation of realistic or high expectations. Gilboa's framework, more so than that of previous scholars who argued for peace journalism, preventative journalism, telediplomacy, and even media intervention, offers a promising method for evaluating the different effects that particular media have during the discreet phases of conflict.[27]

Similarly, in an effort to expand research on the role of media and conflict, Wolfsfeld (2004) examines the role that media play in the construction of a peace process. Through an investigation of the Oslo peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, the peace process between Israel and Jordan, and the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, Wolfsfeld proposes four primary ways in which media can influence the path to peace: (1) defining the political atmosphere; (2)

determining the nature of the debate about a peace process; (3) influencing the antagonists' strategy and behavior; and (4) influencing the public standing and legitimacy of antagonists involved.[28]   The investigation finds that there are many structural and cultural factors that encourage media to play a counter-productive role in the peace-making process, but that there are possibilities for success, perhaps best exemplified by the media in Northern Ireland. Wolfsfeld provides a useful analytic model for monitoring and evaluating the role of media in the specific processes leading up to a negotiated peace agreement, assuming the existence of a discrete group of actors whose stakes and interests in conflict can be identified.[29]

Yet, the nature of today's War on Terror, and its close associate, the battle for the "hearts and minds of the Arab world," provide an analytical challenge to existing frameworks for analyzing media and conflict. While it is the case that many conflicts continue to go through clear phases, and where understanding the role of media at each "stage" of the conflict offers a productive method for understanding the changing relationship between media and war (especially in the context of 'hot wars'), today's War on Terror does not fit neatly into the categories of analysis proposed by Gilboa, Wolfsfeld, and others. Interestingly, theoretical work explaining the media's influence on conflict rarely tackles the question of cross-cultural compatibility, the consequence that cultural antagonisms can have in the conflict and peace making processes, and most importantly, what, if anything, the media can do to minimize the negative influences that contrasting cultural identities have on the path to reconciliation.[30]

Perhaps due to the ambiguous scope of the current War on Terror, and the corresponding scope and significance of its effects, it is difficult to discern whether it is in any particular "stage" at any given point, who the primary actors involved are, and whether or not it can actually be going through two different "stages" in two different places at the same time. Moreover, its precise beginning is an open question as well; while the intensity of the War on Terror certainly increased after the events of September 11th, 2001, the attacks themselves were consequences of a series of policies and ideologies that are essential factors in understanding our current conflict. In fact, the War on Terror, similar to the Cold War before it, exemplifies the importance of examining the role of media not only in its coverage and investigation of the material aspects of war, but also in the construction and propagation of the underlying ideologies that are so influential in shaping the socio-political environments that can result in conflict.[31] Breaking down a conflict into specific stages, and examining each in isolation, or even as a sequence can only yield partial answers that are insufficient for understanding the relationship between media and conflict in the 21st century. Thus, scholars must continue to

expand their conceptualizations of conflict in order to incorporate the many socio-political influences and conversations that are critical both at the onset and continuation of violent conflict.[32]

In the face of this challenge, scholars have argued for a new form of journalism – peace journalism – as a means of "de-escalation-oriented conflict coverage."[33] Lynch & McGoldrick (2005) define peace journalism as that which takes place "when editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report and about how to report them – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict."[34] Galtung (2002), a pioneer in the field of peace journalism studies, argues that media in times of conflict should focus on "conflict transformation," a move that requires journalists that are empathetic and understanding; able to provide a platform for all parties and voices to express themselves; and focus on the negative impact of violence, such as damage and trauma.[35] Similarly, in his study of the role of media in the buildup to and falling apart of the Israeli-Palestinian Oslo accords, Wolfsfeld (2004) notes that it is the responsibility of reporters in the war zones "to provide as much information as possible about the roots of the problem and to encourage a rational public debate concerning the various options for ending it." Wolfsfeld explains that, at times, encouraging rational deliberation amongst alienated groups can encourage all parties to refrain from escalating violence and engage in thoughtful consideration of ways to end the conflict.[36]

It is important to note that peace journalism was accused of encouraging journalists to "get involved" in the stories they are covering and trying to advocate an agenda at the expense of being objective.[37] Even though objectivity has often been regarded as an essential journalistic value, several contemporary scholars have considered absolute objectivity to be a myth.[38] Maintaining journalistic objectivity can be particularly hard in situations where "…editors and reporters are caught up, whether they like it or not, in the loops and coils of conflict and political process."[39] In this context, Bell (1997) said: "When I report from the war zones, or anywhere else, I do so with all the fairness and impartiality I can muster,… but using my eyes and ears and mind and accumulated experience, which are surely the very essence of the subjective."[40]

It is also important to note that peace journalism authors are not calling for journalists to sanitize their coverage of conflicts, nor focus solely on calls for peace and cooperation. Rather, advocates argue that journalists describe violence in terms of its political, economic and social motivations, rather than a natural or inevitable consequence of otherwise uncontrollable events. By exposing violence as either a dire or irresponsible choice for dealing with an existing conflict, peace

journalists can encourage non-violent responses to conflicts that are otherwise viewed through a highly politicized lens.[41]

Yet, as of now, peace journalism is neither a tested means to reduce violent tensions in the world, nor has it been adopted by many, if any, mainstream or even mass-consumed media outlets. One of the major weaknesses in the literature is a failure amongst peace-journalism scholars to consider the roles that collective identity – religious, ethnic, national and transnational – can have on the propensity for groups to either take to violence or consider non-violent solutions to conflicts. This weakness in the literature is especially problematic given the growing area of scholarship examining the role that media – especially electronic and new media – can have on the constitution and wherewithal of collective identities.[42]

One way that peace journalism scholars could integrate the role of identity into their work is through the use of the concept of the 'politics of recognition.' Developed by Charles Taylor (1994), the politics of recognition draws from the Hegelian concepts of consciousness and the ideal reciprocal relationship and suggests that personal and collective identities are shaped and impacted both by social recognition and validation, and, perhaps more importantly, by misrecognition or nonrecognition:

> "A number of strands in contemporary politics turn on the need, sometimes the demand, for recognition. The need, it can be argued, is one of the driving forces behind nationalist movements in politics… The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, as the people or the society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves."[43]

In his discussion of the necessity of incorporating a healthy understanding of identity politics into the maintenance and growth of contemporary civil societies, Taylor argues for the need to recognize all legitimate and legal groups and to engage them in open dialogue without any political or social restrictions: "Equal recognition is not just the appropriate mode for a healthy democratic society. Its refusal can inflict damage on those who are denied it."[44] Similarly, Wolf (1994) warns against the nonrecognition or misrecognition of various groups: "The harms most obvious in this context are, at the least, that the members of the unrecognized cultures will feel deracinated and empty, lacking the sources for a feeling of community and a basis for self-esteem, and, at the worst, that they will be threatened with the risk of cultural annihilation."[45]

Simon Cottle (2006) offers an approach grounded in the "mediatized recognition" of oppressed or marginalized groups in order to better understand the role that media can play in the processes of cross-cultural reconciliation. Placing the concept of *recognition* at the heart of the media contribution to reconciliation, Cottle argues that the capacity of media to recognize isolated, denigrated, and discriminated cultural "Others," on their own communicative terms, becomes central in determining how, when, and what function the media play in negotiating cross-cultural tensions. Moreover, expanding upon the deliberative necessities of a transcultural dialogue, Cottle points to the importance of new media to counter the "rationalist bias within much contemporary theorizing."[46] Drawing from Iris Young, Cottle notes that new media – televised media in particular – are able to increase exposure to and acceptance of diverse methods of communication, like non-linear storytelling and performative communication, as well as to the distinct cultural meanings and values of perceived "Others."[47]

While rarely discussed in the context of peace journalism, the concept of mediatized recognition may be helpful in explaining precisely how and why news media can play a constructive role in the cultural and political conflicts. For Cottle, media are a critical means by which cultural antagonisms can be outlined and negotiated in contemporary conflicts: "In today's mediatized societies it is probably inevitable that the media will be seen as a key, possibly principal, means by which cultural differences and agendas can be publicly recognized and acknowledged."[48] Howard (2002), a more traditional peace journalism theorist, agrees, arguing that media that make an effort to provide equal recognition to all social and political groups, particularly the ones that have often been underrepresented and marginalized, can contribute to the peaceful integration of these groups into the overall structure of the civil society: "With this recognition emerges a journalism that is sensitized to conflict resolution techniques, and seeks to maximize understanding of the underlying causes and possible solutions."[49]

THE TYPOLOGY OF A CONCILIATORY MEDIA

"Conciliatory media" is a term that we coined in this study and refers to news media that work to meet a number of criteria, outlined in detail below, when it comes to covering issues of collective social importance. By doing so, such media can deviate from the "war journalism" style that has dominated today's post 9/11 mediascape and instead contribute to creating an environment that is more conducive to cooperation, negotiation and reconciliation.

Research has shown that audience members will try to get more information from the media to enhance their understanding, particularly during times of conflict (see the section on media system dependency scale in Appendix 1). Therefore, we argue that a conciliatory media can help alleviate tensions grounded in stereotype and myth and enhance a global understanding of events in ways that encourage open-mindedness among audiences. "By making available space or air time for expression of grievances, the media encourage an essential part of the healing process. During the period of reconciliation and rehabilitation, the media can also serve to empower groups that had previously been voiceless."[50] Echoing the same thought, Botes (1996) was cited in Aho (2004) as saying that "media are sensitive towards the task of promoting tolerant and diverse viewpoints."[51]

Drawing from a case study of Australian media coverage of the Howard government's treatment of illegal immigrants, Cottle isolates seven characteristics of media that best serve a conciliatory function: (1) "image to the invisible;" (2) "claims, reason and public argumentation;" (3) "public performance and credibility;" (4) "personal accounts and experimental testimonies;" (5) "reconciling the past, towards the present;" (6) "media reflexivity;" and (7) "bearing witness in a globalized world."[52] The first characteristic, "image to the invisible," speaks to the capacity of a media to expose an event or act that had previously been "hidden" by governments and corporations. The "claims, reason and public argumentation" function is similar to that described by proponents of "deliberative democracy," where public officials and opinion leaders describe and defend their decisions in the public sphere, opening them to challenges and questions. The third characteristic, "public performance

and credibility," speaks to the ability of a media to interview or challenge a guest live, where the responses are *de facto* authentic, unable to be censored or scripted. Space for "personal accounts and experimental testimony" is important in that "former Others are enabled to put their individual experiences into the public domain," conversations that allow for "stories and personal accounts of pain, suffering and injustice" to "fragment reductionist stereotypes of the collective Other." Similarly, a media that creates space for communications that "reconcile the past" with an eye to the present "assist in the public process of acknowledging the deep trauma and hurt," contributing "to an ongoing process of reconciliation and cultural accommodation." The media reflexivity quality refers to a media's ability to examine, praise and criticize both other media coverage, as well as one's own, in a process that pedagogically encourages more critical approaches of media consumption among viewers. Finally, perhaps as a summary of the previous characteristics, a media's ability to "bear witness in a globalized world," where content focuses on the dynamics of historical and contemporary injustices, "can help dismantle historically anachronistic images of the Other" and change the "consciousness and politics of understanding that condition our responses and ability to interact with today's globalized world." Needless to say, Cottle proposes these characteristics as an ideal, arguing that the more media are able to approach news with such criteria in mind, the more effective the process of recognition is, and thus the higher the media's ability to lessen antagonisms between different cultures.[53]

Utilizing the limited academic literature on peace journalism[54], we developed an eleven-point typology of media that best serve a conciliatory function as follows:

1. Providing a public place for politically underrepresented groups.
2. Providing multiple viewpoints on a diversity of controversial issues.
3. Representing the interests of the international public in general rather than a specific group of people.
4. Providing firsthand observations from eyewitnesses of international events.
5. Covering stories of injustice in the world.
6. Acknowledging mistakes in journalistic coverage when appropriate.
7. Demonstrating a desire towards solving rather than escalating conflicts.
8. Avoiding the use of victimizing terms, such as martyr or pathetic, unless they are attributed to a reliable source.

9. Avoiding the use of demonizing labels, such as terrorist or extremist, unless they are attributed to a reliable source.
10. Abstaining from opinions that are not substantiated by credible evidence.
11. Providing background, contextualizing information that helps viewers fully understand the story.

We argue that when a media organization embodies such characteristics, it can work towards debunking cross-cultural stereotypes, creating a general culture of tolerance, injecting a multicultural knowledge into the public sphere, and working to produce reconciliation among cultural antagonists.

While this is an idealized media form that can be hard to find in today's mostly commercially driven media, it can be argued that the Al-Jazeera English satellite channel has adopted many of the characteristics included in the conciliatory media typology and thus may prove to provide a conciliatory function when it comes to covering politically and culturally divisive issues.

In this study, we explore whether AJE's mission, identity, code of ethics and resources allow it to play a conciliatory role in today's world which is governed by sensational coverage of conflict as mentioned before. Operating with vast resources, relative independence from market and geopolitical forces; boasting an exceptionally qualified staff; staying away from the "soundbite culture;" and having various bureaus strategically placed around parts of the world that have often been marginalized or neglected by the mainstream Western media, such as Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia; AJE is in an excellent position to enhance a greater understanding between various people and cultures around the world. It is this potential of AJE to serve as a conciliatory medium that we have measured in this study.

HISTORY OF THE AL-JAZEERA NETWORK

Al-Jazeera, which means "the island" in Arabic, was launched by Qatar's progressive emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, in November 1996, as part of his efforts to democratize his tiny state in the Persian Gulf. The Qatari emir "planned for Al-Jazeera to be an independent and nonpartisan satellite TV network free from government scrutiny, control, and manipulation."[55]

The launching of Al-Jazeera followed the termination of a contract in April 1996 between Rome-based, Saudi-owned Orbit Radio and Television Service and the Arabic TV division of the BBC News Service. The contract termination resulted from a serious clash between the Saudi government and the BBC regarding editorial policies. It was reported that the Saudi investors decided to withdraw their financial support of the project following an argument over the broadcast of a documentary about executions in Saudi Arabia. After the failure of that venture, the majority of the BBC's Arabic TV service editorial staff members were recruited by Al-Jazeera, which also inherited the BBC network's editorial spirit, freedom, and style.[56] This core group of newly recruited staff members received their training in a Western journalistic environment, and they were familiar with the Arab political environment, with all its nuances and intricacies – qualifications that made them "the final ingredient in the recipe for Al-Jazeera's eventual success."[57]

Today, Al-Jazeera has created a niche for itself by identifying a market demand for serious and independent journalism, with content mostly dedicated to political matters that are of key concern to the Arab people.[58] In this context, Mohamed Zayani (2005) argued that Al-Jazeera has capitalized on the fact that the Middle East is a region where politics plays a critical role in people's daily lives to the extent that any social gathering or regular family reunion often revolves around political debates. According to Zayani, Al-Jazeera has been "providing food for an audience that is hungry for credible news and serious political analysis."[59]

Al-Jazeera's viewers, who were initially shocked by the courageous approach and independent editorial style of the channel's talk shows, have become used to controversial confrontations, contentious views

and loud debates, "with Islamists and anti-Islamists pitted against each other, as well as people of all political persuasions and dissidents from Morocco to Egypt and Palestine to Bahrain."[60] Al-Jazeera's talk shows "often set the agenda for local arguments and debates, as well as reflecting the issues considered important among the Arab intellectual elite. And its talk shows have been far more free, controversial, live, and uncensored than those of most of its competitors."[61] For Arab television viewers, who have been longing for such talk shows, which they can use to listen to controversial opinions as well as express their views without inhibitions, Al-Jazeera has been a breath of fresh air in a heavily censored environment.

It was no surprise that Al-Jazeera's talk shows would infuriate most Arab governments' officials, who were not accustomed to seeing an Arab television station hold them accountable for their actions, challenge their policies, or take a line that is contradictory to their agendas. Outrage with Al-Jazeera took different forms: many countries sent official complaints to Qatar. In fact, more than 450 complaints were received by Qatari diplomats from various Arab states during the first few years following the start of Al-Jazeera.[62] "Arab ambassadors to [the Qatari capital] Doha said they spent so much time complaining about Al-Jazeera that they felt more like ambassadors to a TV channel than ambassadors to a country."[63]

Since its launch, Al-Jazeera has created a vibrant and dynamic political environment that has liberalized the Arab media discourse and positively impacted political debates. This impact has been described as the "Al-Jazeera effect," which refers to Al-Jazeera's role in "providing an unprecedented forum for debate in the Arab world that is eviscerating the legitimacy of the Arab status quo and helping to build a radically new pluralist political culture."[64] Commenting on the "Al-Jazeera effect," the Egyptian political activist Saad al-Din Ibrahim was quoted by Lynch (2005) as saying: "Al-Jazeera has done probably for the Arab world more than any organized critical movement could have done, in opening up the public space, in giving Arab citizens a newly found opportunity to assert themselves."[65]

Along the same lines, Zayani (2005) argued that Al-Jazeera has led to a "growing realization that Arab public opinion matters…Al-Jazeera is broadening the form, content and extent of public involvement. As there are more interactive programs [on Al-Jazeera], there are more people who call in to express their views and more viewers who are exposed to such a diversity of views…[This makes Al-Jazeera viewers] more than mere passive recipients."[66]

The open environment that is made possible thanks to Al-Jazeera's interactive talk shows can encourage political efficacy and facilitate

political mobilization. Al-Jazeera, by opening new venues for freedom of expression and providing a platform for dialogue, can affect the Arab public discourse. In this context, Dale Eickelman (2002) argues that Arab satellite channels, particularly Al-Jazeera, have the ability to substitute for what he called the "democracy deficit" which characterizes the Arab world. According to Eickelman, the uncensored information that is disseminated by a network like Al-Jazeera helps shape Arab public opinion, which in turn "pushes Arab governments to be more responsive to their citizens, or at least to say that they are."[67]

Echoing the same thought, Lynch (2006) argues that Al-Jazeera talk shows have contributed to creating a "new [more politically savvy Arab] public [which in turn] has forced Arab leaders to justify their positions far more than ever before, introducing a genuinely new level of accountability to Arab politics. By focusing relentlessly on the problems facing the Arab status quo – social, cultural, and political – it has generated a sense of urgency for change that had long been lacking."[68]

Yet, while it is clear that Al-Jazeera has changed Arab media and political discourse permanently, it is unclear if such an "Al-Jazeera effect" can be replicated or used as evidence of the enhanced impact that broadcast media have on public opinion en masse. Al-Jazeera's influence in the region is tied to a number of specific historical and cultural conditions that provided a backdrop emphasizing the magnitude of change that Al-Jazeera has presented compared to the Arab status quo. In a region notorious for obstructing the freedom of press, and a historically significant sense of regional identity, Al-Jazeera has both challenged unpopular regimes and policies while reigniting feelings of collective influence amongst publics throughout the region. Thus, while it is important to outline the importance that Al-Jazeera had at the turn of the century, this importance is perhaps better understood as a symbol for the changed dynamics of communication and power in today's globalized society rather than a testament to the influence of the broadcast media.

PROFILE OF AL-JAZEERA ENGLISH

Al-Jazeera English (AJE), a subsidiary of Qatar's Al-Jazeera Arabic network, represents a new form of transnational media that has the declared purpose of revolutionizing the global newscape. Launched on November 15, 2006, AJE -- "is the world's first global English language news channel to be headquartered in the Middle East"[69] -- is already accessible in over 110 million households worldwide, and has also agreed to provide distribution (oftentimes free of charge) via multiple video sharing websites, making it accessible to anyone with a connection to the World Wide Web. With over 25 bureaus worldwide, AJE is touted as "the voice of the South." Ibrahim Helal (2008), AJE's deputy manager for news and programmes, explains: "The 'South' here is not meant to be geographical. It is symbolic. It is a lifestyle because in the West, you have a lot of South as well. In Britain, you have South. In Europe, you have South. The South denotes the voiceless in general." The network promises that it contains the technological capacity and the ideological wherewithal to provide new and productive fora for cross-cultural communications.

According to its proponents, AJE presents a tremendous opportunity for a new direction in the discourse of global news flow. With its avowed promise of giving a "voice to the voiceless," AJE's launch and growing popularity represent a new style of media structure and content that provides an important test case for existing research regarding transnational media organizations and media and conflict scholarship more broadly.

When asked about what the AJE brand meant to him, Scott Furgeson, AJE's director of programming, said: "It means independence. It means alternative opinion. It means voice of the voiceless. If you're a journalist and you're a broadcaster and you're interested in that sort of a subject, this is the place to be."[71] Along the same lines, Veronica Pedrosa, an AJE presenter in Kuala Lumpur, said: "AJE is somewhat freer to report without a kind of projection of who its viewer is. It's not just concerned with viewership and ratings as CNN and BBC worldwide. Just because it is funded by the government of Qatar as opposed to being commercially-driven, it doesn't have stockholders it needs to answer to. And also it's

trying to prove itself. I remember that in my job interview for my current position, I asked my boss: 'So if you're not worried about viewers, if you're not worried about money, what is going to be the gauge of your success?' And he told me at the time, 'well, high quality journalism.'"[72]

Nahedah Zayed, AJE news editor at the Washington, D.C. bureau, reflecting on her experience at AJE compared to several other major news broadcasters, suggested that AJE provides a voice for the voiceless not only by covering stories that have been underrepresented in the traditional mainstream media, but also through the diversity of its staff: "We are so diverse and so varied and it just gives you a sense of yes, that's the voice of the voiceless. I see people from Africa. I see people from the jungles of Brazil. Indigenous Indians in Bolivia. Palestinians in the West Bank. You are not going to see it anywhere else."[73]

Addressing AJE's mission, Nigel Parsons, the former AJE managing director, said: "This was a chance, a blank piece of paper to do things differently. And I do think that we have shaken up a very tired old industry. I do think we have raised the bar. Everyone said that there was nothing different to do or be done. I think to a large measure that we have achieved what we have set out to do. We do provide more analysis. We do provide more depth. We do cover untold stories."[74]

Serving as a "voice to the voiceless" is a concept that is unfamiliar amongst many Western news media networks. In this context, AJE's Helal, said: "The AJE way of journalism is a bit different from the West because we tend to go faster to the story and to go deeper into communities to understand the stories, rather than getting the [news] services to give us the information… We try to do our best to set the agenda by searching for stories others cannot reach or don't think of."[75] According to Helal, the nature of AJE stories and the angles they focus on contribute to their standing out as a network compared to Western television stations. "We were in Myanmar exclusively during the tensions last year. We covered Gaza from within Gaza by Gazan correspondents. We looked into why Gazans are united behind Hamas despite the suffering. These kinds of stories are not easily covered by other media. It's not an accusation [against other media]. It's about the elements of perceiving the knowledge, the know-how when it comes to covering the story and producing it. It's not there in Western media, but we have invested in people by bringing more than forty ethnic backgrounds and nationalities represented in the staff."[76]

Echoing the same thought, Sue Philips, AJE's former London bureau chief who currently coordinates the efforts of AJE's international bureaus, said, "AJE provides an alternative voice on an alternative screen. You would turn to AJE to see the latest developments in Somalia, Darfur, Niger, in Asia, in South America… It's the global picture that [Al-Jazeera

English] is providing…We cover more of the developing world than other organizations. We re-visit places. We don't pop in for ten minutes or parachute in. We use nationals in each country to report on their country. This, we feel, provides our viewers with a better understanding of the culture, of the languages, etc."[77]

Early research on the content, ideological underpinnings and operation of AJE all indicate that its approach to and production of news differ significantly from that of other major transnational media organizations like CNN International and BBC World. Content analysis points to a repeated and thorough effort at producing programming that has more depth than most contemporary televised news, as well as an agenda that emphasizes issues of particular importance to those living outside the post-industrialized Western world.[78]

Originating from the "Global South," AJE demonstrates what Naomi Sakr (2007) describes as a "contra-flow" action. Sakr cites Sinclair et al's (1996) definition of contra-flow as a situation where "…countries [that were] once considered clients of media imperialism have successfully exported their output into the metropolis."[79] According to Sakr, "contra-flow in its full sense would seem to imply not just reversed or alternative media flows, but a flow that is also counter-hegemonic. Theories of hegemony suggest that counter-hegemonic media practices are liable either to be incorporated into dominant structures or marginalized in a way that neutralizes the threat they pose to the status quo."[80] Addressing the counter-hegemonic issue, Waddah Khanfar, Al-Jazeera's director general, told the authors: "Our philosophy of reporting is human sentiment paradigm rather than the power center. We shift away from the power. Actually, our relationship with power is always to question power, rather than to give power more domain to control. We have to empower the voiceless, rather than to empower the pulpit… or the powerful only."[81]

AJE has a news agenda that aims at "redressing global imbalances in the flow of information."[82] According to AJE's former managing director, Nigel Parsons, AJE is "the first news channel based in the Mideast to bring news back to the West."[83] Moreover, AJE focuses less on "breaking news," oftentimes of little significance to a majority of the world's citizens, and the "soundbite culture" that characterizes many of its Western counterparts. News items on AJE "are generally longer and snappier [than its Western counterparts] while documentary-style shows abound…its stories seem to introduce more angles than would be the case with 'conventional' all-news networks."[84]

With an initial budget of over U.S. $1 billion, mostly coming from the emir of Qatar, AJE has opened up four broadcasting centers (in Qatar, the UK, Malaysia and the United States) and 21 supporting bureaus in Africa, Latin America and Asia, parts of the world that have often been

marginalized or altogether neglected by the mainstream Western media. Thanks to its sizable and remarkably market-independent resources, AJE is not subject to the economic pressures that have resulted in a decline in the quality of the many Western media.[85] Even the BBC World Service, though publicly funded via a grant-in-aid by the UK's foreign and Commonwealth Office, relies on some commercially viable programming to sustain its budget. According to Kieran Baker, AJE's regional news editor for the Americas, "This station [AJE] may be the last bastion of public broadcasting."[86] Along the same lines, Naheda Zayed, AJE's news editor in Washington, D.C. observes: "We are not driven by the dollar or constrained by commercialization pressures as many other news networks are. And this gives us great liberty in the way we approach our stories."[87]

According to AJE's Code of Ethics, AJE presents "diverse points of view and opinions without bias or partiality." Moreover, it "recognizes diversity in human societies with all their races, cultures and beliefs and their values and intrinsic individualities in order to present unbiased and faithful reflection of them." And it "acknowledges a mistake when it occurs, promptly corrects it and ensures it does not recur."[88] Moreover, AJE's corporate profile further expresses its unique mission: "The channel gives voice to untold stories, promotes debate, and challenges established perceptions…The channel [sets] the news agenda, bridging cultures and providing a unique grassroots perspective from underreported regions around the world to a potential global audience of over one billion English speakers."[89] Given its aims, resources, structure and size, AJE provides a breath of fresh air and an interesting case study for examining the role of mass media in the negotiating cross-cultural conflict in the 21st century.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: Is there a relationship between respondents' dependence on AJE as a source for following global news and determining political behavior and the level of their cognitive dogmatism?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between respondents' dependence on AJE as a source for following global news and determining political behavior and the level of their political tolerance?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between respondents' dependence on AJE as a source for following global news and determining political behavior and the level of their civic participation?

RQ4: Is there a relationship between respondents' dependence on AJE as a source for following global news and determining political behavior and the level of their cultural ethnocentrism?

RQ5: Is there a relationship between the respondents' frequency of watching AJE and their degree of favorability toward U.S.:
- Foreign policy in general
- Cultural values
- People
- War on Terror
- Policy in Iraq
- Policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict
- Brands and products

RQ6: Is there a relationship between the respondents' level of dependence on particular media outlets (namely AJE, CNN International and BBC World) as sources for following global news and determining political behavior and their degree of favorability toward U.S.:
- Foreign policy in general
- Cultural values
- People
- War on Terror

- Policy in Iraq
- Policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict
- Brands and products

RQ7: Is there a relationship between the number of months that respondents have been watching AJE and their degree of favorability toward U.S.:

- Foreign policy in general
- Cultural values
- People
- War on Terror
- Policy in Iraq
- Policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict
- Brands and products

RQ8: Is there a relationship between the respondents' levels of dogmatism, political tolerance, civic participation and cultural ethnocentrism and the frequency of their discussing global news and politics with their interpersonal networks?

RQ9: Is there a relationship between the respondents' level of dependence on particular media outlets (namely AJE, BBC World and CNN International) as sources for following global news and determining political behavior and their perception of the urgency of the following global issues:

- The Palestinian-Israeli conflict
- The situation in Iraq
- Terror threats in Europe and the U.S.
- The conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan
- The spread of HIV and other infectious diseases
- Global climate change

RQ10: Do respondents consider AJE a conciliatory medium?

RQ11: Is there a relationship between the respondents' educational level and their levels of dogmatism, political tolerance, civic participation and cultural ethnocentrism?

RQ12: Is there a relationship between respondents' educational level and the level of dependence on particular media outlets (namely AJE, BBC World and CNN International) as sources for following global news and determining political behavior?

RQ13: Is there a relationship between the number of months that respondents have been watching AJE and their levels of:
- Cognitive dogmatism
- Political tolerance
- Civic participation
- Cultural ethnocentrism

RQ14: Are there differences among respondents in the six countries included in this study with regard to their levels of:
- Cognitive dogmatism
- Political tolerance
- Civic participation
- Cultural ethnocentrism

METHOD

In order to evaluate AJE's performance and to answer the research questions, we conducted a multi-level method examining AJE as an organization, as well as its audiences in 6 different countries. To evaluate AJE as an organization, over 25 qualitative, in-depth interviews were conducted with members of its journalistic, editorial and administrative staff. These interviews took place at each of the channel's main broadcasting bureaus: Doha, Washington D.C., London, Kuala Lumpur, as well as in Jakarta. To evaluate AJE's impact on its viewers, we conducted a cross-sectional survey[90] on a purposive sample of AJE audiences[91] in Malaysia, Indonesia, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Kingdom and the United States to analyze the demographics, worldviews, and cultural, political, civic and cognitive dispositions of viewers of AJE. A purposive sample is a type of non-probability sample that "includes subjects or elements selected for specific characteristics or qualities and eliminates those who fail to meet these criteria."[92] Purposive samples are not meant to be representative of the population. Drawing from existing research, the countries under study were chosen due to their relative levels of viewership as well as their ability to signify existing cultural perspectives in the context of growing resentment between the "Islamic" and "Western" civilizations.

We distributed a paper questionnaire to the respondents. We hired research firms that identified AJE viewers and conducted the survey either through CATI (computer assisted telephone interviewing) or in person in Malaysia, Indonesia, Qatar and Kuwait. These research firms used existing achieved sample from both syndicated media surveys as well as free find/referrals. We distributed the questionnaires ourselves in the U.S. and the U.K. In the U.S., we distributed questionnaires in person mostly at the two main Islamic centers in Toledo, OH, (one of only two American cities where AJE is carried through cable; the other city is Burlington, VT). As for the U.K., we distributed the questionnaires in person at the two major mosques in central London. We thought that targeting mosques and Islamic centers in the U.S. and the U.K. would increase the likelihood that we identify respondents who are familiar with AJE and who have been watching it, particularly given that Al-

Jazeera Arabic has been a popular channel among Arabs and Muslims in general.

The total sample size surveyed was 597 participants, with approximately 100 participants surveyed at each of the proposed locations. The survey focused on sampling existing viewers of AJE only, though the sample included participants who had both just started watching AJE as well as those who had been watching the channel since it was first broadcast. Accordingly, the survey data provides an empirical record of the numerous dispositions of viewers of AJE that are examined, relative to the participants' dependence on AJE as a source of information, as well as how often and how long they had been viewing AJE, to test the possibility of AJE's function as a "conciliatory media." We also conducted focus group interviews with select groups of respondents that were used to help us contextualize some of the survey results.

The survey drew from existing literature to measure several variables that were critical to answering our research questions. In order to determine the levels of importance that AJE had on the opinions and attitudes of participants, compared to other international news broadcasters, we drew from Media System Dependence theory. In order to measure cultural, political, civic and cognitive dispositions, we drew from scales and questions to measure each participant's level of: (1) cognitive dogmatism, (2) cultural ethnocentrism, (3) political tolerance, and (4) civic engagement. (Each of the scales is discussed in further detail in the appendices). Altogether, we theorized that each of these attributes could independently provide evidence of the success or failure of a "conciliatory media." Moreover, the survey asked questions about participants' opinions of the United States culture, people and foreign policies, as well as their opinion of the relative importance of several issues impacting international communities (global warming and the Arab-Israeli conflict, for example).

We used a Generalized Linear Model (GLM), using robust standard errors and adjusting for clustering by country as a method of analysis for most of our research questions. To determine the statistical significance of our findings, we set our alpha level at 0.05. "It is standard practice in mass media research studies to set the probability level at .01 or .05. This means that significant results of the study occur because of random error or chance only one or five times out of 100."[93]

The final data set included 597 questionnaires collected from respondents in six countries (107 from Indonesia; 107 from Malaysia; 101 from the United Kingdom; 104 from the United States; 118 from Qatar; and 60 from Kuwait). Included in this set were 409 males and 179 females[94]Among the respondents, 421 were Muslim (72 percent); 88 were Christian (15 percent), 17 were Jewish (2.9 percent) and 59 were people of other religions.[95]

Scales' Reliability:
Media System Dependency (MSD) Scale Reliability
This scale yielded high internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha)[96] for all three channels (.85 for AJE, .84 for BBC World, and .89 for CNN International). A scale is considered reliable if it yields a Cronbach's alpha of .65 or more. In this context, DeVellis (2003) argues that: "My personal comfort ranges for research scales are as follows: below .60, unacceptable; between .60 and .65, undesirable; between .65 and .70 minimally acceptable; between .70 and .80, respectable; between .80 and .90, very good; much above .90, one should consider shortening the scale…"[97] The MSD scale for CNN had a mean of 10.93 and a standard deviation of 5.38. The MSD scale for the BBC had a mean of 12.62 and a standard deviation of 4.36. The MSD scale for AJE had a mean of 13.97 and a standard deviation of 4.31.

Dogmatism Scale
A study by Shearman and Levine (2006) indicated that only 11 of the 23 items on the original scale that they used remained in the final version for which they reported internal reliability. Included in these 11 items were statements such as: "There is a single correct way to do most things;" "It is important to be open to different points of view;" "I consider myself to be very open-minded;" and "Different points of views should be encouraged."[98] Thus, we scaled those 11 items as specified, and they yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .84. This scale's mean was 31.72 and its standard deviation was 9.87.

Political Tolerance Scale

This scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .91. It is important to note that there were 152 missing cases for the political tolerance scale; of those missing cases, 65 were from Malaysia. Many Malaysian respondents considered the political tolerance scale to be highly sensitive and they were reluctant to answer it. This scale's mean was 2.98 and its standard deviation was 2.48.

Cultural Ethnocentrism Scale

This scale yielded a Cronbach's alpa of .65. This scale's mean was 6.75 and its standard deviation was 2.74.

Civic Engagement Scale

Cronbach's alpha reliability for this scale was .70. This scale's mean was 8.57 and its standard deviation was 18.23.

Conciliatory Media Scale

A factor analysis test was conducted on this scale, and all 11 items on the scale loaded on one factor. So, it was "factorially pure."[99] The conciliatory media scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .93. This scale's mean was 76.48 and its standard deviation was 16.37.

RQ1: Is there a relationship between respondents' dependence on AJE as a source for following global news and determining political behavior and the level of their cognitive dogmatism?

A generalized linear model (GLM) test, controlling for the respondents' gender, religion and travel outside their country, showed a significant positive relationship between respondents' dependence on AJE and their cognitive dogmatism (p<.0001). In other words, respondents who were more dependent on AJE were more dogmatic. The regression coefficient for this relationship was .129. It is worth mentioning here that respondents' dependence on CNN International and the BBC World yielded the same results in terms of having a significant positive relationship with the respondents' cognitive dogmatism. (For CNN, p<.0001 with a regression coefficient of .639; and for the BBC World, p was .0006 with a regression coefficient of .308).

RQ2: Is there a relationship between respondents' dependence on AJE as a source for following global news and determining political behavior and the level of their political tolerance?

A GLM test, controlling for gender, religion and travel, showed no significant relationship between respondents' dependence on AJE and their political tolerance levels (p=.519). The same results were yielded for both CNN International and BBC World.

RQ3: Is there a relationship between respondents' dependence on AJE as a source for following global news and determining political behavior and the level of their civic participation?

A GLM test, controlling for gender, religion and travel, showed no significant relationship between respondents' dependence on AJE and their civic participation level (p=.332). The same results were yielded for both CNN International and BBC World.

RQ4: Is there a relationship between respondents' dependence on AJE as a source for following global news and determining political behavior and the level of their cultural ethnocentrism?

A GLM test, controlling for gender, religion and travel, showed no significant relationship between respondents' dependence on AJE and their level of cultural ethnocentrism (p=.083). The same results were yielded for both CNN International and BBC World.

RQ5: Is there a relationship between the respondents' frequency of watching AJE and their degree of favorability toward U.S.:
- *Foreign policy in general*
- *Cultural values*
- *People*
- *War on terror*
- *Policy in Iraq*
- *Policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*
- *Brands and products*

We ran each of the different attitudes toward the U.S. as a separate dependent variable, while controlling for respondents' gender, travel and religion. A GLM test showed a significant negative relationship only between the time spent watching AJE and the respondents' attitudes concerning the U.S. policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (p=.041). The regression coefficient was -.047. In other words, the more that respondents watched AJE, the less supportive they were of the U.S. policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Other items in this question did not yield significant results.

RQ6: Is there a relationship between the respondents' level of dependence on particular media outlets (namely AJE, CNN International and the BBC World) as sources for following global news and determining political behavior and their degree of favorability toward the U.S.:

- *Foreign policy in general*
- *Cultural values*
- *People*
- *War on terror*
- *Policy in Iraq*
- *Policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*
- *Brands and products*

A GLM test that included dependence on AJE, BBC World and CNN International to examine their comparative effects on respondents' attitudes in this regard showed the following results: Dependence on BBC World and CNNI predicted support for U.S. foreign policy in general (For CNN, p=.0017 with a regression coefficient of .156; for BBC World, p=.0109 with a regression coefficient of .066). Dependence on BBC World predicted support for U.S. cultural values (p=.043; regression coefficient was .092). Dependence on CNNI predicted support for America's War on Terror (p<.0001 with a regression coefficient of .236), the U.S. policy in Iraq (p<.0001 with a regression coefficient of .210) and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (p=.0004 with a regression coefficient of .267). However, dependence on AJE predicted lack of support for U.S. policy in Iraq (p=.0001 with a regression coefficient of -.118) as well as the U.S. policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (p=.026 with a regression coefficient of -.279). None of the three networks tested were predictive of support, or lack thereof, for purchasing American products.

RQ7: Is there a relationship between the number of months that respondents have been watching AJE and their degree of favorability toward U.S.:

- *Foreign policy in general*
- *Cultural values*
- *People*
- *War on terror*
- *Policy in Iraq*
- *Policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*
- *Brands and products*

A GLM test that controlled for respondents' gender, travel and religion, showed significant results only with the U.S. policy in Iraq (p=.015).

The regression coefficient was -.056. The more months that a respondent reported viewing AJE, the less supportive he/she was of U.S. policy in Iraq.

RQ8: Is there a relationship between the respondents' levels of dogmatism, political tolerance, civic participation and cultural ethnocentrism and the frequency of their discussing global news and politics with their interpersonal networks?

Interpersonal networks in this study referred to friends and family. A GLM test showed significant positive relationship only between interpersonal discussion and cultural ethnocentrism (p=.0097). The regression coefficient was .054. In other words, the more frequent the respondents discussed global news with their interpersonal networks, the higher their level of cultural ethnocentrism.

RQ9: Is there a relationship between the respondents' level of dependence on particular media outlets (namely AJE, BBC World and CNN International) as sources for following global news and determining political behavior and their perception of the urgency of the following global issues:
- *The Palestinian-Israeli conflict*
- *The situation in Iraq*
- *Terror threats in Europe and the U.S.*
- *The conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan*
- *The spread of HIV and other infectious diseases*
- *Global climate change*

A GLM test that included media dependence on AJE, CNN and BBC World at the same time as predictors showed the following results: Dependence on AJE was predictive of the importance of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict while controlling for the other two sources (p=.014 with a regression coefficient of .169). Dependence on BBC World was predictive of the importance of the situation in Iraq while controlling for the other two sources (p=.031 with a regression coefficient of .165). Both dependence on BBC World and CNNI were highly predictive of the importance of terror threats in the U.S. and Europe (for BBC, p=.016 with a regression coefficient of .138; for CNN, p=.002 with a regression coefficient of .089). Finally, both dependence on BBC World and CNNI were predictive of the importance of global climate change (for BBC, p=.004 with a regression coefficient of .055; for CNN, p=.008 with a regression coefficient of .049).

RQ10: Do respondents consider AJE a conciliatory medium?

The participants in this survey were asked to rate AJE's success (or lack thereof) in performing each of the 11 functions mentioned under conciliatory media section on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 meant "not at all successful" and 10 meant "very successful." The average of the respondents' ratings of AJE's success level when it comes to these functions was 7 with a standard deviation of 1.5. Importantly, a GLM test, controlling for respondents' gender, travel and religion, also showed that the more months that viewers had been watching AJE, the more they reported it was a conciliatory medium ($p < .0056$ with a regression coefficient of .335).

RQ11: Is there a relationship between the respondents' educational level and their levels of dogmatism, political tolerance, civic participation and cultural ethnocentrism?

A GLM test showed that higher levels of education were significantly related to lower levels of cultural ethnocentrism ($p < .0001$ with a regression coefficient of -.118) and higher levels of civic participation ($p = .0023$ with a regression coefficient of .485).

RQ12: Is there a relationship between respondents' educational level and the level of dependence on particular media outlets (namely AJE, BBC World and CNN International) as sources for following global news and determining political behavior?

A GLM test showed that lower educational levels were significantly predictive of dependence on BBC World and CNN International (for BBC, $p = .002$ with a regression coefficient of -0.032; for CNN, $p < .0001$ with a regression coefficient of -0.194).

RQ13: Is there a relationship between the number of months that respondents have been watching AJE and their levels of:
- *Cognitive dogmatism*
- *Political tolerance*
- *Civic participation*
- *Cultural ethnocentrism*

A GLM test that controlled for respondents' gender, travel and religion showed that the more months that respondents reported watching AJE, the less dogmatic they were ($p < .0066$ with a regression coefficient of -.214). None of the relationships with the other scales were significant.

RQ14: Are there differences among respondents in the six countries included in this study with regard to their levels of:
- *Cognitive dogmatism*
- *Political tolerance*
- *Civic participation*
- *Cultural ethnocentrism*

Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests were run since the variances were not the same among the countries. Each scale showed significant differences by country as follows:

For the dogmatism scale, Indonesia was significantly higher than any of the other countries. Malaysia and Qatar were both significantly higher than the U.S. and the U.K. Also, Kuwait was significantly higher than the U.S. For the cultural ethnocentrism scale, Kuwait was significantly higher than Indonesia, the U.K., the U.S. and Qatar. Qatar and Malaysia were significantly higher than the U.K, the U.S. and Indonesia. For the political tolerance scale, Qatar, the U.S. and the U.K. were significantly higher than Kuwait, Indonesia and Malaysia. For the civic participation scale, the U.K., Indonesia and the U.S. were significantly higher than Kuwait and Malaysia.

DISCUSSION

Our findings present an interesting set of answers, and many more questions, in terms of understanding what role news plays in today's global mediasphere. Our results can be organized into three primary findings: (1) viewers perceived AJE as fulfilling a conciliatory function, and the longer viewers had been watching AJE, the more conciliatory it was; (2) the longer a participant had been watching AJE, the less dogmatic they were in their thinking; and (3) consumers of the global media – the BBC World, CNNI and AJE – tune into broadcasters that provide information that affirms rather than informs their existing opinions. Our findings demonstrate a nuanced answer to the question of how much influence global news media have in the current media environment. While people today are likely tuning into news programming which they find helps them reaffirm their pre-existing opinions on current affairs, the news media – when they embody the principles of a conciliatory media – may be able to foster lower levels of dogmatism, and thus produce a latent but substantial media effect.

This latent effect can be applicable to AJE, which is still relatively new on the world media scene, and it has faced several major obstacles since its launch in November 2006, "not least finding a way into the U.S. market and resolving the tension in its editorial vision…But its supporters point out that CNN needed 10 years to bed down."[100] In this context, Barbara Serra, an AJE presenter in the London bureau said: "I think we're a work in progress…,but I think we're getting close to having a huge impact on the global news scene."[101]

Primary Finding 1: Al-Jazeera English viewers found it to be a conciliatory media

Overall, viewers found that AJE was a conciliatory media, and the longer they had been watching AJE, the better they thought it was at fulfilling its conciliatory functions. Conciliatory media, a term introduced in this research project as mentioned above, was determined based on how good viewers thought AJE was at performing 11 functions. The eleven functions or characteristics were determined based on a review

of existing literature, including peace journalism research, and were discussed in greater length in the "Conciliatory Media" section above.

A conciliatory media can create space for the "mediatized recognition" of stories from groups that have been historically and/or are currently disenfranchised, a process that has been found to be an important step in the process towards reconciling cultural tensions.[102] While not directly stated, this process of mediatized recognition is at the heart of AJE's self-prescribed mission, as well as to how many of its journalists feel about the organization's work. Moreover, by providing more depth and context to its stories, as well as reasoned arguments on all sides of an issue, a conciliatory media is likely to induce more open thinking when it comes to considering other people's perspectives.

The participants in this survey gave AJE a high ranking (7 on a scale of 1 to 10 when it came to its performance of the 11 conciliatory functions). Importantly, the longer viewers had been watching AJE, the more they reported it was a conciliatory medium. Thus, the finding that AJE was a conciliatory media is not likely to be based merely on perceptions of AJE, or its brand, but rather it is based on the experiences of actually viewing the AJE's programming.

An example of AJE's ability to provide mediatized recognition came from an anecdote from AJE correspondent, Josh Rushing. Among other things, Rushing contributes a series called "War with Josh Rushing" that examines the consequences of war with a particular emphasis on the environmental, social, economic, and political consequences of conflict that are often overlooked. In early 2008, Rushing filmed an episode for his series titled "Journey into the Heart of Darkness," where he joined a Vietnam veteran who had been charged with 9 counts of murder in the My Lai massacre on a trip back to My Lai, Vietnam. According to Rushing, this was the first time a U.S. soldier who had been found guilty by the military of crimes involved in the massacre had ever gone back to the My Lai. As Rushing described the experience: "We introduced him to a survivor, who was shot twice as an 11-year-old boy. His whole family was killed, put into a hole and a grenade fired into the hole. Now he runs a museum there at the site." The episode was not an effort to tarnish the record of the Vietnam veteran, nor was it to point blame on any particular person or organization. The episode was emotional but civil, creating a mediated space for the Mai Lai survivor to grieve publicly, in front of a soldier who was directly involved in the situation, while also allowing for the soldier to respond to the survivor's grievances. According to Rushing, a former Marine himself:

> "My question in this episode is how can normally good people --
> because this is a cross-section of soldiers in the military, particularly
> if it's a draft situation -- do such awful things. They were shooting

eighteen-month-olds. They were killing and raping in such a way that war does not justify. There is no order in the military that can legally hold up to justify the things that they were doing. So that's what we are looking at. The psychological side of it. The emotional side of it. I don't care about the politics."[103]

Similarly, AJE is known not only for focusing on the underreported, but also taking greater risks by reporting in areas that are otherwise dangerous or difficult to get access to by the mainstream Western international news outlets. Myanmar is a case in point. In 2007, after the ruling crackdown on its citizens, Al-Jazeera provided the most credible reporting from inside the country. According to Mark Seddon, formerly AJE's main UN correspondent, in the midst of the Junta's crackdown, AJE kept five correspondents in Myanmar. More to the point, AJE's coverage was considered to be the most accurate and credible according to Myanmar's citizenry. Demonstrating the point, Seddon recalls:

"The British Ambassador to the United Nations actually requested to do an interview with us on Burma. I asked him why and he said, 'Because we know from all of our various sources that people in the country are looking at the Al-Jazeera website as a source of news—what's happening in their country'.…The ambassador wanted to send a message. He knew that the TV signals were going to be blocked but that the Internet might not be blocked. He wanted to send the signal that the British were using all of their best offices… to sign up for much tougher sanctions unless the generals release prisoners, set boundaries and get their tanks off the streets."[104]

When asked if AJE had been successful at representing the political interests of underrepresented groups, Will Stebbins, the D.C. bureau chief for AJE, recalled the network's coverage of the 2007 elections in Argentina, where AJE correspondent Teresa Bo caught on camera and interviewed several Argentineans who were systematically committing voter fraud for both of the major political candidates running for office. Despite the fact that English language news is not widely watched in Latin America, AJE's coverage "caused a sensation in Argentina, had thousands of hits on YouTube, local Argentinean news stations downloaded it from the Internet and re-broadcasted it completely and the federal prosecutor in Buenos Aires contacted our correspondent and initiated a criminal case based on the show."[105] No other major international news network covered the story.

AJE's coverage of the treatment of minorities in Malaysia has also been quite telling. On November 10, 2007, large protests broke out in the heart of downtown Kuala Lumpur. Organized by BERSIH, a coalition of Malaysian opposition political parties and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with the stated aim of reforming the electoral

process, up to an estimated 40,000 protestors came out in force in order to draw attention to complaints of government discrimination against minority communities and to call for an end to government corruption and for electoral reform. While the protests began as a peaceful endeavor, Malaysian police quickly tried to quash the protestors and to dissuade people from joining the demonstrations by using fire hoses and tear gas. The images were stunning, not only for international audiences, but especially for Malaysians. While the Malaysian broadcast and print media failed to cover the protests as anything more than a blip, Al-Jazeera English covered the protests live and in detail. While covering them, AJE correspondent Hamish MacDonald was himself physically affected by the tear gas, the consequences of which were jarring for anyone watching.

The images of the excessive force used against the protestors spread like wildfire. Independent news providers and bloggers posted links to AJE's coverage, and more than 250,000 people watched it on YouTube.com during the first week after the protest. More importantly, a large number of Malaysians saw the images and debated the merits of the rally. The large-scale discrepancy between AJE's ample coverage of the protests and the sparser coverage of the Malaysian—largely state-influenced—media resulted in the Malaysian mainstream media's "largest credibility crisis to date."[106] Moreover, despite an on-air scolding from the Malaysian Minister of Information, Zainuddin Maidin,[107]AJE continued to air video of the government's heavy-handed tactics and was again highly critical of the government two weeks later during a new set of protests (which also turned violent due to excessive police force). Dato Manja Ismail, director of Malay publications for Media Prima, the state-run media conglomerate, argued that by exposing the way the ruling government was treating ethnic minorities, "AJE's coverage of the protests changed how we cover sensitive political issues here. Before, we could not show such images, or tell such tales of government abuse. Now, if we don't we will lose our audience to AJE. I've told the Minister of Information that, and he understands that things must change."[108]

These stories dovetail nicely both with AJE's mission to provide a "voice to the voiceless," as well as our finding that viewers felt that it succeeded in providing a space for the mediatized recognition of abuses of power. Along these lines, when asked to elaborate on the potential benefits of focusing on the metaphorically "voiceless" communities, Marwan Bashara, AJE's senior political analyst, said:

> "Where you start mobilizing people, as viewers, and they start listening to this… they start understanding that there is a global language, and that there is a global periphery and there are global power centers. And people start understanding that the suffering

in Mozambique or in Zimbabwe is very similar to what you are suffering from in India or Myanmar....And that's why we're global. We're global not because of our satellite – we can get to everyone.... It's because our themes and our coverage gets to everyone."[109]

While a systematic content analysis is beyond the scope of this project, these stories, along with AJE's reputation and mission, provide substantial context for understanding why participants felt that AJE was fulfilling a conciliatory function based on the criteria developed here. By examining international news through the lens of the South, highlighting abuses of power and connecting stories of the disenfranchised from around the world, "several important steps toward conflict resolution can occur: the [conflicting] parties may be educated about each other's point of view; stereotypes are challenged; and initial perceptions can be re-evaluated and clarified."[110] Given that AJE is still a relative newcomer in the global mediasphere, the extent of its role in conflict resolution is yet to be seen, though this is a promising finding indeed.

Primary Finding 2: The longer viewers had been watching AJE, the less dogmatic they were in their thinking

The survey found that the more months a viewer had been watching AJE, the less dogmatic they were in their thinking. Dogmatism is defined as "a relatively closed cognitive organization of beliefs and disbeliefs about reality, organized around a central set of beliefs about absolute authority which, in turn, provides a framework for patterns of intolerance and qualified tolerance toward others."[111] Previous research has demonstrated a positive correlation between levels of dogmatism and confrontational behavior in conflict situations.[112] This finding was found to be significant amongst both participants who relied heavily on AJE as their primary source for information and political behavior, as well as those who were less dependent on AJE. Moreover, the relationship was significant regardless of respondents' gender, religion or travel outside their countries.

In some ways, levels of dogmatism can be described as a gateway variable controlling the relative impact that new information – especially information provided via the global news media – can have on opinion and behavior formation: "The relatively closed nature of high-dogmatic individuals' cognitive systems leads to the processing of information in a way that ignores, minimizes, or avoids inconsistencies in beliefs and attitudes. Low-dogmatic individuals, however, do not keep inconsistent attitudes and beliefs isolated or separated, and the open nature of their cognitive systems allows them to see connections between belief and disbelief systems."[113] Thus, the lower levels of dogmatism associated with AJE viewership may open up viewers to become increasingly capable

of navigating issues that have otherwise been seen as irreconcilable. Moreover, lower levels of dogmatism have been found to strongly relate to one's willingness to engage and listen to competing information claims, a consequence that could be exceptionally helpful in combating perceptions of a "Clash of Civilizations."[114]

Importantly, while we did find evidence of an "Al-Jazeera effect," it was limited to the cognitive level of thinking. By measuring the participants' levels of cognitive dogmatism, this study provides a gauge of how individuals process information, without consideration of a particular issue. Here, dogmatism is seen as a variable "involved in the encoding and storing of information in memory and the processes involved in evaluation and judgment."[115] Thus, rather than the more rational or explicit behaviors and opinions that were asked in the survey (e.g. measures of political tolerance or feelings towards U.S. policy in Iraq), the dogmatism findings provide us with an authentic and important understanding of how people process information, particularly information that contradicts existing beliefs. As is briefly outlined above, levels of dogmatism are strongly related to how people behave in confrontational situations, as well as levels of political and cultural tolerance; thus we argue that AJE viewership may be able to positively impact viewers' behaviors over the long-term.[116]

This is particularly significant in light of our finding that viewers considered AJE to be a conciliatory media, and that the longer a viewer had tuned into AJE, the better they thought it was at fulfilling a conciliatory function. Not only did viewers think that AJE was effective at embodying the journalistic standards that we identified as essential for a news outlet to cover contentious issues in socially productive ways, but the longer they watched, the less dogmatic they became, thus providing evidence that the concept of a conciliatory media can have tangible consequences on how people approach difficult issues.

Primary Finding 3: Viewers tune into international news for affirmation rather than information

On a number of levels, the findings provided evidence that participants were tuning into international news media that they thought would further substantiate their opinions about U.S. policies and culture, and provide them with information regarding the international issues of concern that they felt should be priorities.

First, the study found a strong relationship between the participants' attitudes toward the U.S. policies and culture and the particular broadcaster they depended on for news and information. Participants were asked how supportive/unsupportive they were of: (1) America's War on Terror, (2) U.S. policy in Iraq, (3) U.S. policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli

conflict, (4) purchasing American-made brands and products; as well as how favorable/unfavorable they were of (5) American cultural values, (6) U.S. foreign policy in general and (7) American people. Respondents who were dependent on BBC World and especially on CNNI were more supportive of U.S. foreign policy generally. Moreover, those dependent on the BBC World were more favorable of American cultural values, while those dependent on CNNI were more likely to support America's War on Terror. Finally, participants dependent on CNNI were more likely to support U.S. policy in Iraq and U.S. policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, while those dependent on AJE were more critical of both.

Given that AJE brands itself on showing the "other side" of the war in Iraq and the oppression of the Palestinian people, these findings are not surprising. It is unlikely that a viewer who favors the U.S. policy in Iraq or toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would likely report him/herself dependent on AJE, especially given the Al-Jazeera network's history of reporting on both those issues. Rather, these findings likely suggest that people seek out news media that reinforce their predetermined ideologies and opinions. In other words, viewers use the media to get affirmed rather than to get informed. So, for example, the viewers who oppose the U.S. policies in Iraq and Palestine may be more dependent on AJE as a source of information in that it will likely provide them information to further substantiate their already established opinion. Similarly, viewers who support the U.S. foreign policy may consider themselves dependent on CNNI since they believe its reporting operates along similar ideological lines to theirs.

Similar to how viewers tune into particular broadcasters for information that will affirm their pre-existing opinions, viewers also seek out broadcasters that prioritize international issues that they are particularly concerned with. Thus, we found that respondents' dependence on AJE, CNNI and BBC World was significantly related to how they perceived the urgency of various global issues. For example, viewers who were more dependent on AJE gave more importance to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict while those who were more dependent on BBC World and CNNI prioritized terror threats in the U.S. and Europe higher.

Strikingly, while viewers likely choose to watch international news broadcasters that will tell stories in ways that reinforce their opinions, we found that the more frequently participants watched AJE, the less supportive they were of U.S. policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Similarly, the longer participants had been tuning into AJE, the more critical they were of U.S. policy in Iraq. Thus, while the news media are unlikely to change one's opinion on politically salient issues,

it may often be the case that they do reinforce and deepen already held opinions. These findings seem to provide strong evidence for Kai Hafez's argument that the media appeal to their particular constituencies rather than to a universal audience. According to Hafez (2007), "When all is said and done, the mass media are not in the least oriented towards a 'world system,' but in fact concentrate upon national markets, whose interests and stereotypes they largely reproduce. Moreover, the influence of the media on politics is negligible, particularly in relation to international conflicts that touch upon vital national interests."[117] While AJE – given its cross-regional and global focus – presents a challenge to Hafez's suggestion that today's news media concentrate on national markets, our findings do support the argument that people generally seek the news media that are more likely to reinforce their existing opinions of current events rather than challenge them.

Findings from focus groups in Southeast Asia further substantiate this point. For example, a young Indonesian male said: "I don't like [Western] news networks, such as Fox because they provide a very American perspective. However, I like AJE since it provides more news on the Middle East and the Gulf region."[118] Similarly, a middle-aged Malaysian male admitted: "When I heard of the launch of AJE, I thought that it would have a more fair representation of news that is important to me, compared to Western networks. Then, when I started watching it, my opinion about it was reinforced."[119]

These findings present some interesting questions for theories of media influence. While the media system dependency (MSD) theory posits that media influence is determined by the "the scarcity or exclusivity of [an individual's] information resources," today's over-saturated media environment means that it is rarely the case that people find themselves dependent on any particular media organization for information.[120] We live in a networked society where information is easily accessible and circulated across borders and time zones, largely eliminating the likelihood of situations where people are lacking sources of news. Yet, this study did find that participants still considered themselves dependent on particular sources of news (BBC, CNNI and AJE), despite the lack of information scarcity. Moreover, this study did confirm that dependence on particular media outlets was likely to correlate to (and we argue reinforce) the participants' opinions on pertinent foreign policy issues, thus supporting MSD's basic premise that dependence means influence. Thus, the new question becomes, when there is an abundance of sources of information, why do viewers become dependent on a particular news organization?

One possibility is that news has become a highly politically and ideologically charged topic, a condition that would alter the reasons why

someone tunes into a particular broadcaster. Bennett's (2004) research has found that "changes in citizenship may account for a large part of the difficulty in delivering standard mass society news format…to audiences whose members are increasingly parsing information in highly personal terms. This identity shift means…that news and information systems cannot simply go back in time to the seemingly rosier days of mass news audiences."[121] Hjarvard (2002) adds to Bennett's assessment by arguing that in today's highly competitive news environment, the degree of authority that was often allowed with the media of old no longer exists. Rather, similar to how consumers choose between competing commercial products, they rely on image and brand to determine which news organizations they trust. "The communication of a brand name plays a much more prominent role in global media, almost to the extent that the presentation of a brand name is equally important as relying on the brand name itself."[122] Thus, brands – and symbols associated with media brands – are the essential "landmarks" by which trust is gauged in today's decoupled and decentralized media environment.

Accordingly, Robinson (2002) argued that the media ought to be perceived as just one of several factors that affect political decisions rather than a main cause for such decisions. "Despite the radical claims of some, new communication technologies have not transformed world politics and media-state relations."[123]

Beyond the questions regarding specific opinions of policies and culture, we also found no significant relationship between viewership or dependence on AJE, BBC World or CNNI and viewers' levels of political tolerance, cultural ethnocentrism or civic engagement. These findings provide strong evidence showing that the mass media have no identifiable impact on determining people's political and cultural behaviors and attitudes.

These results may provide further evidence of the changed role that news media have amongst today's audiences. While media of old promoted cohesion amongst nation-states, or a national identity, new media have deviated from this tradition by moving towards the global level of analysis (and global audiences), and are thus best thought of as promoting "a cultural and mental urbanization."[124] An important difference between the traditional, nation-based media of old, and the new, culturally and ideologically aligned media of today is that today's "media provide a different connection between social action, knowledge, and emotion. In the global metropolis, you can experience strong emotions and acquire enormous amounts of information, but this does not necessarily have any consequences at all in terms of subsequent social action."[125]

Thus, because of the changed social environment associated with a de-emphasis on national identity and the nation-state, the specific media effects of these new media have changed accordingly. Simply put, while national media systems represented some ties to the official nation-state, the public communication that was taking place has some association with action – changes in policy, for instance – that would take place. New media systems, decoupled from the nation-state, circulating the global airwaves, have no such similarity, and thus their association with public action is more complex. One result of such a decoupling has been the "aestheticisation" of communication, whereby knowledge and emotions become goals in and of themselves, separate from the sphere of social action.[126]

In this competitive environment, people's levels of consuming news are decreasing, and when they seek news media outlets, they pick the ones that reinforce their views. However, this does not rule out the media potential to affect people's cognitive level of thinking. The fact that the longer people watched AJE, the less dogmatic they became is a strong indication that the media can affect how people approach new issues where their opinions have not already been formed. What remains to be seen is how decreased levels of dogmatism from viewing AJE will actually impact viewers' behaviors.

In this regard, we believe that the political situation on the ground may play a bigger role than AJE, or any other media outlet for that matter, in shaping people's opinions, particularly when it comes to complicated and highly sensitive problems such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict or the situation in Iraq. In other words, the news media by themselves are unlikely to have an immediate and drastic impact on viewers' opinions as long as those viewers do not see improvements or changes on the ground.

MOVING FORWARD

This study provides tentative support of Nick Couldry's (2006) call for the "transvaluing of media studies," where he argues that media scholars jettison "the myth of the mediated centre and explore more openly how media are produced, circulated, received and (quite possibly) ignored in the contemporary social world."[127] Pointing out that the increased density in media flows does not necessarily translate into increased media power, Couldry calls on scholars to more critically evaluate the direction of the relationship between media consumption of public opinions.

It is in this vein that this study cautiously approaches the conciliatory potential of AJE and its influence. In terms of news media today, AJE is an anomaly when it comes to its role, mission and identity. It stands out from its competitors in that it presents a challenge to the existing paradigms guiding international news broadcasters. It is neither dominated by geopolitical nor commercial interests, and is the first of its kind to have the resources, mission and journalistic capacity to reach out to ideologically and politically similar audiences throughout the world. It both represents a challenge to "the myth of the mediated centre," while also providing a test case for examining whether the "increased density in media flows…necessarily translates into increased media power."[128]

Addressing such issues is not entirely straightforward, though this study does shed some important light on the changing ways in which news media are consumed and processed amongst today's media-savvy audiences. The three primary findings – (1) that viewers found AJE to be a conciliatory media; (2) that the longer viewers had watched AJE, the less cognitively dogmatic they were in their thinking; and (3) that people are likely to seek out news media that affirm rather than inform their opinions – offer a complicated answer to understanding the influence of the global news media today. For example, in an environment where people seek out news that affirms their opinions on important international issues and policies, what potential does the news media have in combating the myth of a "Clash of Civilizations?" Moreover, is it really the case that while news media are affirming pre-determined opinions, they can simultaneously be contributing to lower levels of dogmatism that may facilitate more open-mindedness when it comes to the many contentious

issues ahead of us? More research is required to examine the different impacts that the news media may be having at the cognitive, rational and behavioral levels of thinking.

Yet, it is clear that AJE is doing something right. Perhaps it is what Roger Silverstone (2002) describes as today's news media's ability to fulfill "the need to be heard."[129] As minorities around the world form diasporic communities in places far from their native environments, they have increasingly come to look toward global media systems as a means to connect with their homelands, hear and identify with their cultural kin, and to have their voices and interests represented in the global commons. Accordingly, today's news media have moved towards the "personification of the message, targeting ideologically aligned audiences, regardless of nationality.[130] In a sense, contemporary news media have come to function as a "re-embedding social mechanism, i.e. a mechanism that reconstructs and institutionalizes patterns of social interaction and thereby provides trust" in an otherwise increasingly fragmented world.[131] This study's findings confirm that people are drawn to news media that help them connect with others who share similar stories, a process that provides them with a sense of stability. Thus, in moving forward, questions of identity construction, promotion and identification are central to analyzing and understanding how media become trusted means for accessing information, and thus influential, in today's media environment.

APPENDIX 1:
MEDIA SYSTEM DEPENDENCY SCALE

Examining the role of media – and the influence of a particular media outlet – in conflict requires first and foremost a means of evaluating the importance of media in determining opinions and behaviors. In order to best answer this question, this study relied on media systems dependency (MSD) theory to explore whether there is a relationship between the respondents' dependence on AJE as an important source of news and their political tolerance, dogmatism level, civic participation and cultural ethnocentrism. We also explored respondents' dependence on BBC World and CNN International for the sake of comparison with AJE. MSD theory suggests that media are best viewed as an "information system whose powers vis-à-vis effects rest on the scarcity or exclusivity of their information resources."[132] MSD theory emerged as an effort and reaction to the two diverging trends in media effects research: one positing weak media effects (via uses and gratifications), another (via cultivation theory) arguing for the existence of strong media effects. MSD was an effort to reframe the research question away from whether or not the media has strong effects to asking "under what societal conditions do/don't media have substantial effects?"[133] MSD thus represents a nuanced approach towards understanding the relationship between media and power, focusing exclusively on neither the micro or macro levels, but rather aiming to develop a multi-level understanding of media power that could account for the occurrence of both weak and strong media effects at the level of the individual and, more broadly, society. Moreover, by reframing the question to focus on the specific environment conditioning the reception of media messages, MSD offers a more internationally malleable research agenda for determining media power across cultures and nations. Such an approach is of particular use in the context of evaluating the news media, where numerous external or environmental factors (fear, for example) can impact the power of a particular story or message.

Both MSD and Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theorists depart from many traditional media effects theorists in that the audience is understood as an active and influential variable in the media-effects process. Yet, the particular ways in which the audience relates to media is a point of

significant departure. For U&G theorists, the primary question is how an audience uses media to satisfy particular needs at a given time, a condition that is largely influenced and understood at the individual and interpersonal levels. Contrastingly, MSD argues that there are significant constraints to the role these interpersonal networks play in the dependency relationship. Rather than focusing on an individual's needs or uses, MSD suggests that human motivations and actions are better understood as goal-oriented, and that these goals (as well as perceived "needs") are to a large extent shaped through social pressures that are largely outside the control of the individual. Accordingly, while U&G theories suggest that the individual's ability to neutralize and even combat media power is substantive, MSD introduces a number of variables that challenge the rather optimistic hopes of many U&G theorists. While media texts are vulnerable to reinterpretation and reappropriation by individuals, MSD contends that media systems' ability to control structural and informational resources in expansive ways contribute to their "powerful knowledge construction position at macrolevels," a condition that "is likely to extend to microlevels."[134] Accordingly, U&G theories fail to take into account not only the constraining effects that media institutions have at the macro level, but also the consequences that these macro conditions have on the normalization of particular social knowledge(s) at the individual and interpersonal levels.

MSD's multilevel, ecological approach offers scholars a method to examine not only the importance of interpersonal networks in understanding news media influence, but also the social contexts in which interpersonal relationships and individuals' dependence on media systems may be impacted. The central organizing concept is the "micro-MSD relation," defined as "the extent to which attainment of individual's goals is contingent upon access to the information and resources of the media system, relative to the extent to which attainment of the media system's goals is contingent upon the resources controlled by individuals."[135] For example, drawing from much of Adorno's (and others) work, MSD suggests that people's "intolerance of ambiguity" is a critical psychological condition that most strive to alleviate or reconcile.[136] Accordingly, in situations of ambiguity, or where there are limited numbers of actors with information, the peoples' dependence on media systems increase. Conditions of ambiguity, alienation, and disorder, or as Ball-Rokeach (In Preparation) describes, "problematic social environs," are critical social circumstances that dramatically influence the level of dependence on media systems and thus the intensity and scope of media effects.[137]

Under such conditions, the audience members' dependence on the media is a direct result of "the reduced adequacy of their established

social arrangements and the media's capacity to acquire and transmit information that facilitates reconstruction of arrangements."[138]

The MSD scale that we used in our survey consists of two questions measuring the extent of dependence on AJE, CNN International and BBC World as sources for following global news and determining political behavior.

APPENDIX 2:
COGNITIVE DOGMATISM SCALE

AJE's mission, code of ethics and the testimonies of its staff members indicate that the network is serving as a platform through which voices across the spectrum can express themselves and provide a plethora of information relevant to the ongoing conflicts that the world is witnessing today. AJE, by providing comprehensive, in-depth analytical coverage that goes beyond the "soundbite culture," as claimed by its staff members, can facilitate what Wolfsfeld (2004) referred to as a "rational public debate"[139] among its viewers in a way that can reduce their dogmatism level and enhance their understanding and open-mindedness in approaching the issues and conflicts being covered.

Dogmatism is defined as "a relatively closed cognitive organization of beliefs and disbeliefs about reality, organized around a central set of beliefs about absolute authority which, in turn, provides a framework for patterns of intolerance and qualified tolerance toward others."[140] Research shows a positive correlation between dogmatism and confrontational behavior in conflict situations.[141]

Rokeach (1960) defined the belief system as a representation of "all the beliefs, sets, expectancies, or hypotheses, conscious and unconscious, that a person at a given time accepts as true of the world he lives in."[142] He also defines the disbelief system as containing "all the disbeliefs, sets, expectancies, conscious and unconscious, that, to one degree or another, a person at a given time rejects as false."[143] Rokeach (1960) assumes that an individual's reliance on authority would "range from rational, tentative reliance…at one extreme to arbitrary, absolute reliance on the other."[144]

With these definitions in mind, Rokeach (1960) developed a 40-item dogmatism scale that measured an individual's cognitive tendency toward open-mindedness versus close-mindedness. "Individuals high in dogmatism are characterized by their tendency to compartmentalize and isolate their beliefs and disbeliefs. Alternatively, individuals with more open belief systems, or with low dogmatism, are characterized by their willingness and readiness to make a linkage between diverging beliefs."[145]

Rokeach's dogmatism scale was criticized for being "lengthy and often impractical for research purpose."[146] and for becoming outdated. That is why we have decided to use an updated dogmatism scale version to measure whether there is a correlation between AJE viewing and dogmatism level. This updated 23-item scale, which was constructed by Shearman and Levine (2006), aims to measure four main characteristics of the dogmatism cognitive style: "the degree of open-mindedness versus closed-mindedness, the extent that an individual believes in a single correct view, the extent to which one rejects ideas or viewpoints that are [in] disagreement with one's own opinion, and blind respect or excessive reliance on authority."[147]

APPENDIX 3:
POLITICAL TOLERANCE SCALE

AJE, according to its code of ethics and the testimonies of its staff members, has been serving as a "voice to the voiceless" and providing "equal recognition"[148] to all parties involved in a conflict. It has also been exposing its viewers to a variety of conflicting issues and perspectives to be discussed in a public deliberation. "Those who engage in deliberation are forced to consider alternative perspectives, reconsider their own perspectives and ultimately form better reasoned opinions. An outcome of public deliberation is a clear understanding of all sides of a public issue."[149] Based on that, we explore whether there is a relationship between people's dependence on AJE as an important source of global news events and the level of their political tolerance. In other words, we test whether AJE can play a conciliatory role by reducing political intolerance among its viewers. In this context, Scheufele, et al (2005) found that "exposure to everyday differences of political opinion may translate into an appreciation of the need to tolerate differences of political opinion among disparate groups within the larger society."[150]

Tolerance reflects "a willingness to put up with those things that one rejects. Politically, it implies a willingness to permit the expression of those ideas or interests that one opposes."[151] The true test for tolerance is when there is opposition or disagreement with a certain group. "If there is no reason to oppose, then there is no occasion for one to be tolerant or intolerant....One is tolerant to the extent one is prepared to extend freedoms to those whose ideas one rejects, whatever these might be."[152] In this context, tolerance "entails the willingness to extend civil liberties to adversaries."[153]

Individuals can become more tolerant by being exposed to a variety of opinions and perspectives, not just through the media, but through their interpersonal discussion networks that serve as dynamic deliberative forums. Research by Knight & Johnson (1994) as cited in Scheufele, et al (2005) found that "individual discussion within a diverse [interpersonal] network results in members having to compromise between opposing points of view, which motivates individuals to reevaluate those issues where conflict occurs."[154]

In addition to media exposure and involvement in deliberative interpersonal discussions, research has shown that the educational level affects political tolerance. In this context, Bobo & Licari (1989) found that more years of schooling lead to greater cognitive sophistication, which can increase political tolerance. "In short, education changes cognitive style in ways that increase the likelihood of recognizing the importance of extending civil liberties to those we dislike."[155]

In our review of the literature, we came across one scale that was developed by Sullivan, Piereson & Marcus (1982)[156] to measure political tolerance. This scale, which is used in our study to measure whether AJE viewing affects political tolerance, starts with a statement asking respondents to identify the political organization or group that they are "least likely to agree with when it comes to public policy?" The scale then asks respondents about how far they would be willing to go to support this group's civil liberties (teaching in a state school; running for public office; forming a lawful organization; holding a public rally; making a public speech; not having to be subject to government wiretapping).

APPENDIX 4:
CULTURAL ETHNOCENTRISM

In order to gauge how culturally ethnocentric participants in this survey are, the survey asked two questions regarding each participant's opinion of the superiority of his/her own culture and her/his fear of "other cultures." The questions were taken from a 2004 Pew study that, among other things, surveyed the cultural values and opinions of international audiences.[157]

APPENDIX 5:
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SCALE

Research has shown that news media, particularly conciliatory or peace media, can play a role in audience members' participation in civic activities. In this context, results from a study conducted by Norris (1996) as cited in Scheufele, et al (2005) showed that viewers of certain types of public affairs programming on television are more willing to participate in public forums and get involved in a variety of political and civic activities than those who do not view such programs.[158]

Civic participation can be defined as the "activities that address community concerns through nongovernmental or nonelectoral means, such as volunteering for building a homeless shelter or working on a community project."[159] Civic participation is part of "social capital," which includes "those tangible substances that count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit."[160] The type of people who volunteer to participate in community activities usually have a better understanding of the events going on around them and thus are more willing to listen to the other side with an open mind.

In this study, we adopted a scale developed by Zhang & Chia (2006) to measure whether there is a relationship between respondents' dependence on AJE as an important media source and the level of their civic engagement. In this scale, respondents are asked about the frequency of their performing the following community activities during the previous year: going to a club/neighborhood meeting; serving as an officer of some clubs or organizations; serving on a committee for a local organization; and working on a committee project.

Please answer the following questions as truthfully and completely as possible.
Your identity will be kept entirely confidential and your answers anonymous.

1. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

    a.   There is a clear line between what is right and what is wrong.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

    b.   People who disagree with me are usually wrong.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

    c.   Having multiple perspectives on an issue is usually desirable.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

d.   I'm the type of person who questions authority.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

e.   When I disagree with someone else, I think it is perfectly acceptable to agree to disagree.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

f.   I am confident in the correctness of my beliefs.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

g.   There is a single correct way to do most things.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

h.   People should respect authority.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

i. I am a person who is strongly committed to my beliefs.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

j.   Diversity of opinion and background is valuable in any group or organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

k.   It is important to be open to different points of view.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

l.   My way is generally the best way to go.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

m.   I will not compromise when it comes to things that are really important to me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

n.   There are often many different acceptable ways to solve a problem.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

o.   I consider myself to be very open-minded.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

p.   Few issues lend themselves to either or solutions; rather there is usually a middle ground on most topics.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

q.   Different points of view should be encouraged.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

r.   People who are in a position of authority have the right to tell others what to do.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

s.   People who are very different from us can be dangerous.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

t.   I am "set in my ways."

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

u.   When I make a decision, I stick with it.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

v.   It is usually wise to seek out expert opinions before making decisions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

w.   I like having a set routine.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

2. Our people are not perfect, but our culture is superior to others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

3. Our way of life needs to be protected against foreign influence.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

4. How often do you discuss news and politics with your interpersonal networks (e.g. family and friends)?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
0	1	2	3	4

5. How do you feel about American cultural values?

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
    Not at all favorable   Very favorable

6. How do you feel about the U.S. foreign policy in general?

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
    Not at all favorable   Very favorable

7. How do you feel about the American people?

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
    Not at all favorable   Very favorable

8. Please indicate how important each of the following media sources are for determining your political behavior, with 1 being not at all important, and 10 being very important:
   i.   CNN International:

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
    Not at all important   Very important

   ii. BBC News:

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
    Not at all important   Very important

   iii. Al-Jazeera English:

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
    Not at all important   Very important

   iv. Regional satellite broadcaster (please specify):
    _____

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
    Not at all important   Very important

    v.   Local news channels (please specify):

_____

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Not at all important   Very important

9. Please rate each of the following six international issues with regard to your perception of their urgency (with 1 being the least urgent issue and 10 being the most urgent issue):

    a.   The Palestinian-Israeli conflict

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Not at all urgent   Very urgent

    b.   The situation in Iraq

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Not at all urgent   Very urgent

    c.   Terror threats in Europe and the U.S.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Not at all urgent   Very urgent

    d.   The conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Not at all urgent   Very urgent

    e.   The spread of HIV and other infectious diseases

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Not at all urgent   Very urgent

    f.   Global climate change

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Not at all urgent   Very urgent

10. What political organization/group do you find yourself least likely to agree with when it comes to public policy?

_____

11. Should a member of the group you've identified in the prior question be allowed to:
   a. Teach in a state school?
      i. Yes   ii. No
   b. Run for public office?
      i. Yes   ii. No
   c. Form a lawful organization?
      i. Yes   ii. No
   d. Hold a public rally?
      i. Yes   ii. No
   e. Make a public speech?
      i. Yes   ii. No
   f. Be free from government wiretapping?
      i. Yes   ii. No

12. Please indicate how supportive you are of each of the following:
   a. America's war on terror:

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
      Not at all supportive   Very supportive

   b. U.S. policy in Iraq:

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
      Not at all supportive   Very supportive

   c. U.S. policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict:

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
      Not at all supportive   Very supportive

   d. Purchasing American-made brands and products:

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
      Not at all supportive   Very supportive

13. How many times have you performed each of the following community activities in the past year:
   i. Gone to a club/neighborhood meeting _____

   ii. Served as a leader of a club or organization _____

   iii. Served on a committee for a local organization _____

iv. Worked on a committee project _____

14. Please indicate how important each of the following media sources are for you in your efforts to follow global news events, with 1 being not at all important, and 10 being very important:
   i. CNN International

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
   Not at all important   Very important

   ii. BBC News

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
   Not at all important   Very important

   iii. Al-Jazeera English

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
   Not at all important   Very important

   iv. Regional satellite broadcaster (please specify) _____
   _____

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
   Not at all important   Very important

   v. Local news channels (please specify) _____
   _____

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
   Not at all important   Very important

Please answer the following questions regarding Al-Jazeera English (AJE)
1. In an average week, how many hours do you spend watching AJE?
      _____ hours per week

2. In an average week, how many days in a week do you watch AJE?
      _____ days per week

3. How long have you been a regular viewer of AJE?
      _____ months

4. Compared to other televised broadcasting news networks, how does AJE rate in each of the following categories?

a.   Providing a public place for politically underrepresented groups

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
Not at all successful   Very Successful

b.   Providing multiple viewpoints on a diversity of controversial issues

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
Not at all successful   Very Successful

c.   Representing the interests of the international public in general rather than a specific group of people

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
Not at all successful   Very Successful

d.   Providing firsthand observations from eyewitnesses of international events

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
Not at all successful   Very Successful

e.   Covering stories of injustice in the world

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
Not at all successful   Very Successful

f.   Acknowledging mistakes in journalistic coverage when appropriate

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
Not at all successful   Very Successful

g.   Demonstrating a desire towards solving rather than escalating conflicts

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
Not at all successful   Very Successful

h. Avoiding the use of victimizing terms, such as martyr or pathetic, unless they are attributed to a reliable source

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Not at all successful   Very Successful

i. Avoiding the use of demonizing labels, such as terrorist or extremist, unless they are attributed to reliable sources

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Not at all successful   Very Successful

j. Abstaining from opinions that are not substantiated by credible evidence

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Not at all successful   Very Successful

k. Providing background, contextualizing information that helps viewers fully understand the story

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Not at all successful   Very Successful

5. What do you consider your current attitude toward the US foreign policy compared with the one that you had before you started watching AJE?

Much worse	Worse	Slightly Worse	Same	Slightly improved	Improved	Much improved
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please answer the following demographics questions
1. Your age: _____ years

2. Your gender:
    i.   Male
    ii. Female

3. What is your religion?
    i.   Muslim
    ii.   Christian
    iii. Jewish
    iv.   Other (Please specify) _____

4. What is your nationality? _____

5. How many years of education do you have? _____

6. Do you speak any languages other than your native language?
    i. No
    ii. Yes (please specify): _____

7. Within the last year, how many times have you traveled outside your country?

Never	Once	Twice	Three times	Four times	Five times	6 times or more

8. Have you ever traveled to the United States?
    i. Yes
    ii. No

9. How many American friends do you have? _____

10. How many years of education do your parents have?
    Mother: _____

    Father: _____

Thank you for participating in the survey! If you would like to learn more about the Al-Jazeera Research Project, please visit our website at ajerp.com.

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