



Radio Sawa in Jordan: Different Perceptions, Together?

Turner, Michael

Academic Director: Al Khalil, Muhamed

Project Advisor: Bazadough, Manal

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

International and Area Studies

Asia, Jordan, Amman

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for:

Jordan: Modernization and Social Change

SIT Study Abroad, Spring 2007

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	3
Copyright Release.....	4
Acknowledgments.....	5
Opening Quotes.....	6
Introductions.....	7
Rationale.....	12
The Voice of America as Radio Sawa's Predecessor.....	12
Regarding Radio Sawa Specifically.....	15
Contemporary Arab Public Opinion of the United States.....	18
Research on Persuasive Communication and Credibility.....	20
Review of Critical Questions as Derived from these Contexts.....	23
Methodology.....	24
Findings.....	29
Goals and Motivations.....	30
Source of Popularity and Related Factors.....	32
Association with US Government and Implications.....	35
Radio as a News Source in Jordan.....	36
Relationship Between Spheres of Entertainment and Information.....	39
Attractiveness of Non-Entertainment Programming.....	40
Objectivity and the “American Slant” Issue.....	42
Effectiveness in Achieving Goals.....	45
Conclusions.....	48
Bibliography.....	54
Appendices.....	56
Verification of Informed Consent.....	56
Statement of Oral Consent.....	57

Abstract

Radio Sawa in Jordan: Different Perceptions, Together?

This study attempted to take the issue of Radio Sawa – a United States Congress-funded public relations endeavor that has enjoyed significant recent popularity in much of the Middle East – and expound upon issues of its perceived motivations, intentions, attractiveness, credibility, and effectiveness in relation to the Jordanian public, primarily the younger generation that constitutes the station's target audience. Local professionals involved in media and academia were asked to comment upon such questions as well as to provide insight into the broader state of radio media reception in Jordan. Research obtained for the study found general agreement that the Radio Sawa endeavor suffers severe limitations on its ability to directly affect Jordanian public opinion, for widespread antagonism toward the United States was cited in nearly every case as a response to broader American foreign policy, a factor that outweighs any positive effects that targeted media efforts otherwise may have. Music and entertainment programming was confirmed as hypothesized to be the foremost source of the station's attractiveness and consequent popularity, but the value and credibility of its news and information broadcasts remained a matter of debate among the subjects. These disagreeing perspectives were contextualized in theories of persuasive communication and source credibility in a motion to explain them as consequences of different preconceptions in regard to Radio Sawa's messages and intentions, a phenomenon that is certain to affect the larger audience's perception of the station as well. The study also pinpointed the necessity of continued research in Jordan's radio industry, the nature of which has been transformed dramatically in recent years by widespread privatization, mirroring the historic shift away from state-run media occurring throughout other parts of the Arab world as well.

ISP Topic Codes

109 – Journalism

111 – Mass Communications

521 – Regional Studies: Middle East

Copyright Release

The author hereby does grant the School for International Training the permission to electronically reproduce and transmit this document to the students, alumni, staff, and faculty of the World Learning Community.

The author hereby does grant the School for International Training the permission to electronically reproduce and transmit this document to the public via the World Wide Web or other electronic means.

The author hereby does grant the School for International Training the permission to reproduce this document to the public in print format.

Student: Michael Turner

Signature:

Date:

Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my most sincere thanks and gratitude for their assistance in this project to the following people: Nour Abu Omar, who helped end my trend of dead-end searches for suitable contacts and even made some crucial phone calls on my behalf, ultimately giving me the necessary grounds to begin the study. Manal Bazadough, who advised my project despite her busy schedule and personal obligations, and without whose personability I doubt I could ever have spoken to many of the people who contributed to the research. Dr. Mahmoud Zawawi, who offered to meet with me so quickly after reaching him I barely had time to prepare and followed up with more meetings and emails throughout the project, donating a considerable amount of his time even between travels in and out of the country. Fardous al-Masri, who invited me to Sawt AlMadena's upscale office immediately on the day I spoke with her, a date which also happened to fall on the unimaginably busy second day of her new station's official launch. Haider Bany Yasin, who not only scheduled an interview for me at Jordan Radio but accompanied me throughout the afternoon and treated me as his most esteemed guest. And finally, all of my interviewees and additional contacts in general, who generously donated their time to contribute to this project in the midst of their busy days and more urgent engagements.

“Music is an international language.” - Mahmoud Zawawi, Radio Sawa

“Radio should be a friend.” - Haitham Shibli, Jordan Radio

“Media has to be indigenous.” - Daoud Kuttab, AmmanNet

“[Our] mission is to promote freedom and democracy – the President's policy in the region – by broadcasting accurate, reliable, and objective news and information.” - August 2005 Middle East Broadcasting Networks Performance Report

Introductions

I'm sure that I heard Radio Sawa long before I ever heard *about* Radio Sawa. It's nearly impossible spend more than a few days in Amman, taking cabs from place to place, and not be exposed to it as one your drivers maneuvers his way through the city's backed-up traffic. On occasion the more hospitable of drivers, intent on making his young American client feel at home, actively switches the radio receiver to it: 98.1, the station where you're bound to find songs that are at least youthful if not straight off the American billboard's top-20. The music is hip and varied, traversing the the boundaries between Western and Arabic pop music near-seamlessly. Where else, in any case, can you find pop stars Britney Spears and Amr Diab playing back to back?¹

My first real knowledge of Radio Sawa, however, came to me one day as I was haphazardly flipping through the pages of the tourist-gearred Rough Guide to Jordan. One of a small handful of radio stations profiled in the guidebook's "Media" section, the station is briefly summarized in two sentences as "publicly funded by the US Congress," "hugely popular for its innovative music policy," and "set up so that the US government could broadcast its news and opinions in Arabic directly to the people of the Middle East."² I was immediately intrigued. In which sort of manner, I was already beginning to wonder, do these elements correspond with each other, and how representative is this case of the way that Jordanian society parses and responds to broadcast media in general? The Rough Guide finalizes its description of Radio Sawa by asserting "it seems ... that most listeners love the music and ignore the propaganda in between." But is it truly all that simple? To what extent do Jordanian listeners really consider Sawa's non-music programming propaganda? Is the station even all that widely recognized as a United States initiative – and if so, how do people know? How much, in this specific social context, can the realms of news and opinion be granted elevated credibility by the merit of popular music? As my interest peaked and I began to read more on the subject, my questions both expanded in scope and became more specific individually, and from there I chose to embark upon this particular research project. I knew that there were more than two sentences to this story, in Jordan alone.

¹ George Gedda, "Radio Sawa: Music As a Tool," *Foreign Service Journal*, November 2002, p. 53.

² Matther Teller, *The Rough Guide to Jordan, Third Edition* (New York: Rough Guides Inc., 2006), p. 72.

Having established personal interest in Radio Sawa as a topic worthy of academic exploration, I next set out to situate the research I was considering into my studies as a student of international relations in the Middle East. What sort of larger forces does this endeavor represent, and what is the nature of the role that these forces play in the overall scheme of Jordan's process of modernization? Radio, on one hand, is part of the quintessentially modern phenomenon of easily-accessed media consumed on a mass scale, and Sawa owes its existence and effectiveness to the way in which Jordan has integrated this innovation. This particular scenario, while focusing on a single iteration of radio media, provides an obvious parallel to the ever-changing face of mass communication that accompanies the country's implementation of technological progress. The Radio Sawa effort additionally points to the continuing efforts of foreign powers – in this case the United States – to affect, direct, and contribute to Jordan's popular national discourse. As a “semi-rentier state” that is heavily dependent on economic aid and other external monetary resources, often granted in unspoken exchange for its political support, this foreign interest appears unlikely to wane in the foreseeable future.³ The more fluid mannerisms and related effectiveness of these this extranational influences, that said, lie among some of the central forces bearing the potential to define the trajectory of Jordan's cultural and political existence.

Radio Sawa is an exemplary manifestation of such intentions on the part of the United States, and the form of the reception that it receives in Jordan as well as throughout the rest of the Arab world is a crucial hint to the as to the nature of the social forces of communication and persuasion as they play out both in this individual state and in the broader region surrounding it. The identity of the United States as a key player in Middle Eastern politics has remained strong in recent years, but at the same time its popularity as such has continued to decline following continuing military and political engagements in the region that are largely resented by most Arabs.⁴ Particularly in the face of such an upsurge in dissatisfaction with its policies, the United State's ability to influence public opinion by additional means remains an important strategic concern, especially in cases where it is unwilling to

³ Ibrahim Saif, private lecture at School for International Training's Amman Office, 10 March 2007.

⁴ Gallup Organization, “The 2002 Gallup Poll of the Islamic World: Executive Report,” Gallup Poll Tuesday Briefing, February 2002.

change the unpopular practices themselves. This study will to some degree gage the viability of affecting public opinion toward the United States by means of the broadcast endeavor Radio Sawa, the implications of which will comment on the degree of pliability of this opinion itself and the effectiveness of media in changing it in regard to policies which otherwise remain static. In doing so the study will likewise provide Jordanians both consciousness of the factors that play a role in dissemination of agenda and opinion from external sources and awareness of the relationship between different spheres of media and their effects upon each other when broadcast simultaneously from the same source.

My hypothesis as I approached this study project on Radio Sawa was that despite the oversimplicity of the Rough Guide's "listeners love the music and ignore the propaganda" summarization of the station, its general conceptualization of Jordanian perception of Radio Sawa was on target. Preliminary statistics showed that the station has indeed been popular in the country over the course of the first few years since its inception, but listening statistics say little about *why* an audience listens.⁵ With a 24-hour broadcast that is composed largely of popular music, however, my assumption was that this entertainment programming held significantly more appeal than the station's more sparsely-scheduled newscasts.⁶ I had serious doubts as to whether the non-entertainment portions of Radio Sawa held much credibility in the eyes of the station's target audience and even more as to if anyone would ever tune in to the station for these segments primarily. American government outlets have not proved the most viable sources for news and opinion in Jordan. Studies of the United States' al-Hurra Television – a project umbrellaed under the same organization that funds Radio Sawa, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks – have shown that the channel is generally ineffective in garnering an audience, even without comments upon what percentage of this already small audience is truly responsive to its messages.⁷ If Jordanians aren't searching out the American perspective on a television channel that airs primarily news, why would they pursue it on a radio station mostly characterized by

⁵ Press Release, "Alhurra Television and Radio Sawa Audience Jumps to 35 Million in the Middle East," Middle East Broadcasting Network, 23 August 2005.

⁶ Deirdre Kline, "Fact Sheet: Radio Sawa," attachment to personal email, 5 January 2007.

⁷ Lindsay Wise, "A Second Look at Alhurra: US-Funded Channel Comes of Age on the Front Lines of the 'Battle for Hearts and Minds,'" *Transnational Broadcasting Studies Journal*, Spring 2005.

its music?

Radio Sawa, of course, is certainly a different case and cannot be fully paralleled to al-Hurra: most importantly, it *has* succeeded in its goal of establishing a listening base. The two networks may be ideologically related and even employ some of the same basic marketing tactics – al-Hurra isn't exclusively newscasts either, with “travel and fashion shows, medical and technology series, cinema and music programs” among its most-watched offerings – but the American television network has never been a real competitor on Jordan's satellite-television front line.⁸ This reality is radically different from the Radio Sawa narrative, which witnessed the station's unparalleled ascension to the number-one spot among Jordanian radio within roughly three months following its launch.⁹ Part of this study's intrigue for me has been the logistics of the aforementioned scenario, and likewise another of its intentions is to root out an idea as to how such may have become the case. I had some initial possibilities in mind. FM radio is a local undertaking, for example, and maybe this limitation of geographic scope cut out a lot of Sawa's potential competition. Traditional government limitations on private radio might have contributed to the same effect from a different angle. In either case, Radio Sawa has still managed to create a media entity that resonates well with Jordanians, and even the most opportune logistical circumstances won't singlehandedly make people listen in. Through this project, I hope to explore the source of the station's overall attractiveness in the Jordanian radio market as well.

I decided that my study of Radio Sawa would be best contextualized in theories of media perception and credibility discussed alongside public opinion research on Arab views of the United States, the latter being a key motivation for the Radio Sawa project in the first place. By identifying contemporary trends in the Arab world's attitude – including Jordanians' specifically – toward the United States both politically and culturally, it is possible to identify some of the public opinion challenges that American media efforts are seeking to address as well as viable avenues by which they may attempt to do so. This “base perception” of an information source, independent of whatever effects on opinion Radio Sawa may be able to produce, has been demonstrated in similar studies of audience

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Mahmoud A. Zawawi, personal interview, 17 April 2007.

opinion to affect the nature of the listener's response to the media.¹⁰ In the particular case of Radio Sawa, such a theory could suggest that listeners already unfavorable toward certain aspects of United States policy would be comparatively even more skeptical toward broadcasts that they identified as ideologically in line with these practices. In this light, I expected to see perceptions of Radio Sawa that varied from each other depending on the source from which they came, and my choice of subtitling this project “Different Perceptions, Together?” reflects the study's intention of addressing this question of discrepancy.

I also realized that connecting Radio Sawa to the historical precedent of United States overseas broadcasting was a necessity to exploration of both the logistical process of its establishment and the ideological precepts that guide its continuing operation. In order to provide such a context I briefly researched the background and motivations involved in Radio Sawa's predecessor in the Middle East, the Voice of America. While this program was of a very different nature and never achieved popularity comparable to its offspring endeavor, some of its underlying goals and purposes were markedly similar. Radio Sawa is a relatively new concept in realization, but it is indeed grounded in much of the legal precedent, philosophy, and infrastructure of the Voice of America and its history in the Middle East.¹¹ This study attempts to frame the Jordanian relationship with Radio Sawa not as a product of the isolated historical period consisting of the few years since the station's official launch, but as a culmination of both Jordanian society's larger interplay with broadcast media and the much longer-lived legacy of targeted public relations efforts from the United States. These are the social forces that have contributed to the contemporary environment of Jordanian Radio in which Sawa exists and is now helping to define on its own terms.

“Sawa” is an Arabic word that means “together,” and as a name for such a massive communications project it certainly implies that its goal is to bring something to that state. But what is that something? Americans and Arabs? Their respective popular music? Entertainment and news? Radio Sawa has been on the air for five years and counting. Maybe now can we take some of the many

¹⁰ Brian Sternthal et al., “Persuasive Effects of Source Credibility: Tests of Cognitive Response,” *The Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 4, No. 4., March 1978, p. 253.

¹¹ Zawawi, 17 April 2007.

pieces of its puzzle and begin to arrange them, together.

Rationale

An effective study of Radio Sawa in Jordan mandates first that a background for the station and the environment for its reception in the country be provided. As such the sections to follow will briefly discuss the precedent of the Voice of America, current literature on Radio Sawa, the Arab public's attitude toward the United States, and applicable theories of effective communication. Related issues requiring exploration will be synopsisized into the format in which they were approached as research questions. Each of these contexts has served as an integral basis for the study in its own right, and will be referenced among the discussion and findings.

The Voice of America as Radio Sawa's Predecessor

Following its entrance into World War II and United States' newly assumed role as a global power, its ability to communicate its perspectives with the populations of other nations came into play as a crucial component of foreign policy. This emerging concern was soon institutionalized and addressed under the auspices of the newly formed communications network entitled the “Voice of America” (often abbreviated “VOA”).¹² Legally, the government of the United States, by demands of the First Amendment, has no authority to direct the content of in-country broadcasts to the American people. Outside of the United States, however, this limitation does not prevail; the Voice of America was established as an arm of the United States government on this principle and continues to operate on it.¹³ The Voice of America began its history in February of 1942, when it first went on air in the German language, directed at the German people. As the VOA program expanded to meet new foreign policy directives and successfully secured continued governmental funding, new language branches

¹² Foy Kohler, “The Effectiveness of the Voice of America,” *The Quarterly of Film Radio and Television*, Vol. 6, No. 1., Autumn 1951, p. 20.

¹³ Zawawi, 17 April 2007.

were added in order to reach new population groups, and individual channels were adjusted to suit the government's priority for each one's target locality. The most extensive Voice of America language networks have traditionally been Russian and Chinese, but following the end of the Cold War the Russian network has lost much of its historical priority. The Arabic-language VOA program was first initiated in January 1950, and operated from that point until the year 2002, when Radio Sawa was established in its place.¹⁴

Given that many of regions to which the Voice of America has been intended for broadcast have been and sometimes still are under the control of regimes inhospitable to such an American endeavor, contemporary technological innovations have been consistently employed to bypass broadcast restrictions and likewise increase the networks' overall efficiency.¹⁵ Originally, the majority of VOA programs were both produced in and transmitted from the United States itself using short-wave radio technology. The benefit of such a strategy lies first in that short-wave radio – given adequate power – has the capability of reaching nearly anywhere in the world, and the subsequent advantage is that it requires no negotiation on the part of the US government with other states to acquire either transmission stations or frequencies. The downside of short-wave broadcasts, on the other hand, is that they suffer in quality almost inherently and reliability with any change in climate, landscape or weather patterns.¹⁶ As its VOA-related initiatives continued to grow and moved to address these inefficiencies, the American government adopted a new strategy of negotiating rights to “relay stations” in foreign nations that would be able to receive and retransmit the short-wave broadcast from the United States in the form of a more-localized, better-quality medium-wave (AM) technology. This approach improved both the capacity and reliability of the organization's broadcasts.

The commercial advent of the transistor radio in 1954 was an especially significant development for the United States' foreign communications endeavors. Prior to this point, most radio access in the Middle East had defaulted to coffeehouses and other gathering places where the proprietor of the business dictated the radio dial, as Charles Glock had lamented in a discussion of

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Kohler, p. 21.

¹⁶ Ibid.

media and opinion formation just a year earlier.¹⁷ As previously bulky and expensive radios were miniaturized and experienced a dramatic fall in price, their distribution moved out of the realm of these public spaces and into the sphere of individual ownership. In effect, this innovation increased the size – as well as changed the social composure – of the world radio-listening audience by yet-unseen dimensions.¹⁸ The new accessibility of radio transmissions to the general public made continued localization of Voice of America programs more effective, and in turn a new focus arose not only on expanding medium-wave transmissions but eventually on also implementing the better-quality, though more limited-ranged, long-wave radio known as FM. This shift, of course, reiterated to the United States the necessity of establishing locality-specific transmitters, and in more recent years numerous deals have been made with foreign governments to secure sites and frequencies for transmitting US-funded programs to their respective surrounding territories on FM radio.¹⁹

Radio Sawa came into existence just in time to capitalize on this trend as it began to play out on a larger scale in the Middle East. In 2002 the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) – the body responsible for regulating and funding American overseas media networks – made the decision to commission a new radio project in the Arab world in place of the preexisting Voice of America Arabic service.²⁰ Initiated under the direction of the BBG's subsidiary Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN), the principle idea behind this replacement network would be to “broadcast FM [radio programs] to as many countries as possible.”²¹ Again due to the range limitations of FM technology, this initiative would necessitate the establishment of transmitters in each Arab state. Following the 1990-1991 Gulf War and expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait the United States had already established a Voice of America transmitter in the small gulf state that could be utilized for such a purpose, but a station broadcast from this locality could constitute only a small segment of Radio Sawa's intended scope. Negotiations followed quickly, and FM agreements began to emerge in other US-allied states in the region shortly afterward. After a year and a half of negotiations, Jordan became the “first [new]

¹⁷ Charles Y. Glock, “The Comparative Study of Communications and Opinion Formation,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4., Special Issue on International Communications Research, Winter 1952-1953, p. 515.

¹⁸ Zawawi, 17 April 2007.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Gedda, p. 53.

²¹ Zawawi, 17 April 2007.

country to sign an FM agreement” with the United States, and Radio Sawa began to broadcast from Amman.²²

Regarding Radio Sawa Specifically

The new station became a success in Jordan in terms of popularity almost immediately following its implementation. “Targeted at young people,” primarily youth of 18 to 28 years – a group that composes a relatively large percentage of Jordanians in a region where over 60% of the population is under 30 – the station was well-received and soon came to dominate the local radio market.²³ By 2003, “Radio Sawa was the number one station in Jordan.”²⁴ To locate the sort of model that would help meet these audience goals, the American Government had earlier contacted a firm called Edison Media Research. “The goal, first and foremost,” writes employee Tom Webster, “was always to put on a station that people would find hard not to listen to. A station that would be like nothing else that was available but would sound like something they always wanted.”²⁵ The formula for garnering a mass audience worked. At the same time, Sawa's strategy of attracting it by appealing to popular demand for music was a dramatic departure from the traditional Voice of America style, and has received criticism for the implications this may have had in keeping its smaller but potentially more elite audience.²⁶ The notion of an inherent tradeoff of this nature has backing in academic discourse. “In their tendency to address as wide a public as possible,” writes Ivo Josiposi in the June 1984 *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, “the mass media have to adapt to the tastes and standards of the masses who are their potential consumers. So, they adapt their programmes and activities to the level of the average consumer.”²⁷

²² Mahmoud A. Zawawi, personal interview, 25 April 2007. Dr. Zawawi was one of the key figures in the negotiation process that led to this agreement.

²³ Kline, “Fact Sheet: Radio Sawa.”

²⁴ Zawawi, 17 April 2007.

²⁵ Tom Webster, “Radio Sawa,” Research Synopsis for Edison Media Research, Undated, Accessed online. <http://www.edisonresearch.com/home/archives/2004/10/radio_sawa.php>

²⁶ William A. Rugh, “Comments on Radio Sawa and al Hurra Television,” Testimony before the United States Senate, 29 April 2004, Accessed online. <<http://www.senate.gov/~foreign/testimony/2004/RughTestimony040429.pdf>>

²⁷ Ivo Josiposi, “The Mass Media and Musical Culture,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*,

Radio Sawa nonetheless stresses that it is not simply an entertainment outlet, and emphasizes its news and information programming as central components of its broadcast agenda. A “Frequently Asked Questions” document provided by MBN Communications Director Deirdre Kline states that “although Radio Sawa’s format features an upbeat mix of Western and Arabic popular music to help attract as wide an audience as possible, news is a significant part of Radio Sawa’s programming.”²⁸ The station moreover cites programming of this nature as balanced and objective. “Radio Sawa,” declares a 2005 MBN press release on the station's popularity, “is committed to broadcasting accurate, timely and relevant news about the Middle East, the world and the United States, to the highest standards of journalism, as well as the free marketplace of ideas, respect for the intelligence and culture of its audience, and a style that is upbeat, modern and forward-looking.”²⁹ According to informational literature provided by the MBN, the presence of the Broadcasting Board of Governors as an independent federal agency “serves as oversight and a firewall to protect the professional independence and integrity of the broadcasters.”³⁰

The truth to Radio Sawa's self-proclaimed identity as a credible newscaster and commentator, however, is a matter of much debate outside the circle of its own employees and informational literature. In a 2004 testimony before the United States Senate, William A. Rugh specifically critiqued the effectiveness of this claim to autonomy with a comment that “the ‘firewall’ that the Broadcasting Board of Governors speaks of, separating Radio Sawa from State Department policy, was not seen or appreciated by Arab listeners.”³¹ A 2006 academic study by Mohammed el-Nawawy of Queens University resulted in conclusions strongly in agreement with this notion. By surveying a sample of 394 students from five different Arab countries, the study attempted to locate the extent of Radio Sawa's (as well as Alhurra's) news credibility and compare it to the respondents' perceptions of United States policy.³² 99 of the students surveyed were from Jordan, and their responses generally reflected

Vol. 15, No. 1., June 1984, p. 40.

²⁸ Deirdre Kline, “Frequently Asked Questions about Radio Sawa,” attachment to personal email, undated.

²⁹ Middle East Broadcasting Networks, “Alhurra TV and Radio Sawa Jumps to 35 Million in the Middle East,” Official Press Release, 23 August 2005.

³⁰ Kline, “Frequently Asked Questions about Radio Sawa.”

³¹ Rugh.

³² Mohammed el-Nawawy, “US Public diplomacy in the Arab World: The news credibility of Radio Sawa and Television Alhurra in five countries,” *Global Media and Communication*, Vol. 2, No. 2., 2006, p. 195.

those of other participants in the study. Following his research, el-Nawawy concluded that Radio Sawa suffered “relatively low news-credibility” and that “because many Arab media users today are intensely aware of the US administration's motives in trying to win Arab hearts and minds and improve its image in the Arab world, they have a tendency not to trust news broadcast on Radio Sawa.”³³ In related discussion, the lack of correlation between listening frequency and increased credibility – elements that have appeared related in studies of other media outlets – is explained by noting that for most respondents the primary attraction of Radio Sawa was identified as its music programming.³⁴ This comment refers back to the station's apparent success in attracting a youthful audience by such means.

A 2005 paper published in the *Transnational Broadcasting Studies Journal* by Wendy Sefsaf approached the question of Radio Sawa's and Alhurra's respective credibility and potential for effective communication from a more literature-based angle of public communication. While an article that hypothesizes many of the same conclusions el-Nawawy would confirm methodologically a year later, a criticism of this paper lies in that it often fails to make notable distinctions between Radio Sawa and Alhurra, instead opting to group analysis into an overarching indictment of both of the networks simultaneously. “The BBG's ... messages are not only failing to influence their audience,” the author writes, “but are actually proving offensive to them. They also display a lack of cultural awareness and appropriateness which is widening, rather than bridging, the gap between Arabs and Americans.”³⁵ While such a conclusion may well be true for Alhurra, a 2005 ACNielsen survey's findings that forty percent of young Jordanians – actually one of the lower percentages for a Radio Sawa target state with in-country FM broadcast of the station – were regular listeners to the radio network's programming suggests that there is not a complete cultural disconnect between it and its audience.³⁶ The Sefsaf article also makes the debatable assertion that “any listener to a US-sponsored station is likely to be favorably disposed to the United States,” whereas when this proposed correlation was quantified in el-Nawawy's

³³ Ibid, p. 200.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Wendy Feliz Sefsaf, “US International Broadcasting Strategies in the Arab World: An analysis of the Broadcasting Board of Governors' strategy from a public communication standpoint,” *Transnational Broadcasting Studies Journal*, Vol. 13., Fall 2004.

³⁶ Cited in Deirdre Kline, “Continued Audience Growth for News and Information: Performance Update,” slideshow attachment to personal email, August 2005.

2006 study he found “no significant relationship between the frequency of listening to Radio Sawa and favorability toward US foreign policy.”³⁷ In conclusion the Sefsaf paper asserts, again treating Radio Sawa and Television Alhurra as identical media entities, that “[all the United States has] created in terms of a solution to [its] public relations crisis is a poorly funded and thought-out plan of public diplomacy,” suggesting by implication that American media efforts do have the power to transform opinion if only implemented in a different form.³⁸

Contemporary Arab Public Opinion of the United States

The issue of public opinion and its formation, given the ideological aims behind Radio Sawa, must be developed in order to conceptualize the potential that the media endeavor either does or does not have to affect it. Public opinion has been defined by Virginia R. Sedman of Columbia University in a still-widely applicable 1932 paper as “an active or latent force derived from a composite of individual thoughts, sentiments and impressions, which composite is weighted by the varying degrees of influence and aggressiveness of the separate opinions within the aggregate.”³⁹ Sedman's description continues on to qualify this statement by explaining that public opinion, by this definition, cannot be solely attributed to the faculties of “deliberate thought,” and in many ways is a culmination of environmental factors and preexisting prejudices. The meaning of this interpretation is for Radio Sawa twofold; on one hand it implies that by providing an additional context for dialog the endeavor may inherently become one of the environmental factors that influences public opinion, but on the other it suggests that these factors of environmental influence could be so numerous and simultaneously subtle that a single agent will have no notable effect on the discourse as a whole.

Public opinion, in any case, has been an important player in terms of the ideological basis for Radio Sawa. For a United States-funded station that “seeks to effectively communicate with the youthful population of Arabic-speakers in the Middle East,” preexisting attitudes and the concurrent

³⁷ El-Nawawy, p. 198.

³⁸ Sefsaf.

³⁹ Virginia Rankin Sedman, “Some Interpretations of Public Opinion,” *Social Forces*, Vol. 10, No. 3., March 1932, p. 340.

reality of opinions toward the United States are crucial.⁴⁰ In 1952 Charles Glock, a social researcher at Columbia University, boldly wrote that “in Islamic countries ... it is not as obvious as with us that such knowledge [of current affairs] is essential or that having an opinion is important.”⁴¹ If Jordan or anywhere else in the Arab world is to be considered such, contemporary research leaves almost no doubt as to this statement's blatant inaccuracy. In fact, public opinion in this region – in regard to the United States particularly – is among some of most strongly and unanimously voiced. According to a 2004 study published in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, “only 1 percent of people surveyed in June 2003 in Jordan or the Palestinian Authority” – both target locales for the Radio Sawa stream broadcast from Amman -- “expressed a favorable opinion of the United States.”⁴² This widespread discontentment with American policy closely mirrors trends throughout the rest of the Arab world and, according to the paper, many other predominantly-Muslim countries as well.

The aforementioned study takes this basic reality of opposition toward the United States and makes an effort to examine some potential factors of its formation by means of statistics on both education and media use, both elements that may play into the “composite” public opinion of which Sedman writes.⁴³ By examining data from the 2002 Gallup Poll of the Islamic World, the researchers described their intentions as a motion to cast “light on the role of information in shaping attitudes and beliefs.”⁴⁴ If applicable in such a case the results of the study carry important implications as to the role in public opinion Radio Sawa, as a media agent, can potentially play. The authors note, for example, that “increased use of news media in this data is associated with more politically neutral knowledge, but neither less misinformation nor more pro-U.S. attitudes.”⁴⁵ This observation's suggestion is that simple exposure to more information – however accurate – still does not often translate to a departure from the normative political mood. The authors' conclusion that political attitudes, however, do tend to correspond with frequent use of specific media sources (in this case either CNN or Al Jazeera) would

⁴⁰ Kline, “Fact Sheet: Radio Sawa.”

⁴¹ Glock, p. 513.

⁴² Matthew A. Gentzkow and Jesse M. Shapiro, “Media, Education and Anti-Americanism in the Muslim World,” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 18, No. 3., Summer 2004, p. 117.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 118.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 119.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 122.

be more significant had the el-Nawawy study not already concluded that such a phenomenon does not appear to apply to Radio Sawa.⁴⁶ In this regard, Radio Sawa's unique operating scenario in combination with its programming format may place it as an anomaly in the context of its relation with public opinion, and the effects that such an identity may preclude must be considered before approaching the station as a typical media actor. Nonetheless, the author's concluding supposition that “exposure to a broader range of information sources could reduce hostility to America” at least hints that Radio Sawa holds the potential to act as one of these sources and consequently contribute to the dialog that shapes public opinion.⁴⁷ This issue, of course, is a research concern that will be addressed in the context of Jordan specifically.

Research on Persuasive Communication and Credibility

As this study attempts to locate the nature of Radio Sawa's reception in Jordan, a review of more broadly-applicable theories of effective communication and targeted persuasion is among the most critical of its necessary background investigations. The manner by which information obtained from the media is parsed by its listeners is inherently related to the effect it may or may not have upon them, and as such an application of these theories to Radio Sawa helps to identify other variables that will determine the way it is perceived and the scope of its possible impact upon the audience. It will also gage limitations on conclusions made from this particular study on the basis of sociological phenomenon that can not be observed on a short-term basis or qualitatively measured.

A 1978 study published in the *Journal of Consumer Research* took the issue of persuasive power and attempted to identify the factors that play into it by quantifying their impact as independent variables in a controlled experiment. The study postulates that the two primary issues affecting the ability to persuade – and to ultimately influence opinion – are the credibility of the source and the audience's preexisting notion of the issue at hand.⁴⁸ “A message recipient's initial opinion,” it was

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 126.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 131.

⁴⁸ Sternthal, p. 253.

hypothesized, “is an important determinant of influence.” A positive initial opinion was expected to compliment the persuasive impact of the communicator, as was the communicator's identity as a high-credibility source. In terms of the opposite scenario, where both the communicator was perceived as lacking credibility and the message recipient was negatively predisposed toward the content of the message, the effectiveness of the persuasive appeal was predicted to be minimal.⁴⁹ Completion of the experiment led the researchers to conclude that, upon analysis of the final data, both aspects of the hypothesis as detailed were indeed the case.⁵⁰

When this particular model of effective persuasion and consequent influence over opinion is applied to the case of Radio Sawa, important questions arise as to the factors that will define its ability to affect its audience. First, the elements that play into its credibility as a communicator must be identified. The United States government, as has been discussed, suffers a poor image throughout the Arab world. If Radio Sawa, then, is recognized in the popular psyche as an extension of this administration, its own credibility among listeners can be expected to follow the same low-rated path. Such a demise in credibility, as demonstrated in the study cited above, would be a detriment to persuasive power. Likewise, if the broadcasts emitted from Radio Sawa are perceived as portraying the United States in a positive light, but listeners are already predisposed to negative attitudes toward the United States, persuasiveness will be impeded. This point raises the essential question of balance, for if Radio Sawa newscasts are perceived as neutral and accurate – rather than pandering directly to the interests of the American government – they bear the potential to lighten this effect.

Research prior to the Sternthal study discussed above had likewise attempted to quantify credibility through sociological experiments and came to similar conclusions in regard to its immediate effect on persuasive power. A study published in a 1951 issue of *The Public Opinion Quarterly* entitled “The Influence of Source Credibility on Communication Effectiveness” concluded that “significant differences were obtained in the extent to which opinion on an issue was changed by the attribution of the material to different sources,” despite the fact that the information received by the subject was in

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 252.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 259.

either case identical.⁵¹ Though not a primary concern of the research, a side note that “evaluations were also affected by personal opinions on the topic before the communication was ever presented” also heavily parallels the notions confirmed in the 1978 study of persuasive effects in its affirmation that a subject's initial disposition plays into the potential for persuasion.⁵² Both of these observations reiterate the centrality of the audiences' preexisting attitude toward a message and the identity of the source to which it is attributed as means of measuring the effectiveness of a persuasive endeavor.

The 1951 authors' broader discussion of how an audience's perception of credibility relates to fact acquisition and opinion change over a lengthier period of time, however, leaves room to believe that even a source of perceived low credibility can have some communication merit. When subjects were asked to recall factual information obtained from a source, for example, the researchers found that “there is no significant difference” in how much could be recollected regardless of the source's perceived credibility.⁵³ In addition, the researchers expounded upon a preexisting hypothesis termed the “sleeper effect,” in which over time a gradual disassociation of the communicated with the communicator can translate into the listener accepting information obtained from a less credible source in the same manner that information obtained from a more credible source would have been.⁵⁴ Data from the study revealed a correlation between an audience forgetting an information source and its subsequent acceptance of a perspective that was initially rejected.

In application to Radio Sawa as a communicator, these latter two points are particularly significant. In the case that this study does reveal that Radio Sawa is popularly associated with the United States government and consequently is identified as low-credibility source for this reason, they hint that the station may still hold the potential to effectively communicate its messages and even persuade despite such a hindrance. On one hand, the Hovland and Weiss study's indication that an audience's reception of factual information is generally unconnected to credibility means that Radio Sawa is likely to be equally effective in promoting awareness of the news and informational items that

⁵¹ C. Hovland and W. Weiss, “The Influence of Source Credibility on Communication Effectiveness,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 4., Winter 1951-1952, p. 642.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 641.

⁵³ *Ibid*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 636.

it chooses – regardless of how its intentions in doing so are perceived – as long as it has a sizable audience. The second point, regarding the possibility of a “sleeper effect” where any persuasive appeals may be initially rejected but then eventually accepted, indicates that even if Radio Sawa is deemed to lack credibility it may not ultimately lose all of its effectiveness in persuasion. The resulting necessity of qualifying any observations of opinion change into a more broadly-applicable timeframe is crucial in that even a definitive conclusion of present ineffectiveness of communication may not necessarily point to the same outcome in the future.

Review of Critical Questions as Derived from these Contexts

When the above theories, history and rationale are utilized together as a foundation for studying Radio Sawa in Jordan, they culminate in a set of individual questions from which the research has drawn its bulk. Each of the following issues, therefore, was raised in discussion with research subjects and will be elaborated upon in the study's findings.

- What is the popular interpretation of the motivations for and goals of Radio Sawa, and how does this compare to both the views of media professionals and the station's claims of intention?
- Does its music, as claimed by most current literature, indeed constitute the majority of Radio Sawa's attractiveness? What additional factors may have played into its original popularity in Jordan, and is this scenario still the case?
- How closely is Radio Sawa popularly associated with the United States government, and to what degree is it viewed as a United States mouthpiece? How does this possible identity affect the listening audience?
- What is the general and comparative standing of radio as a news and information source in Jordan?
- Is there a perceived discrepancy, or conflict in nature, between the methods by which Radio Sawa attracts and audience and its fundamental goals, or do these two spheres compliment each

other?

- What sort of attraction does Radio Sawa's non-music programming have for the current listening audience?
- Are Radio Sawa newscasts interpreted as having an “American slant” or imbalance, and if so for which reasons?
- How is the overall effectiveness of Radio Sawa gaged in terms of achieving its perceived goals?

Methodology

My initial plan as to the methodology of this investigation of Radio Sawa was multi-stranded, and the preliminary model it had assumed prior to actually commencing was broader than that which was ultimately employed. Originally, a central component of this study was to revolve around surveys administered to Jordanian students at Amman's Jordan University, asking the students for personal perspective on Radio Sawa and trying to quantify their responses into generalizable figures. After discussion with instructors and careful consideration of its overall merit, however, this proposal was left unpursued. The eventual decision to limit the sources for the study to a smaller group was made on the basis of a variety of factors. On one account, while students would likely be both familiar with Radio Sawa and able to provide viable responses to research questions, their role as a survey sample that is adequately representative of the station's larger audience is questionable. Today's university students may end up the individual decision-makers of the next generation, but do their attitudes really reflect that of the “Arab street,” a faction with its own power to drive policy as well? An entire study could be devoted to such an issue alone, and to pursue the perspective a group that may not necessarily be adequate spokespeople for the Sawa audience seemed unwise when there were alternative means of research available. Even if this question was resolved, Mohammed el-Nawawy's 2006 study has already profiled this sector more comprehensively than this study could hope to do given its allotted time and resources. A different approach seemed more appropriate.

In lieu of interviewing students as members of the Radio Sawa audience, I decided to search out

perspectives from individuals who carry the professional and academic merit to make pronouncements on the station and its relationship with the broader Jordanian population, thereby limiting my field of research to a group more suited to the project's scope. More specifically, I wanted to get in touch with people whose careers and livelihoods are dependent upon and thereby necessitate understanding and analysis of the social forces dictating media – and particularly radio – perception in Jordan. While open to meeting with anyone who carried such qualifications and had the time to engage my research, I still eventually found it possible to conceptually categorize all of my interviewees and contacts into one of three strains of sources. The first was people associated with the operation of Radio Sawa itself, who would be able to clarify the “official” standpoint of the station's administration as well as to provide individual insight from the inside. The second was the “competition,” which consisted of other professionals involved in the local Jordanian radio industry and promised to provide context for the overall nature of radio in Jordan in addition to comments on Sawa specifically. The final, more all-inclusive source category was composed of individuals employed either in academia or other forms of media who could comment on the same issues from a more neutrally-affiliated standpoint.

Of these three groups, I had expected that the most problematic one to gain access to would be that of Radio Sawa personnel. In simple terms of numbers, there are very few Sawa-affiliated individuals in Jordan. The station is aired in the kingdom, but the content of the broadcast itself is sculpted elsewhere, with the only Radio Sawa studios located in the United States and Dubai.⁵⁵ Still, I speculated, there had to be some non-technical staff somewhere in the country who were monitoring the reception of the venture. Some searches through news reports about Radio Sawa's launch revealed that it had indeed had an office in Amman at some point in time, but my attempts to locate it physically were completely unsuccessful. Later, I discovered that the office had been closed since the previous year due to funding cuts. This failure was discouraging of its own accord, and I was additionally worried that Radio Sawa's association with the United States government would wrap any progress I did make with contacts in layers of bureaucratic red tape. Access to this important source seemed highly elusive.

⁵⁵ Kline, “Fact Sheet: Radio Sawa.”

All my concerns were assuaged, however, when I finally reached Dr. Mahmoud Zawawi, the director of Radio Sawa in Jordan and formerly a longtime employee of the Voice of America. He was personally able to engage the majority of my research questions and directed me to other contacts in the United States who would be able to answer specific aspects of the study even more authoritatively. These individuals provided a crucial voice for the Sawa endeavor that would compliment, contrast with, and contextualize the responses of other research sources. In this light, the greatest challenge to organizing the research material obtained from these Sawa-associated sources was the process of dividing it into either the realm of concrete fact or that of fluid perspective, given both were provided in the same interview setting. Information on Radio Sawa funding, for example, can generally be taken at face value as asserted by individuals employed by the program; a declaration of its effectiveness, however, is more debatable and could likely change in the eyes of another equally-informed source. The latter sort of information was therefore selected to be held in comparison to other perspectives as part of the body of the study's findings and analysis, while the historical and factual information provided by individuals with professional connections to Radio Sawa has been utilized to provide background rationale.

Scheduling meetings with local radio professionals was on the whole a comparatively less complicated task, as there are simply more numerous options one on count, and likewise because connections between individuals in the industry appear strong. Contacts with whom I had already met over the course of my research were very helpful in connecting me with new sources and providing general assistance. Nonetheless, nearly all of the people in the upper-level management of these stations – the individuals with whom I most wanted to speak – appear to be keeping very busy schedules, and some were unwilling to commit time to the research. Another access challenge arose when I tried to contact stations with government ties, which retain relatively a significant role in the radio marketplace given that Jordan only began to allow real privatization within the last few years, mirroring a trend throughout much of the Arab world.⁵⁶ Such organizations often place restrictions on the sort of information that they can officially communicate without special permission. Even with

⁵⁶ Rula Jardaneh, “Arab FM radio stations increasing,” *Jordan Business*, March 2007, p. 29.

these limitations, however, I was finally able obtain interviews at state-run Amen FM (commonly known as the “police station”) as well as at Jordan Radio, the longest-standing station in the country and one that continues to hold one of the most extensive networks of broadcasting services. In other cases, my requests as a researcher were denied and I was instead redirected to a website with a small selection of general information that, of course, made no reference to Radio Sawa at all. Despite these minor complications, fortunately, the Jordanian radio professionals with whom I was able to speak provided very relevant comments on Radio Sawa from the angle of competitors and colleagues for whom the nature of audience perception is equally important.

Academic and non-radio sources were the most unexpectedly difficult interviewees to locate for the project. Early in the beginning stages of my research, I arrived confidently at Jordan University and began trying to locate the Journalism or Communications Department that I had assumed present there so as to make such contacts. To my consternation, I soon discovered that despite its size, Jordan University has no program of any journalistic nature. The only two journalism schools in the country that I was able to locate are at Petra University, outside of Amman, and Yarmouk University in neighboring Irbid. While I have only actually cited one professor associated with either of these two schools, Dr. Issam Mousa, it is worth noting that other university-affiliated contacts were instrumental in putting me in touch with necessary project resources, and for this I am most grateful. Nonetheless, relative trouble in locating relevant academic sources – many told me that they simply did not feel familiar enough with Radio Sawa to comment upon it – to some degree prompted a larger focus on the views of radio-industry professionals. Wary to discuss my findings without the perspective of at least another individual with less ties to this single circuit, however, I searched for another source and was eventually able to speak with Jamil al-Nimri, the director of the Jordanian Commission for Democratic Culture and a regular contributor to Jordan Television.

On the whole I would estimate that less than a third of the qualified potential interview sources that I made contact with were actually able to follow through with a personal meeting. For this reason in particular I owe my most sincere gratitude to those individuals who did volunteer to assist in my research, for despite the fact that their schedules were just as busy as others' they donated their time

and hospitality to a student who had little to offer to them in return. Each one of the interviewees with whom I met provided useful, relevant, and well-considered comments from an honest perspective. The presence of disagreement among them only highlights the extent of the debate over Radio Sawa on multiple levels. My experience as a researcher has cast light upon the effectiveness of networking contacts in Jordan; whereas my association with a university has traditionally been my primary introduction in any professional setting, I found that much better success scheduling visits and meetings in many cases stemmed from detailing interpersonal connections and referencing shared acquaintances. I again extend my thanks to the individuals who guided me through this combined maze of Jordan's social and professional environments.

One of the issues that arose during the course of the research, ultimately requiring a slight change of practice, was that of consent forms and related protection of my sources' integrity. Early into the project I had compiled a comprehensive document requiring a signature to ensure informed participation and planned to utilize it in the case of every interview, but following only the first interview conducted I decided to reevaluate this intention. Jordanian interviewees seemed unclear as to the purpose of the informed consent form and, when its nature was explained, quickly handed it back with reassurance that I certainly could quote them in my research. Wanting to follow acceptable ethical guidelines as a researcher, but concerned that forcing a paper upon interviewees would impede the direct communication and personal atmosphere that was so crucial to the study, I discussed this issue with my academic director. As all of the interviewees were prominent figures in the realms of public media or academia, oral consent was ultimately deemed sufficient for this specific research, particularly given it posed no significant threat of stress or harm to the individuals. In addition, I attempted when possible to verify my notes from individual interviews by sending followup emails with synopses of the information I had gleaned from the meeting to promote accuracy and provide subjects an opportunity for additional comments and clarifications.

My command of Arabic is sufficient for many of the day-to-day logistical requirements of a student in Amman, but certainly nowhere near functional on an academic level, and the implications of this personal limitation on me as researcher were a resounding concern as I began this project.

Fortunately, the nature of my research topic played out in such a way that all of my interviewees spoke English on a professional level. The lack of necessity for a translator meant that each of my sources' comments could be parsed straightforwardly and utilized exactly as it was voiced, thereby ensuring that valuable meaning was not lost and allowing me to personally pursue clarifications with ease. I was delighted to find, however, that my studies as a student of Arabic remained somewhat valuable in an unexpected manner. Being able to navigate while searching out offices in unfamiliar parts of Amman helped ease much of my uncertainty as a student new to such research, and exchanging small niceties in Arabic with my contacts again contributed to the relaxed setting that allowed more open dialog on the academic topic at hand.

On an overall level I found Jordan to be an environment generally conducive to academic research. I met the majority of interviewees in their offices, as was most convenient for them, and was always greeted with the most hospitality. In most cases the interview style was very informal; I tried not to rush into research questions before establishing personal commonality with the individuals who had volunteered their time, and often conversations about family, school, and even politics were a precursor to the questions I posed on Radio Sawa. For this reason, while I never requested more than an hour of interviewees' time and stated that I could condense the interview into an even shorter session, the length of some meetings stretched on to upwards of two hours or more. I was even given a private tour of more than one radio studio. The mutually of these exchanges seemed to contribute heavily to the straightforward and honest responses I was provided with for the study, and made it a gratifying and thoroughly enjoyable learning experience as well.

Findings

The findings to follow were collected from individual research subjects and represent the debate over – or in some cases agreement upon – the different issues related to Radio Sawa, as outlined in the review of critical questions appended to the previous summary of rationale. The points as raised by different interviewees will be interpreted and discussed alongside both each other and the literature-

based theories already provided as they are presented. An overall analysis, as well as suggestions of areas for further research, will be drawn from these interpretations and discussions and will be detailed in the conclusions.

Goals and Motivations

The nature of popular perception of Radio Sawa's aims and intentions is a central component of the way in which its reception plays out in Jordan. Despite much speculation otherwise, the station's administration never directly states that it has any intention of changing public opinion in the region. "Radio Sawa is committed to broadcasting accurate, timely and relevant news about the Middle East, the world and the United States," its official statements tend to default, "and, thereby, advancing the long-term U.S. national interest of promoting freedom and democracy."⁵⁷ This notion of "freedom and democracy," however – or what a 2005 MBN presentation explicitly described as "the President's policy in the region" – is often not interpreted in identical fashion in that region itself.⁵⁸ The same language has been used extensively as explanation for American policy in regard to Iraq and the Palestinian territories, two of the issues toward which Arabs consider American policy most unfair and unjustifiable, according to Dr. Issam Mousa of Jordan's University of Graduate Studies.⁵⁹ Exerting its oft-unwanted influence upon the region and attempting to provoke internal change, that said, is a legacy that inherently mars reception of United States endeavors in the Middle East in general, and Radio Sawa is no exception. Few Jordanians believe that the station's mission is as simple as stated.

Even though its programming has acquired a radically different format from that of its predecessor, the Voice of America, Radio Sawa is still commonly identified as a member of the same ideological lineage. The station's administration recognizes this relationship as well, and cites the provisions for the operation of Radio Sawa as reflective of "identical goals, policies and principles," heralding their implications as a mandate for accuracy and autonomy.⁶⁰ In an interview, Radio Sawa's own Dr.

⁵⁷ Kline, "Fact Sheet: Radio Sawa."

⁵⁸ Kline, "Continued Audience Growth for News and Information: Performance Update."

⁵⁹ Issam Mousa, personal interview, 8 May 2007.

⁶⁰ Kline, "Frequently Asked Questions about Radio Sawa."

Zawawi confidently stated that “there is no doubt that the Voice of America and Radio Sawa have the same mission.”⁶¹ Other perspectives, on the other hand, do not identify the continuity between the two networks as either a positive attribute or one that truly translates to these principles. Daoud Kuttab, the founder and general manager of the radio station AmmanNet, also described Radio Sawa as “the daughter of the Voice of America” with a “very smart initial business plan,” but insisted that the station exists in reality as an attempt to modify opinions.⁶² Dr. Mousa also explicitly compared Radio Sawa to the Voice of America, but with no praise for the association. “People think it's propaganda,” he explained.⁶³ Disregarding the controversy over what its relationship with Radio Sawa implies, the fact that each of these interviewees referenced the Voice of America – though no specific mention was made of it in the questionnaire – demonstrates its history as a factor crucial to Radio Sawa's current reception and signifies that this inherited legacy is one that the new station cannot easily dispel.

Demonstrating agreement with Mr. Kuttab's claims, Radio Sawa was commonly described as a component of a United States plan to influence opinion and reorient Arab political attitudes. Multiple references, for example, were made to the “winning hearts and minds” rhetoric that United States president George Bush has pushed in explanation of his administration's Middle East policy. Jamil al-Nimri, the director of the Jordanian Commission for Democratic Culture and a regular contributor to Jordan Television, specifically described Radio Sawa as an effort that has “been created to influence the public opinion of youth.”⁶⁴ Its real goal, he said, is not to provide entertainment but a cultural image of the United States that will resonate well with Arab youth, by implication hoping to affect their political attitudes. When Haitham Shibli, the Director of Foreign Programs at Jordan Radio, was asked for his understanding of the station's intentions he responded similarly, saying that the station's motivations are “to defend American policy” and that it hopes to succeed in “polishing the American image.”⁶⁵ Dr. Zawawi, however, disagreed with this interpretation of the station's motivation. An “indirect objective” of Radio Sawa, he noted, is to serve as a public diplomacy tool to represent the United States, and it could possibly make a minor positive contribution to the United States image.⁶⁶ He

⁶¹ Zawawi, 25 April 2007.

⁶² Daoud Kuttab, personal interview, 29 April 2007.

⁶³ Mousa.

⁶⁴ Jamil al-Nimri, personal interview, 2 May 2007.

⁶⁵ Haitham Shibli, personal interview, 6 May 2007.

⁶⁶ Zawawi, 25 April 2007.

nonetheless freely admitted that Radio Sawa will not make Arabs pro-American, saying that the effects of more than fifty years of unpopular policy cannot be reversed without a change in this political reality itself.⁶⁷

Mr. Shibli had made nearly the same comment, describing Arab attitudes toward the United States as connected to policy and asserting that Radio Sawa “cannot change opinion.”⁶⁸ When asked to elaborate upon why he believed Radio Sawa would pursue such an aim if it was so obviously doomed to be unproductive, he replied “I believe they just ignore it.” Dr. Zawawi's comments, however, show that at least some of the station's administration perceives inherent limitations on the degree to which it can have an effect on public discourse. If it does not seek to directly change opinions, that said, what is Radio Sawa's purpose? Dr. Zawawi emphasized Radio Sawa as an avenue for dialog, explaining that its independent broadcasting provides a previously-unheard voice in a region where the dominant state-run media – including Jordan's – has traditionally filtered their press.⁶⁹ This issue, regarding Radio Sawa's potential as to act as an agent of open dialog, was afterwards integrated into later research questions involving the station's effectiveness in obtaining perceived goals. Still, the dominant attitude among sources was that despite no announced policy of prompting opinion change, this concern remained Radio Sawa's primary goal. “No one will put money into a station,” Mr. Kuttab most simply surmised, “just to play music.”⁷⁰

Source of Popularity and Related Factors

Music, however, is the majority on-air product of the funding that Radio Sawa receives, and discussion with research subjects revealed nearly unanimous agreement that it has indeed been the primary source of the station's numerical popularity since its launch. According to the Middle East Broadcasting Networks' literature, this is exactly the model that had been intended, hoping to draw in a

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Shibli.

⁶⁹ Zawawi, 25 April 2007.

⁷⁰ Kuttab.

mass audience that would afterwards come to appreciate the station's other programming as well.⁷¹ Dr. Zawawi's explanation of the way in which the station “became a hit with the kids” attributed it largely to two factors: its innovative mix of Arabic and American popular music foremost, in combination with its around-the-clock broadcast policy (the Voice of America, by comparison, had aired only seven hours per day).⁷² When the popularity issue was raised with Mr. Kuttab, he echoed this notion immediately, describing Radio Sawa's alternation between Western and Arabic pop songs as a format quick to gain audience response. “They did extremely well,” he said. “They were number one for a while, you know.”⁷³ According to Fardous al-Masri, manager of the recently-established station Sawt AlMadena (“Voice of the City”) and a longtime journalist in the kingdom, the music on Radio Sawa was key to the station's acquisition of a broad audience because it appealed to young people – a majority of the Jordanian population – in particular.⁷⁴ Identical or comparable answers were provided by every other source interviewed.

Even with agreement upon the issue of music's contribution to the station's popularity, opinions varied to some degree on both the influence of other factors as contributors to the station's success in gaining an audience and the related potential for this success's continuity. While Radio Sawa is still a major player in the Jordanian radio market, it has not maintained its original level of listenership despite no significant change in its programming model, and this scenario indicates that additional forces may have played into its popularity. Though it was the top radio station in Amman in 2003, for example, by 2004 “Radio Sawa was number two.”⁷⁵ Many sources cited this gradual decline in popularity but provided different speculation for why it had become the case. At Jordan Radio, Mr. Shibli framed the success of Radio Sawa as a passing fad, reiterating that statistics show its popularity is “going down.” “Everything new attracts people,” he said.⁷⁶ To the tune of other sources, Shibli also commented that for Radio Sawa, “music is no longer an attractive point.” Other stations have cut out

⁷¹ Kline, “Fact Sheet: Radio Sawa.”

⁷² Zawawi, 17 April 2007.

⁷³ Kuttab.

⁷⁴ Fardous al-Masri, personal interview, 7 May 2007.

⁷⁵ Zawawi, 17 April 2007.

⁷⁶ Shibli.

major segments of Radio Sawa's market share.⁷⁷

Where were these competitor stations, then, when Radio Sawa was first launched in 2002 and was greeted with such success? In actuality, the majority of them did not yet exist. Discussion with other sources revealed the recent process of privatization as a significant factor for change in Jordan's radio environment, and in many cases interviewees correlated its effects to the Radio Sawa narrative. When the station replaced the Voice of America roughly five years ago, there were only a handful of other radio stations on Jordanian airwaves, according to Amen FM president Essam al-Omary: two state-run stations, and a few foreign broadcasters including the BBC, Radio Monte Carlo and NBC.⁷⁸ Around a year later, Dr. Zawawi explained to the same tune, the Jordanian government's decision to begin licensing radio frequencies to private stations began to produce competition that sought to attract an audience on a model similar to that which Radio Sawa had employed.⁷⁹ He said that one of the first of these stations, Radio Fann (“Art”), was essentially a “complete imitation of Radio Sawa” and was likewise successful in building a large audience soon after its launch.⁸⁰ According to Mr. Kuttab of AmmanNet, this process of privatization really began to accelerate in 2004, a trend that his formerly Internet-based station would capitalize on in the summer to follow.⁸¹ Today, said Mrs. al-Masri at Sawt alMadena, there are twenty-eight stations broadcasting on local FM frequencies.⁸²

The degree to which this sudden boom in private radio broadcasting has affected Radio Sawa's viability in the Jordanian market was debated among interviewees, though the fact that it has had some impact on the station's popularity was never denied. Dr. Zawawi stressed that while the increase in available stations – many of which replicated Radio Sawa's previously unique music format – did undercut some of its audience base, the station has managed to retain its position among the top radio broadcasters in Jordan.⁸³ Being the first in a trend, as Radio Sawa's music programming seemed to be, may have its continuing advantages. Not all radio professionals, on the other hand, agree that the

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Essam al-Omary, personal interview, 10 May 2007.

⁷⁹ Zawawi, 25 April 2007.

⁸⁰ Radio Fann, despite a request from the researcher, refused to speak with him. This claim stands uncontested.

⁸¹ Kuttab.

⁸² Al-Masri.

⁸³ Zawawi, 17 April 2007.

American endeavor's appeal has persisted through the changes brought about by the industry's recent deregulation. Radio Sawa's music content was appealing, admits Mr. Kuttab, and the station came in at the right logistical time to capitalize on its formula. At the same time, “their success was their demise,” he observed, referring to “copycatting.”⁸⁴ Other interviewees echoed this doubtful tone. “There are so many stations now available,” noted Dr. Mousa, and they account for “a lot of competition.”⁸⁵ Radio Sawa was popular, agreed Mr. al-Omary, but he replied in kind in saying that the station holds no longer holds a monopoly on the popular music format it was known for. “Other stations,” too, “know what the listeners need.”⁸⁶

Association with US Government and Implications

Given it has already been established that the United States government lacks popularity on account of its policies in the region and suffers low credibility as an information source, the extent of Radio Sawa's popular association with this American administration remains the pivotal factor that threatens to link its reception to the attitude of distrust common to Arab dialog involving the United States. Middle East scholars have already leveled claims that the station cannot escape this identification. According to William Rugh, “Radio Sawa is regarded as a U.S. government sponsored station. Arab listeners are experienced in detecting who is behind a given broadcaster, and they sensed that the news and public affairs programs were sponsored by the American government.”⁸⁷ Mr. al-Omary agreed with this sentiment, explaining that Radio Sawa cannot escape its connection to politics. The station, he noted, is associated with the foreign ministry of the United States. “It's wrong,” he followed – again, American overseas broadcasting's legal framework technically does separate it from the State Department, and some Jordanian radio professionals make this distinction – but the average radio listener remains blind to any autonomy that Radio Sawa claims to have. “That's what they

⁸⁴ Kuttab.

⁸⁵ Mousa.

⁸⁶ Al-Omary.

⁸⁷ Rugh.

think.”⁸⁸ Mr. Shibli made the same comment almost verbatim, insisting that “everybody knows Radio Sawa is the voice of the foreign ministry of the United States.”⁸⁹

Even if not this explicit, none of the interviewees disagreed that most Jordanian listeners at least recognize Radio Sawa as a station with American affiliations. “The overwhelming majority,” according to Dr. Zawawi, sees Radio Sawa in this light. Still, he did not believe that this association detracts from the station's audience exposure; in fact, he mentioned that it may provide even better reason to listen for Jordanians who realize that the United States' role as a superpower makes it at least worth hearing. “You may not like the United States,” he elaborated, “but at the same time, you can't ignore it.”⁹⁰ Mrs. al-Masri, towing more middle ground, again stated that “everyone knows” to whom the Sawa initiative belongs. For this reason some people refuse to listen, she explained, but “open-minded people want to hear it.”⁹¹ Mr. Kuttab adopted a similar stance, saying that while some Jordanians will refuse to listen out of principle – because Radio Sawa is an “American station” – for “some people it doesn't matter... they just want a good song.”⁹² Other sources, however, commented that the effect a recognition of the station's governmental ties has upon Radio Sawa is almost exclusively detrimental. Mr. Shibli speculated that the station would be much more effective in lieu of the mutual identification with the United States government that he had previously detailed. “Nobody is willing to listen to the American view,” he said. “They should hide that it's an American station.”⁹³

Radio as a News Source in Jordan

In order to determine the background tone for the specific comments they would make on Radio Sawa and its news programming, interviewees were asked to provide their conceptualization of Jordan's news radio environment in a general sense. This question was approached differently

⁸⁸ Al-Omary.

⁸⁹ Shibli.

⁹⁰ Zawawi, 25 April 2007.

⁹¹ Al-Masri.

⁹² Kuttab.

⁹³ Shibli.

depending on the source, with some individuals opting for a more historical angle while others compared the standing of radio to that of other media types. The overall state of Jordanian news radio, nonetheless, is a crucial factor contributing to Radio Sawa's reception because the station itself must operate within the limitations inherent to this individual matrix. Comments revealed that even though some common threads run through sources' answers to the question, major debates remain in terms of both radio's comparative importance as a news source and the public demand for news over other forms of radio programming.

Approaching from a historical angle, Daoud Kuttab was quickly critical of the state of news radio in both the kingdom and wider region. "It has been quite bad," he said. "Basically, government has controlled news radio."⁹⁴ These state-controlled broadcasts, he continued, have traditionally been unable to garner the genuine faith of their respective countries' citizens. Mr. Kuttab described the case of the Egyptian station Sawt al-Arab ("Voice of the Arabs") during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, where the station triumphantly announced impending victory when exactly the opposite was true, as the prototypical failure of Arab news radio's credibility. Wary of such significant failures, news seekers in the Arab world will often "go to the BBC."⁹⁵ Dr. Issam Mousa made note of the same phenomenon, saying that while news radio is certainly "important," it is also "natural to check between more than one source" because of this very issue of credibility.⁹⁶ With the advent of the industry deregulation discussed previously, however, the longstanding dynamic of state-dictated broadcasting is beginning to change, and other interviewees' comments showed signs of optimism at the public's growing trust in radio news. Though hailing from a government station himself, Jordan Radio's Haitham Shibli enthusiastically cited recent market studies as indicative of a rekindled interest in programming of this nature. People in Jordan now listen to radio, he repeated, for news.⁹⁷

Amen FM's Essam al-Omary, that said, did not agree with attributing news such an elevated status. He described the elements of radio programming as a sort of three-stepped ladder, where news was actually the bottom rung. "Fun and service," he said, are in foremost demand. The programming

⁹⁴ Kuttab.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Mousa.

⁹⁷ Shibli.

that is actually more wanted than the news, he said, is that pertaining to religion. News itself suffers relatively low priority among listeners.⁹⁸ Still, al-Omary's comments were the only to cite this phenomenon, and are met with disagreement from other radio professionals, Mrs. al-Masri among them. The tiering that Mr. al-Omary described may be representative of the current offerings on FM airwaves – programming today, she noted, is “mostly for entertainment” – but she insists that the market has in actuality been overflowed with music and entertainment programming, and what is aired is not reflective of what is desired by listeners. She placed emphasis on a growing demand for what she termed “new news:” listener-interactive and locally-based stories that as of yet receive little airtime even on dedicated news-only stations.⁹⁹ This viewpoint to some degree resounds with Mr. Shibli's assertion that radio news programming is ballooning in relative importance, but to another differs in that the news Mrs. al-Masri referenced is neither that of a traditional national nor international-level nature.

Approaching the issue of news radio from the different personal angle of a non-radio media professional, Jamil al-Nimri was more doubtful as to its overall significance among other forms of media. Radio is not much of a source, he explained, in comparison to other outlets. Television and newspapers, by al-Nimri's account, are the major front for news in Jordanian society. But “people in cars usually listen to radio,” he allowed. “And the youth.”¹⁰⁰ Dr. Zawawi, while not necessarily in disagreement, approached the issue differently in his emphasis that these two audiences are exactly the ones that keep radio-broadcast news viable. “Radio will always have an audience,” he said, because “you don't need eyes.” Not only drivers are likely to be listening to the radio, he elaborated, but people involved in routine tasks at home and at work are as well.¹⁰¹ This guarantee of a continued “captive audience” – whether they consider radio to be their primary news source or not – is central to the logic behind the investment in Radio Sawa as a media endeavor.¹⁰² As long as the station can offer something Jordanians something they want, they will probably be there to listen.

⁹⁸ Al-Omary.

⁹⁹ Al-Masri.

¹⁰⁰ Al-Nimri.

¹⁰¹ Zawawi.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Relationship Between Spheres of Entertainment and Information

The nature of the perception of Radio Sawa's format, as a multi-content broadcaster, was another issue posed as a question to research participants. Its significance lies in that if listeners consciously interpret Radio Sawa's entertainment-based programming as a ploy to gain their audience for non-entertainment realms – which to a degree is what Middle East Broadcasting Networks literature says it is, apologetically denying that it is simply providing music for people's pleasure – the sense of dishonesty conveyed could again negatively affect the station's credibility as a newscaster. Given a combination of the general attitudes that music was employed to attract Radio Sawa's audience and that its underlying intention was to expose this audience to its news, interviewees were asked if this dual-content broadcast was either self-complimentary or conflicting in nature. Answers to this question were realized as divided opinions. Generally, people in the radio industry were less likely to perceive a discrepancy in the relationship between the two sphere spheres, though some did.

Jordan Radio's Haitham Shibli, for example, saw no problem in elevating news and informational programs' exposure by way of popular demand for entertainment. “This is an old game of radio,” he said, referring to traditional broadcasting strategies.¹⁰³ Wary to imply that Radio Sawa necessarily benefits from this format today, however, he qualified the statement, saying that a continuing trend toward specialization is moving norms away from the mixed-mode broadcasts that had once been so effective. Dr. Mahmoud Zawawi, by contrast, did not note this phenomenon. He said that the two sides of Radio Sawa's programming do indeed compliment each other, and stressed that the station's split-content broadcasting is the result of a specific strategic choice.¹⁰⁴ Some critics in the United States, he also mentioned, have accused Radio Sawa of “just playing music.” He dismissed these claims, clarifying that newscasts have progressively been expanded as the station has gained audience and remain a key focus of its administrative attention.¹⁰⁵ Comments from Mrs. al-Masri

¹⁰³ Shibli.

¹⁰⁴ Zawawi, 25 April 2007.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

mirrored these sentiments as she explained that music and news together can help each other, mentioning the diversity of programming styles on her own young station.¹⁰⁶

Other sources were much more critical of Radio Sawa's programming strategy, though in each case the detailed discrepancies in its nature were connected to the station's perceived political goals. At the Jordanian Commission for Democratic Culture, Jamil al-Nimri immediately responded by saying “yes, there is a conflict.”¹⁰⁷ People accept the music, he said, but do not accept the political message that he believes the United States is trying to sell to Radio Sawa listeners. Even left to the news programming alone, Mr. al-Nimri was unconvinced that the Radio Sawa format was suitable for its goals. “It's easy to listen to short news,” he said, referring to the station's tendency towards brief reports and summaries, “but hard to deliver a message.” Daoud Kuttab's comments fell in line with this idea as he repeated the concept of a programming conflict.¹⁰⁸ People recognize Radio Sawa's political associations and intentions, he explained, and these elements neither compliment its entertainment airings not are complimented by them. Listeners may tune in for a song they like, but it will not draw them into a news dialog they do not want to hear. “People are quick,” he pronounced, “to shift the station.”¹⁰⁹

Attractiveness of Non-Entertainment Programming

Along lines similar to those of the previous question, interviewees were asked subsequently to expound more upon issues involving the attractiveness Radio Sawa's news, informational and opinion offerings exclusively. As in responses to many other questions posed, answers in this instance again heavily hinged upon the concept of Radio Sawa's popular association with the United States government. The implications of this relationship, however, were explained as both assistance and detriment to the value of the station's non-entertainment programming. Dr. Zawawi had claimed beforehand, for example, that even if Jordanians interpreted Radio Sawa as the direct voice of the

¹⁰⁶ Al-Masry.

¹⁰⁷ Al-Nimri.

¹⁰⁸ Kuttab.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

American government, they were still apt to listen to it if for nothing more than vested personal interest in hearing out the world's superpower.¹¹⁰ Others, such as Mr. Shibli, had declared that listeners had no interest in hearing the “American view,” and thereby the station's airings of this nature remain without appeal.¹¹¹

The latter sentiment resounds more with the general attitudes interviewees provided, though some agreement that particular elements of Radio Sawa's non-entertainment programming formula are appropriate to its goals could be found. Radio Sawa's Dr. Zawawi referred primarily to the news, which he quickly described as “attractive too.” It's fast, he said, and “this appeals to many people.”¹¹² Even if people don't want to hear them specifically, the newscasts are at least short enough that listeners will tolerate them between songs, he continued, and this means that audiences attracted by the station's entertainment programming will be exposed to the dialog it wants to open. In addition, Radio Sawa newscasts are reliable as they air consistently at quarter until and quarter after the hour – most stations play news on the hour, giving Radio Sawa an effective monopoly on news radio at these times – and regular listeners know they won't have to wait long for an update.¹¹³ These ideas found mild support among other radio professionals. “People don't like to read,” said Fardous al-Masri, and this news makes communication easier and more accessible.¹¹⁴ Daoud Kuttab likewise agreed that condensed news can be attractive. The main problem Radio Sawa faces in regard to its newscast attractiveness, he nonetheless speculated, is that “their target audience doesn't care too much for the news.”¹¹⁵

That said, if there is an audience searching out its news, Radio Sawa does carry an advantage in that it is both licensed to broadcast it and has resources and scope with which local stations cannot compete. The network has around fifty reporters in the region, including four in Jordan, which allows it to report firsthand on major international issues.¹¹⁶ Both Mr. Kuttab and Mrs. al-Masri, however, noted that the broader focus of Radio Sawa's news may actually detract from its viability. Even though al-

¹¹⁰ Zawawi, 25 April 2007.

¹¹¹ Shibli.

¹¹² Zawawi.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Al-Masri.

¹¹⁵ Kuttab.

¹¹⁶ Zawawi, 25 April 2007.

Masri had mentioned Sawa's appeal to an “open-minded” audience, she qualified this statement by saying that Radio Sawa was generally not a first choice for news. People trust local sources more, she elaborated, and foreign news is considered better available from other sources such as television and newspapers.¹¹⁷ Mr. Kuttab expressed this notion as well, repeating that Radio Sawa's news “is not localized enough.”¹¹⁸ “Media,” he said, “has to be indigenous.” If people do want to leave this local realm in exchange for regional news, he continued, they are again much more likely to go to the BBC.¹¹⁹ The concept of indigenusness was echoed by Haitham Shibli. “Radio should be a friend,” he said, and encompass all the positive attributes that friendship implies. “People want to hear someone who speaks their language,” he insisted, and in their own accent as well.¹²⁰ Both literally and metaphorically Radio Sawa does neither – newscasts are in Modern Standard Arabic, not Jordan's local dialects, and Shibli again stressed that people perceive an American message – so for now, the station remains a foreigner.

Objectivity and the “American Slant” Issue

The issue of balance and objectivity lies among some of the most crucial aspects of the current perception of Radio Sawa in Jordan as well as any ability it may have to affect national discourse. As already discussed in the literature-based rationale, a source's credibility and a listener's relative disposition to its message have been demonstrated to be the two significant factors that play into its persuasive ability. Jordanians' sense of Radio Sawa's slant, or lack of one, lies at the root of both of these variables. In terms of the former, if listeners perceive an inherent imbalance in the actual content of Radio Sawa's news, they will likely relate it to the station's failure to act as a credible source. In the latter context, a perceived imbalance in reporting could exasperate any disparity between the messages Radio Sawa airs and the preexisting opinions of its audience, thereby impeding persuasiveness and overall communication effectiveness. When confronted with this notion, interviewees gave different

¹¹⁷ Al-Masri.

¹¹⁸ Kuttab.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Shibli.

personal accounts of the station's objectivity but often noted that, on the whole, an audience's preconception of intention may produce more allegations of bias than actual analysis of content.

Radio Sawa's official stance is a claim to objectivity. In 2005 Joaquin Blaya, Chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors Middle East Committee, declared that “by attracting a broad audience and giving them accurate and objective news, Radio Sawa is a perfect example of combining the mission to the marketplace.”¹²¹ Other Radio Sawa-affiliated literature does not shy away from similar claims, and personnel on the ground echo this notion. “Newswise,” said Dr. Zawawi, “Radio Sawa is very balanced.”¹²² He explained that Radio Sawa's news content is not dictated by the United States government or any other external source, and said news items are chosen by their importance on the regional radar, not on the basis of the government's political concerns. During the American invasion of Iraq, for example, Radio Sawa spent significant time broadcasting Saddam Hussein's voice as he released messages to the press.¹²³ These claims to autonomy do have grounding in Radio Sawa's legal framework as well, regardless of whether or not listeners (as William Rugh warns) actually appreciate them. While Radio Sawa, for example, is a grantee that receives finances as a federal subsidiary, it is not actually part of the federal government. In addition, to secure continued funds Radio Sawa must abide by the 1994 U.S. International Broadcasting Act, which requires that its news be “consistently reliable and authoritative, accurate, objective, and comprehensive.”¹²⁴ While the extent of adherence to these guidelines is an issue of its own, they do set legal precedent that could threaten harsh retribution if blatantly violated.

Surprisingly enough, even some of the interviewees who were otherwise overtly critical of Radio Sawa were wary to approach the topic of balance so directly. At AmmanNet, Mr. Kuttab was hesitant to summarize its news objectivity in any overarching manner. He questioned the station's process of news item selection – which stories are chosen or not – but said that the presentation of the news stories that are selected is actually relatively balanced.¹²⁵ Mrs. al-Masri of Sawt AlMadena skirted

¹²¹ Deirdre Kline, “Radio Sawa Celebrates Five Years of Bringing News and Information to the Middle East,” attachment to personal email, 21 March 2007.

¹²² Zawawi, 25 April 2007.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Kline, “Frequently Asked Questions about Radio Sawa.”

¹²⁵ Kuttab.

the issue somewhat, saying that from a political analysis of Radio Sawa's news, “you feel its not for you sometimes,” but declining to say that the station was necessarily biased.¹²⁶ Dr. Issam Mousa presented the most complex picture of Radio Sawa's news, in a sense painting the station as so bent on being perceived as objective that its catering to Arab sentiment comes across as even more dishonest than its real intentions.¹²⁷ “I find that Radio Sawa is not expressive of the real American attitude toward the Palestinians in particular,” he elaborated, anecdotally describing its interviews with Palestinian Authority officials as having provided them legitimacy that American policy itself would never grant.¹²⁸ This lack of congruence with policy, as he described it, may provide a sort of “anti-slant” that actually harms Radio Sawa's news credibility more than a direct favorable bias towards American interests. At least, then, people could be sure of for whom the station was trying to speak.

Others, however, noted that Jordanians may already be so convinced that Radio Sawa is an American voice that they render the question of its objectivity negligible. In short, if people assume Radio Sawa reflects the American policy they so strongly oppose, they may refuse to listen to its non-entertainment portions from the start. “When you choose to be the devil's advocate,” said Mr. Shibli, capturing this attitude, “you can't defend your actions.”¹²⁹ People's preexisting attitudes toward the United States, he explained, give them reason to ignore the station. “I have to trust you before I listen.”¹³⁰ Mr. al-Nimri's comments mirror this assertion closely. When asked about Radio Sawa's state of news balance, he replied that it was not a very relevant issue on a broader scale. Even accuracy, al-Nimri continued, won't help the United States' image or Jordanians' perception of the station. The reality of United States policy itself simply evokes no positive response.¹³¹ Still more interviewees agreed, detailing popular concerns that exposure to Radio Sawa's news may translate to playing into the hands of the United States itself or possibly those of an even more unpopular regional force. “I think they're afraid it serves Israeli politics,” Essam al-Omary elaborated.¹³²

¹²⁶ Al-Masri.

¹²⁷ Mousa.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Shibli

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Al-Nimri.

¹³² Al-Omary.

Dr. Mousa, a communications specialist, noted the same issue of preconceptions and the effects they may have on perceptions of Radio Sawa's objectivity. "Even if you tell the truth," he related, "people don't buy it." "You have to build better bridges than media."¹³³ Despite this generalization, he afterwards contextualized this relationship in the light of a comparable scenario that has seen different results, leaving room for the possibility that Radio Sawa could overstep some of its inherited obstacles as an American offspring. Much like other interviewees, he brought up the case of the BBC, a government-linked media corporation that has established remarkable reputability in Jordan as well as throughout other parts of the Middle East. "I trust the BBC more," he said, "and a lot of people do the same."¹³⁴ But British policy is for the most part just as unpopular in the region as American policy, which it often reflects, he continued. There are British troops as well in Iraq, but people don't trust the BBC any less in the way that they do associate Radio Sawa with United States policy. This, Dr. Mousa explained, is because "the BBC has been building that measure of confidence" for many years. People in the Middle East know that it is affiliated with the British government, but the BBC has established its autonomy nonetheless and gained their trust. Radio Sawa, however, has yet to do so.¹³⁵

Effectiveness in Achieving Goals

As a final followup to other questions, research participants were asked to define their overall conceptualization of Radio Sawa's effectiveness in achieving its goals in Jordan. To a large degree, these evaluations varied depending on individuals' own perceptions of Radio Sawa's underlying motivations. While most attitudes were on the whole skeptical, the major agreement that was found among interviewees dealt with the issue of Radio Sawa's popularity. As discussed previously, the overarching agreement among interviewees that Radio Sawa's music policy was an effective means of establishing mass appeal indicates that the station has indeed been effective in achieving some of its stated goals. At the very least, it has been heard. "When a foreign station becomes number one in three

¹³³ Mousa.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

months,” asserted Dr. Zawawi, this is a great success story in my mind.”¹³⁶ Other interviewees agreed that the station had done remarkably well on these terms, especially given its common association with United States government, regardless of the additional forces that may have assisted the station's popularity.¹³⁷ Even if Radio Sawa's underlying goals are more complex than that of simply garnering an audience, the station must have adequate exposure to pursue them, and in this regard it has been particularly effective.

Sources who believed that Radio Sawa's intentions are to change opinion and to persuade Arab listeners to adopt a pro-American stance, however, evaluated the station's perceived effectiveness very poorly. “I don't think it has a future in the Arab world,” Mr. Shibli said. “It's a matter of culture.”¹³⁸ Mr. Kuttab made comparable comments, but on an even more broadly applicable level. “The idea that radio itself can change opinion,” he decreed, “is ridiculous.”¹³⁹ He said that Radio Sawa in particular will not change opinion, because “opinions are made because of action,” referring to United States policy in the region. This idea of policy as the principle player in the process of public opinion formation, assigning media a relatively insignificant role, was common to even more interviewees. As Dr. Mousa had mentioned, it is considered a much more important “bridge” than any media effort.¹⁴⁰ Each of these observations falls into line with a concluding point in Mohammed el-Nawawy's 2006 study, where he summarizes his personal understanding of the issue in noting that “this researcher believes that actions speak louder than words. It is only when the Arabs see a US policy that reflects their own interests that they will trust the American-sponsored channels or any other form of public diplomacy.”¹⁴¹ This general sentiment – in the case that the station really is trying to affect opinion after all – hints that the forces controlling Radio Sawa's effectiveness fall largely outside of its own reach as single entity.

The emphasis that Dr. Zawawi, as an individual who works for Radio Sawa, had placed on the potential ability of Radio Sawa to open a dialog cannot be ignored in an evaluation of the station's effectiveness. By providing a viable alternative to the tradition of state-run or self-censored media, he

¹³⁶ Zawawi, 25 April 2007.

¹³⁷ Kuttab.

¹³⁸ Shibli.

¹³⁹ Kuttab.

¹⁴⁰ Mousa.

¹⁴¹ El-Nawawy, p. 201.

said, the station can contribute to popular intellectual discourse in the region. It will sometimes, for example, criticize aspects of Jordanian policy that remain untouched by local media.¹⁴² Comments that did relate to this issue, on the other hand, were largely unfavorable, referring back to the effects its popular association with the United States has on the station's authenticity in the eyes of its audience. According to Mr. Kuttab, Radio Sawa's own identity as a government station sets a poor precedent for this notion of free dialog, especially given the distrust state-run media outlets have acquired in the Middle East.¹⁴³ This tone was echoed by other interviewees in their responses to questions of balance previously discussed. The actual steps that a government-affiliated station may take to open a dialog, it appears, are trumped by the popular assumption that such media will be closed off by nature. Such a concern toward American-affiliated broadcasting is not new to its history. As early as January of 1946, after having provided the Voice of America with wire service news during World War II, the Associated Press withdrew this service alongside a parallel assertion: "governments cannot engage in newscasting without creating the fear of propaganda which necessarily would reflect upon the objectivity of the news service from which such newscasts are prepared."¹⁴⁴ If Radio Sawa is to open a dialog today, that said, it will likely have to comprehensively address the implications of this same longstanding issue beforehand.

Claims of overall effectiveness, of course, must be understood as an interpretation of different perceptions that can vary from individual to individual. Two of the most significant of these perceptions – and the ones that have the greatest effect upon subsequent gaging of this effectiveness – are that Radio Sawa is an arm of the United States government and that its goal is to change Arab opinion. Contextualized in Radio Sawa's own self-testimony, however, the former of these notions is explicitly denied and the latter allegation remains at most unspoken. Given this discrepancy, the question that must be raised is not which of which of these narratives is more accurate, but which is more representative of the way in which Jordanian *listeners* actually perceive Radio Sawa. Judging by parallels of current findings to preexisting discourse on Radio Sawa, the author is inclined to believe

¹⁴² Zawawi, 25 April 2007.

¹⁴³ Kuttab.

¹⁴⁴ Paulu Burton, "The Voice of America and Wire Service News," *The Quarterly of Film Radio and Television*, Vol. 6, No. 1., Autumn 1951, p. 31.

that listeners tend not to recognize the station's official declarations and do indeed see Radio Sawa as exclusive American bid to affect the Arab perspective of the United States. Again, the veracity of this perception is not deemed as important as the much more qualifiable effects it will have on popular evaluation of the station's success. In this regard, and as discussed in the Sternthal study of 1978, audience preconception appears to indict any persuasive appeals Radio Sawa may air and condemn its effectiveness by default, even if such persuasion is not its true motivation. The station, Kuttab representatively stated, will have no real success in changing perspectives; it will not win “hearts and minds.” But “Radio Sawa has helped articulate the needs of young people,” he said. “And that's music.”¹⁴⁵

Conclusions

Having presented the findings of the research as contributed by the media professionals involved, the following section will proceed to briefly summarize and analyze the general attitudes presented while simultaneously providing any remaining context of necessity. Where debates remain present among sources, possible explanations for such discrepancy will be presented on the basis of background literature. In the case of agreement among all the various interviewees, the author feels that it is appropriate to – given certain qualifications as necessary – consider them applicable conclusions to be held to the light of the original hypotheses.

Opinions voiced by research participants have arrived at consensus in some important areas regarding the reception of Radio Sawa in Jordan. The station has been widely popular in the recent past, though the current trajectory of this popularity remains a debate. Almost all interviewees cited its music programming policy as Radio Sawa's active method of appeal, but likewise agreed that the full success of this format may to some degree pay tribute to the highly-regulated industry into which Radio Sawa entered that has since changed. As also discussed, the majority of Jordanians recognize Radio Sawa as an American endeavor. While the nature of the direct effects of this popular association

¹⁴⁵ Kuttab.

are a matter of debate, its role as a determiner of Radio Sawa's perception in Jordanian society arises as particularly significant. In cases where the audience perceives the station as a low-credibility newscaster, for example, this perception can often be correlated to general distrust of United States foreign policy. This policy, as well, is a central concern of Jordanians' and one whose voice many potential listeners are wary of being exposed to by means of the Radio Sawa endeavor. While the issue of the station as a representative spokesperson for the American administration is up for debate, general attitudes also reflected that Radio Sawa holds no potential to dramatically change perspectives or opinion in a political climate where actions resound with much more force than any media endeavor.

The author believes that all of the above perspectives can be taken as conclusions, but that the issue of Radio Sawa's potential as a persuasive force must be revisited for clarity. While the notion that the station can not change aggregate opinion remains well grounded in both this research and prior literature, studies of persuasion and credibility must be kept in mind as possible creditors of merit in that they inhibit completely ruling out the potential for any effects upon opinion that Radio Sawa may be able to produce. It again must be kept in mind that, referring back to Virginia Sedman's 1932 discussion of public opinion, not all of the forces that dictate overall opinion can be credited to conscious thought or faculty. Connecting a conscious rejection of Radio Sawa's messages – as seems to often be the case with its Jordanian listeners – with an ineffectiveness of persuasion, then, is a leap that must be approached with caution. The idea that Radio Sawa could act more subtly, in a manner unseen by its audience, to gradually affect outlook remains a possibility if it can indeed be integrated as one of the “environmental factors” Sedman speaks of. The author argues that it will meet this requirement to some degree as long as it can maintain a sizable audience, and that Radio Sawa may therefore be able to make persuasive appeals if that is its intention, though never as effectively as it could if actively received as a media source of more positive standing instead.

This assertion is likewise supported by the 1952 Hovland and Weiss study as well as the 1978 Sternthal study in their respective discussions of credibility and persuasion. Returning to the discovery that Radio Sawa is widely associated with the United States government, the findings also generally confirm that the the station, as predicted, suffers a loss of credibility because of this identification. A

majority of interviews agreed that, in line with the both of the aforementioned studies' conclusions, the station's communication effectiveness and persuasion is ultimately impeded for this reason. Findings also commonly refer to the concept of preconceptions and predispositions as detailed in the Sternthal study and agree that since many of Radio Sawa's listeners perceive its messages as contrary to their opinions, it will suffer a loss of persuasive ability. Given these studies' general applicability, however, it is a necessity to apply the possibilities in communication they leave open to this particular study as well. The "sleeper effect," as Hovland and Weiss termed it, poses the possibility that listeners may gradually disassociate Radio Sawa, as the communicator, from the messages that it communicates, and in turn eventually accept these messages despite an initial rejection since the rejection occurred only on the basis of the source's perceived lack of credibility. The same study's interpretation of explicit factual acquisition as generally uncorrelated with credibility also holds notable implications for Radio Sawa, for if its intention is to open dialog and serve as a viable information source it appears that the truly applicable variable is its exposure to an audience, regardless of credibility. This concept may be paralleled to the findings in the 2004 Gentzkow and Shapiro study, claiming no correlation between media source and – looking at the same spectrum from the opposite angle – misinformation.

The issue of credibility remains significant because, as theorized previously, it could boost Radio Sawa's direct effectiveness as a communicator dramatically to the point that these lesser effects would be comparatively negligible. The author foresees two manners by which Radio Sawa may ultimately be able to witness a change the low credibility as an information source it has been deemed to carry in Jordanian society both through previous research and the findings of this study. The first one assumes that Radio Sawa will continue to bear its association with the American government, but that attitudes toward this administration on the part of the Arab world will experience a drastic change in nature either on account of American policy shifts themselves or other extraneous factors, and this transformation will be transferred to the station. As the ability to judge the likeliness of such an occurrence lies outside the context of this study, however, this possibility will be left unresolved. The second, and probably more likely, option by which Radio Sawa's credibility may see a redefinition lies in the potential that the station – despite a static Arab attitude toward the United States government –

may be able to shake off its current association with this government and gradually gain popular identification as an autonomous and reliable media source. The most obvious parallel precedent lies in the case of the BBC, which was widely cited in findings as a radio source that Jordanians trust and utilize despite widespread opposition to British foreign policy, mirroring views of the United States' involvement in the region. To replicate such a scenario, however, Radio Sawa will likely have to be more straightforward in recognizing news seekers as a primary audience and will also have to build its credibility over a long span of time, in lieu of immediate results.

Having established the importance of a continuing audience to Radio Sawa's potential effectiveness in any goals it may have, we come to an important point of argument that points to new focuses arising from the research. The current narrative, as constructed by research sources, recounts Radio Sawa's remarkable rise in popularity followed by a gradual decline that came alongside privatization and increased competition on an entertainment level. The station's contemporary ability to hold on to its existing market share – the trajectory of its popularity – is met with no conclusions as to its nature. The author, on this note, strongly emphasizes the need for increased research in the Jordanian Radio industry on the whole. As mentioned in the findings, this industry has seen an unprecedented boom that has produced more stations in three years than the kingdom had had in its entire previous history. Deregulation of a traditionally government-restricted media sphere and a subsequent capitalization from the private sector appear to be the factors that have changed Radio Sawa's operating environment so drastically. To most effectively contextualize the station's challenges in this industry and the effects its continuing transformation may have on Radio Sawa's audience, a more in-depth and broadly-based study must be undertaken that will not only locate trends in popularity of individual stations but the elements that dictate them as well. In addition, the author recommends an extension of research on the comparative standing of radio as a news source in Jordan, for this question was approached differently depending on the source. Findings of such research would contribute to the context for this particular study and also shed more light on various issues of significance to Jordan's process of modernization, among them the process of media reception and interplay between public and private spheres.

A final issue that must be addressed, given that Radio Sawa is a regional initiative not only limited in scope to Jordan, is the representativeness of the current findings outside of the kingdom. The author contends that this study is very likely applicable to such a regional context for a variety of reasons, in that the background environment for the station's reception in the larger Arab world and many of its affecting factors are either comparable or identical to the respective scenario in Jordan. Radio Sawa's operative format is one of the issues that makes this parallel viable as the station's programming style and policies see no change from country to country, with the one exception of Iraq. In terms of reception environment, general sentiment toward the United States is comparably low in other parts of the Arab world, suggesting no major variation in the preconceptions and predispositions toward Radio Sawa's messages that are so integral to the station's reception in Jordan. Yet another similarity between Jordan and the rest of the region that has been shown to be crucial to understanding Radio Sawa in the country is its history of state-run media in combination with a recent shift toward privatization. As mentioned before, this trend is reflective of developments occurring elsewhere in the Middle East and it is likely that their effects upon Radio Sawa in other Arab countries will mirror those that they have had in Jordan. Finally, the small existing research base on Radio Sawa must be recalled and addressed. The 2006 Mohammed el-Nawawy study that gaged Radio Sawa's news credibility, drawing from five different Arab states, noted no significant difference between results obtained in Jordan and those that occurred elsewhere. The author sees no reason to believe that such a congruency in results would not apply to other issues involving Radio Sawa, across the region, as well.

Taking all the findings into light, maybe the one most unanimous but as-of-yet indirectly addressed conclusion to be made is that Radio Sawa is certainly a politically contentious issue. It is, after all, an American station, and America itself – as polls have shown – is not a subject on which many Arabs are hesitant to voice their opinions. There are few people who know about the station, and know who funds it, who aren't quick to implicate the two in a lengthy discussion of the nature of their relationship. Radio Sawa, however, speaks of more issues than politics: music, culture, generation, and technology all find a place in its discourse. If all the political debates surrounding it are put to the side, Radio Sawa will still be broadcasting in Jordan for the time being, and it will likely still have listeners.

As long as it's a number on the radio dial playing modern music, even the harshest of politics probably won't keep hip young Jordanians from tuning in for just a moment, at least until their favorite new song goes off the air. On this level, maybe Radio Sawa has struck a chord in this country that is much simpler than all of its connections to international powers and regional politics. Dr. Mahmoud Zawawi, asked what listeners saw first in Radio Sawa, may have described this phenomenon best of all. "Music is an international language," he said. And it's still one Radio Sawa knows how to speak.

Bibliography

- Burton, Paulu. "The Voice of America and Wire Service News." *The Quarterly of Film Radio and Television*, Vol. 6, No. 1. Autumn 1951, pp. 30-36.
- Josipovi, Ivo. "The Mass Media and Musical Culture." *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, Vol. 15, No. 1. June 1984, pp. 39-51.
- Kohler, Foy. "The Effectiveness of the Voice of America." *The Quarterly of Film Radio and Television*, Vol. 6, No. 1. Autumn 1951, pp. 20-29.
- Gallup Organization. "The 2002 Gallup Poll of the Islamic World: Executive Report." Gallup Poll Tuesday Briefing. February 2002.
- Gedda, George. "Radio Sawa: Music As a Tool," *Foreign Service Journal*. November 2002.
- Genztkow, Matthew A. and Shapiro, Jesse M. "Media, Education and Anti-Americanism in the Muslim World." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 18, No. 3. Summer 2004, pp. 117-133.
- Glock, Charles Y. "The Comparative Study of Communications and Opinion Formation." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4. Special Issue on International Communications Research. Winter 1952-1953, pp. 512-523.
- Hovland, C. and Weiss, W. "The Influence of Source Credibility on Communication Effectiveness." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 4. Winter 1951-1952, pp. 635-650.
- Jardaneh, Rula. "Arab FM radio stations increasing." *Jordan Business*. March 2007, p. 29.
- Kline, Deirdre. "Continued Audience Growth for News and Information: Performance Update." Slideshow attachment to personal email. August 2005.
- Kline, Deirdre. "Fact Sheet: Radio Sawa." Attachment to personal email. 5 January 2007.
- Kline, Deirdre. "Frequently Asked Questions about Radio Sawa." Attachment to personal email. Undated.
- Kline, Deirdre. "Radio Sawa Celebrates Five Years of Bringing News and Information to the Middle East." Attachment to personal email. 21 March 2007.
- Kuttab, Daoud. Personal Interview. 29 April 2007.
- Al-Masri, Fardous. Personal Interview. 7 May 2007.
- Middle East Broadcasting Networks. "Alhurra TV and Radio Sawa Jumps to 35 Million in the Middle East." Official Press Release. 23 August 2005.
- Mousa, Issam. Personal Interview. 8 May 2007.
- El-Nawawy, Mohammed. "US Public diplomacy in the Arab World: The news credibility of Radio Sawa and Television

Alhurra in five countries.” *Global Media and Communication*, Vol. 2, No. 2. 2006, pp. 185-205.

Al-Nimri, Jamil. Personal Interview. 2 May 2007.

Al-Omary, Essam. Personal Interview. 10 May 2007.

Press Release. “Alhurra Television and Radio Sawa Audience Jumps to 35 Million in the Middle East.” Middle East Broadcasting Network. 23 August 2005.

Rugh, William A. “Comments on Radio Sawa and al Hurra Television.” Testimony before the United States Senate. 29 April 2004. Accessed online. <<http://www.senate.gov/~foreign/testimony/2004/RughTestimony040429.pdf>>

Saif, Ibrahim. Private lecture at School for International Training's Amman Office. 10 March 2007.

Sedman, Virginia Rankin. “Some Interpretations of Public Opinion.” *Social Forces*, Vol. 10, No. 3. March 1932, pp. 339-350.

Sefsaf, Wendy Feliz. “US International Broadcasting Strategies in the Arab World: An analysis of the Broadcasting Board of Governors' strategy from a public communication standpoint.” *Transnational Broadcasting Studies Journal*, Vol. 13. Fall 2004.

Shibli, Haitham. Personal Interview. 6 May 2007.

Sternthal, Brian et al. “Persuasive Effects of Source Credibility: Tests of Cognitive Response.” *The Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 4, No. 4. March 1978, pp. 252-260.

Teller, Matthew. *The Rough Guide to Jordan: Third Edition*. New York: Rough Guides Inc., 2006.

Webster, Tom. “Radio Sawa.” Research Synopsis for Edison Media Research. Undated. Accessed online. <http://www.edisonresearch.com/home/archives/2004/10/radio_sawa.php>

Wise, Lindsay. “A Second Look at Alhurra: US-Funded Channel Comes of Age on the Front Lines of the 'Battle for Hearts and Minds.’” *Transnational Broadcasting Studies Journal*. Spring 2005.

Zawawi, Mahmoud A. Personal Interview. 17 April 2007.

Zawawi, Mahmoud A. Personal Interview. 25 April 2007.

Verification of Informed Consent
School for International Training
Jordan: Modernization and Social Change, Spring 2007

The purpose of this document is to ensure that I have been made aware of the nature of my voluntary involvement in the study entitled “Radio Sawa in Jordan: Different Perceptions, Together?” conducted by Michael Turner, including that:

1. I understand that I will be asked to shared my personal views of the United States media endeavor Radio Sawa and its reception among Jordanian society by means of either an interview or a short questionnaire.
2. The time required of my participation in this study should amount to roughly an hour or less.
3. The researcher does not foresee any major risks in association with this research, but I am aware that exposure to discomfort or stress during the course of the study remains a possibility. If I choose to continue in such a circumstance I do so with understanding of and responsibility for any personal consequences that may follow. I am free to leave any question unanswered or to discontinue the study at any time.
4. The information I have provided will be used for research exclusively. I have been presented the choice to either (___) allow or to (___) disallow the association of my name and affiliation with the information I provide. If I choose to disallow such, my responses will be utilized anonymously. Doing so will not affect the structure of the interview or the consideration of the comments I have made.
5. The researcher will provide additional information about the purpose and nature of the study and his academic affiliations at my request at any time.

I am aware that I may report dissatisfactions or concerns with any aspect of this experience to Dr. Muhamed AlKhalil, SIT Jordan Academic Director, at (962) 077 7176318 or sitjordan@gmail.com. I realize that I must be at least 18 years of age to participate. My signature below is confirmation of my voluntary participation in this study, understanding of the points above, and reception of a copy of this consent form.

Date

Signature

Print Name

Statement of Oral Consent

A written informed consent form, as appended to the previous page, was offered to research participants in the case that they preferred to respond anonymously or simply wished to confirm their consent in writing for any reason. Some participants chose to utilize this document and signed to verify their participation, though none indicated a wish to remain anonymous. The majority of participants waived the form and granted oral consent, which as detailed in the methodology has been deemed ethically sufficient for a project of this nature.