

## The Impact of Anadolu Agency News as a News Source on Arab Media and Arab Public Opinion\*

Bir Haber Kaynağı Olarak Anadolu Ajansı Haberlerinin Arap Medyası ve Arap Kamuoyu Üzerindeki Etkisi

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### ABSTRACT

Global news agencies continue to play a fundamental role as news providers not only for media outlets but also for individuals by making the instant dissemination and consumption of news possible and promoting an experience of global connectedness. The globalization of the media has led to a few global news agencies dominating the world's media; thus, the influence of these agencies can spread across countries without regard to political boundaries. As part of the international race to win the Arab public opinion and consolidate their dominance in the Arab world, the big global news agencies are seeking to present their programs and news in Arabic language. In recent years, Turkey as an important regional power in the Arab world has taken some initiatives to communicate with the Arab public through the press, the most important of which is the Arabic Department of the Anadolu (News) Agency. On this basis, the study aims to examine the level and nature of the media presence of Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department in the Arab world and how Anadolu Agency can become a reliable news source for the largest Arab media outlets. In this study, on the one hand, a quantitative approach was adopted in which the researchers collected data on the daily and the monthly number of news quoted by Arabic newspapers from the Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency. On the other hand, in the qualitative analysis, the study relies on the analysis of some surveys and previous Arabic studies to identify the factors that contribute to the success and development of the Arabic Department of the Anadolu Agency in the Arab world. The study showed that the common cultural, religious, and historical ties between Turkey and the Arab world have greatly facilitated the active presence of Anadolu Agency in the Arab geographies and the regions.

**Keywords:** News Agencies, Anadolu Agency, Anadolu Agency Arabic Department, Arab World, Arab Media

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## ÖZ

Küresel haber ajansları, anlık haber dağıtımını ve tüketimini mümkün kılarak ve bununla birlikte küresel bağlantılılık deneyimini de teşvik ederek, günümüzün değişen küresel medya ortamlarında bile yalnızca medya kuruluşları için değil, bireyler için de haber sağlayıcıları olarak hala temel bir rol oynamaktadır. Medyanın küreselleşmesi, birkaç küresel haber ajansının dünya medyasına hakim olmasına yol açtı; bu nedenle, bu kurumların etkisi siyasi sınırlara bakılmaksızın ülkeler arasında yayılabilmektedir. Arap kamuoyunu kazanmak ve Arap dünyasındaki hakimiyetlerini pekiştirmek için uluslararası yarışın bir parçası olarak, büyük küresel haber ajansları programlarını ve haberlerini Arapça dilinde sunmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Son yıllarda Arap dünyasında önemli bir bölgesel güç olan Türkiye, Arap kamuoyuyla basın aracılığıyla iletişim kurmak için bazı girişimlerde bulunmuştur, bunlardan en önemlisi Anadolu Ajansı'nın Arapça bölümüdür. Bu temelde, çalışma, Anadolu Ajansı'nın Arapça bölümünün Arap dünyasındaki medya varlığının düzeyini ve niteliğini ve Anadolu Ajansı'nın en büyük Arap medya kuruluşları için nasıl güvenilir bir haber kaynağı haline gelebildiğini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada, bir yandan araştırmacıların Anadolu Ajansı Arapça bölümünden Arapça gazetelerin aktardığı günlük ve aylık haber sayılarına ilişkin verileri topladığı nicel bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir; nitel analizde ise çalışma, Anadolu Ajansı Arapça bölümünün Arap dünyasındaki başarısına ve gelişimine katkıda bulunan faktörleri belirlemek için bazı anketlerin ve önceki Arapça çalışmaların analizine dayanmaktadır. Çalışma, Türkiye ile Arap dünyası arasındaki ortak kültürel, dini ve tarihi bağların Anadolu Ajansı'nın Arap coğrafyalarında ve bölgelerinde aktif varlığını büyük ölçüde kolaylaştırdığını göstermiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Haber Ajansları, Anadolu Ajansı, Anadolu Ajansı Arapça Bölümü, Arap Dünyası, Arap Medyası

## Introduction

Most intellectuals and researchers in the media field believe that *"No globalization exists without the advancement of mass media and media-culture industry as it is an integral part of mass media, communication and news"* (Majdoubi Bahida, 2021). The geo-economic development that the world has experienced in recent years has led to critical changes and developments in the media and cultural industries on a global scale. Media globalization has also led to the control of global media by a group of global news agencies, satellite broadcasting channels, and the Internet. These agencies' influence can spread through countries without regard to political boundaries. Therefore, countries ought to take advantage of the communication and technological developments achieved in this field.

Television programs that are aired in a foreign language and target a specific audience have recently been utilized. Arabs are among those targeted by the global media. This has led to the emergence of Arabic-speaking foreign television channels. As part of the international race to appease the Arabic audience and consolidate their own dominance in the Arab region, major media companies have sought to present their programs and news in Arabic. The Arab audience is targeted through the Arabic departments of global news agencies, which have played a major role in the development of the Arab press.

The interest in the Arabic-speaking media began in the 1930s before World War II when the Mussolini regime in Italy set up a radio station broadcasting in Arabic and targeting the Arab world. Germany, then led by Adolf Hitler, founded the famous "Radio Berlin", which managed to secure a

prominent place in the Arab world. Britain later responded by founding the BBC's Arabic service. Most other countries, such as the Soviet Union, the United States, France, and China later established Arabic-speaking channels "to win" the Arab public audience (Majdoubi Bahida, 2010, p.216).

The establishment of Arabic departments in global agencies is an important step in their history. This step aims to reach and influence Arab audiences and convince them of the policies of these agencies in their native languages. The first Arabic department was the Arabic department of *Agence France-Presse* in the early seventies. Then came Reuters, which became a major news source for the Arab media. The reason for the success of Arabic departments of global news agencies in the Arab world is that there is no major Arab news agency to be in service of Arab media outlets. Other news agencies such as Associated Press, United Press International, and German, Spanish, and Soviet agencies later established their Arabic departments (Majdoubi Bahida, 2010, p.217).

In recent years, Turkey has recognized the importance of engaging and communicating with the Arab public through the press. Therefore, as part of its comprehensive renaissance, Turkey has established the Arabic department of the Anadolu Agency. There are contradicting views about the reasons for establishing this Arabic department in the Agency. According to some views, it was established to introduce a new language in the agency and to communicate with Arabs in their native language. Other views say it was established for political purposes. The study is primarily concerned with analyzing the media presence of Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department in the Arab region.

To achieve this goal, the study relies on both quantitative and qualitative research methods, which are among the most important academic research tools in media and communication studies.

The aim of the study is to determine the level and nature of Anadolu Agency's media presence in the Arab world and to find out the reasons for the Arab media's frequent reliance on the Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency as their main news source. In addition, we will try to examine the factors that contributed to the widespread impact of Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department, as several Arab media outlets frequently rely on Anadolu Agency's news. We also note that world-renowned media outlets such as Al-Jazeera also rely on Anadolu Agency as a news source, often quoting entire news articles from that agency. The same is true for the most influential Arabic newspapers in the Arab world, such as Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper and Rai Al-Youm newspaper.

## **1. Research Problem**

After the Arab Spring, Turkey realized the importance of communicating with the Arab public through the media in order to strengthen its presence in the Arab world. For this reason, Turkey has launched some initiatives, among the most prominent of which are "TRT Arabic" and the "Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency." Although Arab media has witnessed a remarkable development of news agencies, newspapers, and channels such as Al-Jazeera Net and Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper in recent years, Anadolu Agency has become known in the Arab world through its Arabic Department. The research noticed that the Anadolu Agency is an important source of news in the Arab world as many Arab media outlets rely on it. Global media giants such as Al-Jazeera Net, Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper, and Rai Al-Youm newspaper also rely on Anadolu Agency as a news source to edit their daily news. Based on these observations, the study examines the media presence of Anadolu Agency in the Arab media. It also examines the extent to which the Arabic department of this agency has

succeeded in securing a place for itself in the Arab media landscape, as this Arabic Department has become an important source of news for the most influential Arab media in Arab public opinion.

### **1.1. Study Questions**

The authors noticed that the Arab media's reliance on Anadolu Agency as an important news source is increasing over time, which raises the following questions:

Q1: To what extent has the Anadolu Agency succeeded in becoming a reliable news source for the mainstream media in the Arab world?

Q2: What type of success did Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department achieve in the Arab world? Is it a dominant or an ordinary media presence?

Q3: Does the Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency compete with the Arabic departments of global news agencies targeting the Arab world?

Q4: Did the common cultural, religious, and historical factors between Turkey and the Arab world play an active role and have an impact in consolidating the Anadolu Agency's presence in this region?

### **1.2. Objectives of the Study**

This study has a number of objectives, including:

- To find out whether Anadolu Agency can become a reliable news source for the largest media outlets in the Arab world.
- To find out whether or not Anadolu Agency's Arabic department is having great success in profoundly influencing the Arab world.
- To find out whether the Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency is a competitor of Arabic departments of global news agencies in the Arab world.
- To identify the common cultural, religious, and historical factors between Turkey and the Arab world and their role in promoting the active presence of the Anadolu Agency in this geography.

### **1.3. Research Methodology**

The methodology used in the study combines various media studies research techniques. It relies on the following:

#### **1.3.1. Quantitative Analysis**

Anadolu Agency's news published in different Arabic media has been counted; the quantity reflects the importance of Anadolu Agency's coverage in the Arab world. As for the mechanism of quantitative analysis, two criteria will be applied: geographical distribution criterion and news production criterion.

#### **1.3.2. Geographical Distribution Criterion**

The study samples from Arab media have been selected according to the geographical distribution to determine how present Anadolu Agency is in most parts of the Arab world. The samples can be identified as follows:

- The Arabian Gulf region: Media outlets that target the Arab world have been focused on, such

as Al-Jazeera channel and Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper.

- The Maghreb region: The three most popular newspapers in the Maghreb region were selected for the study, namely the Moroccan newspaper "Akhbar Al-Youm", the Tunisian newspaper "Al Chourouk" and the Algerian newspaper "Algeria".

### 1.3.3. News Production Criterion

The news produced by Anadolu Agency during crises and major events in the Arab world is monitored. The Algerian crisis and the Sudanese crisis are selected as examples.

### 1.3.4. Qualitative Analysis

The mechanisms of qualitative analysis are diverse and are often determined by the researchers.

In this research study, the authors observe the mechanisms of quantitative analysis at five levels:

- **The first level:** Measuring the extent of the agency's Arabic Department compliance with communication ethics through monitoring and analyzing some topics that constitute the core agenda of the Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency.
- **The second level:** The capacity of Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department to find a place for itself in the Arab world.
- **The third level:** The general image of Turkey and the image of Turkish president Erdogan in the minds of the Arab Populace.
- **The fourth level:** The spread of Turkish culture in the Arab world.
- **The Fifth level:** The interest of Arab media in Anadolu Agency.

## 2. General Review of News Agencies and Anadolu Agency

### 2.1. Globalization and News Agencies

The last quarter of the twentieth century has witnessed an immense advancement in the information and communication technology field, which researchers consider to be the main reason behind the massive media revolution on both quantitative and qualitative levels. This revolution is due to the emergence of the new phenomenon of the "*global village*," which refers to the increasing interconnectedness of the world through the spread of media technologies. This expression was introduced in 1962 by the Canadian scientist Marshall McLuhan who expresses the essence of strong capitalism, which aims at bypassing the regulatory framework of nation-states in the spheres of international finance, cultural change, and access to information, especially in the current age where most countries in Asia, Africa, and South America have opened their borders to allow an easy flow of goods, capital, and ideas (Al-Farhan, p.107-108).

Scholte (1997, p.427-452) mentions three ways to envisage what globalization actually means. First, we can see it as meaning increased interactions on national borders, in other words, globalization and internationalization are identical. The frequency of movement of goods, individuals, money, messages and intellectual content is greater. A second conception invokes the notion of reduced impediments to mass trade, travel, communicative and financial interactions. In the first case, globalization is the mover of change; in the second it is a result of the other changes. Before

globalization, societal relationships are seen as intimately related to particular locales, but after globalization, transnational social phenomena can shrink the differences imposed by geography (Cingi, 2018, p.90-91).

The role of media and technology in engendering these changes has been the object of study of several scholars working on mass media and in the sociological field. In a nutshell, the media have participated in at least two phases in the realization of globalization. The first phase depended on the arrival of television and other electronic media. The second phase grew from the development of telematics networks and the Internet - the beginnings of an era of digitized media. Viewed as a phenomenon involving communication, globalization as a can be seen to date from Marshall McLuhan's seminal work describing the Global Village, one in which highly evolved media communication, and in particular the deployment of orbiting satellite transmitters, have led to instantaneous communication even at a vast distance and this has given the whole world the characteristics more traditionally associated with a village. The Earth has become a single worldwide community (Cingi, 2018, p.91).

Furthermore, globalization is not just an economic system, it encompasses areas of politics, culture, science, and media. This is due to the fact that the global, capitalist, and economic growth presupposes the existence of free markets and political systems with a certain form of governance. In modern global capitalism, the spheres of economic and political power have multiplied. This has created a set of alternatives and a plurality of forces in power, and as much as it has enhanced the democratic development it has brought by negative effects such as power's non-monopolization and circulation, and the multiplicity and diversity of centers of power and influence on society. To prevent authorities from possessing wealth, a kind of decentralization of administration was established.

As the globalization that capitalism tried to build up has impacted media institutions around the world, the global power is now restricted to a group of global, economic corporations such as Microsoft, Vodafone, Bertelsmann, United GlobalCom, Disney and other local and international giant media companies. Due to the massive and rapid expansion in the field of communication and information technology, these corporations have enormous capabilities to collect, transmit, and disseminate information throughout the world at a very high speed. In a related context, the digital revolution has exceeded traditional forms of communication - written, audio and visual - and paved the way for the internet, multimedia, and the digital revolution epitomized by McLuhan in his statement about the 'global village. Large media conglomerates had an interest in the various forms of written, visual and audio-visual communication and used diverse channels such as newspapers, magazines, radio stations, television stations, digital broadcasting networks, and the internet to transmit information.

The news services of global media agencies represent an age-old form of media globalization that has led to the establishment of technical relationships between satellite broadcasting and satellites. Media globalization has also led to the control of global media by a group of global news agencies, satellite broadcasting channels, and the internet. These agencies' influence can spread through countries without regard to political boundaries. Since the beginning of the last century, major powers have relied on global news agencies as the most important means of communication during crises and interstate conflicts.

## 2.2. Brief History of Anadolu Agency

The history of Anadolu Agency is almost identical to that of the Republic of Turkey. Having been founded on April 6, 1920, 17 days before the Turkish Grand National Assembly convened for the first time, Anadolu Agency helped announce the first legislation by the Assembly that established the Turkish Republic. The Anadolu Agency witnessed all stages of the National Struggle, the War of Liberation, and reforms of the Republic. After Istanbul came under occupation on March 16, 1920, and the Ottoman parliament was annulled, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk called on all provinces to hold elections for a new parliament to be established in Ankara. Several intellectuals, who realized that they could not stay in Istanbul any longer, tried to join the National Struggle. This development paved the way for the foundation of the Anadolu Agency.

The story of the establishment of the Anadolu Agency began when the writer Khaleda Adib and the journalist Yunus Nadi met on March 31, 1920, on their way to Ankara. At that time, they discussed with each other and decided to establish a Turkish "news agency". They suggested several names for the agency, of which the names "Turkish Agency", "Ankara Agency" and "Anadolu Agency". After deliberations, they agreed on the "Anadolu Agency," which is still used today. At the residence of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (founder of the Turkish Republic) in Ankara, at the Faculty of Agriculture, the issue of establishing the Atatürk Agency was presented and included in his agenda, and indeed the agency was established on April 6, 1920, after the final decision was made in this regard. The first office of the Anadolu agency, as the first headquarters of the national debate, was opened in a Department of the Faculty of Agriculture in Ankara, and the agency started broadcasting its first news on April 12, 1920.

The Anadolu Agency played an important role in the establishment of the Turkish Republic, as it published the news in all Turkish provinces about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's decision to meet in Ankara to establish the Grand National Assembly, the "Parliament". This occurred after the closure of the Ottoman Parliament. In summary, the prominent role of the Anadolu Agency can be summarized in the following points:

- The agency attempted to direct the Turkish public to defend Turkey's national interests during the Turkish War of Independence and prove the legitimacy of the independence project based on the national struggle and reforms.
- The agency has confronted the hostile positions and the negative ideas about the Turkish War of Independence spread by some international newspapers and local newspapers under the pressure of the occupation.

## 2.3. Overview of the Arabic Departments of Global News Agencies

As part of the international race to appease the Arabic audience and cement their dominance in the Arab region, major media companies have sought to present their programs and news in Arabic. The Arab audience is targeted through the Arabic departments of international news agencies, which have played a major role in the development of the Arab press. The global news agencies were an important source of news, especially since information and communication technology was not as advanced as it is today, since there were only telephone and telex, which were very expensive. As a result, Arab news agencies were unsophisticated and only had reporters in some major capitals like Paris, London, and New York. Secondly, it allowed cultural exchange between peoples of the developed



countries and the Arab world. It is worth noting that a country's diplomatic priority is not only limited to maintaining political, economic, military, or cultural relations with the international community; but as well as consolidating the state's position within that community and defending her interests. Therefore, a country's representation has become a trademark that enforces respect and achieves credibility in the eyes of the international public. According to Spanish scholar *El Houssine Majdoubi*, "one of the most important mechanisms to achieve these goals is to develop a communication strategy with others in their native language in order to be convincing".

Therefore, countries ought to utilize communication and technological developments achieved in this field. Television programs that are aired in a foreign language and target a specific audience have recently been utilized. Arabs are among those targeted by the global media. This has led to the emergence of Arabic-speaking foreign television channels.

Media is one of the most important means of influence in the world because of its impact on shaping public opinion, and a fair number of countries have weaponized it to defend their interests. The importance of media, according to Moroccan-Spanish scholar El Houssein Majdouby, was first recognized in the 1930s before World War II, when the Mussolini regime in Italy set up a radio station broadcasting in Arabic and targeting the Arab world. Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, founded the famous "Radio Berlin", which managed to secure a prominent place in the Arab world. Britain later responded by founding the BBC's Arabic service. Most other countries, such as the Soviet Union, the United States, France, and China later established Arabic-speaking channels to win the Arab public audience.

Academic researcher El Houssine Majdoubi, in his article "Western Arabic-language TV channels between the media bridge and the diplomatic agenda" published in the journal *Info America* through the University of Malaga, claims that the second most important leap is the establishment of Arabic departments in major international news agencies (2010). The first was the Arabic Department of *Agence France-Presse* in the early seventies. Then there was Reuters, which became a major news source for the Arab media. The reason for this success was the absence of a major Arab news agency. Other agencies such as Associated Press, United Press International, German, Spanish, and Soviet agencies set up Arabic departments. Although not all Arabic news agencies departments were, the Arabic departments of Reuters and France Press continue to exist and are very successful, while the other departments have failed to pursue their work.

#### **2.4. Overview of the Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency**

Anadolu Agency opened its first Arabic Department in Istanbul in 2011. The establishment of Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department thus coincided with the political changes in the Arab world known as the "Arab Spring," a series of anti-government protests and uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa that challenged some of the region's entrenched authoritarian regimes.

In this regard, former director of Anadolu Agency, Kemal Öztürk, in an interview with the newspaper "Asharq al-Awsat" on January 31, 2013, said that *"it is possible that the events in the Arab world accelerated the establishment of the Arab Department of the Agency."* However, he denied that *"the motive for the establishment of the Arab Department of the Agency is political,"* while affirming that *"the establishment of this Arab Department results from the desire of the Agency to open itself not only to the Middle East and Arab countries, but to all parts of the world."*



The Anadolu Agency believed that the agency's Arabic Department is the link that connects Turkey with the Arab peoples after many years of Turkey's news reaching them through foreign agencies and vice versa. In this regard, Öztürk said the decision to open the Arab department had been planned for years, without denying that the Arab revolutions may have had a role in accelerating its establishment to some extent (Asharq al-Awsat, 2013).

There are different opinions about the reasons for the establishment of the Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency. According to some views, it was launched to introduce a new language into the agency and to communicate with Arabs in their native language, while others believe that it was established for political purposes. The researchers conducted direct interviews with Arab researchers and journalists about the Anadolu Agency and asked them about the reasons for the establishment of the Arabic Department and the opening of offices for this department in most Arab countries.

The Moroccan journalist and professor at Cadiz University Mohamed el Mouden said, *“I think that the establishment of the Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency reflects the importance of Arab public opinion for Turkey as it seeks to strengthen its position and role on the Arab map after the Arab Spring. It is well known that news agencies are capable of shaping public opinion. Thus, Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department helps Turkey advocate its geopolitical positions and influence Arab audiences. It also serves to interpret events, whether they concern Turkey itself, its partners, or its adversaries. It may also be among the tasks of the Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency to compete with other Arabic departments of global news agencies in order to influence Arab public opinion.”* (EL Mouden, 2021).

In addition, The Moroccan-Spanish journalist and writer El Houssine Majdoubi believes *“that there are two main reasons for the establishment of the Arab division of the Anadolu Agency in many Arab countries: First, Turkey has a desire to communicate with other countries. This is important for a large country like Turkey, which aspires to take an important place in the international community, especially in the Mediterranean region. Second, many news agencies seek to establish departments in several languages, which is the case in many countries, not only in medium-sized countries like Morocco and Algeria but also in small countries that used to have one main department in the national language and one or two departments in international languages like English and French.”* (Majdoubi Bahida, 2021)

As a result, it was decided to establish the first regional office for the Arabic Department of the Anadolu Agency in Egypt, which was officially opened in Cairo in November 2012. Subsequently, the Anadolu Agency opened an office in Beirut that was subordinate to the regional office in Cairo. The Cairo bureau employed numerous journalists, editors, and staff and was responsible for news from 23 Middle Eastern and African countries, including the major Arab countries of Tunisia, Lebanon, Palestine, Libya, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia. Morocco and Algeria. Thus, the tasks of these offices are to transmit the news to the Arab media, also news from these offices (Egypt office, Beirut office) is also transmitted to the agency's office in Istanbul, where it is translated into Turkish and transmitted to Turkish media.

### 3. Analyzing the Level and Nature of Anadolu Agency's Media Presence in the Arab World

#### 3.1. Quantitative Analysis:

##### 3.1.1. Quantitative Analysis of Anadolu Agency's Coverage on the Algerian Crisis

The Algerian crisis in Algeria erupted after Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced on February 10nd, 2019, that he would officially run for a fifth term in presidential elections scheduled for April 18. This was followed by a series of protests and rallies that escalated on February 22nd, when the largest demonstrations were organized, most of which were peaceful but firmly opposed to Bouteflika's candidacy for a fifth term. On April 2nd, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika resigned after weeks of massive street protests. However, hundreds of thousands of Algerians returned to protest again, expressing their opposition to the participation of members of the former regime under President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in the country's transition process.

**Table 1:** The number of news published by Anadolu Agency on Algeria crisis

Months	Number of monthly news
February	28
March	177
April	140
May	53
June	55
July	51
August	30
September	22

In March (177 news) and April (140 news), Anadolu Agency published a large number of news items about the Algerian crisis compared to other months. The most important events were the intensification of protests against Bouteflika's candidacy for a fifth term in March and the resignation of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in April 2019. Based on the researchers' examination of Anadolu News Agency's digital archive, it emerged that the total number of daily news on the Algerian crisis from the announcement of the presidential candidacy on February 10nd to Bouteflika's official resignation on April 2nd (52 days) is 222 news, which is considered to be significant coverage of the Algerian crisis by Anadolu Agency. Such a large number of 222 news at the beginning of the Algerian crisis (52 days) shows the following:

First, journalists routinely rely on news agencies, which led the Anadolu Agency to provide significant coverage of events and news updates on the Algerian crisis.

Second, Anadolu Agency produced a large number of news items about the protest marches against Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Thus, it was the most important news source for the local and regional media. It also provided breaking news in the first critical hours after the outbreak of the Algerian crisis.

### 3.1.2. Quantitative Analysis of Anadolu Agency's Coverage on the Sudanese Crisis

The protests in Sudan began after demonstrations in the Sudanese city of "Atbara" denouncing economic conditions mainly lacking bread and fuel.

**Table 2:** The number of news published by Anadolu Agency on Sudanese crisis

Months	Number of monthly news
December	75
January	140
February	101
March	55
April	311
May	166
June	258
July	263
August	153

Due to the significance of the political events in Sudan, Anadolu Agency increased the pace of publishing news on the Sudanese crisis. As for the rapid or gradual decline in the pace of publishing news on the Sudanese crisis, it is related to the lack of events or the absence of any developments to get out of the Sudanese crisis.

In general, since the outbreak of the crisis, the agency had covered very extensively the Sudanese crisis, for example, the total news published from the beginning of the crisis on December 19 to the end of the crisis in August (9 months) reached 1522 news items, which is a significant amount of news, and commensurate with the total news items that a global agency may publish during the onset of any crisis or political turmoil.

## 3.2. Media Presence of Anadolu Agency in the Arab Press

Here, the level of media presence of the Anadolu Agency in each of the newspapers in the Maghreb Arab region, the Arabian Gulf, and the Arab press in the West will be examined. In the aforementioned geographical samples, the most popular newspapers will be selected. Then, the study will examine the digital archive for each Arab newspaper separately, depending on the keyword "*Anadolu Agency*".

### 3.2.1. The Press of the Arab Maghreb

The study first examined the digital archives of some newspapers from the Arab Maghreb, including the Tunisian newspaper "Al Chourouk", the Algerian newspaper "Algeria", and the Moroccan newspaper "Akhbar Al Youm".

The study found that these newspapers quoted very few Anadolu Agency articles. Moreover, the quoted articles from this agency are 3 to 4 news items per week, and these articles are published from time to time. The fact that Arab Maghreb newspapers rely on the Anadolu Agency as a news source for editing their daily news. This proves that Anadolu Agency is an important news source for the aforementioned newspapers.

### 3.2.2. The most influential Arabic Newspapers in the Arab world

The most influential Arabic newspapers on Arabic public opinion are "Al-Quds Al-Arabi" Newspaper and "Rai al-Youm" newspaper, both published in London.

#### 3.2.2.1. Al-Quds Al-Arabi Newspaper

Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper is an Arabic daily newspaper, one of the most widespread newspapers in the Arab world. It was founded in 1989 and is currently headed by Sana Al-Aloul - since July 10, 2013. The newspaper is printed in London, New York, Frankfurt, Amman and Rome and distributed in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and America. This newspaper is a diverse media platform that believes in pluralism and publishes accurate news. It adheres to professional and objective standards through its coverage of events and providing in-depth analysis of Arab and international issues. This newspaper is published in London.

#### 3.2.2.2. The Digital Newspaper "Rai al-Youm"

Rai al-Youm is an independent online newspaper founded in 2013 and currently read in more than 200 countries around the world. The newspaper is characterized by a high level of professionalism and credibility in its reporting and in the writing of its analytical articles.

**Table 3:** The daily number of news quoted by Arab newspapers and Al Jazeera Net from Anadolu Agency

	1-Jan-22	2-Jan-22	3-Jan-22	4-Jan-22	5-Jan-22	6-Jan-22	7-Jan-22
Alquds Alarabi Newspaper	1 news	2 news	1 news	1 news	2 news	1 news	1 news
Rai al-Youm Newspaper	2 news	1 news	1 news	4 news	1 news	1 news	2 news
Al Jazeera Net	1 news	2 news	1 news	1 news	2 news	1 news	1 news

	1-Feb-22	2-Feb-22	3-Feb-22	4-Feb-22	5-Feb-22	6-Feb-22	7-Feb-22
Alquds Alarabi Newspaper	2 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news
Rai al-Youm Newspaper	3 news	3 news	1 news	2 news	1 news	1 news	1 news
Al Jazeera Net	1 news	1 news	2 news	3 news	2 news	1 news	1 news

	1-Mar-22	2-Mar-22	3-Mar-22	4-Mar-22	5-Mar-22	6-Mar-22	7-Mar-22
Alquds Alarabi Newspaper	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	3 news	2 news	1 news
Rai al-Youm Newspaper	3 news	1 news	1 news	2 news	1 news	1 news	1 news
Al Jazeera Net	2 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	3 news	1 news	2 news

	1-Apr-22	2-Apr-22	3-Apr-22	4-Apr-22	5-Apr-22	6-Apr-22	7-Apr-22
Alquds Alarabi Newspaper	2 news	1 news	2 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news
Rai al-Youm Newspaper	1 news	1 news	1 news	2 news	2 news	1 news	3 news
Al Jazeera Net	1 news	2 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news

	1-May-22	2-May-22	3-May-22	4-May-22	5-May-22	6-May-22	7-May-22
Alquds Alarabi Newspaper	1 news	2 news	1 news	2 news	1 news	1 news	2 news
Rai al-Youm Newspaper	2 news	2 news	1 news	1 news	2 news	2 news	1 news
Al Jazeera Net	2 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	3 news	1 news	1 news

	1-Jun-22	2-Jun-22	3-Jun-22	4-Jun-22	5-Jun-22	6-Jun-22	7-Jun-22
Alquds Alarabi Newspaper	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	2 news	1 news
Rai al-Youm Newspaper	1 news	2 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	2 news
Al Jazeera Net	1 news	1 news	4 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news

	1-Jul-22	2-Jul-22	3-Jul-22	4-Jul-22	5-Jul-22	6-Jul-22	7-Jul-22
Alquds Alarabi Newspaper	2 news	2 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	3 news	2 news
Rai al-Youm Newspaper	2 news	3 news	1 news	1 news	2 news	3 news	3 news
Al Jazeera Net	1 news	2 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news

	1-Aug-22	2-Aug-22	3-Aug-22	4-Aug-22	5-Aug-22	6-Aug-22	7-Aug-22
Alquds Alarabi Newspaper	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	2 news	3 news
Rai al-Youm Newspaper	1 news	2 news	1 news	1 news	4 news	2 news	4 news
Al Jazeera Net	2 news	1 news	2 news	1 news	1 news	1 news	1 news

In the first 10 months of the current year, the authors counted the number of news items quoted by Al-Quds Al-Arabi and Rai al-Youm newspapers. The study showed that the number of news items quoted by Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper from the Anadolu Agency ranged from 1 to 3 (see Table 3).

In the case of Rai al-Youm newspaper, the number of news quoted by Rai al-Youm newspaper from this agency varied between 1 and 4 (see Table 3). Through an in-depth analytical study of the archive of both Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper and Rai Al-Youm newspaper. It became clear to the authors that each of the two aforementioned newspapers relies heavily on Anadolu Agency as a news source when editing their daily news.

The authors browsed a large number of daily news articles for Al-Quds Al-Arabi and "Rai al-Youm" newspapers during the study period - the first ten months of the current year - and concluded that the journalists of both newspapers rely heavily on Anadolu Agency as a news source when editing their daily articles on Arab and Turkish affairs. The authors conclude that Anadolu Agency has a strong presence in the daily news process of "Rai Al-Youm" and "Al-Quds Al-Arabi" newspapers, the most widely read Arabic Newspapers in the Arab world. The study also shows that these newspapers, which are known for their professionalism in the Arab world, consider Anadolu Agency as a reliable news source.

### **3.2.3. The Qatari Al-Jazeera**

Al-Jazeera is a satellite news channel that was launched in 1996 and has enjoyed immense success in the Arab region as well as internationally. Al-Jazeera has a wide Arab and foreign following. Its position on the global media scene was strengthened by its outstanding coverage of the U.S. war against Afghanistan in 2001 and the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 with unprecedented success. Al-Jazeera has bureaus and correspondents in various regions of the world.

First, the authors calculated the number of Anadolu Agency news published by Al-Jazeera Net in the 10 months of 2022 (from January to the end of May). From this, the study calculated the number of news items by taking the first week of each month (see Table 3) to determine the number of news items that Al-Jazeera Net quoted per day from Anadolu Agency. In general, the study concluded that the number of Anadolu Agency news quoted by Al-Jazeera Net per day is very limited, ranging from 1 to 3 news per day (see Table 3).

It should be noted that media outlets with a global character do not rely on quoting news in large quantities from a particular news agency. So, the number of Anadolu Agency news that "Al-Jazeera Net" publishes per day is between 1 and 3 news. The reason is that "Al-Jazeera Net" has a wide network of correspondents in different parts of the world to collect news. Therefore, quoting one or two articles per day from Anadolu Agency is an important achievement for an international broadcaster like Al-Jazeera and also reflects the important presence of Anadolu Agency in Al-Jazeera's daily news production process.

## **4. Qualitative Analysis:**

The mechanisms of qualitative analysis are diverse and are often related to those chosen by the researchers. In this context, the researchers of the study observe the mechanisms of qualitative analysis at five levels:

### **4.1. The First Level: Measuring the Extent of the Core Agenda of the Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency**

As for Anadolu Agency's media coverage in the Arab world, there are a number of topics that form its core media agenda. As illustrated in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the political crisis in Sudan, the conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and Libya, Turkish-Arab relations, the fight against Islamophobia, etc.

Anadolu Agency's Arabic division dedicates a separate department under the title "Arab countries", which reports on the most important events and developments in the Arab world, including agreements, sporting or cultural events, and political crises in the Arab world.



To examine the extent to which Anadolu Agency adheres to professional ethics, the study selected some topics that form the core media agenda of Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department. These are the conflicts in Yemen and Turkish-Qatari relations.

#### **4.1.1. The Conflict in Yemen**

The agency continues its media role by publishing news that monitors the progress of the conflict in Yemen and the heavy material and human losses that this war has caused. It should be noted that Turkey has been very keen in playing an active role in the stability of Yemen in recent years, especially after its support for the legitimate government in Yemen.

To ensure that the conflict in Yemen is one of the most important topics on Anadolu Agency's media agenda, in the study it was used the keyword "Yemen" to monitor the number of news items published on the Yemen crisis. From this, the study observed that Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department publishes about 3 to 5 news items every day, which is a clear indication that the agency is constantly following the developments of the crisis in Yemen.

What makes the conflict in Yemen one of the priority topics on Anadolu Agency's news desk is not only that the agency publishes the latest news or breaking news on the situation in Yemen, but also that it consistently publishes in-depth reports on the situation in Yemen. The researchers found, for example, a long report by a Yemeni writer and journalist Muhammad Al Sami, dated May 18, 2021, under the title "*Military Escalation and Diplomatic Stumbling. Where is the Yemen Crisis Headed?*" in which he analyzed the resurgence of military escalation in Yemen after international diplomatic efforts to end the war stalled.

#### **4.1.2. Turkish-Qatari Relations**

Anadolu Agency continues to publish news about the strength and prosperity of Turkish-Qatari relations at all levels. The agency reports extensively on the signing of joint agreements between the two countries in various fields and discusses bilateral relations between both countries and the development of the regional socio-economic environment. Most of the articles, about 20 in number, reflect the transition of Qatari-Turkish relations from the phase of cooperation to the phase of deep strategic partnership.

It should be noted that Qatari-Turkish relations have developed rapidly in various fields over the past two decades, especially in economic, political, and military, more so since the Justice and Development Party took over the government of Turkey in 2002. Relations between the two countries are characterized by a unique convergence of views on many regional and international issues. The last twenty years have witnessed remarkable milestones in the development of Qatari-Turkish relations, marking a milestone in the increase of interdependence between the two countries.

To ensure that Turkish-Qatari relations are one of the most important topics in Anadolu Agency's media agenda, we used the keyword "*Turkey and Qatar*" to monitor the number of news items published about Turkish-Qatari relations. From this, the study observed that the Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department publishes about 3 to 5 news items every day, which indicates that the agency directly and consistently follows the developments in Turkish-Qatari relations.

In this context, the study also notes that Anadolu Agency is an agency of the Turkish state. So, it is only natural that it focuses on Turkish activities with Qatar or another Arab country. Take, for

example, the French news agency "Agence France-Presse": it focuses on French activities, especially diplomatic activities.

As far as the professional ethics of journalism are concerned, the media discourse of the Anadolu Agency is very close to the reality of the Arab world, its aspirations, and issues, as it is characterized in some way by objectivity, credibility, and professionalism.

Indeed, Anatolia Agency did not fall into dry propaganda like the other national news agencies of some Arab countries, which rely on a media discourse steeped in propaganda that lacks objectivity and credibility. Anadolu Agency was also able to break the dominance of all international news agencies that present their news from a single point of view. On the other hand, the Arab media lack opinion leaders and think tanks. Therefore, the Arab media is no longer able to formulate a balanced discourse that advances the nation's agenda and defends its policies. Instead, most Arab news agencies are used for peddling derogatory remarks and hostile critiques toward perceived enemies.

Arab researchers and journalists believe that the most significant milestone attributed to Anadolu Agency is the launch of the Arabic version of the agency in 2012. They also observed that Anadolu Agency can now broadcast news under a special equation of each Arab country separately.

#### **4.2. The Second Level: The Capacity of Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency to Find a Place for Itself in the Arab World**

The results of the quantitative analysis show that Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department was able to secure its media presence as an important news source for Arab audiences despite strong competition from the Arabic departments of global news agencies such as Reuters and France Press. The success of Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department can be attributed to two main reasons, namely:

First, the Anadolu Agency was able to spread in the Arab media arena, which was confirmed by the results of the quantitative analysis. These results confirmed the dependence of well-known Arab media outlets on the Anadolu Agency as their main news source, as well as some other Arab media outlets that quoted Anadolu Agency articles in full. This confirms the widespread presence of the Agency in the Arab world.

Second, the Anadolu Agency was able to influence Arab public opinion. Thanks to the spread of the agency's news among the Arab media, the Arab citizen has become eager to see Turkey through the eyes of the Turks and not through the French or British. At the same time, Turkey's importance in the international and regional arena increased due to its growing influence in the world, especially in the Arab world, and the Arabic Department of the agency is working to keep pace with this process.

In this context, a group of Arab journalists and analysts discuss in their articles that *"The Arab world, yearning for freedom and democracy, looks to Turkey as a role model. Moreover, President Erdogan's popularity in the Arab world ensures that Arab audiences constantly follow news from Turkey with interest"* (BBC World, 2019). And this has also contributed to the spread of the news of Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department into the Arab world. The professionalism of Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department and its avoidance of dry propaganda has made the Arabic Department one of the most important Arabic-language Turkish media outlets, capable of winning the Arab public opinion and improving Turkey's image in various fields.

In general, it can be noted that the Arabic Department of the Anadolu Agency has succeeded in becoming an important media window for the Arabic media. Moreover, this Arabic Department has spread widely in the Arab world, especially in the Mediterranean region.

### **4.3. The Third Level: The General Image of Turkey and the Image of Turkish President Erdogan in the Minds of the Arab Populace**

At this level, the study will rely on previous studies and opinion polls conducted by various academic institutions to study public opinion in the Arab world. For example, the Moroccan Arab Barometer Network, the largest publicly available collection of data on the opinions of citizens in Arab countries on many politicians and Arab or international issues since 2006.

This study is partly based on the evaluation of some previous Arab studies on the general image of Turkey and also follows some opinion polls on the prominent figure of the Turkish political scene, namely President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. It should be noted that many Arab specialists in Turkey point out that the Arab public sympathizes with Turkish President Erdogan mainly for religious reasons. He is a Muslim president in a secular country with a majority Muslim population. The Arab public has a positive image of Erdogan and believes that he is a man who stands against the West and has accomplished many achievements in various aspects of life in Turkey.

There are a number of issues that have caused tensions and differences between Turkey and several countries in recent years, and in the current year 2022, Turkey tends to normalize its relations with its Arab adversaries. The remarkable thing in the recent months of this year was that Ankara returned to the policy of zero problems in its foreign policy, through the strategy of minimization the problems from her relations with neighbors that started with Abu Dhabi, Riyadh, and Cairo, went through Washington, Yerevan, and Brussels; yet it was not going so well with Athens.

The Arab media believes that Turkey's efforts to normalize its relations with yesterday's adversaries and to pursue a realistic foreign policy are steps that should have a positive impact in 2022, especially on the country's economy.

The reasons pushing Turkey to normalize and improve relations with various parties in the Arab world can be considered as the negative attitude of the U.S. government toward President Erdogan and the regional problems that are burdening everyone in the region without an outcome in favor of one party over the other.

The Arab media, especially the Arab electronic press, agree with the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the economy of the Arab region, especially Turkey, with the significant decline in the value of the Turkish lira, as well as the approaching of the Turkish presidential election.

#### **4.3.1. Turkey's Economic Image in the Eyes of the Arab Public**

Turkey's economic development between 2002 and 2010 is an important factor in its popularity in the Arab world. While the views and analysis of Arab political elites have also praised that the economic development has improved Arab perceptions of Turkey. The current ruling party ("*AK Party*" – "*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*": The Justice and Development Party) in President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's leadership has achieved numerous successes during his presidency, which is due to end in mid-2023. Among the most important of these achievements are the opening of Istanbul airport, a significant increase in Turkish goods exports, the discovery of natural gas wells in the Black Sea region,

Turkey's willingness to defend its rights in light of the rules of international law, the development of the defense industry, the establishment of automobile factories and the increase in Turkey's tourism revenues. In addition, the main achievements of the current Turkish government are highlighted by its positive performance in the COVID-19 crisis, as it has provided free healthcare to all those affected by the pandemic and supported the economic activity of the sectors affected by the COVID-19 crisis. All these achievements compelled the Arab public to view the economic and social experience of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey with a kind of positivity and admiration, considering that most Arab countries, especially the Maghreb countries, lack this kind of development record.

Due to external pressures, Turkey faces a number of economic challenges, including high-interest rates, the devaluation of the national currency TL, and high inflation rates. Based on an analysis of numerous opinions of Arab political elites and news sources, there are a number of political and economic challenges facing Turkey that have negatively affected its regional image; but on the other hand, there are still a number of variables that contribute to building a positive image of Turkey, the most important of which are: "the Islamic orientation of the government", "the influence of Erdogan", "the influence of the Turkish television series", and "*The AK Party's* development record".

These four variables have an effective impact on Arab public opinion. These changes also lead Arab public opinion to continue to admire modern Turkey, sympathize with the current ruling party, and cultivate a positive image of Turkey.

#### **4.3.2. Strong Turkish Positions in Foreign Policy**

Researchers in the field of Turkish politics believe that the new trend of Turkish regional policy is attracting a positive Arab public opinion. Moreover, the Turkish positions on many Arab issues and affairs excite a popular enthusiasm among the Arab public which sometimes elicits worrisome concerns among the Arab regimes (Majdoubi Bahida, 2021). Hence, the study deals with some of the earlier and current positions in Turkish foreign policy through which Turkey was able to create a positive image of Turkey and win over the Arab public:

- Turkey's continued support for the Palestinian cause.
- Erdogan's withdrawal from the 2009 Davos Annual Meeting.
- Sending the Freedom Flotilla "Mavi Marmara" to break the siege of Gaza Strip.
- Turkey's refusal to participate in the war against Iraq.

These positions are still firmly entrenched in the minds of Arabs because Arab governments have not had the political courage to adopt them.

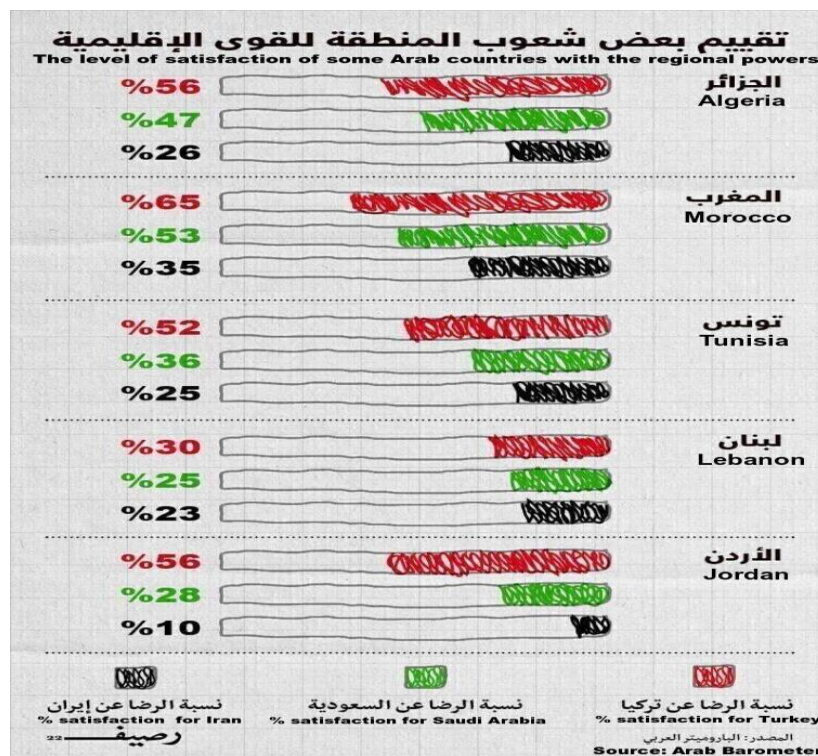
Now, the most prominent position in Turkish foreign policy in the current period is Turkey's balanced position in the Ukraine crisis. Turkey's most critical relations at present are undoubtedly with Kiev and Moscow, with Turkey's political and geographic position accelerating Erdogan's influence on the broader region and vis-a-vis the West (Osterlund, 2022)

It can be noted in the present situation that Turkey's main goal now appears to be regional stability, knowing that any further missteps in its foreign policy would mean further financial difficulties. For example, Turkey has not participated in the sanctions against Russia because it knows that these sanctions are likely to harm Turkey as much as Russia. So, under these circumstances it can be said that Turkey wants to continue to take a balanced position and most probably will continue to

do so for as long as possible. This balanced position is a continuation of a policy that has led to rapprochement over the past year with various countries in the region with which Turkey previously had strained relations or no relations at all. Ankara's diplomatic initiatives have included efforts to improve relations with adversaries such as Armenia, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.

#### 4.3.3. Measuring the level of satisfaction of Arabs about Turkey as Regional Power in the Middle East

In March 2021, the Arab Barometer Research Center conducted a survey asking some people in the region (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, and Jordan) about their satisfaction with the regional powers. These regional powers are represented by Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran.



**Graph 1:** The level of satisfaction of some Arab countries with the regional powers (Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia)

The graph above shows the results of the survey presented by the Arab Barometer Research Center. The results of the above study show that of the five countries that participated in the survey, only four countries had a positive image of Turkey, namely Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Jordan. Satisfaction with Turkey was highest in Morocco (65 %), followed by Jordan and Algeria (56 % in both countries) and Tunisia (52 %). In Lebanon, the percentage of satisfaction with Turkey was low compared to the other Arab countries at 30 %.

As a conclusion, many Arab analysts and journalists believe that the increasing commercial, cultural, and tourist openness between Turkey and Arab countries, as well as Arab sympathy for the current government, which has an Islamic orientation, are among the most important reasons why the percentage of satisfaction with Turkey is high for the four previously mentioned countries.

Only Lebanon has a low percentage of satisfaction with Turkey. This is mainly due to the phenomenon of religious pluralism or diversity and sectarianism or confessionalism, which is the most complex phenomenon in Lebanon.

#### **4.3.4. Erdogan is One of the Most Influential Turkish Political Figures in the Arab World**

The Islamist orientation of the AKP government and "Erdogan's influence" are among the important factors that have led to Turkey's popularity in the Arab world.

Erdogan's political and economic success inspired many Arab thinkers and politicians (with Islamic orientation) in 2002 to continue the struggle against dictators and their tyrannical regimes in Arab countries.

Arab researchers and journalists believe that "Erdogan's influence on Arab audiences" is among the most important factors contributing to creating a positive image of Turkey among Arabs.

In this context, the Arab Barometer Center surveys are among the most important surveys relied upon in the Arab world. The study is therefore relied on surveys conducted by the Arab Barometer Network in recent years on President Erdogan's popularity in the Arab region and Turkey's presence as a regional power in the Arab world, which can be presented as follows:

##### **4.3.4.1. The Arab Barometer Network's 2019 Survey (the Most Popular Regional Leader in the Arab World)**

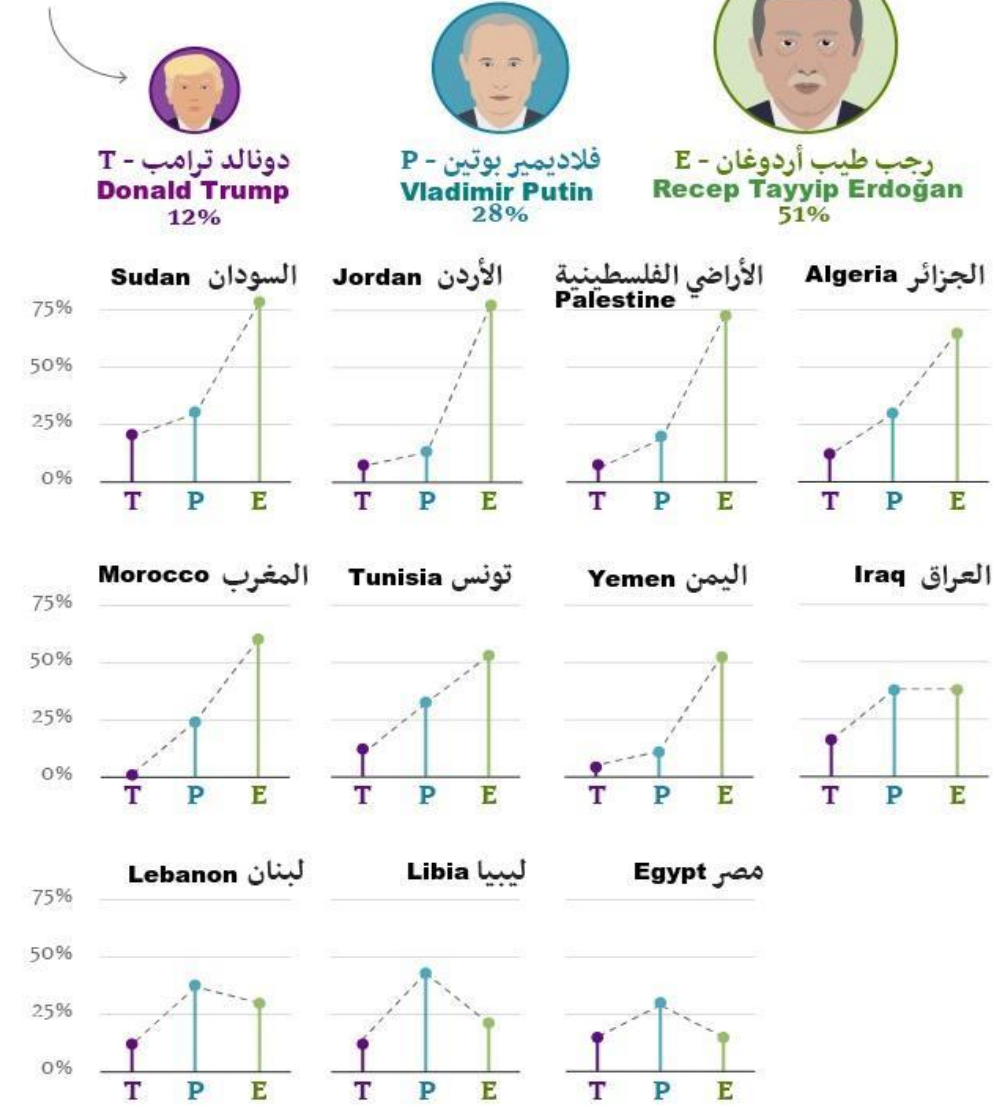
According to the 2019 Arab Barometer survey on the most popular regional leader in the Arab world, the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan leads by a wide margin in seven Arab countries. The results of the survey, conducted by the Arab Barometer Network for BBC Arabic, show that the results are positive for Erdogan's supporters.

The results showed that U.S. President Trump was the worst performer, while Russian President Putin was second (Graph 2). It is worth noting that the presidents of the United States and Russia together have only a small percentage of the popularity that President Erdogan enjoys in the Arab world. In 7 of the 11 countries where the survey was conducted, more than half of the respondent's expressed satisfaction with Erdogan (Graph 2). Many Arab journalists believe that it is natural for the Arab population to sympathize with the Turkish president, especially since he, like them, is a Muslim and lives in a region where the majority of the population is Muslim.



## ترامب يخسر أمام بوتين، وأردوغان يتفوق عليهما نسبة الذين لديهم انطباع ايجابي عن...

المعدل للمنطقة بأسرها



BBC

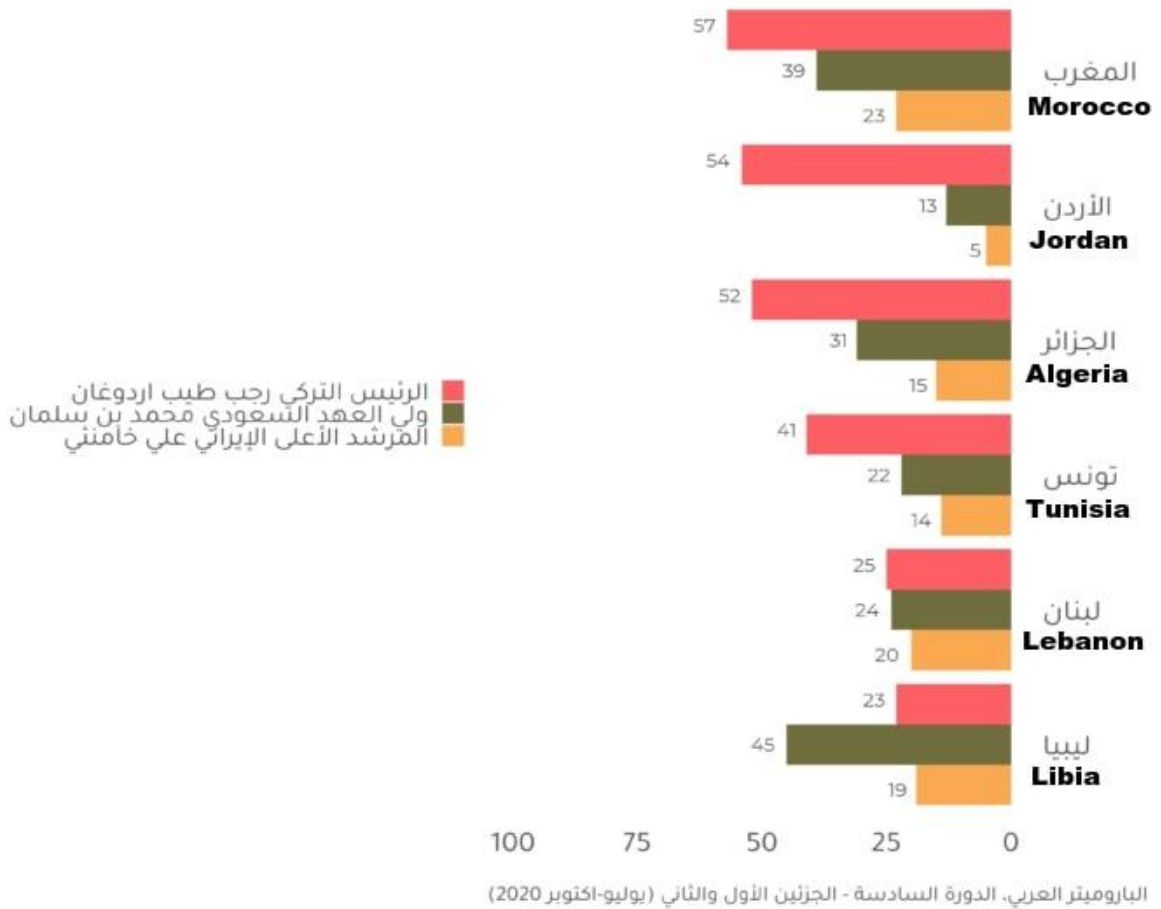
Source: Arab Barometer

المصدر: البارومتر العربي

Graph 2: Data from the sixth session of the Arab Barometer on the most popular regional leader in the Arab world

## An Assessment of the Foreign Policies of Three Presidents

تقييم السياسة الخارجية  
% من يقولون إن سياسات هذا القائد جيدة جداً أو جيدة



Source: Arab Barometer

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Iranian President Ali Khamenei

Graph 3: An Assessment of the Foreign Policies of Three Presidents

According to data from the sixth edition of the Arab Barometer, the most popular regional leader in the six Arab countries that participated in the survey continues to be Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The survey respondents were asked about their opinion of Erdogan's foreign policy. The survey found that about four in ten respondents (42%) think Erdogan's foreign policy is very good or good. This category includes majorities in Morocco (57%), Jordan (54%), Algeria (52%) and a large minority in Tunisia (41%). Only in Lebanon (25%) and Libya (23%) the percentages have decreased compared to the other countries. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman ranks second in popularity. Finally, Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei landed in last place on the popularity scale of regional heads of state, despite his prominent presence on social media platforms.

#### **4.3.4.2. The Arab Barometer Study for 2020 (Arab Citizens' Views of Countries that have carried out military interventions in the Middle East and North Africa)**

According to the Arab Barometer 2020 survey, Arab support for Turkey is the highest compared to the three countries surveyed, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Russia. It was found that most citizens of the six Arab countries surveyed have a positive position toward Turkey. Support is highest in Morocco (65%), Jordan and Algeria (56% each), and Tunisia (52%). However, support for Turkey is not uniform. In Lebanon, where opinions are tied to religious affiliation, 45 percent of Sunnis support Turkey, compared with 35 percent of Christians and only 11 percent of Shiites. At the same time, residents of eastern Libya, whose areas are under the control of the Libyan National Army (LNA), view Turkey less favorably than residents of other parts of the country. This can be explained by Turkey's intervention against Libyan National Army troops. More specifically, 41 percent of Libyans in Tripoli have a favorable opinion of Turkey, compared to 17 percent who live in Benghazi (Robbins, 2021).

Russia, which has also intervened militarily in Libya, is less favorable than Turkey. In the context of the rivalry between the Gulf powers, Saudi Arabia is most favored by its citizens compared to Iran.

Overall, these results show a mixed image of regional powers, but it is evident that Arab support for Turkey is statistically highest across the region, but this support is generally lower in countries directly or indirectly affected by Turkish military interventions. As for Russia, those living in Lebanon, Libya, and Jordan are less supportive of Russia's role in the region.

#### **4.3.4.3. Turkish President Erdogan is the Most Popular Leader among Citizens in the Arab World in 2022**

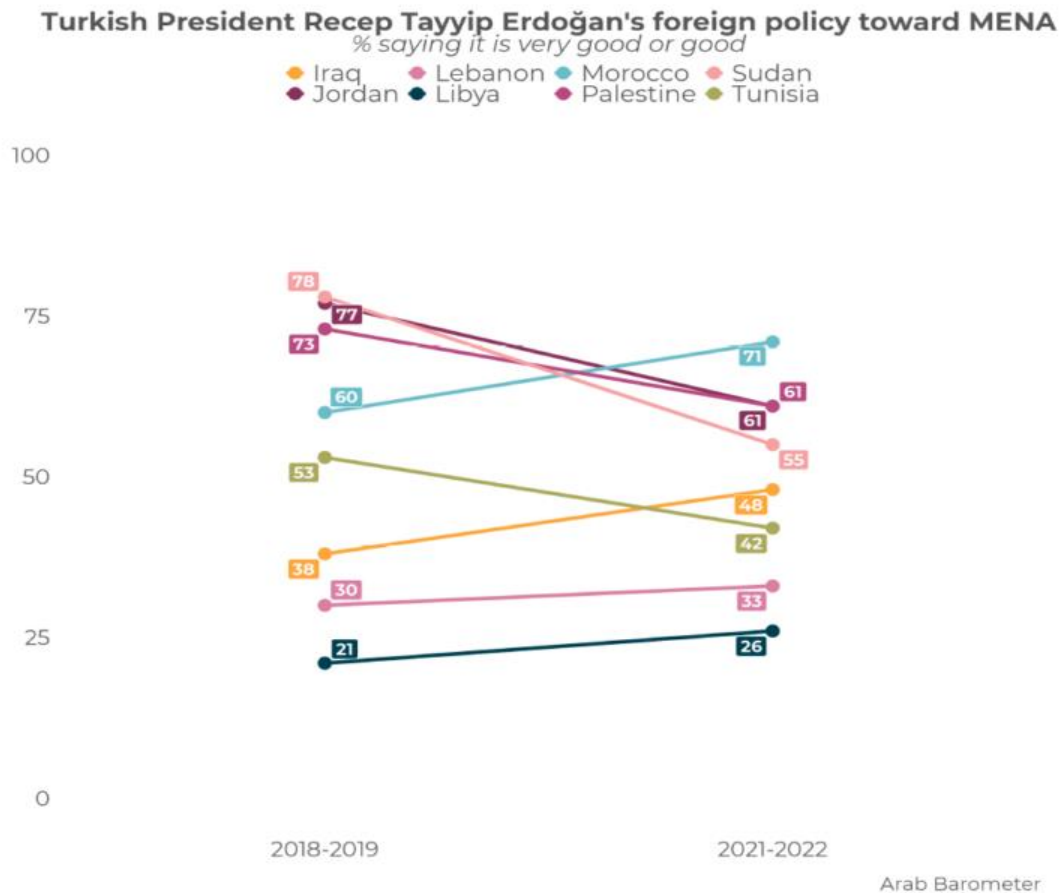
According to a survey conducted by the Arab Barometer research network, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan tops the list of the most popular heads of state in the Arab world, followed by United Arab Emirates President Mohammed bin Zayed and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Nine Arab countries participated in the survey: Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia and Palestine.

The 2022 survey found that Turkish President Erdogan is most popular among Arabs, with 55% of Arabs supporting him in his policies. This is according to a poll conducted by the Arab Barometer for BBC Arabic.

The President of the United Arab Emirates, Mohammed bin Zayed, and the Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, rank second and third, respectively, on the Arab popularity scale. Yet, despite his relative overall popularity, trend attitudes towards Erdogan are not as positive. Compared to the Arab Barometer's fifth wave in 2018-2019, Erdogan's popularity significantly decreased in half the cases Arab Barometer surveyed. Approval of his foreign policy towards MENA dropped 23 points in Sudan, 16 points in Jordan, 12 points in Palestine, and 11 points in Tunisia. In Lebanon, a country with some of the lowest levels of support for Erdogan, there were no meaningful changes in attitudes.

Domestic policies in foreign leaders' respective countries likely affect citizens' perceptions of these leaders. The significant drops in Erdogan's popularity across the region come at a time when Turkey is losing its fight to keep inflation under control. Turkey's financial crisis hit new levels in June

with inflation topping 78 percent according to Turkish estimates. The foreign reserves of Turkey’s central bank have dropped perilously low, causing Erdogan to work towards normalizing relations with his longtime rivals and next most popular leaders, Mohammed bin Salman and Mohammed bin Zayed. If Erdogan is successful in his bid to establish warmer relations with bin Salman and bin Zayed, it is possible that their new détente will affect the leaders’ popularity among Arab citizens in the future (Roche, 2022).



**Graph 4:** The Turkish president Erdogan's foreign policy toward the Middle East and North Africa

Only three countries did support for Erdogan rise significantly since the Arab Barometer surveyed the region in 2018 and 2019: Morocco (11-point increase), Iraq (10-point increase) and Libya (5-point increase) (See **Graph 4**).

The support for Erdogan in each of these countries is likely tied directly to Turkish policy toward each country. For example, Moroccans’ support for Erdogan can easily be linked to Erdogan’s repeated public support of Morocco’s claim on the Western Sahara. In Libya, Turkey has intervened directly in the ongoing civil conflict. Many have called for the removal of Turkish forces, which is likely linked with the low level of overall popularity. However, the increase in support for Erdogan is found entirely due to increasing support in the West of the country. Turkish soldiers have played a vital role helping establish control for the UN backed government. Overall, 31 percent of Libyans who live in the West say Erdogan’s policies are “very good” or “good” compared to only 18 percent of Libyans in the South, and 13 percent of Libyans in the East. A similar regional story can be seen in Iraq. In the Iraqi government-controlled regions of the country, 51 percent of Iraqis support Erdogan compared to only

17 percent of Iraqis in Kurdish regions. This is unsurprising, as Erdogan vehemently opposes the creation of any Kurdish state (Roche, 2022).

In conclusion, the Arab Barometer Surveys (2019-2022) show that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan remains the most popular leader in the Arab world. In the current year 2022, his policies are supported by 55 percent of respondents. This means that some things have remained constant since the 2019 survey.

#### **4.4. The Fourth Level: The Spread of Turkish Culture in the Arab World**

Turkish culture has spread widely in recent years as Turkey has opened to the Arab world culturally and in terms of knowledge. Thus, Turkish series and movies have spread through which the Arab audience learns about the Turkish people, their customs, and traditions. Turkey has become the second-largest exporter of dramas globally, and these works have become the source of knowledge of Turkish culture, attracting the attention of hundreds of millions of viewers. Turkish drama has thus triggered a cultural revolution, becoming an ambassador of Turkish culture and language, dispensing Turkish history and present, and attracting the attention of tourists and investors from all over the world.

Several factors have contributed to the marketing of the Turkish series, especially in the Arab world. On top of the list are the major dubbing companies that translate Turkish dramas in Arab countries into the popular and easy-to-understand Syrian dialect. Dramas are effectively used as a means of so-called "cultural diplomacy." Turkey has cultural, historical, heritage, geographical, and natural elements on which Turkish series are based and which help to introduce Turkish culture, language, history, and present.

In this context, the term "soft power" best expresses the importance of Turkish drama in presenting Turkish cultural heritage and ultimately depicting the details of daily life in the lives of Turks. The Turkish drama also entices viewers to learn more about Turkey, learn the Turkish language, and even take a tourist trip or participate in the cultural and educational activities and programs of the "Yunus Emre Institute", which has cultural centers around the world.

The Turkish government has realized that Turkish cultural products are very effective platforms to introduce Turkey, its culture, and its people to Arab audiences. In addition, the importance of cultural elements to attract Arab audiences. Although Turkish drama bears the character of Western life, the details of the conservative Eastern dynasty go hand in hand with civilized progress.

The researchers gave examples of the appearance of Oriental Islamic elements in soap operas, such as mosques, the veil, and some conservative Eastern Islamic customs, which aroused the admiration of the respondents and made them want to know more about Turkey.

The researchers argue that the spread of Turkish dramas, especially in the Arab world, "helped change the preconceptions in the Arab world about Turkey" and this also gave Turkey a good reputation in different parts of the world and attracted the attention of tourists and investors from all sides.

The results of a 2020 survey conducted by the platform "Netflix" also showed that those who follow Turkish movies and series around the world are more willing to visit Turkey as tourists than

people who have not followed these works of art. The opinion poll, conducted in 8 countries with a population of more than two billion people, found that the role of Turkish movies and series shown on "Netflix" encourages their viewers to visit Turkey. Australians top the list of foreigners who decided to visit Turkey after watching their artworks on Netflix, followed by Americans, Saudis, and Indians (Anadolu Agency, Survey 2020).

In the past, Arabs knew little about Turkish culture, but with the development of technology and media in general, Arab citizens have learned much about Turkish culture. This has aroused the interest of many Arabs to learn a lot about this country, which has become a very popular tourist destination. In addition, the Turkish dramas contributed to increasing the curiosity of Arabs to learn more about Turkish culture, even more than that, the desire to learn the Turkish language.

In conclusion, the Turkish TV series have played an important role in improving Turkey's image in the Arab world and facilitating the spread of the Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency in the Arab world.

#### **4.5. The Fifth Level: The Interest of Arab Media and Arab Readers in the Anadolu Agency's News and the News from Turkey**

##### **4.5.1. The Interest of Arab Media**

The study shows that the interest of the Arab media in the Anadolu Agency has increased despite the strong competition from the Arab departments of other global agencies. This is evidenced by the results of the study's earlier quantitative analysis, as the most widely read Arab Media in the Arab world use Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department as their main news source.

The media industry largely relies on the perspective that quantity leads to quality. From a general perspective, high demand for a particular media outlet is an indication that that media outlet is credible in the eyes of the other media outlets that rely heavily on it, either as a news source or by quoting its news articles. This is evident in this study, where the close connection between the quantitative and the qualitative is evident. On the quantitative level, it can be said that the news or reports published by the Arabic Department of the Anadolu Agency are widely disseminated in the Arab world. Therefore, it can also be concluded that the Arabic Department of the Agency provides the Arab media with a media product of quality and credibility. If it is assumed that the Turkish news product is not of good quality and credibility for the Arab media, the Arab media would not have relied on it as an important source for editing their daily news.

For example, in the study it is mentioned that although Iranian culture is intertwined with Arab culture and Iranian history is intertwined with Arab history, it is obvious that the Iranian Arabic-language media does command a large interest from the Arab media and Arab readers. There are two main reasons for this:

- First, the Arab public's interest in Iranian affairs is low, and are not interested in following what is happening in Iran.
- Second, the Iranian media in Arabic has not succeeded in finding its place in the Arab world. This is partly due to the sharp divisions that cloud Iran's image in the world, and partly due to the lack of quality and credible Iranian media products.



Thus, it can be said that Iran is not using the Iranian Arabic-language media with the necessary seriousness and discipline to improve its image in the Arab world.

On the other hand, many media researchers believe that the popularity of journalistic work is always a goal that any media organization, be it a news agency, a TV channel, or a newspaper, should strive for. Therefore, the researchers can conclude that the Arabic Department of the Anadolu Agency is very popular because the Turkish media product is of high quality and credibility.

#### **4.5.2. The Interest of Arab Readers**

The factor of political stability in Turkey during the 16-year rule of the Justice and Development Party, the Islamic background of its founders and former leadership, and the proximity of Turkey's geographical location and cultural heritage to the Arab world, as opposed to European countries whose customs and cultures are different from those of the Arabs, were the main factors that attract the interest of the Arab public in all news from Turkey. The interest of Arab peoples in the Turkish language and culture in general has increased in recent years, due to Turkey's economic renaissance under the leadership of Turkish President Erdogan and the change in Turkish foreign policy toward the Arab world.

Moreover, after the Arab Spring, many Arab citizens, especially Syrians, Iraqis, and Yemenis, see Turkey as a place where they can settle permanently or study and invest.

The Arabic Department of the Anadolu Agency presents the "Turkey Supplement" for the Arab world. This supplement contains topics that introduce Arab readers to Turkish culture and art, Turkish civilization, archeology, tourism, and social life in Turkey. Anadolu Agency provides this supplement free of charge to Arab newspapers in order to strengthen relations between Turkey and the Arab world, to bring the Arab and Turkish people closer together, and to introduce Turkey and its main historical, tourist, and natural attractions to Arab tourists.

In a related context, Arab public opinion gained a positive outlook on Turkey due to the spread of Turkish drama in the Arab region. Since 2010, Turkey has been playing a leading role in promoting Turkish culture in the Arab region. Thus, the TV Turkish series succeeded in presenting Turkish history, civilization, and architecture. The successes of a group of Turkish dramas have contributed significantly to the tourism, cultural and intellectual promotion of Turkey in the Arab world.

This leads the study to the important conclusion that the penetration of Turkish drama in the Arab world has facilitated the penetration of Turkish Arabic-language media in the Arab world, as evidenced by several studies and opinion polls. Turkey's effective strategy of opening to the Arab world has thus contributed to the Arab public's awareness of Turkish latest issues culture and politics and can view the world from the Turkish perspective.

#### **Conclusion**

The study focuses on determining the level of Anadolu Agency's media presence in the Arab media. After a series of initial observations that showed that most Arab media outlets rely on Anadolu Agency as a news source, the study sought to find the reasons behind this and examined whether the Arabic Department of Anadolu Agency has had significant success in effectively influencing the Arab world. Due to the nature of the study, the researchers used both quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques, through which the four hypotheses of the study were realized.

The success of a media outlet is reflected in its development as a news source and its influence on public opinion. In this regard, the study showed that the Arabic Department of the Anadolu Agency was able to develop in the Arab media arena, which was confirmed by the results of the quantitative analysis. These findings confirm that well-known Arab media outlets rely on Anadolu Agency as their main news source when editing their daily news and that some other Arab media outlets quote Anadolu Agency articles in full. This confirms the significant presence of Anadolu Agency in the Arab media. It can be concluded that the Arab media considers Anadolu Agency as a reliable news source.

As for the qualitative analysis, the study proved that Anadolu Agency succeeded in influencing the Arab public. Thanks to the establishment of the Arab section of this agency, Arab citizens are interested in seeing Turkey as it is portrayed by the Turks, and not through the eyes of the French and British. In this context, a number of Arab studies, especially those conducted by the Arab Barometer research network, have shown that the Arab world, which yearns for freedom and democracy, sees Turkey as a role model.

In addition, President Erdogan's popularity in the Arab world and the spread of Turkish television series ensure that Arab audiences constantly follow news from Turkey with great interest. This has contributed to the spread of the news and development of Anadolu Agency's Arabic Department in the Arab world.

According to the findings of the study, as to the reasons behind Arab media's reliance on Anadolu Agency as a news source, the study concluded that Anadolu Agency's media discourse is very close to the reality of the Arab world, its aspirations, and problems, as it is characterized by objectivity, credibility, and professionalism. The study also showed that Anadolu Agency does not fall into dry propaganda like the other national news agencies of some Arab countries, which rely on a media discourse steeped in propaganda that lacks objectivity and credibility. Anadolu Agency has also managed to break the dominance of all international news agencies that present their news from a single point of view.

In conclusion, by using quantitative and qualitative research methods, the study has shown that the Anadolu Agency has a significant presence in the Arab world and that the Arabic Department of this agency has achieved significant success in establishing its place among the Arab and foreign media outlets in the Arab world. All the mechanisms and data used for the study also showed that the previous hypotheses of this study were confirmed quantitatively and qualitatively.

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