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Title of extract: **Yusuf Al Qaradawi and the New Islamic TV**

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Title/Author of book/edition (if applicable): **Global Mufti. Graf, B. and Skovgaard-Peterson, J.**

Name of Visual Creator or other acknowledgement (if applicable):

Journal details –title/Vol/Year (if applicable):

Publisher: **Hurst**

Pages scanned: **153 - 165**

Course of Study (Module name and number): **Muslim Networks TRDL7065**

Name of Designated Person

authorising scanning: *E.L. Harris*

Date authorised: 31.08.12

Moodle/Powerpoint

was denied appearance on the Egyptian national TV, and they were even denied access to the TV building for reasons linked to their Islamist conviction.¹³ In 1986, he was again allowed to appear on Egyptian Radio, where he was part of a long debate programme in two episodes called "Witness to a decade", about the Islamic revival and present issues. Later, he was interviewed several times on the Egyptian Qur'an Radio.¹⁴

Thus Qaradāwī's appearance on TV has from an early start been politically controversial, and still is. It started during the reign of President Nasser, when Qaradāwī had trouble with the security police in Egypt because of his affiliation with the Muslim Brothers. After periods of imprisonment in Egypt he settled in Qatar in 1961.¹⁵ In July 1970 he was encouraged by Qatari TV to make *Hadī 'l-Islām*, and the first six episodes were shot in Beirut, where he spent his holiday. Today he is not only controversial for the Egyptian state; he is also controversial among some other Muslim scholars and leaders, who find him either too moderate or too radical. Despite the criticism, his TV appearances have contributed to his popularity among ordinary people and to his authority in the Muslim world in general.

Qaradāwī himself seems to have a clear goal in using the TV as a medium to diffuse knowledge about Islam. He does not want to categorise a programme like *Sharia and Life* as a religious programme. In the anniversary programme he tells how at the beginning of the programme the title was discussed.¹⁶ Proposals were *Religion and Life* or *Islam and Life*, and they ended up with *Sharia and Life*, because they wanted Islam to be introduced as a direction in *life*, and not only as theological or abstract belief. In Qaradāwī's perspective Sharia should direct the practice of human life, the life of the individual, of the family, the society, the nation, the country and international relations. His programmes and appearances on TV should therefore not be seen as a limited religious contribution. In his view the programme should be seen as Islamic and not religious TV, since Islam embraces every aspect of life.¹⁷ As we will see in the following, characteristics of his two *fatwa* programmes show how he understands Islamic TV, but also how it has changed because of new transnational development.

*Two fatwa programmes: Hadī 'l-Islām
and al-Sharī'a wa 'l-Hayāt*

At first glance the two programmes *Hadī 'l-Islām* and *al-Sharī'a wa 'l-Hayāt* seem very similar in framework and aim, one of the main reasons being Qaradāwī as a key figure in both programmes. But on closer inspection the two programmes reflect the change from national public service TV to transnational TV, a change in framework which also affects Qaradāwī's message and role.

The key figure in both programmes since their introduction, Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī is invariably dressed in his traditional dress of a Muslim scholar ('*ālim*) and placed behind a desk. In *Hadī 'l-Islām* he is the only person in the studio, facing and talking directly to the viewer, while in *Sharia and Life* he is placed opposite the host of the programme, who is dressed in a suit.¹⁸ Both programmes are in classical Arabic. In *Hadī 'l-Islām* Qaradāwī talks almost exclusively in the classical language, while in *Sharia and Life* he once in a while gives examples in Egyptian dialect; for instance he quotes a proverb in Egyptian. The set design of the two programmes also differs. The interior of the studio of *Hadī 'l-Islām* reflects an Islamic timelessness common to many Islamic religious programmes, with oriental woodwork as decoration and an introduction with Arab classical instrumental background music, while the camera focuses on Qaradāwī.

The set design of *Sharia and Life* has changed over the time. In its first years the visual frame of the programme signalled an obvious connection between Islam and present time. The introduction visualised the hot spots in the world, accompanied by dramatic background music, and seen through the Arab letters for Sharia, functioning as a prism through which one has to see and interpret the present development.¹⁹ In 2006 the difference between *Hadī 'l-Islām* and *Sharia and Life* in studio design has diminished. But still the thematic structure differs. At *Hadī 'l-Islām* Qaradāwī may as an introduction present a current case, followed by answers to questions from people sent in by letter, the questions may differ in topic and scope, which makes the programme jump from one subject to another. In *Sharia and Life* the individual episode is centred around one topic, which is introduced by

the host, and later analysed and expanded by Qaraḍāwī. Thereafter people can call in and ask questions in relation to the specific topic of the programme.

Even though the answers and the world view of Qaraḍāwī may be the same in both programmes and Qaraḍāwī defines himself in the same way, the set design, visual framework, and thematic and media context are not irrelevant for TV-transmitted Islam. It reflects a change in media on several levels. Most importantly, there is a significant change from public service TV to a more agenda setting TV.

By letting Qaraḍāwī face the viewer directly at *Ḥaḍī 'l-Islām*, he is positioned as the authority, who talks to the viewer but does not expect him or her to answer back. This is the univocal dialogue used on public service TV with the aim to inform and educate the mass audience. This is national TV and as such a representative of national public institutions. The viewers can raise the question by post and get an authorised answer by Qaraḍāwī. Al-Jazeera, for its part, gives an important role to the host or presenter. The host is tasked with asking the questions that ordinary viewers may ask. He complements the calls and emails by putting controversial and relevant questions to Qaraḍāwī. The style of the various presenters has differed over time. A person like Aḥmad Maṣṣūr has a confronting and polemical style, and Anne-Sofie Roald has argued that his questions were more critical than those of his successor, Māhir 'Abd Allāh.²⁰ But all the hosts have had the position of the voice of the people, confronting the univocal direction of the public service TV. The hosts are the guarantee that the programme becomes what Eickelman and Anderson see as characteristic for the new media, "*discursive, performative, and participative, and not confined to formal institutions recognized by state authorities*".²¹

Hence the authority and discourse of Qaraḍāwī have not only to do with his personal knowledge. Rather, the context of the media is crucial. It is not unimportant that the viewers have the possibility to call in by phone, which gives the viewer the possibility to participate in a much more direct way. Also, the set design with the talk show setting, two men communicating on an intimate basis, is an important change from the public service setting, where Qaraḍāwī faces the audience. The intimate and performative setting gives the viewer the

possibility to identify with the actors in the dialogue. The viewer could potentially have been the one sitting together with Qaraḍāwī asking the same questions as the host does. In this way, the programme stresses the relevance and importance of the people's problems of today. In contrast to the more traditionalist scholar presented on Arab satellite television, who avoids questions when they relate to a reality of today in conflict with traditional interpretation, Qaraḍāwī welcomes such questions. The "traditional scholar" is in the habit, according to Anne-Sofie Roald, of answering controversial questions with rhetorical counter-questions or talking in abstract terms.²²

Still, one could argue that Qaraḍāwī does raise the same kind of people's questions in *Hadī 'l-Islām* also, despite the different design set. And at the same time, the change of the classical public service media setting could go much further than in *al-Sharī'a wa 'l-Ḥayāt*. The intimate atmosphere is limited by the desk by which the two participants are placed, and the programme seems to keep up this formal interior setting, contrary to other competing *fatwa* programmes which have taken up a new model placing the shaykh as well as the programme host on a sofa as in an imagined living room, strengthening the feeling of intimacy and the possibility for the viewer to identify.²³

According to Skovgaard-Petersen, Qaraḍāwī's way of reasoning in *Sharia and Life* is a rational form of argumentation often seen as typical of public service TV. It is men sitting and discussing serious matters for hours, only interrupted by news—a typical example of the old modernistic intellectual. Qaraḍāwī still has the main aim of educating and informing, Skovgaard-Petersen argues.²⁴ Nevertheless, I find there is a change from the Qatar national TV to al-Jazeera, which is reflected in *Sharia and Life*. The main change is the function of *Sharia and Life* and Qaraḍāwī as *setting an agenda* through facing the problems of the Muslims in small as well as large matters. This much stronger role in setting an agenda has something to do with Qaraḍāwī, but certainly also with the media context, including the role of al-Jazeera.

A main difference between terrestrial and satellite TV is the potential audience. By addressing the national audience and the audience of Arab Gulf countries *Hadī 'l-Islām* has a more conservative and nationally defined Islamic audience by comparison with *Sharia and*

Life, which might reach a very heterogeneous and differentiated audience in relation to Islamic interpretation, nationality and political environment. The al-Jazeera audience could be said to have high expectations of relevance and critical perspectives in the programmes transmitted.

The role of al-Jazeera

Al-Jazeera has become a controversial channel because of its potential for democracy, critical media coverage and the construction of a new Arab public. Not least since 9/11 2001, al-Jazeera has been accused of promoting a political *Muslim* Arab public, defined as in opposition to Western values.²⁵ Others rather see al-Jazeera as a positive instrument, as representative of a liberalisation of the media, which will weaken the Islamic fundamentalism and renew Islam in a progressive sense.²⁶ This approach is supported by arguments saying that al-Jazeera is a necessary alternative to the national TV channels in the Gulf, which broadcast a lot of boring, uninteresting and reactionary religious programmes that underestimate the intelligence of the people.²⁷

So why is al-Jazeera broadcasting the programme *Sharia and Life*, which at first sight seems very similar to *Hadī 'l-Islām* on Qatar TV? And how come that a channel like al-Jazeera, presenting itself as a secular, critical and independent channel focusing on news coverage, chooses to produce a programme of this kind? It is the only specifically religious programme at al-Jazeera, even though religion of course often becomes a subject included in other programmes. But al-Jazeera, for instance, does not transmit the Friday prayer. The answers to these questions seem to lie in the agenda setting of *Sharia and Life* in agreement with the scope of al-Jazeera.

From the very beginning, al-Jazeera has defined itself as an alternative to the state controlled and nationally oriented TV channels. In spite of the economic and political support from the Emir in Qatar, it has been launched as an independent channel, promoting critical journalism and addressing a wider Arab speaking audience. The type of programme is the same kind that can be found at the BBC, which has also been interpreted as the ideal of al-Jazeera. Al-Jazeera broad-

casts news, documentary, and not least different kinds of talk shows, famous for taking up controversial issues and inviting well known personalities without restraining critical cross-questioning. As such, it has echoes of public service TV, wanting to inform and educate, which the BBC is famous for. But more crucial is, again, the aim of setting the agenda. Al-Jazeera wants to raise the questions which the national television of Arab countries did not raise; it wants to define the important issues of the Muslim Arab world.²⁸ The motto of al-Jazeera defines the aim: *al-ra'y wa 'l-ra'y al-ākhr* (the opinion and the counter opinion).

Qaradāwī shares with al-Jazeera an interest in the present political problems of the Arab-Muslim societies. And neither is afraid to raise the controversial issues; they have a common assignment. Compared to the set design of *Hadi 'l-Islām, Sharia and Life* speaks the language of al-Jazeera. The introduction to the programme in the beginning, with pictures from recent dramatic events in the world, is just one example. Another common feature is the ambition, made possible through the technological development of satellite TV, not only to reach physically a transnational audience of predominantly Muslim Arabs living inside and outside the Arab countries, but also to reach a world-wide Arab audience mentally with content, form and approach.²⁹ In the tenth anniversary programme, Qaradāwī explained that they chose to broadcast the programme on Sunday evening at 22:05 (Mecca Time), equivalent to 19:05 (Greenwich Time), because the programme also speaks to Muslim in the Western countries, where Sunday is the holiday and people are off work; this is also the case in some Arab and Muslim countries, he argued.³⁰ The point is that al-Jazeera and Qaradāwī want to set an agenda transnationally, and not only regionally.

The third aspect where al-Jazeera and Qaradāwī have the same approach relates to the most important issues of the Muslim world at the moment. The major issues are about political global conflicts where Muslims are the victims, not least the Palestinian issue, and the state of democracy and development in the Arab world. Qaradāwī emphasised in the anniversary programme that he was tired of talking about all the small issues, too narrowly related to private daily life.

"We have discussed the small things long enough," he said, giving examples like questions about ablution, birth, menstruation and ritual purity. Instead, the programme needed to raise the important issues, the questions of Islamic life, meaning the issues of Muslim society. Qaradāwī continued by mentioning what he called the burning issues, such as Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the war in Lebanon.³¹ Not everyone at al-Jazeera might agree with Qaradāwī about the role that Islam should play in the world of today; but they do seem to agree that this question is absolutely necessary and crucial for the future of Arab societies. As such they have a common agenda: an agenda which through opinion formation creates what media researchers have called an opinion based community.³² But what kind of community is promoted by Qaradāwī and *Sharia and Life*, and how does it correspond with other Islamic media's construction of a public?

The emergence of the new Islamic media

Qaradāwī is very well aware that he is part of a new phenomenon, the Islamic media. He once finished answering a question from a viewer in *Sharia and Life* by saying with a laugh that he knew that if the viewer did not get the answer he wanted, he would just phone the next shaykh in another *fatwa* programme. Therefore his position and role in *Sharia and Life* must also be seen in the context of new Islamic media in general. The Islamic public he is promoting is in competition with other kinds of Islamic programmes.

First, the change from national TV to transnational and thereby more liberal media is decisive for the development of new Islamic TV. As Lila Abu-Lughod has argued in her studies of specifically Egyptian TV, Arab TV has had the objective to construct a national public, using what she calls national pedagogy to educate and construct the people as national citizens.³³ At the same time national TV has been censored and harshly controlled by the state authorities. With transnational TV, not only the censorship but also the (unbalanced) national ideology has been challenged. The new transnational religious Arab channels—such as *Iqrā'*, *al-Majd*, *al-Risāla*, and *al-Fajr*—can be seen

as instruments in what the American Middle East researcher Jon Alterman argues could be the development of a new and transnational Muslim public. He identifies a double potential in the new transnational media. First, they could be an instrument in the development of a civic public; in this way the transnational media can be seen as potentially supporting a process of democratisation in the Arab world. Secondly, the transnational media have the potential to support the development of an Arab and/or Muslim public, which might be defined in opposition to the Western countries and the Western liberal values.³⁴

During the years under national hegemony Islamic coverage was primarily limited to broadcasting of Friday prayer, Friday sermons, Qur'an readings and the pilgrimage (*hajj*). Even before the first Arab satellite station, Arabsat, started in 1985, Saudi Arabia had begun transmitting the Friday prayer from Mecca and the annual *hajj* via the satellite Intelsat. But not all Arab countries have transmitted Friday prayer, which reflects the fact that some Arab nation-states, such as Syria, have had an ideological identity where Islam has been played down. When it comes to transnational Arab TV channels, it is mostly the religious Arab satellite channels which broadcast the Friday prayer. It is therefore possible to see the Friday prayer both as part of a public service obligation of national TV and as an element in the construction of the national identity, including the religious identity, of the state. On the other hand, broadcasting of Friday prayers and other religious rituals on transnational TV is part of a media-created religious space of quite a different kind from the one promoted by national TV.

Qaraḍāwī's move from Qatar TV to al-Jazeera is therefore not insignificant. Even though he maintains the traditional role as Friday preacher on Qatar TV and still appears giving a Friday sermon, even this has reached another degree of influence because of the new Islamic media. Qaraḍāwī has cleverly made use of the media development and a more liberal space. He does not just give the sermon and let Qatar TV transmit it. He also broadcasts his sermons via a transcript on the internet. He has his own very comprehensive website, www.qaradawi.net, and is a central figure behind the online-portal www.islamonline.net. IslamOnline.net has its headquarters in Doha, and Qaraḍāwī is

the head of a committee, made up of the major scholars throughout the Islamic world, whose role is to ensure that nothing on this site violates the fixed principles of Islamic law.³⁵ While this position may be largely honorary, it still testifies to Qaraḍāwī's interest in harnessing new media to spread his message to Muslims and non-Muslims all over the world.

New media like TV, satellite TV, radio, fax machines, audio- and videocassettes, the telephone and the internet have been useful tools in an open challenge to the *authoritative* use of the symbolic language of Islam. The fact that different opposition groups as well as ordinary people have gained access to new media has changed the asymmetrical position of the early mass media and created a new Muslim public. Eickelman and Anderson define this Muslim public as the existence of a large number of Muslims who in public explain their goals in life in a terminology borrowed from the normative language of Islam, even though the individual participant in this discourse may be motivated by other numerous and quite different models of belonging, like ethnic, national, kinship, and occupational belonging. One can talk about a new kind of Muslim identity policy and a new Muslim discourse.³⁶ Researchers in transnational media in general agree about the potential of the new media to challenge all kinds of conventional authorities. From this perspective, the relevant question is how Qaraḍāwī, as a rather conventional religious authority, has succeeded in upholding his authority and even strengthened it through the new media.

The question of authority

The authority of Qaraḍāwī has indeed been challenged, and these challenges are certainly closely related to new media. On the one hand, by addressing a wider audience, he has opened the way for a range of ideological criticism from both more conservative and radical Muslims, as well as from Western observers. On the internet there are websites dedicated to the criticism of Qaraḍāwī, such as the Salafi website against Qaraḍāwī³⁷ and others more selectively critical, such as "Some mistakes of Yusuf al-Qaradawi".³⁸ This type of website criticises what it perceives as his lenient attitude towards infidels, art and

entertainment, and his very defensive interpretation of *jihād*. On the other hand there are institutions which find Qaraḍāwī too radical, such as the pro-Israeli Media Research Institute MEMRI with its website www.memri.org, which selects and translates transcripts from Middle Eastern media and among these gives examples of what Qaraḍāwī has said about the relationship between Muslims and Jews, between Muslim countries and Israel, focusing only on the confrontational statements. Another example is a website that was created as a response to what it calls "Mayor Ken Livingstone's public embrace of Sheikh Qaraḍāwī" in 2004.³⁹ This website seeks to "explain the fears and dismay felt by representatives of community and faith-based groups in London".⁴⁰ The website includes a document referring to and criticising some of Qaraḍāwī's statements and *fatwas* in relation to terror, minorities and women rights.

The point is that being part of the new Islamic media means taking part in a process of globalisation, where weakening of the traditions of society has provided a breeding ground for declarations of community identity, such as religious, ethnic and sub-cultural identity. This process gives room for new intellectuals and new authorities, which are promoted by the media, while the old traditional authority is placed in a weakened position. Qaraḍāwī is very aware of this challenge, and despite his humorous acknowledgment that some people might shop around for the *fatwa* they want, he meets the challenge by distinguishing between a true and traditional authority, such as himself, and the new missionaries who are, in his eyes, merely self-appointed. As far as he is concerned, the solution to the fragmentation of authority is to strengthen the role of traditional scholars in the Muslim world. In his opinion only the *ulama* have the intellectual knowledge and training to guide the Muslim society.

His alliance with al-Jazeera seems to have been crucial in this perspective. The seriousness of al-Jazeera has reflected the seriousness of Qaraḍāwī, and vice versa. Both use the rational, logical way of reasoning and in general highlight a balanced view of the world. At the same time Qaraḍāwī emphasises his authority through his formal theological education at al-Azhar, his confinement to tradition, and the fact that his authority to give *fatwas* is never questioned in *Sharia and Life*. The

situation in the Muslim world and the practice of Muslims might be questioned by the host, but seldom the specific interpretation by Qaraḍāwī. His academic background in Islamic religious studies is presented as an unavoidable qualification and precondition for his authority, an authority which has given him the legitimate status to issue *fatwas*. He finds that the qualifications of the new missionaries are insufficient. He argues that they lack the education in theology, which should both include the science of the Qur'an, *ḥadith* and *fiqh*, as well as knowledge about other religions; they lack linguistic and literary intellect, and knowledge about historical culture.⁴¹

In the media context his attempts to dismiss the new authorities are relevant, because it seems that some are very successful in attracting viewers. New Muslim media stars like Amr Khalid, and rising stars like Moez Masoud, compete with the traditional authority through new ways of using the media in an experience-based and entertaining manner. It is no longer the rationality of the message that has to convince the audience, it is the semantics of Islam, the intensity of the belief and the possibility of identification, that become the purpose of the programmes. The Qur'an goes from being the source of rules to being a book of signs symbolising Muslim feelings, community and identity. It is not the *interpretation* of the text that is important; it is rather the *effect* of the text on the audience.⁴² It reflects what Eickelman and Anderson call the change from a law-based to an experience-based way of reasoning, is the latter being dominant in the new Muslim public.⁴³ Qaraḍāwī's two dominant programmes can therefore be seen as two models, which both are challenged by a third and post-modern kind, where signs and symbols replace the educational and informational aim of Ḥadī 'l-Islām and the agenda setting aim of *Sharia and Life*.

Until now, I have almost solely analysed the setting and the outward circumstances connected to the media. To understand the success of Qaraḍāwī, it is necessary to go further into how he might take part in the construction of a Muslim public and how this is connected to his media use. The question is, how does he construct a Muslim public discursively and why is it met with sympathy among Muslims all over the world?

	<i>Target group</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Aim</i>	<i>Discourse</i>
<i>Hadī 'l-islām</i>	National and regional	One way message. Non-questioned authority. Timelessness.	Information and education.	Universal Islam, outside and above context.
<i>Sharia and Life</i>	Transnational and global	Two way dialogue. Strong authority, but performative questioned. Time and context bounded.	Agenda setting, by means of discourse, performance and participation.	Universal Islam, but dependent of context.

Qaradāwī's Muslim public

It is obvious that the transnational Muslim public is rather fragmented and oppositional, and the media take part in the construction of a Muslim public through communication of an Islamic discourse. Seen in the perspective of Qaradāwī's media use, his discourse is not isolated from other present discourses about society. On the contrary he stresses the importance of starting with the real problems of the people, and the real problems cover very different parts of life. Four overall objectives pass through all his teachings, often repeated in his autobiography, in the anniversary programme and in the presentation of goals and objectives at IslamOnline.net.

First, the realistic approach of Qaradāwī is central. He wants to relate to *real* problems, and he wants to relate to the problems in a *realistic* way. As mentioned before, the real problems are in his view not the formalistic discussions on how to wash one's hands, but what *really* affects the life of Muslims today. Second, he sees *all* kinds of problems as relevant in an Islamic perspective; thus Islam is *universal*. In the anniversary programme he says that the programme includes culture, upbringing, mission, economy, politics, social issues and the

family. Third, Qaraḍāwī makes a virtue of approaching Muslims all over the world. The Muslim public is *transnational* or *global* in his discourse, without ignoring the local, as he says in the anniversary programme. Fourth, the way to approach the questions is through what Qaraḍāwī several times has defined as the *middle way* (see Gräf in this volume). The four approaches together create a discourse defining Islam as universal, global, realistic and tolerant, meaning that its applicability in all places and times is a key point.⁴⁴ But how does Qaraḍāwī substantialise this discourse? Which discursive strategies does he use? And what does intertextuality mean for the construction of his discourse?

Looking through the themes of the episodes of *Sharia and Life* in the new millennium, it is possible to identify four main categories of subjects. First, there are the political challenges facing Muslims all over the world (political issues); second, subjects concerning how to practice religious duties and understand Islamic dogma in a changing world (religious aspects); third, topics regarding how to organise Muslim society in a world influenced by new political thinking, modernisation and globalisation (civic aspects); and fourth, social, family and community matters. As it might appear, it is a general perspective that discusses even the most dogmatic questions in relation to the current changes in the world.

As already mentioned, the question about the current political situation involving Muslim countries or citizens is a returning topic. Examples of programmes in this category are "Islam five years after 9/11",⁴⁵ "Kidnapping and killing of hostages in Iraq",⁴⁶ "Consequences of the ban against *hijāb* in France",⁴⁷ and "Statements of the Pope towards Islam".⁴⁸ Questions on religious practice are raised in relation to the duties of the Muslim, such as prayer and *zakāt*. They are discussed in relation to changes in society, for instance, where the financial structure has changed the private economy or living in a non-Muslim society might bring forward new kind of obstacles in relation to daily prayers. Examples of programmes in this category are "Philosophy of worship in Islam",⁴⁹ "The duty of *zakāt* in the life of Muslims",⁵⁰ "Contemporary practise of *zakāt*",⁵¹ and "Belief in the day of judgment".⁵² These questions overlap with the third category of topics,