

# Reporting Everyday Lives: *Al Jazeera* Journalists and the Production of News



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## Introduction:

- Political, cultural and organisational factors inform the process to produce the Al Jazeera news programmes
- However, these factors are mediated by the collective visualization of the Al Jazeera news form (programme) and its inscribed audience that is shared and used by journalists to produce news stories.

## Conclusion:

- Journalists view the Al Jazeera audience as diverse and contentious and as sharing deep cultural values.
- This audience image underpins journalists' understanding of their news programmes and their selection and presentation of news stories.
- Al Jazeera human-interest stories provide a unique case that helps to illustrate how these collectively shared professional views shape news representations.

## Case Study - Human interest stories:

*"Most feature news must be scrutinized with very precise standards. Viewers are no longer preoccupied with a rabbit delivering twenty one babies or a chick somewhere...silly things. There are deep things like scientific discoveries, there is what helps communities to develop their lives...we saw before a report from the old pigeons' houses in Turkey. Pigeons used to have houses at that time; today people no longer have houses"* (journalist 4, December, 2010).



## Representing the lives of ordinary people:

**Alignment:** A professional strategy that links news stories to the lives of ordinary people so as to explain the connection between complex political issues and the audience. This helps the programmes to develop trust and support from its differentiated audience also.

**News access and equality:** A strategy used to include the views of the audience to sustain audience interest and a sense of their contribution to news issues. Example: Al Jazeera includes audience' comments from Facebook and the names of those who produced them.



## News selection:

**Politicalizing the soft:** Al Jazeera journalists address pertinent political issues through cultural and human interest story frames that address topics such as - cinema festivals and sport events. In doing so, they believe that they are targeting an audience with deep values and who share a concern with political issues.

**Positive news angles:** Journalists are concerned to select news events that illustrate positive values such as the Christmas celebrations, scientific discoveries and ordinary people's achievements. They believe that these stories help to provide positive representations of the cultural identities of their audience.



Picture source: Al Jazeera This Evening programme