

Power of Media and its influences on Politics and International Relationships of UAE

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Abstract

Media effect can be referred to as “theories regarding the manner in which the media impacts its audience.” These effects include their way of thinking, and behavior. From a political perspective, the media has an immense potential of influencing and even shaping the political system of a particular region or country. The various effects of the media are attributed to the fact that it has a capability of reaching at a large number of people at any given time. The media effects can also reach many people with a strong and significant message (Marshall & Quentin, 1964). Despite the fact that the media has been shown to influence the society psychologically, and academically, research shows that it influences these societal facets at different levels in order to support political foundations (London, 1993). This paper discover the power of media and its effects on the political and international relationship specially in the Arab world. It’s ended that media played a very important role in developing and changing people thoughts in the society and political part.

Key words: Political changes; Media; Arab world; Challenges in society

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INTRODUCTION

It has been well documented by various researchers that the laws which were crafted with the aim of prohibiting certain categories of music and banning the act of classifying albums/news were crafted by certain political elites in various countries across the globe (Al Jenaibi, 2010). It has been established that the act of setting agendas regarding certain issues in the society is collaborative. It involves leaders, law-makers and media controllers.

The majority of the media practitioners across the globe argue that the freedom of press has been to a large extent constrained by the various laws governing the media which have been crafted by political institutions (Roberson,1998). These laws dictate the manner in which gathering, broadcasting and reporting of news should be conducted (McGivern & Michael, 2010). Various media organizations as a result have from time to time been sued by individuals, governments along with many others subsequent to broadcasting news considered to be ‘harmful’ or inflammatory and, therefore capable of generating tension within the public domain especially during political unrest (s) (Dennis, 1990). Another perfect example on how a media institution may possibly be sued is if it broadcasts negative news about presidents and other political leaders. This situation is mainly prevalent in some developing countries of the world (McGivern & Michael, 2010). These countries have devised laws which do not permit the media to negatively portray political leaders (Al Jenaibi, 2011). This research proposal analyses the power of media and its influence on politics in UAE. It also analyses how the media has affected the foreign policies of the USA, UK, Portugal, Canada and Australia with the United Arab Emirates, positively and negatively. This is through the application of a socio-scientific perspective to the subject matter.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study investigates the vital role played by the Arab and Western media, and its influence on the politics and public discourse and /or public opinion. It also displays the relation between the official people in each country and the media organizations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Extensive literature has been dedicated to the issue of media effects on politics and it details the myriad ups and downs that are associated with this societal facet (Abdulaziz, 2015). In the present-day world, the media is known to play a crucial role of shaping the political scenery. It affects the verdicts crafted regarding certain issues touching the society and even the state of the globe, for instance, the recent political turmoil in Tunisia and Egypt. Although the United Arab Emirates is understood to have strong international relations with the majority of the nations across the globe, the media especially the print media has significantly tried to damage this reputation by publishing negative issues as opposed to the publication of positive developments and its economic prosperity over the last few years. This has negatively affected the United Arab Emirates' image, affecting its international relations with a number of the major countries of the world.

Beck (2009) believes that most of the political shows across the globe are largely influenced by the views expressed by the public. According to certain researchers like Adorno and Herzog (1996) and Al Jenaibi (2012), the act of citizens of a particular country to be exposed to the media has a negative ramification of causing aggression. Some of them have argued that both the media and aggression are related. A causal relationship however between them does not exist. A number of the researchers like Amner (2006) however have constantly reiterated that the available text regarding the relationship between the media and aggression supports the postulation that "there is not even a single link between the two facets." It is in this regard that some scholars across the globe who concur that a relationship between the facets exists have disagreed regarding the manner in which they affect each other.

In the last couple of years, much has been said and published about the amount of power which ought to be bestowed upon media institutions. It has been observed that in order for the media to act as "a vehicle for power," it should improve considerably so that it can meet the set out objectives of individuals or institutions which are responsible for its regulation (Arab democracy foundation, 2008). Media regulation is known to have a number of key benefits within a particular society. The first one is that it has the capability capturing the attention of people regarding certain issues that affects them. This has an impact of favoring politicians who are currently holding various posts in a given country or Emirate

and more. It also has the potential of shunning from the public limelight issues which may possibly damage the reputation of certain politicians.

The second benefit is that it may possibly be utilized in persuading and mobilizing the public. This is particularly evident in times of wars and during public demonstrations aimed at ousting from office the head of state or prime minister of a particular country (Al-Fakhri, Cropf, & Higgs, 2007). It is mainly used during these circumstances so as to spread propaganda regarding certain political figures and their allies, and matters which affect them. The most recent example of this issue is Aljazeera channel and the Egyptians protests against the president of Egypt, which made Nile Sat administration to block both channels of Aljazeera to broadcast and work from Egypt, and the cancellation of their licenses and any other agreements between Al Jazeera and Nile Sat because they think Al Jazeera channels have played a big role of pushing the Egyptians with their protests and eased their plan of destabilize security in Egypt.

At the moment, the population of the Asian labors who work in the United Arab Emirates has surpassed the 4 million mark. The majority of this population is specifically employed within the construction sector. They have turned out to be a head to the UAE government. A number of the media institutions have highlighted several stories regarding abuses against the Asian population. Also, the UAE society has struggled with them since the rate of crime is extremely high especially in areas where they are more concentrated. These state-of-affairs have compelled a number of Asian countries governments to set new laws and regulations for sending labor-force to the United Arab Emirates. Among the countries are the Philippines, Indonesia and India. This has happened since the media either in these countries or in other countries has either published or printed their plight (Al-Haj, 2012). Furthermore, some news regarding their plight was published on the UAE media whenever a criminal incident occurred in the country and if the criminal hailed from one of the Far East countries.

Research shows that in a country in which the media is controlled by the legal system or the government, it is extremely difficult to spot whether the news and other reports and even programs are censored, altered and unfair so as to favor a government's objectives. This however does not imply that free-press societies are free from a manipulated media. Of note, however, is the fact that within a society in which the press ought to be free and uncensored, there are high chances that one will not likely to see propaganda prevail (Shah, 2005).

In the modern-day world, the link between the media and politics is more and more diffusing. Polity is more and more arranged around a sense/logic that matches with the media. Over the last few years, the media has played a crucial role in the society. It has contributed towards the economization and also mass-mediazation of politics. This

has resulted to several tendencies. The first one is staging. As far as this tendency is concerned, in the present-day world, personal competence in staging is amongst the significant attributes of an upright politician. The politicians are typically linked with certain icons/images. These images are essentially designed by the media.

The second tendency is personified politics as opposed to party of politics. Lately, the world has witnessed a change in the responsibility(s) of political parties. Unlike the 1990s, durable tactics are no longer of great concern for the media at the moment. This has contributed to a decline of the significance of political parties. The third tendency that has been occasioned by economization and mass-mediatization is the exertion of pressure by topicality. The media presents politics to its audience as a fast-moving flux. This flux does not incorporate additional stable processes. It however constitutes itself as a rapid coincidence of moderately autonomous occurrences and topics.

The fourth tendency is that the political coverage within the media is planned around occasions such as party congresses. Such political events are mainly utilized to attract the public attention. The fifth tendency is that the political coverage within the media fraternity is mainly based on several aspects. These include visualization, short reports. Others are personification, and on the generalization of complex political processes. The sixth tendency is that the entertainment industry uses the political themes in television serials and more so as to escalate their attractiveness. Lastly, political communication is more and more making use of interactive elements. These include internet discussion boards and live chats with politicians.

A number of the media institutions in the Arab countries are owned by the government (Abulof, 2011). Some however are by individuals. For instance, the Alkhaleej newspaper which is the first newspaper and, it is owned by a UAE family. The Elemarat elyoum (in Arabic, it implies Emirate today) is wholly owned by the government. It is however aimed at supporting the people and to uncover serious abuses that occur in this country (Al Jenaibi, 2014). In a country such as Qatar, one may possibly find Aljazeera television station while in Kuwait; one may expect to find the Alrai newspaper and Al Watan Television station. These television stations and newspaper are owned by individuals. There are also several entertainment and music channels that are owned by individuals. Some television channels that are owned by the government don't air certain programs which may possibly be popular with the public. The public normally think that government-owned television channels are actually modernized and therefore unsuitable for their respective culture and religion. As a consequence, they usually express their feelings towards the programs that are aired by these channels either via column writers and over the life radio programs (Arab News, 2004).

The electronic media also affects politics in several ways. A number of political issues which may perhaps not be discussed may end-up being expressed over the internet. It is worthwhile to mention that a number of sites which have surpassed their limit as far as freedom of electronic media is concerned have ended-up being blocked. This is may possibly not be as a result their criticism against the government but due to the fact that several writers have abused others. It may also be due to some writers suing others. It is also important to note that the electronic-media is not only a means to discuss freely regarding politics in the United Arab Emirates, but also in other countries of the world (Al Jenaibi, 2015). In some chat rooms and websites, people across the globe discuss scores of issues that are affecting the Arab world and other regions. For instance, during the recent political unrest in Egypt in which the organizers of the demonstrations in the used the electronic-media to a large extent to mobilize protests aimed at ousting the incumbent president, Hosni Mubarak.

The Middle East Media Research Institute was specifically established with the aim of surveying the Arab world via newspapers, and television channels that are based in this region. This organization is obligated to bridge the prevailing language gap between the Western countries and the Arab world. This is through the provision of well-timed translations of Arabic and Turkish media. Other languages that are translated include Persian and Urdu Pashtu. This organization also provides original analysis of several trends in the Middle East. They include political, religious and cultural trends. Others are intellectual, social and intellectual trends. The institution was established in the second month of 1998. It was initially mandated to inform the debate of the United States policy in the Arab world. It is headquartered in Washington D.C. It has branch offices in London, Shanghai and Jerusalem. It also has branch offices in Rome and Baghdad. Its research is translated to several languages which include French, German, Polish, Hebrew and Chinese. Others are English, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Japanese. This institution operates a television channel which is referred to as the MEMRI-TV (The Middle East Media Research Institute, 2009).

3. HYPOTHESIS

A hypothesis can be referred to as "an imaginary statement which relates two or more variables. A research question on the other hand is a hypothesis which is asked in the form of a query." There are several characteristics of hypothesis. The initial one is that it may possibly be tested. This implies that it can be verified or falsified. The second characteristic is that hypotheses aren't moral queries. The third characteristic is that it is neither too explicit nor very common. The fourth characteristic it is mainly a forecast of ramifications. Finally, hypothesis is

usually considered to be important. This is even though it is has been proven to be false.

There are two types of hypotheses (Meyette, 2003).

The research questions and hypotheses in this study were drawn in order to exactly capture the issue at hand.

RQ1: Do you think that other Arab countries and Western Media have significantly influenced the country's relations with US/UK/Australia/ Portugal/ Canada and other Gulf countries?

H1_a: They have been publishing certain issues regarding it which have made the government to change its standpoint about it.

RQ2: Do you think the US/UK/Australia/ Portugal/ Canada media has significantly influenced (positively or negatively) the United Arab Emirates' relations with US/UK/Australia/ Portugal/ Canada?

H2_a: The United States was embroiled in a tussle with the UAE due to the DP world ports and as a consequence, the media especially print media depicted the UAE government and Arab countries in general negatively.

RQ3: Do you think that the electronic media has influenced UAE relations with US/UK/Australia/ Portugal/Canada at all?

H3_a: The electronic media has influenced UAE relations with US/UK/Australia/ Portugal/Canada.

RQ4: In what ways do you think the media influences public opinion in US/UK/Australia/Portugal/Canada with regard to Arab countries such as UAE and others?

H4_a: If the media happens relays information which is has been proven to be incorrect concerning Arab countries, the public will support a wrong cause.

RQ5: What changes do you think have been witnessed over the last one decade within the UAE media?

H5_a: The print media has started to publish and discuss issues which were not published before.

RQ6: Are there any relationships between media exposure and political attitudes?

H6_a: Political attitudes are to some extent affected with greater media exposure.

4. POSITIONING OF THE RESEARCH

This researcher utilizes the theories regarding propaganda and the political aspects of the media. These theories which employed so as to investigate some of the current media presentations in the United Arab Emirate, with a focus on Abu Dhabi, and Dubai. They also be utilized in order to investigate some of the media presentations in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. Subsequent to the attainment of a clearer picture on the manner in which the world media inform its audience regarding the United Arab Emirates, there is a discussion concerning means to employ media images, marketing and other tools in a bid to counteract propaganda about the UAE. The discussion also feature the manner in which the tools have affected the United Arab Emirates relations

with United States, United Kingdom, Portugal, Australia, and Canada.

The experienced gained in the last 7 years and the information in the literature review utilized in developing a research project that investigates extensively the current and potential status of the UAE local media and its position within the global arena. Additionally, the experience used to explore the effects of the UAE media on the politics and its relation with US, UK, Australia, Portugal, and Canada. It is worthwhile to mention that at the moment studies regarding the Arab media are few. Further, few studies regarding the powers of politics do exist.

It should also be noted that only a few studies have used interviews as a means of gathering data from media practitioners. This is attributed to the fact that in the experts do not trust researchers. The issues that are covered in this research are typically considered to be sensitive. For instance the press freedom and the role of the elite in the society are typically considered to be sensitive issues. The majority of the Arab media experts are typically disturbed about providing sensitive information. They work under a blanket of censorship and a lack of freedom of speech. Due to these reasons, the interviewees' trust shall be developed. This explains the reason as to why audio and video recordings shan't be used. Also, no names are published in this study. Numbers and codes utilized for each interviewee.

There are several limitations for this study which include the fact that the amount of time set for the interviewees may possibly be longer. Additionally, extra time should be allowed for emergent questions and discussions. Interviewees as a result required to answer the questions briefly. Also, not many researchers have been conducted about the impact of the Arab news channels in the UAE. Due to this reason, this study includes perceptions, power and impact of the media in the UAE and the Gulf region.

The research use the Agenda setting theory. This theory asserts that:

A link exists as regards to the rate at which the media covers a particular issue and the degree with which people think that the issue has significance. This link has over and over again been shown to occur ((McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p.176).

It also use the studies of "ubiquitous" media. It can be defined as the digital, multimodal content which is obtainable to clients via ubiquitous computing gadgets. This theory proposes the promise of contextualizing media objects visibly. This is by making them to be closer to the real-world situations. It also integrates them with the real-world situations. The theory describes a ubiquitous user as "a person who requires situated and incessant assistance." The user is also portrayed as a person who requires continuous access to media and help with regard to the recording of experiences. Moreover, the user is depicted

as an individual who ought to be provided with mediated communication in mixed reality. The two theories were chosen since politics and media and the ease of access of information are always associated with them.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology to be followed in the study shall be qualitative. The main objective of this type of research is to establish the “why”, and not the “how”. It achieves this through the usage of unstructured information. Examples of this category of information include feedback forms, interview transcripts, along with many others. This type of research serves a number of purposes. These include gaining insight into people’s attitudes, lifestyles and aspirations. It is also used to gain insight into people’s concerns, motivations and value systems. This kind of research is known to incorporate the analysis of any unstructured material. Examples of unstructured material include customer feedback forms and reports (Meyette, 2003).

The literature review conducted in a number of topics which include political communication and public opinion. Other topics include media politics within the UAE, and internationally, studies of articles regarding specific issues affecting the globe, for instance, the recent economic crisis, IRENA, DP World case along with many others.

The research analyzed texts and online sources. Textbooks used in writing of the literature review. They used during data analysis in order to get a clear understanding on how to conduct it. Textbooks used for referencing purposes. This assist in preventing plagiarism. Online sources on the other hand used to complement the textbooks. They utilized in sourcing of data which cannot be found in the textbooks. They used for referencing purposes (Meyette, 2003).

This research makes use of surveys. This is due to the fact that surveys permit the researcher to obtain data regarding practices, and state of affairs at 1 instance. This is through the utilization of questionnaires and interviews and also through observation. Surveys also enable the researcher to study more variables at one instance. Furthermore, they permit the collection of data regarding ideal world environments.

Interviews are used to investigate the relationship between the media and politics, and how media served governments and officials with their decisions for or against UAE. Specifically structural interviews are used so as to investigate changes in behavior, attitudes, policies, and government’s response to media, public response to novel media channels and others. The interviewees include the United Arab Emirates’ Minister for Foreign Affairs/ State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Trade/Deputy Minister for trade, Minister of Interior affairs/Deputy Minister for Interior Affairs (Department of immigration), Minister of Labor, and the United Arab

Emirates’ Ambassadors to the United States, United Kingdom, Portugal, Canada, and Australia. Interviews conducted on heads of Dubai Media incorporation, Dubai Government Media office, Emirates Media, Al-Ittihad, Al-Bayan and Al-Khaleej newspapers. Furthermore, The National and Gulf news Immigration department, Dubai customs, DP world, UAE national council (parliament), GCC General secretariat, Human rights department in the ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Dubai Police and Dubai Foundation of Women and Children leaders shall be interviewed.

Interviews conducted on managers of several media institutions in the United Kingdom. These include the BBC, Times, Daily/Sunday Telegraph, Financial Times, Independent, Daily Mirror and Reuters. Several officials in a number of government ministries interviewed in the UK. These include Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Transport and the Immigration Department. Interviewees in the United States involve some members of the Congress, heads of some Newspapers and Television channels and some key officials in the Department of Employment and Economic Development. Subsequent to the obtainment of the data through surveys, quantitative analytical methods shall be employed. They used in drawing conclusions concerning the prevailing relationships.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

The quantity of data collected in a particular study is typically extensive. Due to this reason, the research use visual displays and comparison in order to sum up data. Displays are extremely significant due to the fact that they aid in lessening and also in summing up the collected data. This summarization helps in expressing key ideas in a compact fashion (Stenbecka, 2001).

Displays include tables, and figures. Tables are characterized by rows. They are also typified by column formats that cross themes and/ or informants. On the other hand, figures includes flow diagrams and diagrams which display circular or recursive relationships. Others include trees which demonstrate consumers’ taxonomies of products or other concepts, and checklists. Checklists normally illustrate all informants. Subsequently, they indicate whether or not every informant has certain feelings, value, or ideology (Meyette, 2003).

Comparison of the disparities and resemblances is an essential process during data analysis. Comparisons normally take place as a researcher spots categories. Each new prospective occurrence of a category is contrasted to previously coded cases. This initiative is aimed at determining if the novel instance belongs to the prevailing category. During comparison, all the transcripts must first of all be coded. The imperative categories and themes are subsequently defined and explained in detail (Stenbecka, 2001). In answering the research questions the researcher finds that:

RQ1: Does heavy exposure to political content and TV shows positively predicts aggressive political opinions, after controlling other non-media factors?

- Yes 98%
- No 2%
- Sometime 0%

RQ2: Does elite predict aggressive political opinions in the same manner as the television?

- Yes 98%
- No 2%
- Sometime 0%

RQ3: Is there a strong relationship between the media and laws in the UAE when broadcasting news?

- Yes 98%
- No 2%
- Sometime 0%

RQ4: Does political issues lead to public discourse in the UAE?

- Yes 98%
- No 2%
- Sometime 0%

RQ5: In what ways do the UAE media perhaps limit its ability to influence world opinion?

RQ6: In what ways can the UAE media present more positive messages, symbols and images to gain a more popular and less biased stance in the world?

H6_a:

RQ7: Are there marketing tools and brand image development that can be used to change public opinion about a nation in the same way as a business, product or service?

H7_a:

RQ8: Do you think the US/UK/Egypt/Australia/Portugal/Jordan, Tunisia media has significantly influenced the United Arab Emirates' relations with US/UK/Egypt/Australia/Portugal/Jordan, Tunisia?]

- Yes 98%
- No 2%
- Sometime 0%

RQ9: Do you think that social media websites (i.e. blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Myspace) have influenced UAE relations with US/UK/Egypt/Australia/Portugal/Jordan at all? Do you think that these sites are good or bad?

- Yes 98%
- No 2%
- Sometime 0%

RQ10: In what ways do you think the media influences public opinion?

-Subsequent to the nine eleven attacks by Al Qaeda, the media gave the incident a huge coverage. This had an outcome of shaping the public opinion in the so as to support global warfare on international terrorism.

- If the media happens relays information which is has been proven to be incorrect, then the public will support a wrong cause.

-During political campaigns, candidates who are able to pay for more advertisements both have further influence as much as the public opinion is concerned. They may therefore have an added advantage.

7. DISCUSSION

From the collected data, the media influences politics in UAE and its international relations. Also, It is worthwhile to mention that the modern-day world of globalization is typified by the presence of satellite channels and the internet. These technologies have made it harder to control any kind of information that appears in the news and other programs. Studies have revealed that owing to the fact that scores of television and radio channels exist, it is hard for a particular government or even an elite group to have control over them. Additionally, a number of the radio and television channels may possibly be hegemonies and extremely influential with regard to the world opinion (Graber, 2000). This therefore poses a serious challenge to those media stations that do not have a great deal of influence within the media fraternity and as a result, they are not able to counteract information deemed to be distorted or biased.

The United Arab Emirates' media is apparently controlled by the government. However, it (the media) has devised a number of initiatives which are aimed at assisting this country positively to unearth issues affecting the society and its relation with foreign countries. Also, the UAE media plays an important role of displaying the truth in various issues which cannot be published in the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council). It should be noted that the United Arab Emirates has supported many nations of the world, but has equally been attacked by scores of countries across the globe mainly owing to the success it has attained in a period of 39 years that other nations could not attain in 100 years. In UAE, there are live radio programs that any person in spite of his-or her nationality, gender or race may possibly call and complain regarding any issue that he-or she is experiencing. Normally, these programs are observed by the government officials who listen to the people's opinions and problems. Furthermore, scores of laws have been amended in the United Arab Emirates due to these programs.

8. FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is based on the power of media and its influence on politics and international relations of UAE with US, UK, Portugal, Australia, and Canada. Suggestions for future research include that more countries should be covered so as to better portray power of the media in the United Arab Emirates. Research should also be conducted to determine the relationship between media exposure and political attitudes in the United Arab Emirates.

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