

Arabic



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The Mutual Influence of Culture and Media as it Manifests itself in the Arab Societies. Introduction The term culture means differently to different persons. In this context, culture is a complex range of learned human behavior patterns, which include knowledge, law, morals, customs and beliefs. Poetry was the mode of communication in the Arab culture, but with the arrival of Islam, print media and broadcasting took over. The media are a significant source of information to the society. Most people in the contemporary world depend on the media for news, information, entertainment and socialization recent development of social media, which facilitate online socialization; dating and social friendships have altered the patterns of socialization (Hammond 25). Further, the contents of the media are substantially determined, by the culture; culture informs the beliefs and knowledge stock of people. Therefore, the media should consider issues that are relevant to the culture that the media represent.

Culture influence on Media

Cultural beliefs and cultural norms influence the structure and operations, and the composition of the media. The social, religious and political issues inherent in the Arabic nations and the Arabic culture take precedence in the media while the rest of the issues from other cultures are squeezed in the rest of the space and time. In the 1990s, the governments in the Arab World owned most televisions channels. Satellite televisions are sprouting rapidly. This is not due to freedom of speech and money but due to political influence on their growth. The West has also influenced the growth of Arabian media through the Arab soap operas (Hammond 26).

In 2003, Star Academy began when Reality television had entered the Arabic public discourse. That was when women fought for their political rights in

Kuwait; election results were contested in Egypt and there erupted escalating violence in Iraq. The political crisis environment framed the current Arab- Western relations. It formed the backdrop that causes controversies surrounding the social and political impact of Reality television that assumes religious, cultural and moral manifestations (Hammond 28). Research in Media has stressed that the moral and social responsibility of news people should not agitate public opinion, but should keep the status quo. It is paramount to preserve national unity by not causing ethnic or religious conflict. Investigative journalism was not allowed in the Arab World due to limited freedom of speech. Personal reputation is a fundamental principle in Arab media; exposure of corruption and weaknesses in policy makers hold the news person in massive consequences. From history, news was used to provide instructions to officials and not a mass product (Hammond 30).

In comparison with American news, Arab news revolves around political news putting human interest stories aside. The global orientation of Arab media is integrated with the need to educate its population and stress Islam religion through media. Social responsibility is one of the media values (Hammond 32).

Funding of Western media is by advertisements; on the contrary, the Arab world is not advertisement driven. Egypt has been a leader in broadcasting among the Arab countries. The Egyptian government invested in the expansion of media and declared it a government monopoly. Though there are differences in the perception and the contents of the media across cultures, the purposes of the media is fairly the same. However, this does not downplay the intensity of Arabic cultural influence on the media, which is

contrary to the influence of the western culture (Hammond 34).

Works Cited

Hammond, Andrew. Popular Culture in the Arab World: Arts, Politics, and the Media. Cairo, Egypt: American University in Cairo Press, 2007. Print.

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