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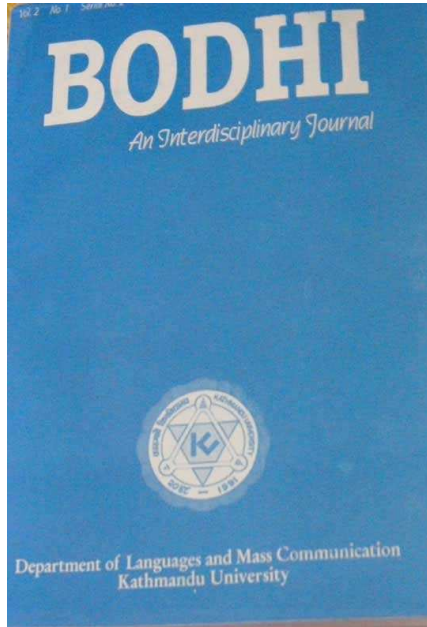
Influences on Media Content: Levels of Analysis in Developed and Developing Countries

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse and discuss theoretical frameworks that relate to influences on media content. This is to identify the suitable models or approaches for studying the influences on media content at news organisations. To achieve this aim, the paper will include two main sections: the first section uses a macro-sociological perspective and will discuss two main theoretical approaches, the political economy and cultural approaches. The second section looks at issues on a micro-sociological level, using the social organisation approach to analyse the definitions of news, news values, gatekeeping and the influences on media content that are internal to news organisations.

Theoretical Frameworks

Diverse frameworks have been employed for studying the influences on media content. Gans (1980), Gitlin (1980), and Shoemaker & Reese (1991) summarise the theoretical frameworks in five main hypotheses (see McQuail, 2000, p. 246). Different frameworks have different assumptions, for instance, regarding whether mass communication media are 'neutral'. And, plurality in terms of conclusions is also obvious.
A 'mirror approach' assumes that the mass media accurately reflect the social reality for the audience. Media channels in this approach are just 'neutral' channels, which reflect the world as it comes with little or no distortion. However, this approach has been criticised by many researchers (e.g., Lippmann, 1922; Fishman, 1980; Strentz, 1989; Beardworth, 1980; Watson & Hill, 2000), who have argued that news is not neutral, but selected and produced in news organisations.

One of the comprehensive models of news production processes has been presented by Shoemaker and Reese (1991, 1996). McQuail (1994, 2000) has presented 'a similar but modified' version of the hierarchy model employed by Shoemaker and Reese. The focus of McQuail's model is on the 'news organisation level' and the relationship between the media organisation and other agencies, institutions, and society from one side and the people working within these news organisations on the other side. According to this model, a media organisation works under pressure from different sources: its audience, owners, social and political institutions, advertisers, news sources, investors. These can be divided into two main categories: economic pressures and social and political pressures. The relationship between these two categories and the media organisation depends on the 'main goals' of the media organisation (McQuail, 1994, p. 186-211).

Influences on News Content (Macro-level Analysis)
Political Economy and News Organisations

The original idea of the political economy framework, which has its roots in the work of Karl Marx, is that a small powerful group, the 'ruling class', dominates, by its economic ownership of organisations in societies, the 'working classes' (see Barrat, 1992). This means the final product of 'ideas', which are produced by organisations including the mass media organisations, reflects the interests of the small powerful groups in the society.

This approach had been analysed and elaborated by many researchers in the capitalist, Western countries (e.g., Tunstall, 1970, 1980, 1992; Golding & Elliott, 1979; Golding & Murdock, 1996; Murdock & Golding, 1973, 1977; Westgaard, 1977; Boyd-Barrett, 1980; Schlesinger, 1980, 1989; Negrine, 1994; Curran & Seaton, 1991; Chomsky, 1989; Chomsky, 1997; Herman & Chomsky, 1994; Herman, 2000), who have concentrated on the link between the ownership of media organisations and the control of these organisations' out-put.

Questions of the relationships between the owners (businessmen or governments) and news organisations, how economic determinates affect the daily journalism work, how political groups or advertisers control the media content -- all of these questions can be answered by this approach to understand the factors that shape the content produced by each news organisation (Schudson, 1989, p. 266-269; Golding & Elliott, 1979, p. 159).

The economic factor is the main element in this approach in the capitalist countries (Fishman, 1980, p. 149-50). Davison, et.al. (1982) argue that the closely related theory which explains the content of American media is that the commercial media are moneymaking, produced by the business class in its own interest (p. 71). Market place competitions are of great concern to owners and managers of news organisations. This is one of the reasons for bureaucratic routine in newsrooms. Newspapers should arrive at newsstands on schedule. If not, readers may buy the available competing newspaper (Fishman, 1980, p. 146; Golding & Murdock, 1996, p. 11). Thus, the person who finances the newspaper will control the final product of the media organisation. This influence can be achieved by designing the whole strategy or policy of the organisation or intervening into the daily practices of the journalists.

Roshco (1975, p. 118), on the other hand, concluded that news judgment is a 'reflection of the economic and political arrangements that control the social order and shape its social values'. He emphasized the relationship between journalists and audiences, and asserted that a news organisation should study its audiences continually to see the changes within them over time.

Another part of the economic dimension that affects the news content is technologies that are used by each news organisation (Golding & Elliot, 1979; Smith, 1977; Parker, 1997, p. 21-44; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 215; Aldridge, 1994, p. 19; Cottle, 1993, 1999; Schudson, 1996). The question of how new

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technology affect the final product, by both production and distribution, is still new in media research. New technologies that are used in newsrooms have made the processes easier than they were in the past in terms of time and effort.

Herman and Chomsky (1994), by their 'propaganda model', added another side to the discussion of the political economy approach in the capitalist Western countries. In brief, this model argues that the media product is a propaganda tool for political elites who hold power in the liberal democratic countries (Herman and Chomsky, 1994, Chomsky, 1997; Chomsky, 1989; Herman, 2000).

Government/Press Relationship in Developing Countries

The discussion about the relationship between politics and the media in the Arab world and developing countries in general is more complicated. The influence of the political systems over the news organisations in the developing countries in general and Arab countries in particular is much more effective (Mostyn, 2002; Abu-Osba, 1999a, 1999b; Shah, 1996; Hamada, 1993; Al-Jammal, 1991; Rugh, 1979, 1987; Badran, 1988; Almaney, 1972; Stevenson, 1988; Vasquez, 1983). The media in the developing countries are newer than the media in the Western countries. Most of them were established at the beginning of the twentieth century by the new governments as tools to support their development programs (Nasser, 1983; Al-Jammal, 1991; Hamada, 1993; Tarabay, 1994).

In the 1980s, the degree of ownership and control differs from one Arabic country to another. According to Abu-Zaid (1986), five countries have public ownership of newspapers (Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Algeria). Ten Arab countries have both public and private ownership (Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Oman, Tunis and Morocco). Only one country (Lebanon) has private ownership alone (Abu-Zaid, 1986, p. 23-28).

Most governments in developing countries control the content of their countries' mass media directly (by government-ownership of media) or indirectly (by direct or indirect subsidies for private news organisations) (Mostyn, 2002, p. 159-170). The governments in the Arab world control the mass media directly by their right to make or reject permission to establish a news organisation; official censorship by laws and instructions or indirectly through economic control, exerted by cutting subsidies.

The press organisations in the Arabian Gulf (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE) are characterized by some researchers (i.e., Rugh, 1979, 1987; Al-Jammal, 1991; Tarabay, 1994) as loyal to their countries' regime and as avoiding publishing critical issues. Nevertheless, one cannot generalise this description to all the countries. Kuwaiti journalists, for example, more openly criticize government policies or plans than do journalists in the other Gulf countries. Al-Jazeera TV channel, in Qatar, made many challenges for Arab governments by broadcasting very critical issues (political, economic, social and cultural issues) related to the Arab world. Therefore, many Arab governments (e.g., Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan) have had problems with this channel, because its broadcasting of critical issues (e.g., human rights, civil society and democracy in the Arab world) about these countries (see El-Nawawy and Iskandar, 2002; Alterman, 1999; Anderson & Eickelman, 1999; Rathmell, 1997).

The political approach gives a general picture (that is, a macro analysis) of news organisation work in different societies. This point, argues Schudson (1989, p. 268; 1996, p. 143), is both the strength and the weakness in the approach. It is the strength because this general picture helps to show how media organisations work, the relationship between media and power, especially the political power, and the role of media in society. However, the weakness of this general picture is that it fails to answer questions dealing with the daily practice of creating news in media organisations.

Media Organisations and Sources

The macro-level analysis of the political economy approach also highlights influences from outside the media organisation. These influences can be summarized in sources of information and sources of revenue (Sigal, 1986; Fishman, 1980; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991, 1996; Gans, 1980; McQuail, 1994, 2000).

There are many kinds of information sources: local sources, national and foreign sources, state and regional sources. Revenue sources include audiences and advertisers. Information sources include social institutions such as business and official sources. Official sources, as part of information sources, are preferred by the journalists not just because they are easy to gain access to, but also because some reporters argue that official sources 'have important things to say' (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991, p. 152).

Revenue sources (advertisings and audiences) in most capitalist free-market countries are other influences on media content. Media scheduling and planning reflect the interest of advertisers. This influence of advertising comes by providing information that has 'promotional value, product placement, and sponsoring (McQuail, 2000, p. 261). Advertising in Arabic and developing countries also affect on media content, but less than media organisations in the free-market countries. This is because of Advertising market in Arabic countries is very small comparing with the developed capitalist countries (Abu-Osba, 1999a). Nevertheless, advertising is the main source of income for all media organisations in capitalist and developing countries. However, advertiser influence is 'ethically disapproved' (McQuail, 2000, p. 262) and media organisations have to keep its content, especially news content, away from advertiser influence.

Readers, as a second source of revenue, are the figure of greatest power (Murdock, 1980, p. 42; Whale, 1977, p. 82;

Turow, 1992, p. 97). They are significant factors not only in shaping newspaper policy, but also they are important to attract advertising revenue. Gurevitch and Blumer (1977) emphasise the role of audiences in shaping the content, but they argue that this role differs according to the system in which news organisation work (p. 251-269). However, news production studies show that readers do not know about news reporting and 'journalists write primarily for themselves, for their editors, and for other journalists' (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991, p. 96). This thesis aims to show to what extent that journalists in Oman know their readers and to what extent that readers in Oman influence news reporting.

Cultural Approach and News Organisation

Schudson (1989, 1996) brought a new dimension to news production studies by using the cultural approach, along with the political economy and social organisation approaches. The culturological approach studies the relationship between media and society to give a clear view of how media organisations are influenced by the 'cultural air'[1] of the ideological atmosphere in any society, which tell media what should and what should not be said (Schudson, 1989, p. 278).

The 'culturological'[2] (or anthropological) approach investigates the constructing force of a broad cultural symbol system (Schudson, 1996, 1989; Allan, 1999). Because of the purpose of my research, I use the cultural approach from an anthropological perspective, which analyses how the given culture influences the news production (Schudson, 1989). Culture refers to sets of values, traditions, and a way of life in a particular society, which are different from those of other cultures or societies (see Scollon and Scollon, 1995; Al-Shaqsi, 2000). News, in this perspective, is a cultural product produced by journalists who believe in specific cultural values. Many

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[1] This term used by Hoggart (see Schudson, 1989, p. 278).

[2] The term used by Schudson, 1989, p. 275

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studies have used this approach to analyzing journalistic practices (i.e., Peterson, 1979; Hansen and Linné, 1994; Ettema, Whitney, & Wackman, 1997; Shaari, 1997; Zhu, et.al., 1997).

In his study about news workers of *The Times* in England, Peterson (1979) found that preferred to publish and the role of their cultural background in selecting foreign news items. Peterson (1979), who emphasised out the importance of the cultural approach in news production studies, indicated that the cultural background of journalists and correspondents is important in selecting and gathering news (p. 118-119). Zhu, et.al. (1997), in their comparative study of journalists in China, Taiwan, and the United States, found that societal influences have the 'strongest impact on journalists' view about media roles', an impact greater than organisational or individual influences (p. 84). Thus, the cultural context of where news workers making their news content is essential to analyse the content and the influences on media content in any society.

Ideology and News Organisations

Many researchers argue that news content, as a cultural product, is not neutral, but ideological (e.g., Golding & Elliot, 1979; Golding, 1977; Gans, 1980, p. 30; Davison, et.al, 1987, p. 75; Hall, 1993; 1989; Hall, et.al, 1978; Heck, 1981).

 'Ideology' is defined as follows:

> A system of ideas and beliefs about human conduct which has normally been simplified and manipulated in order to obtain popular support for certain actions, and which is usually emotive in its reference to social action (Watson and Hill, 2000, p. 144).

By looking at ideology, researchers focus attention on the symbolic influence of media on audiences (Hall, 1993, 1989, 1981). Gans (1980, p. 80) argues that journalists express the dominant political ideology; they often do so unconsciously (see earlier discussions on political economy sections).

Mudgal (1995) tries to understand the media's relationship with 'terrorism' and the state in the Indian Punjab. He argued that,

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> News is a process by which the society comes to know itself. This understanding of the media-society relationship helps journalists to form a 'working ideology' for them, which may have little to do with the actual process and practice of news production (p. 35).

The results of Mudgal (1995) showed how the state 'defines the conflict, characterizes violence and labels perpetrators'. The study brought together many aspects of other news production studies. Interviews with the participants of the conflict added a new dimension in news production studies. However, the use of the 'propaganda model' to study war time coverage in a developing country was not appropriate, because media systems in most developing countries support their government, which means that those systems directly use the propaganda model. Governments in the developing countries control the media more during war times than at any other time (see Al-Kindi, 1995). However, this model as Herman and Chomsky (1994, p. 1), show is appropriate to United State's media, which indirectly support political elites.

Another point related to ideology that many Arabic and researchers from developing countries have raised is an imbalance in the flow of information from the developed Western countries to less developed countries (Abdulrahman, 1984; Al-Srayrah, 1989; Drwish, 1998; Saleh, 1998). Drwish (1998: 23-5) indicated that news production studies in the Arab countries should cover the influences of international, especially Western, content on the domestic news content. Saleh (1998, p. 20) believes that the definitions of ideology relate to capitalism and Western societies, which aim to give the consumers what they want without considering the interests of societies. According to Saleh, although journalism in many developing countries operates within different media systems than that in developed countries, the Western media still dominates over these countries and news organisations within them (op.cit., p. 23).

This is an old problematic issue, which has been discussed by many media researchers (Mowlana, 1977; Al-Ahmed, 1987; Lule, 1992; Wells, 1981). Mowlana (1977, p. 73) refers to the importation of Western mass media to most Middle East countries. He noted that can be seen on two levels: (1) as imported communication technology through introduction of the printing press, telegraph, telephone, radio, television (and Internet), and (2) as various forms of nationalism, modernisation, ideology, news and most entertainment. In most developing countries, the political, bureaucratic and intellectual elite (or ruling class) plays the dominant major role in shaping the structure and function of the press (Mowlana, 1977, p. 79; Al-Shamari, 1989, p. 36). Mowlana (1977, p. 80) argues that the media content, especially that of press, is still designed for the elite in developing societies, because of illiteracy. The United Nations (UN) Development Program report shows that nearly 100 million people of the 335 million in the Arab world were illiterate. Three-fourths of them were aged 15 to 45 (International Herald Tribune, January 8, 2008).

The above-mentioned studies have investigated that news production by journalists that either have the same 'culture air' or are part of a hegemonic ideology. However, one cannot generalise from the findings of these studies to all societies, especially where journalists from different societies and cultures came to work within the same place, such as Arabic-language and English-language news organisations.

Social Organisation of News Production (Micro-level Analysis): What is 'News'?

The field of the 'sociology of news' examines two main questions: 'What is news?' and 'What makes news?' (Tumber, 1999, p. 3; Berkowitz, 1997, p. xii). The definition of 'news' is one of the complex issues in communication studies. This is because no one definition is shared among researchers, or among the journalists themselves. Lippmann (1922), who is one of the essential sources in the field of news, defines news as a

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social product of journalistic routines. Roshco (1975) argues that news is 'more easily pursued than defined, a characteristic it shares with such other enthralling abstractions as love and truth' (p.33). Gieber (1964, p. 218) argues that news is 'what newspaper men make it'. News is 'manufactured by journalists' (Cohen & Young, 1973, p. 97). News for Fishman (1980) is 'the result of the methods news workers employ' (1980, p. 14). Researchers in Western countries define news as a product to sell (Martin & Chaudhary, 1983, p. 3; Nasser, 1983, p. 34; Grossberg, et.al., 1998, p. 14; Schudson, 1995, p. 29). However, many researchers in Arabic and developing countries reject the Western news model because they see it as unsuitable for their societies (see Nasser, 1983). Most researchers in these countries define the news in relation to the development of the society (Saleh, 1998, p. 19; Abu-Zaid, 1981, p. 27; Abdulnabi, 1989, p. 241).

The definitions above make apparent the difficulties involved in defining news, for Western researchers (i.e. Altheide, 1976; Hartley, 1982; Hetherington, 1985; Fishman, 1980) or researchers from developing countries (i.e. Saleh, 1998; Abdulnabi, 1989; Nasser, 1983; Abu-Zaid, 1981). Other researchers have not defined the news, but rather described the processes of news action as a manufactured process (i.e. Lippmann, 1922; Cohen & Young, 1973, 1981; Gieber, 1964; Fishman, 1980; Strentz, 1989; Beardworth, 1980; Watson & Hill, 2000). As Altheide (1976, p. 196) said, news cannot be a 'truthful and complete account of the social world'. No news organisation can report every event of the social world. The definition of news as a 'mirror of reality' was critisised, also, by numerous researchers (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Tuchman, 1978; Parenti, 1993, p. 52; and Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 37).

Based on the above discussion and the differences between the Western and developing countries in defining news, in this paper the term 'news' refers to a product that is selected and influenced by many factors inside and outside the news organisation. Thus, news, is not seen as a 'mirror of reality', but

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rather as being selected, shaped and produced in news organisations.

Mass Communicator inside News Organisations

The early studies of news sociology began with White (1950). He suggested that journalists act as gatekeepers of media messages. They select the events which will become 'news'. Breed (1955) examined how journalists become socialised to their jobs. His study showed the way pressure exacts conformity in a newsroom. 'The reporters learn what management wants and then pursue what is in their own best interest' (Breed, 1955, p. 326-335).

Chomsky (1989) and Parenti (1993) assert the importance of the role of the journalist in news selection and his/her self-censorship in shaping the content. Curran (1998) argues that controls operate 'unobtrusively' through beginning staff selection, and through self-censorship rather than through obvious coercion (p. 84). Ericson, et.al, (1987) indicate that journalists' cultures and attitudes affect their work in newsroom. All the previous views pay attention to the journalist in the news organisation who works as a gatekeeper. This leads us to the gatekeeping model in news production studies.

Gatekeeping

Lewin, a social psychologist, coined the term 'gatekeeper', and then several social scientists (e.g., White, 1950; Gieber, 1964) applied it to journalism to refer to the person (or persons) inside news organisations who decide what is and what is not be published (Schudson, 1989, p. 264). White (1950) studied a gatekeeper (or 'Mr. Gates' as White calls him) for one week and found Mr. Gates decided which wire service stories would run in the paper and which would not. White found the gatekeeper highly subjective in what he decided would be 'news'. In contrast, Gieber's study (1964) of sixteen wire editors in Wisconsin found the telegraph editor to be "…

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preoccupied with the mechanical pressures of his work rather than the social meanings and impact of the news" (1964, p. 175).

Thus, there is a contrast contrary in the results of White's and Giber's studies. The two communicators in the two both studies are both gatekeepers who decide which items could be news at the end of the day. But White (1950) stresses the role of the gatekeepers' attitudes and values, whereas Gieber (1964) argued that the role of the gatekeeper is just a daily routine.

No one can ignore the role of gatekeepers in shaping and constructing news, and it is not always the role of 'Mr. Gates' to fit the item to the size of the paper. The gatekeeper chooses the news and sometimes rewrites it to publish in the newspaper. However, the gatekeeper works within the context of other factors that shape news. Therefore, many researchers (e.g., Gans, 1980; Nwanufero, 1984, p. 11; Schudson, 1989, 1996; Shoemaker, 1991; Tuchman, 1991, p. 91; and Abu-Osba, 1999) extended the concept of gatekeeping to include other factors that have stronger effect on the process of news production such as the political, economic and cultural factors than the effect of the 'traditional gatekeeper'. The construction of news is not made by journalists, publishers, or gatekeepers, but in the process by which all parts, routines and arrangements of the organisation create news.

Gatekeeping also can be affected by the ideology of the social system in which the gatekeeper exists. The ideological system causes the gatekeeper to select items that serve the purpose of a powerful elite. Shoemaker (1991) extended the gatekeeping model to cover three main levels that affect the decision of the gatekeeper: individual journalists, the organisation, and the society. She identified various psychological processes affecting the gatekeeping process. She also argued that social forces affect news content and that news organisations relate very strongly to the social system in which they operate (see also Shoemaker, et.al, 2001).

News Values

The approach of social organisation of news work as a micro level analysis also includes news values perspective. News values in news production process organise news selection process by suggesting a number of values that guide gatekeepers to select or reject news items. This is cannot be separated from the gatekeeping perspective, because gatekeepers use these values to select or reject news items. Galtung and Ruge (1970) suggested that there were twelve 'news factors' affecting the selection or rejection process. These were 1) frequency, 2) intensity, 3) clarity, 4) cultural proximity, 5) consonance, 6) unexpectedness, 7) continuity, 8) both the composition and socio-cultural values of the society or gatekeepers, 10) elite nations, 11) elite people, and 12) something negative. This model was widely investigated by many communication research studies in the West and developing countries (i.e., Gutiezzez, 1992; Lule, 1992; Ericson, et.al., 1987; Stephen, 1980; Gans,1980; Rubin, 1979; Galtung & Ruge, 1970; Schoenbach, 1983; Hartley, 1982).

The list of news values that may guide the journalist (or gatekeeper) in the Western countries in selecting a news item includes immediacy, proximity, importance, unusualness, human interest, conflict, size, novelty, timeliness, and drama. Even given these broad common values, the newsgathering and selection choices of Western journalists and news organisations differ in many ways. These differences depend on the society, and on the newspaper, its policy, journalists and readers.
Differences in news values are even more evident when one compares journalism work in Western countries, the Communist world and developing countries Journalism work in the Communist world was seen to be a propaganda medium for the party in power (Martin & Chaudhary, 1983, p. 26). Thus, the gathering, selecting and publishing of news depended

on ideological elements (Karch, 1983, p. 111). Karch notes that news values in these countries related to the Communist Party,

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and the journalist in these countries was employed by the Party that is in the power. Another news value in the Communist world was social responsibility. News, as a part of the society, was expected to be positive, and effective, and to emphasise government achievements. News could also be critical, but only of those who were against the Communist Party. News in the Communist world was also required to be educative and cultural. It was presented to educate the public about the Party's ideology. Like in the Western world, human interest was as a news value in the Communist world. However, as Lendavi (1983) observes, in the Communist world there was an ideological theme that news was about the people in general but not about a person himself (p. 82). Newspapers in these countries gave attention to readers' letters which supported the Communist Party's policies. Some other news values in the Communist world were nearly the same as those in with the West, such as immediacy, proximity, and importance, but these were considered less important than those noted above by Lendavi (1983) and Karch (1983), and they were to support the ideology of the Party.

In the developing countries, the situation is more difficult to describe because of the large groups of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America that are included in this classification. The Arabian Gulf countries, for example, are in a better economic situation than Arabic countries in North Africa or many Asian countries. These countries differ in their political, economic and cultural systems from the Western countries. However, one thing shared by the media in all the developing countries is the value placed on 'development' (Lule, 1992, p. 56; Habte, 1983, p. 95- 110; Hester & To, 1992). Supporting 'development' is the first news value in the developing countries. News is valued, in these countries, if it supports economic, political, social and cultural efforts of the government in the society.

Daily Routines inside News Organisation

The routine processes practiced by individual journalists inside news organisations is another factor that influences media content. News organisations face time and space limitations in delivering the product to readers. Therefore, it is essential to understand the routine news work before analysing other influences in the news making process (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 109; Fishman, 1980, p. 15). In their study about routine practices that defines news production in three countries, Nigeria, Sweden and Ireland, Golding and Elliott (1979) found that production fell into a cycle of four sequences: planning, gathering, selection and presentation (p. 70). This division and others (e.g., Ericson, et.al, 1987) guide news production researchers in their examination of the relationship between the work of individuals and the news organisation's responsibilities.

The role of the communicator's routine is also highly noted in works of Tuchman (1978). These studies conducted microanalyses of daily routines of journalists and reporters, and found that the social world is 'routinely constructed'. However, the method of these works was criticized on linguistic grounds. For example, Van Dijk (1988b, p. 7-8) argued that this 'microanalysis also requires systematic descriptions of news as a product of news-making practices'. Other researchers (Gans, 1980; Hetherington, 1985) combined macro analyses with microanalyses of news organisations, news routines, and news values. However, these works did not show exactly how the journalists interpret news and how their interpretations shape the final product (Van Dijk, 1988b, p. 7). Although focusing on the linguistic dimension of media content, as Van Dijk (1988a) shows, by using discourse analysis or semiotics for example helps in knowing news values or newspapers' ideologies, the linguistic approach alone cannot provide any relevant information about daily practices inside media organisations. It can give a very narrow picture about the differences in using language of the content, but this should be supported by other

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approaches of news production to show other factors that affect news content. Thus, combining macro analyses with micro analyses gives more accurate picture of the process of news production than adopting using only a micro level analysis, such as the linguistic analysis, in analysing influences on news production.

Summary

In the 1970s, many studies (e.g., Epstein, 1974; Roshco, 1975; Altheide, 1976; Tuchman, 1978) focused on news organisation construction. Since then, a number of studies have focused on how media workers and their employers, as well as organisational structures and society itself, affect media content (Fishman, 1980; Reese, 1993; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991, 1996). Several researchers (e.g. Engwall, 1978; Tremayne, 1980; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991, 1996, p. 138), have examined related questions, such as the following: How are organisations structured? How do they differ from (or resemble) each other? How is authority exercised within them? What difference do these factors make to media content? Works of Epstein (1974), Tuchman (1978) Schlesinger (1978), Tremayne (1980), Tunstall (1971), Hetherington (1985), Gans (1980), Ericson, et.al. (1987) have emphasized the influence of organisational elements inside the news organisation, the owners' policy and their goals in shaping the final product.

The social organisation framework combines both the political economy and cultural approaches to explain the influences on news content. The advantages of the social organisation framework is that it highlights journalistic practices, routines and organisational procedures that govern the daily activities of journalists in selecting, gathering and writing news. This approach includes an examination of the day-to-day newsroom operations. However, the weakness of the social organisation framework is the limitations of this micro-level of investigation. This level of analysis alone cannot help the researcher to observe the factors that are outside the newsroom or the

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'cultural air' of the society in which the journalist works. Therefore, a combination of the cultural approach and the political economy approach has been suggested to cover this weakness.

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