

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY**

**RADIO & TV IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES:
EMERGENCE AND AMBITION**

Master's Thesis

HAMDO ALDABSAWI

ISTANBUL, 2020

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
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**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
FILM AND TELEVISION MASTER’S PROGRAM**

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Thesis Supervisor: PROF. NİLAY ULUSOY

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Hamdo ALDABSAWI



ABSTRACT

RADIO & TV IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: EMERGENCE AND AMBITION

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The role of the media and its impact on audiences around the world has grown, especially after the technological developments speeding up the global information flow. New media now lacks any barriers and has crossed open skies to enter homes without permission. The media performs several major functions through explaining and analyzing events, developing human relationships, entertainment, advertising, shaping attitudes and trends, and increasing social cohesion. With these functions, the media has joined the two pillars of countries -politics and economics- as the third.

While the development of technology and media has followed a somewhat similar progression around the world, each country has followed its own distinct path. This study aims to explore the various stages and roles of the mass media specifically in the United Arab Emirates from its emergence until today. Further, the study aims to diagnose the most important obstacles facing media professionals in this important sector, by analyzing the laws that regulates work in various UAE media institutions and the importance of the national media cadres as the localization issues.

This study is one of the few studies of its kind focusing specifically on the UAE in an attempt to explore the interaction between its media and society, and the effect of this interaction on the media discourse directed to society, in turn.

The success achieved by the Emirati media in a short time after its beginnings could not be possible without its local creative workforce and the support and attention that the founders and leaders of this country bestowed on them.

Keywords: United Arab Emirates, Media, Radio, Television

ÖZET

BİRLEŞİK ARAP EMİRLİKLERİ'NDE RADYO VE TELEVİZYON: ORTAYA ÇIKIŞ VE HADEFLERİ

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Dünyanın her yerinde medyanın rolü ve takipçileri üzerindeki etkisi, özellikle küresel enformasyon akışını hızlandıran teknolojik gelişmelerin ardından artmıştır. Bugün artık yeni medya her türlü engelden yoksun olup açık semaları kat ederek ve izin almaksızın evlere ve girmiş durumdadır. Medya olayları açıklayıp analiz ederek, eğlence kaynağı olarak, insan ilişkilerini geliştirerek, reklam yaparak, tutum ve trendleri şekillendirerek ve toplumsal uyumu artırarak birçok önemli işlev görmektedir. Bu işlevler sayesinde medya ülkelerin iki temel direği olan siyaset ve ekonomiye bir üçüncü olarak katılmıştır.

Teknoloji ve medyanın ilerlemesi bir yandan tüm dünyada benzer bir yol izlemiş olsa da, her ülkenin çizdiği yol kendine özgü farklılıklar da göstermiştir. Bu çalışma, ilk ortaya çıkışından bugüne kadarki süreçte kitlesel medyanın Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri'nde geçirdiği çeşitli aşamaları ve üstlendiği rolleri açığa kavuşturma amacıyla yapılmıştır. Çalışma aynı zamanda BAE'de çalışan profesyonel medya mensuplarının önündeki en önemli engelleri, ülkedeki çeşitli medya kurumlarını düzenleyen yasaları inceleyerek ve medya kadrolarının yerelleşmesi meselesini masaya yatırarak teşhis etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Bu araştırma BAE'de medya ve toplumun karşılıklı etkileşimini ve bu etkileşimin de medya söylemi üzerindeki etkisini mercek altına alan nadir çalışmalardan birisidir.

Emirlikler'deki medyanın başlangıcından kısa süre sonra gerçekleştirdiği başarı, yaratıcı yerel kadroları ve bu ülkenin kurucu ve liderlerinin cömertçe sundukları destek ve ilgi olmadan mümkün olamazdı.

Keywords: Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri, Medya, Radyo, Televizyon

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1. INTRODUCTION

Preserving the cultural heritage of peoples and nations is a work that is done over generations and decades. To the extent that people care to preserve the archives of their cultural heritage, this heritage remains an expression of the originality of the nation. Whenever creative minds produce new ways to benefit, develop and improve on this cultural heritage of their people, it continues to survive and develop through its generations, and interacting with neighboring societies, join the path of human civilization and progress, so as to achieve a reasonable balance between what is inherited from the past and what is new. The goal is to ultimately to make a better tomorrow for human beings.

This study will examine the most prominent features of the development of mass media in the United Arab Emirates in its audial and visual forms, and the most important stages this development passed through for nearly a century. It will show that the media is not only a key partner in the process of social and cultural development, but also a key source of power for those who control the dissemination of information. The study also emphasizes the effects of the media on shaping human personality because it functions across all classes of society and produces information in large spaces and all the time. Thus, it contributes to building the convictions, attitudes and beliefs of individuals and is a central force in their socialization.

One important argument in this study is that regardless of the multiplicity of media theories that explain the performance, functions and message of the media, there is a difference between the way the media is perceived in the developed countries and the way it is perceived in the developing world (of which the UAE is a part). For whereas the former prioritizes the media's functions of disseminating news, advertising campaigns and shaping public opinion trends, in the latter the focus is on the role of the media in the process of human development, through which the intellectual and civilizational levels of individuals are furthered. The latter is precisely the role the Emirati media has focused on, especially during the stage of state-building.

The study presents the beginnings of radio and television in the Emirates and the conditions of the emergence of the Emirati audio-visual media, indicating the most prominent features of the development of radio stations and TV channels. It also deals with the analysis of the state organs and legislations that are responsible for organizing and controlling the media process at the national level, protecting media rights on the one hand and the rights of society with respect to what is broadcast and published by the media on the other, as well as creating a media environment and helping the media perform its role in a manner that achieves its goals and functions within the society.

The study relies on internet sources such as articles, press investigations and media forums, as well as academic studies that deal with the Arab media, to support its argument. Its main methods are analytical and inductive.

The study will review the emergence of radio and television in the United Arab Emirates, the challenges that faced the launch of these specific media, how the country prepared and paved for those means, and how it affected the traditions prevalent in the country.

The study will consist of four main chapters, and a conclusion chapter. In the first chapter, an overview of the process in which the mass communication and media emerged will be examined. Next, there will be a survey of the theories and functions of media and communication in society.

The second chapter of the study is devoted to the history of mass media in the United Arab Emirates and the emergence there of radio and television networks.

The third chapter deals with the state of radio and television in the Emirates today, radio and television channels in the United Arab Emirates, and radio and television programs and regulations in the United Arab Emirates.

The fourth chapter concerns the positive and negative effects of mass media in the Emirati society and the future vision of media in the UAE. Then the discussion chapter evaluates the findings and the contradictions involving them, and explains their implications.

Finally, the conclusion contains the most important recommendations based on these findings.



2. OVERVIEW OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

In this chapter, I will discuss from a more general and global perspective the process through which media and communication tools and networks appeared, the importance of media and communication for building human personality, with specific emphasis on certain media functions in this regard.

2.1. THE APPEARANCE OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Communication is a process through which we send and receive information. It is derived from the Latin word '*communis*' which means 'common'. Thus Denis McQuail says that communication is a process which increases commonality, but also requires elements of commonality for it to occur in the first place. In modern society, mass communication is entrusted with the great task of communicating with a large number of people from different regions and from varied backgrounds. Communication between a mass medium and its audience is called mass communication (McQuail and Windahl, 1986). There are multiple ways in which communication is conducted, and these are collectively known as the "media" (Soma, 2012: 33). The word "media" is the plural form of the Latin word '*medium*', and it is used as a collective noun to refer to newspapers, magazines, television, radio, films, the internet, etc (Suriyasarn, 1998: 34).

Human beings have realized the importance of media and communication since the dawn of history and have been keen to devise means that enabled it, starting from engraving on the walls of temples and tombs in ancient civilizations to clicking on “tablets” today. While in this long journey the forms of media have differed from one era to another, their fundamental goals remained constant, especially the transfer of news and information and the formation of public opinion, although each era has added some of its own features to this (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 11).

Today, the role of the means of communication in the life of modern human beings has escalated, so that we are truly living in the media era, especially thanks to the intermarriage of the information and communication revolutions, which resulted in a

qualitative development in the dissemination of information and the speed of its broadcast through various means of communication. The exchange of roles between the sender and the receiver in the communication process through what has become known as interactive communication has primarily assumed digital forms, most notably the electronic portals of the media (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 11).

These developments have contributed to the increasing dissemination of information that has become a source of power for those who own it or can access it. At the general level, most systems, including the political, economic and cultural systems, seek to obtain information for the survival of the system and for it to be able to interact with the members of the society as well as other systems. At the individual level, people seek access to information to achieve their social and psychological goals. The media is considered one of the main and important sources of information on which individuals depend in the modern era, through which individuals satisfy many needs and desires ranging from the need to know the best purchases in the markets and the desire to obtain information about public affairs in order to participate in the public sphere. Governments depend on media for their policies, as they take into consideration the changes in attitudes and demands in domestic and international public opinion. Moreover, the media is a key player in the process of social and cultural development (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 12).

The influence of the media on shaping human personality has significantly increased reaching all layers of society due to its ability to disseminate information non-stop across large spaces and various platforms, whether it is audible or readable such as newspapers and magazines, or visible like television channels, or interactive as in the case of websites and electronic portals. These means contribute to building convictions, attitudes and beliefs of individuals, and thereby influence their socialization. For all of these reasons concerning its functions and effects on human beings, the media occupies a special position in our day, when the developed world have become dependent on three pillars of social structure: politics, the economy and the media (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 12).

The media performs several major functions in society, the most prominent of which are providing the news; interpretation and analysis of events; guidance and formation of

attitudes and trends; dissemination of education and knowledge; development of human relationships and increasing social cohesion; advertisement; and, finally, the entertainment function (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 12).

Regardless of the multiplicity of media theories that explain the performance of the media, its functions, and its message, there is a difference between the way the nature and role of media are perceived in the developed countries and the way these are regarded in the developing world, of which the Arab countries are a part. Developed countries prioritize the media's functions of disseminating news, advertising campaigns and shaping public opinion trends. Developing countries, in contrast, focus on the role of the media in the process of human development – the formation of individual characters and advancement of their intellectual and civilizational levels. However, all of these latter functions of the media have developed hand in hand with the overall development of societies at the cultural, economic and political levels. The media was affected by all of this and affected it in turn (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 13).

In this context, it is interesting to note that the meaning of the word “media” itself has received a lot of attention and been given many definitions, as outlined by Muhammad Abdul Qadir Ahmed:

“Free and objective transmission of news and information in a media conveying news and facts correctly means that media targets the mind and does not aim for any purpose other than the media itself in order to distinguish between it and propaganda (Abu Shanab, 2001: 2).”

There are thus many in the developing countries who see that the media is a process that entails the publication of news, accurate information that focuses on honesty and frankness, addressing the minds of the masses, their supreme emotions, and uplifting them through enlightening them with knowledge and education, not through anesthesia and deception (Matar, 2003: 118). Obeid for instance, mentions media as “the objective expression of the mindset, spirit, inclinations and trends of the masses (Obeid, 2000).” The media, embodied in radio, television, newspapers and magazines, books, cinema and advertising, is one of the most important social institutions that affect the personality, values, ideas and practices of young people in the long term (Al-Hassan, 1998: 100).

2.2. THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

The main problem in this context concerns the definition of “development”. Since the 1940s, several theories have been propounded to define development but the definition of development has always been a contentious issue (Soma, 2012: 34).

After the Second World War, the governments of the newly independent nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America tried to be self-reliant while improving the socio-economic conditions of their people. Economists from developed countries advised them to save more and invest their capital on industrialization and urbanization. This marked the start of modernization theories. Rostow, in the 1960s, postulated the 'Theory of Growth' as a popular economic theory of development (Rostow, 1960). He emphasized GNP (Gross National Product) as a measure of a country's progress in development, and claimed that Third World nations should raise the desires of their populations for consumer goods so that they would be motivated to earn higher incomes. In this process the role of the mass media was important as it was believed to increase consumer desire through advertising (Singhal & Rogers, 1989).

The psychological theories of Everett Hagen and David McClelland also influenced the development discourse. As Singhal and Rogers noted, Hagen argued that Third World societies were composed largely of traditionalist members, whereas industrialized societies contained more innovative individuals. He argued that for development to occur, individual personalities had to change. More innovative personalities could be encouraged by improving literacy levels, by expanding the mass media, by urbanization and by promoting nationalism (Singhal & Rogers, 1989). McClelland's theory, on the other hand, emphasized the role of achievement motivation and the desire for excellence. He argued that the need for achievement encourages an individual to meet challenges, to take risks and to succeed in the face of difficulties (McClelland, 1951). Singhal and Rogers mentioned that industrialized nations contained individuals with high levels of achievement motivation, which led to a high level of national economic growth (Singhal & Rogers, 1989).

Melcote and Steeves, relying on dependency theorists such as Frank, Cardoso, Goulet, Baran, Sunkel, and Amin, observed that the main feature of the Third World was its dependent global economic position and they were seriously critical of the modernization theories (Melcote & Sleeves, 2001). According to Frank, "the development or underdevelopment in the third world nations was and is related to the economic development of Western Europe and North-America (Frank, 1996). The core concept of dependency theory was that the underdevelopment of the third world nations was due to the economic exploitation of these nations by European colonial powers. In the 1970s, Rogers (1976) put forward a new approach of development. This new approach included factors such as equality of distribution of information and socio-economic benefits, popular participation in self-development, planning and execution, self-reliance and integration of tradition within modernity.

Thus the theories from 1950s to 1980s advocated economic growth and social development as the main indicators of development. Along with this, the focus was on poverty reduction, generating productivity and employment, improving physical quality of life by providing material needs. In the 1990s, the objectives of development remained the same; only the approach to achieve them was different (Soma, 2012: 36).

Development, in its general meaning, is the process in which someone or something grows to become more advanced, and advancement means entering a new realm of achievement and creation of something, such as providing products and services, improving skills, capabilities, quality, etc.¹ Hijab (2000), in his book *Media and Comprehensive Development*, defined development as "the outcome of scientific efforts used to organize joint governmental and popular activities at various levels to mobilize existing resources or that can be found to meet the necessary needs according to a drawn-out plan and in light of the general policies of society."

Development is no longer limited to the economic dimension only, but has become much broader and more comprehensive. There is almost unanimous agreement among

¹ Cambridge Dictionary. [online] <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/development>. [accessed on 25 December 2019].

researchers studying developmental media to conceptualize of development in a more comprehensive manner, where development is a dynamic, comprehensive, complex, deep, conscious, and deliberate process. It aims to bring about broad, comprehensive and profound transformations in society and in various economic, social, and cultural fields (Al-Mahmoud, 2004: 247). This confirms that it is a process to be adapted to special circumstances, capabilities and material and human resources, and therefore cannot be imported or borrowed in a ready-made manner. Rather, it is a project that must be worked on (Al-Mahmoud, 2004: 247).

The modern literature on development confirms that development is a comprehensive and sustainable process of civilization, and it is based primarily on the human being and is made for the sake of the human being itself. The media is thus to be perceived as an important pillar of this sustainable and comprehensive development process (Abu Alsaeed, 2009: 225).

2.3. FUNCTIONS OF MASS MEDIA

According to Agarwal and Gupta, mass communication is the process of delivering information, ideas, and attitudes to a sizeable and diversified audience through use of media developed for that purpose (Aggarwal & Gupta, 2001). Mass communication has gained immense social significance because of the development of mass media, like newspapers, radio, television, internet etc. (Soma, 2012: 43).

Denis McQuail (1987) emphasizes one more function as definitive for mass media, and that is its mobilizing function. Nearly everywhere, the media is expected to advance national interests and promote certain key values and behavior patterns, but this is especially so in times of crisis. And in certain developing societies, as well as in many socialist states, a mobilizing role is formally allotted to the media.

The following set of basic ideas about the media's purpose in society has been taken from Denis McQuail's book 'Mass Communication Theory':

- a. Information: providing information about events and conditions in society and the world, indicating relations of power, facilitating innovation, adaptation and progress.
- b. Correlation: explaining, interpreting and commenting on the meaning of events and information, providing support for established authority and norms, socializing, coordinating separate activities, consensus building, setting orders of priority and signaling relative status.
- c. Continuity: expressing the dominant culture and recognizing sub-cultures and new cultural developments, forging and maintaining commonality of values.
- d. Entertainment: providing amusement, diversion, means of relaxation, and reducing social tension.
- e. Mobilization: campaigning for societal objectives in the sphere of politics, war, economic development, work and sometimes religion.

The “Hypodermic Needle Theory” suggests that the media has a direct and powerful influence on audiences. The theory was developed in the 1920s and 1930s after researchers observed the effect of propaganda during World War I and incidents such as Orson Welles’ “War of the Worlds” broadcast. It became the dominant way of thinking about media influence during the subsequent decades. The Hypodermic Needle theory is a linear communication theory which suggests that a media message is injected directly into the brain of a passive, homogenous audience. This theory suggests that media texts are closed texts and audiences are influenced in the same way.²

The “agenda-setting theory” states that the news plays an integral part in the shaping of political realities. The amount of time spent on an issue and the information relayed in a news story, along with the story's position, determines how much a reader learns and the amount of importance placed on the issue.³ According to McCombs and Shaw, when the media reflect on the views of a candidate during a campaign, they are also shaping and

² Lessonbucket. [online] <https://lessonbucket.com/vce-media/units-3-4/agency-and-control/communication-theories/>. [accessed on 10 June 2020].

³ Study. [online] <https://study.com/academy/lesson/agenda-setting-definition-function-process-examples.html>. [accessed 10 June 2020]

determining the issues of importance (McCombs & Shaw, 1989). This can ultimately set the agenda of a political campaign. But in Vilanilam's view, the media are as much influenced by society as society is influenced by the media, and the impact is mutual and continuous (Vilanilam, 2005).

In a society, the media perform certain functions as agenda setter, as watch-dog and as gate-keeper. As we have seen, according to the agenda-setting theory of the media, setting public agenda is one of the most important functions of the press and other mass media. McCombs and Shaw claim that the media instructs audiences about what the public issues are, and also how much importance is to be assigned to these issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1989). The gate-keeping concept of the media suggests that there is a long selection process by the editors and publishers of newspapers and other news organs before any material is presented to the readers as news. The concept of news is thus constructed by the editors and media professionals, who are the gatekeepers in the media industry (Vilanilam, 2005). Finally, the media have the watchdog function, as they speak for the people, represent the interest of the people, and serve as checks on the government. Schuepp argues that like a watchdog who shows constant loyalty to its owner by protecting him from any possible outside interference infringing his security and rights, the media is responsible for being loyal to the society in which it functions, as the watchdog of the society and not of the government, and should thus attack anybody who threatens democracy, freedom of speech, and the basic rights of the people in that society (Schuepp, 2000).

The media also plays a notable role in the economic, political and social development of a country. In the political sphere, the media has an important role to play in the areas of democracy and good governance, political transparency, foreign policy, human rights, war on terrorism, and public relations. In the economic sphere, we can find media's role in the areas of economic policy and growth, economic empowerment, advertisements and tourism, business and investment, etc. In the social sphere, the media helps manage social issues, such as population control, education, food security, and public health (Soma, 2012: 47-48).

Raymond Williams argued in his book, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, that we have to see the technologies as being socially shaped by the political economy of the institutions involved in their development. As a result, how a technology evolves and how it is used is a matter of social and political choice; Williams discounted the idea that technologies themselves may shape such choices as ideological, believing that it obscures the element of social choice in ways that implicitly support the control by existing powerful interests (Williams, 1974: 131). John Fiske in his book, *Television Culture*, states that culture is the generation and circulation of meanings and pleasures within a society; and television is a bearer and provoker of meanings and pleasures in that society (Fiske, 1987).



3. THE HISTORY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION IN THE UAE

In this chapter, we will look at the emergence of radio and television in the United Arab Emirates, and that of media law that accompanied it.

3.1. THE EMERGENCE OF RADIO-BROADCASTING IN THE UAE

Local radio stations in the UAE have largely maintained their standing with the audiences and within the larger world of media, challenging the idea that every new medium replaces what preceded it. Radio is the medium that emerged in the beginning of the last century, carrying with it the ethereal waves that fed the minds of listeners in peace and war (Ibrahim, 2017).

The Emirati radio-broadcasting history is revealing in the way it reflects the process of development and spirit of renaissance that has characterized the Emirati society. It proceeded at an accelerated pace and took tremendous leaps, but it was not in the air but on solid ground that it presented an informative entertainment: an enlightening and educational message that has preserved the national identity. At the same time, it has opened up to the cultures of the world without fear, hesitation or confusion. The UAE leadership has from the beginning been aware that the media should utilize both the audial and visual forms, to be a platform through which the citizen's voice can be heard wherever they are. They considered the media an open university, informing, educating and enlightening -a role that cannot be overlooked in the process of developing and modernizing the society-, as well as preserving and illuminating the Arab identity (Al-Khaja, 2013).

The UAE established its media related vision at both the regional and international levels from the very beginning, by clarifying that its main role is to build and preserve the social fabric of the homeland and the dignity and privacy of the citizens, keeping them away from defamation, slander, crisis, and conflict. The history of this vision of the Emirates concerning media has been one of determined effort (Al-Khaja, 2013).

Going back to the very beginning of this history, we see that the British, in an effort to prevent Arab aid to the UAE in the early 1960s, cut off its people's communication with Arab media broadcasters, which resulted in the necessity of instituting a radio broadcasting station, which was the first official station in the history of the country (Al-Madani, 2019).

This radio station, which was known to the public simply as “*the station*”, started broadcasting in 1962 from “Al-Mirqab” in Sharjah, which was initially established as a runway for British Royal Air in 1932. The first radio device that entered the UAE was attended by the English director of Sharjah Airport Station (James) in 1934. At that time, he invited both Abd Al-Latif Al-Sarkal and his son Nasser to listen to the strange device at the airport lounge in the presence of Khan Sahib Hussein (Abdulrahman, 1998). The British commissioner in Sharjah chose “Sawt Al-Sahel” as the name of the radio station, along the lines of “Coast Guard Force”. This radio subsequently came under the supervision of the Development Office that was instituted by the “Trucial States Council of the Emirates”, which was established in 1952 (Al-Madani, 2019).

The radio station “Sawt Al-Sahel” continued broadcasting its entertainment and educational programs until the early 1970s, which witnessed the foundation of the United Arab Emirates, after which it was bought by the latter, changing its name to “Dubai Radio” and launching it in a new format on the same frequency (Al-Madani, 2019).

The UAE saw the emergence of the first private and unofficial popular radio, which began broadcasting from the Emirate of Ajman in the period 1961-1965, thanks to the individual efforts by Rashid Abdullah bin Hamdha Al Alili (Khamis, 2013).

These first radio stations were followed by several others. The “Abu Dhabi Radio” was launched in February 1969, and its name was changed in 1971 to “The Voice of the United Arab Emirates from Abu Dhabi” to become the official radio of the country, and focused on the coverage of national celebrations. **Error! Bookmark not defined.** “The Holy Quran Radio” was established in 1979, which specializes in broadcasting various religious and family instruction programs. **Error! Bookmark not defined.** The “Emarat

FM” Radio was founded in 1995, and is one of the most popular radio stations locally and in the larger Gulf region, due to its successful embodiment of the Emirati and Gulf tradition that characterizes all its programs. The “Star FM” Radio was established in 2009, and it combines Arab with Western characteristics, and broadcasts the latest international news, especially targeting the Arab youth demographic. The “Abu Dhabi Classic FM” Radio was established in 2009, to become the first radio station airing classical music in the country (WAM, 2013).

The “Dubai Radio” was founded in 1971 by Riyadh Al-Shuaibi, and was placed on the frequency of the “Sawt Al-Sahel Radio” after the latter was discontinued. It contained news programs and live broadcasts that aim to communicate with the audience, listen to their problems and seek to solve them, along with other programs of culture and, specifically, poetry (WAM, 2013).

In 2011, the new “Dubai FM” radio station, launched by the Dubai Media Incorporated, began to provide targeted and diversified content, under the supervision of a group of the most talented local and Arab cadres, to address various groups of society (WAM, 2013).

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi inaugurated “Sharjah Radio” in 1972, which pays great attention to the well-being of Arab and Muslim citizens, and in November of 2000, the voice of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi was heard, announcing the reopening of “UAE Radio” from Sharjah, and demanded its employees to seek the good to benefit people, and to avoid sickness and what hurts modesty or causes divisions among people (WAM, 2013).

The “Ras Al Khaimah Radio” was launched in 1972 from its headquarters in Al-Mairid area, to broadcast its programs in Arabic, English and Urdu.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** In March 1978, “UAE Radio” was launched in Umm Al Quwain. It extended its broadcast to the other Arab Gulf countries. In 2006, “The Holy Quran Radio” was launched from Umm Al Quwain to broadcast enlightened Islamic thought, away from fanaticism and doctrinal differences, embodying the noble values of Islam (WAM, 2013).

In June 2006, the “Fujairah FM” radio station was launched, aiming to express the vision of the place and horizon that links it to the outside world while preserving the national identity. In August 2009, the “Zayed Radio of The Holy Qur’an” launched from Fujairah, with programs guided by Islamic principles and ethics.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** The “Radio 4 FM” from Ajman was established in September 2001, under the supervision of Ajman Private Studios, with the aim of communicating between members of the society and representatives of government departments, broadcasting in English, Hindi and Malayalam (WAM, 2013).

The above history of radio broadcasting in the UAE is intended to point out that the progress of the Emirati media is based on a historical heritage from which it originated, and that its foundation was not laid at a time of great material resources and technical capabilities. The Emirati people, despite the few resources available to them, were still able to achieve great success, a valuable experience that the younger generations of the Emirati nation must follow up on.

The Emirati radio plays a social role, as summarized by the following points (Falata, 1997):

- a. Consolidating values, customs and traditions, and refining the behavior of the individual and society, and even working to introduce and impart them outside the political and geographical boundaries.
- b. Managing social problems in different ways.
- c. Providing a good opportunity for the youth of the society to benefit from their free time in a fruitful way, through cultural and social programs, interviews, competitions and other useful programs.
- d. Protecting society members from destructive intellectual currents by preserving the prevailing values.
- e. In addition to its role in informing the audiences about political changes in general and the social changes involving other peoples of the world, directing internal public opinion, creating views and forming public opinion on global issues.

The Emirati media has followed closely the path and vision of the new union, as it emerged out of the Trucial Emirates, by playing the tune of the union, always in harmony with the national interest and kept promoting the higher interest of the nation and the welfare of its people as its highest goals.

3.2. THE EMERGENCE OF TELEVISION IN UAE

Television is one of the most important discoveries in the twentieth century in the field of communication. Due to its advantage of combining sound and image (particularly after the switch from black-and-white to color), it has outperformed other means of communication and spread to all parts of the world (Al-Aifa, 2003: 60).

Television is a complex media that uses words, visual images, and background sound to generate impressions stimulate thoughts. Therefore, a significant segment of Western intellectuals think that television provides a benefit that distracts from anxiety in a life of loneliness and isolation, and from the boredom of marital life, and thereby reduces family conflicts, and provides in general an instrument of democracy and dialogue (Al-Aifa, 2003: 60-62). Moreover, television as a mass medium is no longer just a tool for transmitting live or recorded news by satellites, but rather it has the extraordinary ability to persuade, influence and control (Dleo, 2018: 125-126).

Television was a major technical achievement in the UAE, which came to compete with more traditional arts and entertainment media like the theater and cinema. It also represented a major breakthrough in the news and communication world, and a serious challenge to the status of radio and communication devices like telephone, telegraph, etc., thanks to its ability to keep up with and transport and spread the experience of events. Hence, great value is attached to the idea of one connected world, under a single sky of communication. Television has multiple functions, which include news, marketing, entertainment, as well as other various social, political, religious, cultural, and educational services (Zueimi, 2006: 172-178).

On the emergence of television in the UAE, Al-Hamli says:

"Abu Dhabi TV is the first television that was opened in the UAE before the union of the Emirates, and its opening coincided with the third sitting day of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, on December 6, 1969, where it began broadcasting in two colors, Black and white, then on December 4, 1974, it switched to colored broadcasting, and after the establishment of the United Arab Emirates, the television was joined to the Ministry of information and Culture, and it became the official television of the country, under the name United Arab Emirates TV from Abu Dhabi".⁴

Abu Dhabi TV is credited with creating many media faces on its screen that viewers have come to know through it: Maryam Ahmed, Ali Salmin, Hamad Ali Al Hosani, Salem Omar, Muhammad Masoud Al Mazrouei, Rashid Al Dhaheri, Obaid Hamad Kaabous, Ahmed Salem, and Aida Hamza (Shablol, 2019).

Dubai TV was launched in Dubai, at the request of the late Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai at the time it made its first broadcast September 9, 1969. Its opening was attended by Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed and Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber, who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Southern Arab Gulf, and Sheikh Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Minister of Guidance and News. The opening included the broadcast of a recorded speech by the late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Crown Prince of Kuwait at that time, and Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum delivered a speech in which he thanked Kuwait, and Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber delivered a speech about the relations between Kuwait and Arab Gulf countries. The Dubai TV broadcasts began in black and white. Later, Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum decided to establish color television, which began broadcasting on September 1, 1974, and was officially opened on December 1, 1974 during the celebrations of the third National Day of the United Arab Emirates (Shablol, 2019).

Sharjah TV started its terrestrial broadcasting on November 2, 1989 and switched to satellite broadcasting on October 1, 1996, and created a new channel for broadcasting religious programs that was officially launched on March 22, 1997 in more than one language, and in 2009 a decree (No. 25) was promulgated by Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin

⁴ Laha Magazine. 2019. [online] <https://www.lahamag.com/article/128081>. [accessed on 2 March 2020].

Muhammad Al Qasimi, Member of the High Council and Ruler of Sharjah, to found the Sharjah Media Incorporate, as a government institution concerned with developing the media sector in the Emirate of Sharjah. The goals of the institution are to contribute to the development of the national media cadres, to keep pace with the developmental requirements of the era (Shablol, 2019).

Several government and private TV channels were created in the UAE territory during the 1990s to provide services to viewers: Ajman TV (1998), Ras Al Khaimah TV (2008), Fujairah TV, Al Dhafra TV (2010), Baynunah Channel (2013), in addition to several local radio stations (Shablol, 2019).

3.3. MEDIA LAW IN UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The leadership of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the President of the UAE, and his brother His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, have established favorable conditions for the media to develop further. In this respect, the new law for media activities in the UAE represents a qualitative shift in terms of its comprehensiveness, since it is not limited to journalistic activities and publications, as was the former law issued in 1980. This change is consistent with the trends in the development of the media industry (Ghabbash, 2009).

The new media law came to enhance journalistic freedom in the UAE and contribute to political and economic empowerment to serve developmental goals and reinforce national identity, and keep pace with professional and technical developments occurring in the media sectors in all forms in the country (Ghabbash, 2009).

According to the the Federal Law No. 11 of 2016, the UAE National Media Council is the supervising federal authority responsible for the media, including its free zones. The National Media Council oversees traditional media such as press activities, publishing, audio and visual broadcasts, movies and electronic media, digital media, and electronic publications.⁵

The National Media Council has a legal personality, independent budget and the necessary legal capacity to carry out all actions that ensure the achievement of its goals. It is attached to the Council of Ministers, the headquarters of the main council are in the city of Abu Dhabi, and it can establish branches or offices inside and outside the country.⁵

The National Media Council issues licenses to media institutions and follows up all contents of the print, published and visible media within the country and those imported from abroad to the country. According to the law, the National Media Council is concerned with the following:

- a. Drawing up the country's media policy.
- b. Preparing media legislation and ensuring its implementation.
- c. Coordination of media policy among the member Emirates in line with the country's policy inside and abroad.
- d. Supporting the Federation and clarifying the concept of national unity.

Media institutions and the mass media in the UAE are bound by the regulations and controls issued by the council, and they are also obliged to provide the information and data required by the council to achieve its purposes.⁵

⁵ UAEGATE, Report, 2017. <https://u.ae/ar-ae/media/media>. [accessed 10 February 2020]

4. RADIO & TV BROADCASTING IN THE UAE TODAY

In this chapter, radio and television institutions and channels in the United Arab Emirates will be discussed in terms of their actual conditions and what is expected of them regarding them in regard to their role in solving the media-related issues in the current United Arab Emirates society.

4.1. THE EMIRATI MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

A study conducted in 2014 by a market research company based in UK called TNS Global found that the United Arab Emirates has one of the highest television viewing rates in the world, with 86 percent of the respondents saying they watch TV at least once a day (Fanack, 2012).

Television broadcasts, like all conventional Emirati media, are concentrated among a small group of media companies, who have either direct links with the government or positive relations with the ruling family (Fanack, 2012).

All terrestrial broadcasting stations are parts of larger umbrella groups such as the Abu Dhabi Media Company, the Dubai Media Incorporate and the Sharjah Media Incorporate. However, the vast majority of Emiratis choose to watch foreign channels from among the hundreds available to them via satellite (Fanack, 2012).

Figures from 2013, issued by T-view Company, listed seven channels of MBC networks owned by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the list of the top ten most-watched channels in the United Arab Emirates, in addition to Asianet Middle East and Asianet News owned by India, and the Hindi-speaking channel Sony TV (Fanack, 2012).

4.1.1. Dubai Media Incorporate

Founded in 2003 and owned by the Dubai government, Dubai TV, which replaced the Emirates TV Channel One, was launched in 1974. It mainly shows entertainment

programs in the Arabic language, but sometimes also shows religious content (Fanack, 2012).

Dubai One Channel is a successor to Channel 33, and was founded in 1977. It shows western TV series and movies, as well as content in Hindi (Fanack, 2012).

Sama Dubai Channel was launched in 2005 with a special focus on the Emirati and Gulf cultures and traditions intended for young audiences (Fanack, 2012).

4.1.2. Abu Dhabi Media (Emirates Media Incorporate)

The Abu Dhabi Media was established in 1969 as a government-owned media organization, and it supervises the broadcast of Abu Dhabi TV, the country's oldest TV channel. The channel shows news, current affairs and entertainment programs. Since its launch, Abu Dhabi TV has spawned several sister channels, including Abu Dhabi Drama TV, Abu Dhabi UAE TV, and is a channel directed towards local and national news, drawing attention to social and economic developments (Fanack, 2012).

4.1.3. Al Murad Group

The Al Murad Group is based in Ajman and is in charge of Ajman TV, which was launched in 1996. The channel broadcasts in both Arabic and English and provides entertainment programs directed largely to families (Fanack, 2012).

4.1.4. Sharjah Media Incorporate

Founded in 2009, as a government corporation to manage the media broadcast from Sharjah, Sharjah Media Incorporate currently owns Sharjah TV, which was founded in 1989 (Fanack, 2012).

Since its inception, the channel aims to meet the demands of citizens and residents through broadcast content in Arabic, English and Urdu, but with a primary focus on the Emirati culture and national affairs (Fanack, 2012).

4.2. RADIO PROGRAMS IN UAE

4.2.1. Abu Dhabi Radio Programs

The Abu Dhabi Radio station, which started broadcasting February 25, 1969 is the official radio station of the UAE since its establishment in the early 1970s and remains one of the most important stations in the UAE. The Abu Dhabi Radio broadcast hours reach 20 hours per day. The radio focuses on news and live broadcast programs, which constitute 55 percent of the total programming (Al-Mushikhi, 2008: 183).

4.2.1.1. Studio One Program

“Studio One”, which started broadcasting in 1986, is one of the most popular programs of the Abu Dhabi Radio. It is presented by the manager of Abu Dhabi Radio, Jaber Obaid, and the radio presenter Ahmad Al-Muzaini. The program airs in the morning for two hours from 11 AM, and is repeated at 9 PM. Studio One broadcasts in its new format daily except on Thursdays and Fridays, and it dedicates the Saturday and Sunday programs every week to the live discussion of various local issues that concern the community at large, based on researches and opinion polls in that field. On Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, it reaches live audiences via various means of communication, such as text messages, telephone, fax, e-mail, and also contacts institutions, corporations and agencies relevant to the topic. The program team visits a remote area in the country each month to communicate with local residents and share their issues. The importance of this program lies in its honesty and objectivity in sharing issues and concerns of the people live on air, and then contacting government ministers and other officials responsible for providing public services, in order to provide solutions to these issues and to know who from the government departments fell short in their performance of duty towards the society (Al-Mushikhi, 2008: 183-184).

On this special broadcasting experience in the Arab Gulf region, the manager of Abu Dhabi Radio says the following:

“We are not a party against anyone, and we will not be biased except for the right, justice and objectivity, and the honesty of sharing news regarding the issues and mass

problems that concern a large segment of people. So the program will not address any problem or raise any issue without an objective field study, or provide an official guide or dependence on an approved official document, or a personal presence of the person responsible of the issue to the headquarters of the radio. It will present what enhances his issue, and make absolutely sure of the right to adopt what is presented, and until we achieve the extent we hope. From the credibility of handling and sharing that does not convert the program to a platform for private or marginal issues (Al-Mushikhi, 2008: 184)."

A dedicated team follows up the issues raised by the audiences. They write daily reports on what is published in the local newspapers, follow up on the mass issues that are broadcasted and published by the various media channels, and then discuss how to present them in each of the program's episodes (Al-Mushikhi, 2008: 185).

Another program that the Abu Dhabi Radio is known for is "Bashaer Al Masaa", which is a variety program that includes cultural topics and songs, in addition to phone conversations with the audiences. The program was recently suspended despite the large number of followers inside and outside the UAE. Besides the Abu Dhabi Radio, there are many specialized radio stations that have appeared for different periods in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi as a response to the social and economic developments over the past three decades (Al-Mushikhi, 2008: 185).

4.2.1.2. The Quran Radio from Abu Dhabi

"The Quran Radio" was launched on May 23, 1979. Its broadcasts last for 24 hours, covering the UAE, the Arab Gulf region, as well as parts of the Indian subcontinent and Iran. Quran recitations cover 80 percent of the total daily broadcast. The radio aims to present Islamic culture in a simplified but interesting media style, through a diversity of programs pertaining to the domains of both faith and jurisprudence, under the guidance of the Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammad. The Quran Radio also produces many programs related to the Muslim family and programs intended for children (Al-Mushikhi, 2008: 185).

4.2.1.3. Emirates FM Radio

The Emirates FM Radio began airing December 1, 1995, and provides entertainment services, technical information and live interviews with singers, as well as Arabic music.

This radio focuses on the young demographic, and has one of the largest listener bases. It broadcasts to most of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jordan and Egypt (Al-Mushikhi, 2008: 185).

4.2.1.4. The Sound of Music Radio

The Sound of Music Radio was established on April 1, 1998, and broadcasts old Arabic songs with special focus on the lyric arts of Arab music, in addition to world music, especially well-known symphonies (Al-Mushikhi, 2008: 186).

4.2.1.5. Emirates Radio Network (Radio 1 & Radio 2)

Radio 1 and Radio 2 were established on July 1, 1980, broadcasting on FM waves, and are considered the most popular choice for fans of foreign music in the UAE. Radio 1 targets the youth and broadcasts modern popular songs from around the world. Radio 2 also targets the youth, and airs foreign popular songs from the past five decades or older, in addition to political news, sports and economic reports from inside and outside the UAE (Al-Mushikhi, 2008: 186).

4.2.1.6. The Urdu Program

This radio station was launched in Abu Dhabi in 1976, to serve residents of the Indian subcontinent, especially the Pakistani communities in the country. At the beginning its broadcasts lasted 3 hours per day, between 5 PM and 8 PM. Today its air time increased to more than 5 hours per day. All of its radio programs are produced locally (Al-Mushikhi, 2008: 186).

4.2.1.7. The Filipino Program

This program provides a radio service since September 26, 1991, and broadcasts two hours daily from 3 PM until 5 PM on two medium waves of length (810 & 657 KHz) and targets the Filipino speakers living in the UAE (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 175).

4.2.1.8. The French Program

This radio service started in 1977 and the broadcasting period is two hours per day from 1 PM until 3 PM. It broadcasts on two medium waves (810 KHz & 657 KHz). Fifty percent of the programs are produced locally; it is intended for the French-speaking audiences living in the UAE (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 175).

4.2.1.9. The English Program

This program was launched in 1969, and currently it broadcasts for three hours daily, from 12 PM until 3 PM. It targets the English-speaking community in the United Arab Emirates, and about 60 percent of their programs are locally produced. The programs of this service include variety programs, weekly updates on events, newly released foreign songs, interviews with foreigners visiting the UAE and highlights of the most important achievements in the country. This radio also informs its audiences of the social issues, seminars and conferences that take place within the country. The aim of this channel is to familiarize the English-speaking community with the customs, traditions, heritage and state of the country, and with the Arab viewpoint on domestic and international issues. The break-down of the types of programs broadcasted by this station is as follows: 21.3 percent News, 16.7 percent Drama, 16.7 percent Music, 14.8 percent Entertainment, 11.1 percent Cultural, 11.1 percent Services, and 8.3 percent Religious programs (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 181).

4.2.1.10. Popular Radio

This program started on April 16, 1983, broadcasts for two and a half hours daily from 4PM to 6.30PM, and targets the citizens of the UAE. It airs traditional and popular Gulf songs alongside discussions on the history of the region, as there are many arts registered in the popular language and passed through the generations. As Ahmed Salem, the former director of the radio said, “it is difficult to record the genes in the classical language because it will lose many of its features (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 180).”

The aim of the popular radio is to highlight the roots of the Gulf region's cultural heritage, and the breakdown of its programs is as follows: 53 percent devoted to lyrical and musical programs, 30 percent to drama, 10 percent to news, and 7 percent to religious programs. Popular Radio faces some problems such as weak resources, lack of response from listeners and poor broadcasting quality (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 180).

4.2.1.11. The Public Program

This program is presented in the Arabic language, and is the official voice of the state. It targets Arab listeners in the UAE and abroad. It produces about 85 percent of its programs locally. The programs of this service cover all kinds of cultural and religious activities, as well as news, services, variety programs and others. The types of programs provided by the public program in Abu Dhabi Radio station are 33 percent musical, 20 percent religious, 14.1 percent cultural, 13.7 percent news and politics, 5.2 percent drama, 4.3 percent services, 1.7 percent entertainment and 8 percent other types (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 178).

It is clear that the music programs constitute the highest percentage of programs provided by the Abu Dhabi Public Radio. The radio provides 80 songs per day by many Arab singers to satisfy all tastes. As the UAE has a large Arab community, the radio also provides religious programs, which occupy 20 percent of all programs. Religious programs include the recitation of the Holy Qur'an and various religious hadiths. Cultural programs occupy the third position among the most frequent types of broadcasts, with a percentage of 14.1. They are followed by programs devoted to news and political affairs, in the fourth place with a percentage of 13.7 percent, while radio drama makes up 5.2 percent of the total programs, which is a small percentage due to the lack of dramatic topics and production capabilities, as well as scarcity of actors, in the Emirates (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 179).

4.2.2. Dubai Radio Programs

Dubai Radio, which was called "Sawt Al-Sahel" during the era of British colonialism, is the oldest radio station in the Emirates. It has been broadcasting its programs from Sharjah

since 1966. When the country got its independence from the British colonial rule, it was renamed "Dubai Radio", and its ownership was transferred to the Dubai government and has since adhered to the rules and regulations of the state (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 184).

Dubai Radio was officially established in 1971 by Riyadh Al-Shuaibi, who moved from the former "Sawt Al-Sahel" Radio. It continued operating from the same frequency as "Sawt Al-Sahel" Radio, and its focus has been news and live broadcast programs that aim to communicate with the public, listen to their problems and seek to solve them, in addition to cultural and poetic programs (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 184).

Dubai Radio began with a limited broadcast time, which was only a few hours during the day, but it soon extended its duration to keep pace with the pace of the considerable development in the UAE. Its pioneering voice currently reaches all parts of the globe through a unique system of high-power broadcast stations on the medium and short waves. It later began broadcasting all day, offering its listeners a selection of news of current affairs, sports news and other hourly programs, as well as entertainment programs that include musical, theatrical, literary works, both classical and popular (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 184).

The distribution of the various Dubai Radio programs is: music and art programs with 25 percent, religious programs with 12 percent, the news with 11 percent, and drama and popular programs with 20 percent of the total broadcast time. This radio station is funded by the Dubai government but also depends on revenue from advertisements. After the Dubai Media Incorporated was established in 2003 to replace Dubai TV and Al Bayan newspaper, Dubai Radio had a new stint after the Dubai Media Incorporated announced its launch under the name Dubai Radio 93 FM, on January 1, 2014, to present new distinguished media content provided by the Dubai Media Incorporated. The radio's listeners have gotten used to the new and special content, based on the vision of the company based on innovation and quality, and in keeping with the government's strategic goals (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 185).

Dubai Radio addresses various segments of the community with a range of contemporary and classical music, but with a dynamic, youthful spirit. While Emirati and Gulf songs have come to constitute an important percentage of its overall program selection, some of Arabic music was added as a large part of the morning and evening entertainment programs, combining innovation with vitality (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 185).

4.2.3. Sharjah Radio Programs

The emirate of Sharjah is distinguished by its long history in the media field, whether in journalism or radio, and its constant commitment to cultural awareness through many cultural events and festivals in the fields of poetry and theater. These culminated in its being chosen as the capital of Islamic culture in 2014 (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 188). As an important part of this history, Sharjah Radio broadcast started on August 31, 1972, on the medium wave with a power of 50 kilowatts, as its broadcast reaches most of the country's regions. This radio has focused on cultural, religious and educational programs of a highly intellectual nature, hosting opinion formers, scholars and writers. Its most important programs at that time were “Nur al-Qur’an”, “the Islamic Magazine”, “School Radio” and “Smile You Are in Sharjah” (Al-Mushikhi, 2008: 186).

Today Sharjah Radio broadcasts many public educational programs, especially religious programs aiming to educate children, youth, and women by providing them with a culturally diverse, comprehensive and objective instruction, and raising their awareness in educational, religious and traditional values. Sharjah Radio has expanded its broadcasting in the country to reach the largest number of listeners. At the end of 2013, residents of the capital Abu Dhabi began to receive Sharjah Radio broadcast on the new frequency (96.3FM) for the first time, listening daily to Sharjah Radio’s programs with their distinctive content covering a wide geographical area of the country (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 189).

4.2.4. Ajman Radio Programs

Ajman had the first local radio in the history of the UAE - a popular radio established in 1961- with the personal efforts of Rashid Abdullah bin Hamda and continued until 1965 (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 190).

The new Ajman Radio called Radio 4 was established in September, 2001, under the supervision of Ajman Private Studios, with the aim of aiding the communication between the people and the representatives of government departments. This was followed by several radio stations that broadcast in English, Hindi and Malayalam. Radio 4 aimed to create the future of media in the region using a wide range of programs and content through new and exciting services that maintain and enhance the prestige of the radio station. Radio 4 has made an impression on its listeners with its entertainment programs including the best and latest Arabic songs, skilled broadcasters and a successful branding. Radio 4 was the first in the Arab world to make possible the transmission of radio sound via Ajman TV to listeners worldwide (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 191).

The program lineup of the radio includes a morning program called “Wa Ibtasama Al-Sabah”, which provides much useful information to its listeners at the beginning of the day, and “Sabah Al-Khair Ya Emarat”, which includes various topics, entertaining news, innovations, inventions and oddities and jokes (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 191). “Al-Rabia Wa Al-Nas” is a social program involving the listeners, government departments, public and private companies in voicing concerns about social problems and finding solutions for them. “Al-Rabia Café” program provides a wide choice of nutritional information for the listener in entertaining and humorous ways, and help people to choose the best food accompanied by the latest songs. “Ala Waraq Al-Ward” program provides a selection of songs requested by the listeners (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 191).

4.2.5. Ras Al Khaimah (RAK) Radio Programs

The old Ras Al Khaimah Radio was established April 10, 1972, and began airing on September 1, 1972. The reason for its establishment was the fact that the Abu Dhabi and Dubai radio stations did not have clear reception in the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, and

thus it was deemed necessary to create a radio station in the emirate. The management of the radio station was assigned to several individuals. In 1974, Mr. Abdullah Al-Kouk was the director of the radio. In 1999, His Highness Sheikh Saqr bin Abdullah bin Hamid Al Qasimi took the position of the Vice President of the Department of Information and Culture in Ras Al Khaimah, and in the same year Mr. Abdullah Mohamed Al-Ustaz was assigned as the General Director of the radio station (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 192).

The radio station went by the name of Ras Al-Khaimah Radio in the United Arab Emirates and continued to use this name until 1978 until a decision was issued by the Ministry of Information and Culture to unify the radios and use the name of the country instead of the emirate's name, and continued its activities under the name of the UAE Radio from Ras Al Khaimah (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 192).

RAK Radio had two broadcasting periods, the first from 6 until 10 in the morning, and the second from 4 PM until 10 in the evening. In 1973, it introduced a program in the English language for an hour, and in 1974 it produced another program in the Urdu language, also for an hour. These services are still ongoing today (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 192).

4.2.6. Umm Al Quwain Radio Programs

Umm Al Quwain FM is a pioneering contemporary radio managed by a young but experienced team, and special style of presentation by various Arab nationalities. It provides a unique mix of Arabic music and news, and covers the most important events and marketing offers. In addition to the programs with live audience, Umm Al Quwain FM provides daily news feeds every half an hour starting from 7 in the morning until 1 after midnight (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 200).

The official broadcast of Umm Al Quwain FM began on March 1, 1999. It has been broadcasting 24 hours a day since that date, keeping abreast of every new development in the global media, advertising and technical world. In 2012, the name of “Umm Al Quwain FM” was changed to “Hayat FM” broadcasting on the frequency 95.6, and it has

managed to attract a large number of listeners to its programs (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 201).

The new radio station carries a range of entertainment programs, including the “Sabah Al-Hayat” program, which accompanies listeners on their morning commute to work, the “Hayatona Al-Yawm” program, which covers all events in the UAE, and hosts various specialists in various health and cosmetic fields, and the “Thekrayat” program, which takes the listener to the past to hear the best songs of the 1980s and 1990s. Hayat FM also has many other programs that offers its listeners a novel musical and entertainment experience. Hayat FM targets the age group between 18 and 35 years, and offers music and entertainment in a distinctive radio station (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 201).

Through its distinguished programs Umm Al Quwain Radio was able to find a broad listener base, which is why advertising companies competed among each other to reserve advertising space and to sponsor many programs. In 2006 Qur’an Radio was launched by Umm al-Quwain to broadcast about Islamic enlightened thought, away from intolerance and doctrinal differences, and embodying the tolerant values of Islam (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 201).

4.2.7. Fujairah Radio Programs

Fujairah FM Radio was launched June 2006 expressing a vision in keeping with that of the country and the horizon that links it to the outside world while preserving the national identity. It includes many different programs. Fujairah Radio belongs to Fujairah Media, which owns 4 radio stations: Fujairah Radio (92.6), Spice FM (105.4) Coast FM (103.2) and the Sports channel (1053AM) (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 202).

Fujairah Radio broadcasts in the Arabic language. It airs news programs with Monte Carlo Radio, such as: “Your Dream is True”, “Sabah Al Fujairah”, “Ala Hawak” and “Station”. It also has programs covering culture, sports and social activities, such as: “Your Voice is Heard”, “Evening Share” and “Heartbeat”. Fujairah Radio is on 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and its broadcasts reach the United Arab Emirates, Saudi

Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan, Lebanon and the entire Arab world (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 202).

In August 2009, Zayed Radio for the Holy Qur'an was launched from Fujairah. Zayed Radio for the Holy Qur'an, similar to some other media institutions, operates under the Fujairah Culture and Information Authority, which was established by a decree issued by the ruler of Fujairah in 2006. As guided by Islamic principles and ethics, and as an on-going charity in the spirit of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan - the founder of the United Arab Emirates, the radio broadcast religious programs that highlight the moderation of Islam and tolerance as one of its values (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 202).

The radio follows the principles the true Islamic religion is based on, which are belief in God, belonging to the country, loyalty to the ruler, commitment to the values of Islam and Arabism, providing a climate for creativity and thought, respect for the human mind and dignity, ensuring integrity and assuming a stance of moderation (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 202).

The radio's programs for the most part center on the Holy Qur'an. They include Qur'an recitations from famous reciters from the Arab world, as well as a number of religious radio programs that have been produced in different Arab countries under the supervision of a group of specialists in religious media (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 203).

4.3. TV PROGRAMS IN THE UAE

4.3.1. Abu Dhabi TV Programs

The United Arab Emirates TV from Abu Dhabi began its (black and white) broadcast on August 6, 1969, and its color broadcast on December 4, 1974. At its beginning the United Arab Emirates TV from Abu Dhabi used the PAL system and on the lines of 625 lines and 50 hertz frequency. The UAE TV from Abu Dhabi began broadcasting the second program in English language on the May 15, 1983 (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 209).

The TV broadcasts the two programs from the main studios in Abu Dhabi and has television broadcasting stations in Abu Dhabi, Umm Al Quwain, Al Ain, Habshan, Jabal Al Dhanna, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Dibba, and Khor Fakkan. And as its service developed, the broadcast of the first program came to cover about 70 percent of the region and reached about 90 percent of the total population, whereas the broadcast of the English program covered about 40 percent of the region and reached 65 to 70 percent of the total population. The aim was to extend the coverage of both of its programs extend to all parts of the country (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 210).

The channel's broadcasts cover all parts of the Arab world and many regions in India up to New Delhi, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, the northern Mediterranean, Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, the southern part of France, Spain and Portugal, as well as the African continent including Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern and Central Africa all the way to the equator (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 219).

The Abu Dhabi TV broadcast continues all day on the terrestrial and satellite channels. The second program starts daily at 4 PM and goes on until midnight, but the hours of the TV broadcast increases as needed for coverage of sports events and other activities (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 210). UAE TV from Abu Dhabi uses satellites to serve viewers by broadcasting the most important events in the Arab world, including live events, and the broadcasting hours via satellite are about 2,200 hours per year (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 213).

The program map of Abu Dhabi TV indicates great interest in Arabic programs produced locally and by other Arab countries, as foreign programs do not exceed 20 percent of all the programs. UAE TV produces monthly series, and 45 percent of the programs are produced in the UAE Studios. 10 percent of the programs focus on religion and social issues of women and other groups. Cultural programs constitute 5 percent and variety shows 15 percent of the total coverage (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 214).

There is a great attention to children's programs, because of their special position in the population of the country, and many scientific bodies have pointed out the importance of

television as an effective tool in raising children, referring to the TV as the third parent of the child. Many scientists conducted research on the impact of violence and crime in television programs on juvenile delinquency, on the basis of which a moral charter protecting children from low quality television programming was issued. The charter features the following ten articles (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 215):

- a. Prevent programs that offend the country, its leaders, or its history.
- b. Prevent programs whose content offends public morals.
- c. Prevent programs that suggest, incite or glorify crime.
- d. Prevent programs that destroy religious and national beliefs.
- e. Prevent programs that discourage or alienate working or seeking knowledge.
- f. Prevent programs that encourage unemployment and recklessness.
- g. Prevent programs that encourage the belief that success is achieved by luck.
- h. Prevent programs that contain offensive words or expressions.
- i. Prevent programs that promote disrespect for parents and the elderly.
- j. Prevent programs that make fun of people with disabilities and birth defects.

4.3.1.1. Abu Dhabi First Channel

Abu Dhabi First Channel is the first extension of the UAE TV from Abu Dhabi. While the television began broadcasting in August 1969, the Abu Dhabi channel in its new form, name and slogan "Abu Dhabi First", appeared in October 2008. The channel focuses on a variety of cultural, social, and debate programs, as well as entertainment including dramas and Arab films directed to all members of the Arab community, and a distinct news bulletin targeting the MENA region (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 223).

4.3.1.2. The Abu Dhabi Sports Channel

The Abu Dhabi Sports Channel 1 and Sports Channel 2 aim to develop local and Arab sports, by focusing on various sports activities. The sports channel was established in 1969. In October 2008 the channel underwent a transformation in form and content as it developed its capabilities, and began broadcasting the UAE league, the Saudi League matches. In 2008 it broadcasted the Olympics. The Abu Dhabi Sports Channel provides

full and comprehensive coverage of sports events at the local and regional levels (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 224).

4.3.1.3. The Abu Dhabi Drama Channel

The Abu Dhabi Drama Channel was launched in April, 2010 as a free Arab drama channel that broadcasts its series over 24 hours and without commercial breaks. The channel targets drama fans in the region, and it specializes in showing the best and latest productions of Arab drama series that have achieved great acclaim in this field. The Abu Dhabi Drama Channel show dramas made in Syria, Egypt, and the Gulf, in addition to some dubbed foreign series, so the channel offers its audience their favorite series and their beloved stars (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 225).

4.3.1.4. National Geographic Abu Dhabi

National Geographic Channel Abu Dhabi was launched in July 2009. It can be viewed for free, and invites viewers in the Middle East to change their view of the TV and the world through smart and creative programs presented in the Arabic language. This channel began broadcasting in the region after a contract agreement between the Abu Dhabi Media Company and the National Geographic Channel. The aim of the channel is to make people understand and protect the world through its well-reputed programs that are characterized by their realistic nature and ability to suit audiences' different tastes. This channel features documentaries and entertaining programs related to science, technology, animals, and nature, and offers explorations of cultural issues and contemporary events. The launch of National Geographic Abu Dhabi is a continuation of the National Geographic channels which are currently operating in the region, including the National Geographic Channel that was launched in the Middle East July 1998, National Geographic Adventure channel September 2007, and Natural Geographic Wild January 1998 (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 225-226).

4.3.1.5. Sky News Arabia channel

The first live broadcast of Sky News Arabia was at 8 PM UAE time on May 6, 2012. The channel broadcasts live news 24 hours a day, reaching more than 50 million homes in the Middle East and North Africa. Sky News Arabia is a joint venture between the Abu Dhabi Media Investment Corporation and the British "Sky" group. It features a novel approach to news coverage in the Arab world. The channel is committed to independence and impartiality in providing news, and to provide its viewers with important content from breaking news to sports news, including economy, technology and culture news. The channel is supported by an editorial advisory committee that is considered the first in the region, to ensure balance, accuracy and objectivity in the coverage of events and news (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 227).

4.3.2. Dubai TV Programs

The Dubai Channel was established in October 1992, and has since occupied a distinguished place on the map of satellite TV broadcasting in the Arab region. It began continuous broadcasting 24 hours a day and then set out to communicate with the Arabs living in Europe and America. An agreement was signed with the "Broadcasting" Company, to expand the coverage of Dubai Channel to the Americas, including the entire South America, in August 1995 (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 236).

Dubai Channel's goals are:

- a. Providing a better alternative for the local and Arab audience, and challenging channels from all over the world that show the Arab audience their cultural and social patterns and ideas in a negative or false light.
- b. Presenting the Arab-Islamic civilization and culture to the world in an advanced framework and in contemporary language, giving it the respectable status it deserves among other cultures of the world.
- c. Providing a civilized image for the Arab and foreign audiences in a way that confirms and enhances the position of Arabs other cultures of the world and in the global political and cultural fields, displaying the Arab community's civilizational vision in an undistorted manner.

- d. Highlighting Arab achievements and developments in the social, economic, cultural, sports and artistic fields, and presenting them to the world as a good model to follow (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 237).

The Dubai Channel offer a choice of news, entertainment and educational programs, focusing on covering the political, economic, cultural, artistic and sporting events of the region. The Dubai Channel has been able to achieve success and continuity in a way that reflects the overall development that transformed Dubai into the commercial capital of the Gulf region, and a success story in the world. It broadcasts a part of its programs and news in the English language, which attracts foreign viewers across the world, which gives them a new and objective perspective about everything that is happening in the Middle East (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 237).

4.3.3. Sharjah TV Programs

Sharjah TV Station opened February 19, 1989 under the patronage of His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi. The TV uses three main studios in addition to the linking studio, and is equipped with various technical resources and capabilities sufficient for various purposes like news broadcasting, local programs and in-studio interviews (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 243).

Sharjah TV seeks to achieve several goals within the strategic vision of the Emirate, some of which are given below (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 245-246):

- a. Developing Arabic and Islamic culture.
- b. Supporting and consolidating the national character and highlighting its key properties.
- c. Educating the family, children, students, and the general public, and helping curb bad kinds of moral behavior.
- d. Paying special attention to the large non-Arab Muslim community living in the country.
- e. Providing entertainment in line with the aforementioned goals.

On Sharjah TV, religious and cultural programs occupy 27.3 percent of the total hours of broadcast on the public program; services and popular programs cover 23.7 percent; while political and news programs 13 percent; variety and other programs 24 percent; while the Urdu Program occupies 12 percent of the schedule. In addition, the channel provides a major news broadcast at 2:30 in the evening and another at 6:30 and 7:30 at the end of the programming. It also provides news in Urdu (Al-Ali & Yunis, 2015: 246-247).

4.4. LOCALIZATION IN THE EMIRATI MEDIA INSTITUTIONS AND ITS ROLE IN SOLVING LOCAL MEDIA ISSUES

The Emirati media now lags far behind its golden age, which it witnessed during the 1970s and 1980s, in terms of the number of young Emirati professionals and talents it can deploy. It used to feature more experienced Arab media professionals, who laid the first building block for the Emirati media. The new graduates from journalism schools today lack the boldness and passion of the previous media generation (Abu Nama, 2013).

Even though it is not by itself the key to every other problem, the issue of localization in media institutions and the lack of national cadres remains the most pressing issue in the Emirati media. More effective solutions are needed for this problem that has dominated the media reality in the country for nearly two decades (Al-Mansouri, 2013). The efforts of the Emirates media institutions to sharpen the national cadres are known, but in the field, when one enters the production and editing rooms, the gap between the logo and the reality remains large (Al-Rashid, 2017).

The size of the national cadres and their competencies in the editorial and artistic departments are still inadequate. The rate of their achievements with respect to the localization of the profession is still slow and disproportionate compared to their pace in the areas of technical modernization and development. The issue of localization of the media cadres in the country is a goal, and a national and moral responsibility that everyone in the UAE should come together to achieve (Al-Rashid, 2017).

The official figures show that the percentage of localization in the national media institutions has increased to 25.2 percent. This percentage may have increased slightly more over the past few years, but the President of the National Media Council did not specify a “quota” or a specific percentage about citizens working in media institutions in order to avoid unrealistic localization of marginal jobs, because media requires a combination of talent and professionalism (Badwan & Al-Jamal, 2013).

It should be noted that the goal of localization does not contradict the attraction of external talent to the UAE. On the contrary, foreign talent contributes to the strength of the economy and provides great opportunities for citizens and residents. Localization in the UAE is one of the most important topics in the country’s agenda at the level of the Council of Ministers. The government of the UAE attaches great importance to it, as they have developed laws targeting localization in ministries, federal entities, governmental, semi-governmental, local government companies and all economic sectors (Abdulfattah, 2020).

Here are the approved laws in the UAE related to localization:

- a. Adoption of localization systems and setting new targets according to which the localization rates are raised in strategic sectors. These include civil aviation, communications, banking, insurance and real estate development, which contributes to creating about 20 thousand job opportunities for citizens over three years with an average of about 6700 jobs yearly. Making these part of a studied plan that ensures directing the local experiences in the relevant sectors according to their specific needs.
- b. Establishing a national fund of 300 million dirhams to support and rehabilitate job seekers, so that specialized rehabilitation programs are designed for male and female citizens. Providing them with the necessary practical, applied and theoretical skills, in various fields and in a manner that suits their capabilities and interests, and that makes them an added value within specific experiences. The goal is to incorporate them into the private sector, which constitutes a major part of the developmental process of the country.
- c. Adoption of a new system to train 8,000 graduates in government and semi-government companies and private sector companies for a period of six to twelve

months, with monthly bonuses for the trainee being paid at least in the amount of 10 thousand dirhams and 40 percent support by the government.

- d. Opening administrative or supervisory positions, support services in ministries and federal agencies only to citizens, with care being taken to choose the appropriate competencies in the administrative sectors based on the principle of merit.
- e. Amending the labor and pension laws to equalize the privileges among workers in the private sector, the public sector and the semi-government sector. Re-calculating their retirement pensions accordingly, and supporting the work of citizens in the private sector, encouraging them to diversify their base career options, and motivating them to gain new experiences.
- f. Requiring all governmental, semi-governmental, federal and local companies and private sector companies to give priority to citizens in 160 professions targeted for localization, by forming a committee from the Ministry of Human Resources and Localization, the Federal Authority for Human Resources, the Federal Authority for Identity and Nationality, the General Authority for Pensions, Social Insurances, the Pension Fund and Retirement Benefits of the state of Abu Dhabi, in order to put in place appropriate mechanisms to verify the commitment to offer targeted occupations first to citizens.
- g. Furthermore, an annual localization index will be established in all sectors to evaluate the extent of the commitment to the above decisions concerning localization. Exceptional government incentives are also provided to support and reward institutions successful in implementing the localization system. Also, an annual celebration is to be organized by the Council of Ministers to honor the most important local and foreign economic personalities who have supported the localization drive (Abdulfattah, 2020).

These and other similar decisions are in the interest of the national media institutions as an integral part of the effective institutional development of the United Arab Emirates, which demands a rise in levels of localization.

4.5. ARABIC LANGUAGE BROADCASTING CHANNELS IN THE UAE

The UAE boasts 85 free Arabic satellite channels, representing 17 percent of the number of satellite channels in the Arab countries. A report issued by the Arab Advisors group entitled "Satellite TV Channels in the Arab World 2011" stated that the number of free satellite TV channels in the Arab world had increased by 10.5 percent, as the number of free satellite TV channels broadcast on the Arabsat, Nilesat and Norsat satellite systems reached 538 channels (the number includes the channels under trial broadcast) by the end of April 2011, compared to the 487 satellite channels at the end of April 2010. The report pointed out that the number of experimental satellite channels broadcast on Nilesat and Arabsat systems in the Arab countries had reached 37 at the end of April 2011, while the number of working satellite channels at the end of the same period was 501 channels, compared to 448 active satellite channels at the end of April 2010. The report indicated that the channels owned by the private sector made up the majority of free channels. These channels accounted for about 66.6 percent, followed by the channels owned by government agencies, which amounted to about 20 percent of the total Arab channels. It underlined that the number of free satellite TV channels targeting the Arab region had grown, as the number of free satellite TV channels increased by 438 percent from the beginning of 2004 to April 2011 (AAG, 2011).⁶

According to Mohamed Al Shawa, a research analyst at the Arab Advisors Group, "the number of private satellite channels exceeds the number of government-owned channels, as the number of satellite TV channels owned by the private sector has reached more than two-thirds".⁶ Al-Shawa attributed the increase of channels owned by the private sector to the effects of the liberalization of the audio-visual sectors in the region, pointing to the shrinking share of the government sector, which currently holds one-fifth of the total of operating channels. He said that Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have the largest number of satellite TV channels in the Arab world, with a share ranging between 17 to 17.6 percent.⁶

⁶ AAG, Annual Report, 2011, <http://www.arabadvisors.com/search/node/Satellite%20TV%20channels%20in%20the%20Arab%20world%202011> [accessed 15 March 2020].

The Arab satellite systems Nilesat and ArabSat are hosting a number of major TV service providers, such as the Abu Dhabi Media Company, Dubai Media, Showtime, ART, Al Jazeera, Al Majd and MBC channels.⁶



5. THE EFFECTS OF RADIO & TV BROADCASTING IN THE UAE

In the chapter, I will address the UAE channels in terms of their content, the extent of their effect on their audiences, and their ability to achieve their near and long-term goals.

5.1. THE EFFECT OF THE EMIRATI RADIO & TV CHANNELS

The media plays a growing role in our time, due to the amazing technological development the world is witnessing under the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This development not only opens up new platforms wherever it originates, but also extends its reach and influence to spread to other societies (Abdulrahman, 2015: 122-143).

The United Arab Emirates is aware of the great importance of the media sector, and the important role that all types of media play in supporting the development process as well as its educational role. For this reason, it has provided all the necessary resources to support the media, by building an advanced infrastructure and keeping pace with the latest technological developments, while at the same time guaranteeing the media the necessary freedom to play their intended role through new legislation (Abdulrahman, 2015: 122-143).

Indeed, the media has been playing a crucial role in supporting the developmental model of the United Arab Emirates and has proven to be the backbone of the process of political empowerment that the country has been experiencing since 2005. It has helped the country make great qualitative leaps in developing its political life in general and advancing the role of women in particular (Abdulrahman, 2015: 122-143).

Constantly working for the development of the media sector, the authorities in the United Arab Emirates are focusing their efforts in the current phase on the reformulation of the new media system, so that the tools of this system work in tandem with the traditional media in achieving the desired goals of the entire media system. But, to repeat, these goals ultimately serve the overall development process and preservation of the identity of society, with its culture, traditions and customs (Abdulrahman, 2015: 122-143).

The UAE is a major and influential player in the region. Its national radio and television sectors have had a major role in enhancing the UAE's reputation, consolidating and clarifying its position in many areas, through their international and regional activities, and their discussions in the forums they attend (Abdulrahman, 2015: 122-143).

The national media in the UAE is up to date with the latest developments in its field and is fully conscious of its role and responsibilities towards the homeland. It duly receives full appreciation from the wise leadership of the UAE at various occasions (Abdulrahman, 2015: 122-143).

The radio and television in the UAE, with all their channels, have played a role in excellence, especially during the past decade which witnessed many exceptional situations with the escalation of the regional conflicts and challenges surrounding it. They have been effective in addressing many sensitive issues that were raised during that period, determined to protect the Emirati society, preserving its capabilities and affirming its principles (Abdulrahman, 2015: 122-143).

The national media in the UAE plays a pivotal role in highlighting national accomplishments and delivering the civilizational message of the UAE based on the principles of tolerance, coexistence, love and generosity. These values were outlined by the founding father, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, based on the common heritage and the established traditions. The national media is the first line of defence for national security. It has played a central role in clarifying facts, refuting rumors, uncovering malicious campaigns, as well as perpetuating human values derived from the heritage. The radio and television sectors in the UAE have clearly had a positive and significant influence on the society through its programs, by raising the awareness of individuals with regard to the issues and events surrounding them, and shaping attitudes and trends that has contributed to higher levels of participation by individuals in social activities in their environment (Abdulrahman, 2015: 122-143).

5.1.1. Effects of Radio and TV on Society

The most important cognitive effect of radio and television in the UAE has been to remove ambiguity. Many studies have shown that the use of the media increases information and ambiguity occurs when individuals in society lack sufficient information to understand the events, and this lack of information leads an inability on the part of the individual to interpret events adequately. In many cases the basic source of information for the UAE citizens has been programs in satellite channels, where important issues have been explained and discussed (Abdulrahman, 2015: 122-143).

Satellite channels affect groups in society by setting the agenda, which is one of the most important cognitive effects because when the media focuses on a specific event, it pushes individuals to view this event as important, thereby affecting the perception of the relative importance of issues. People's knowledge and beliefs are constantly being shaped as a result of watching TV programs which include issues concerning religion, family, policies, etc. (Abdulrahman, 2015: 122-143).

Studies have shown that the media, influence the cognitive orientations of individuals, their beliefs and values that shape their basic goals in life and patterns of behavior such as tolerance and trust. It is noted that due to this growing impact of satellite channels on the cognitive attitudes of individuals, they have the greatest responsibility in providing accurate information to their viewers, especially to young people. New media content feeds values and norms, by reflecting patterns of social relations to be developed or devoted to the benefit of a particular social group or by influencing people to change some of their prevailing social patterns (Abdulrahman, 2015: 122-143).

The Emirati radio and television channels have had a huge role in influencing the various conceptions of their audiences, including their political ideals. As well as values, customs and traditions, the media has played a great social role in conveying many political concepts to the audiences, the youth in particular, as political awareness makes the individual an effective and responsible participant in society, with a role in political decision-making, and better claim to their political rights (Abdulrahman, 2015: 122-143).

Media is an important platform in which both human reality and ambition are embodied. Modern life and its attendant growing problems offer individual information on many topics and issues that it is impossible for them to be get on their own. It is precisely here that the media plays a most indispensable role (Abdulrahman, 2015: 122-143). The UAE and its government have attached great importance to the media, and emphasized its role in educating the members of the society, by highlighting and preserving the national identity, transmitting knowledge in the most credible and transparent manner possible, promoting social and cultural responsibility, dialogue and tolerance, redoubling efforts to convey the correct image of the customs and traditions and the true face of the Islamic religion, culture and civilization, as well as drawing attention to spaces which are full of creativity, innovation and credibility, thereby honoring the society and the individual.

5.1.2. Mass Media Effects on the Emirati Family

The new mass media has assumed its prominent position due to the many positive functions it has offered its users. But despite the benefits that modern mass media has brought to its audiences, some blame it as a major cause of a rift in traditional social relationships. Its strong and profound effects have gradually led to a major change in the lifestyle of the Emirati family. There is no doubt that it has led to a decrease in social visits to and from other families, as well as weaker social relations within a family. It is not surprising that some described it as an "alternative homeland for youth". The new forms of media based on modern technology have succeeded in bringing about a qualitative shift in the life of the Emirati family, even the more traditional ones. For example, we find a family whose members live under one roof, who, even when gathered at the dining table, can embody different lifestyles and behave in different ways. Thus, we see weakened family relations and growing social isolation in human life. In many cases, for example, we find a group of young people gathered together in one activity, but with each in their own world, with attention fixed on mobile phones, and engaged in behaviour that can only be described leading to social isolation.⁷

The new social media has put many traditional media technologies to the test. New media has often won out in the war to attract the younger generations with its ability to make communication with others fast and inexpensive. The younger generations prefer the new

social media for its own sake as well as for the time and speed of delivering the information at a time when speed has become a very important value. Today, new media plays an important social role in creating a new culture, and ingraining a new set of psychological, social and political attitudes in the lives of individuals, to the point it has become indispensable.⁷

New mass media quickly introduced many new methods of communication into the daily lives of people in the UAE. Many Emirati families, like families elsewhere, face the pressures of modern life and the responsibility of raising children. Most of these families use mobile phones, email and social media applications to stay in touch and communicate with their children. Today most children derive their values and principles of life from the television, the Internet, and modern social media, in a way that threatens the traditional social value system. This is evidence of the power of these tools and the control they exert over the lives of individuals. These tools have also become a way to escape direct contact with some and establish direct social relations with others.⁷

The misuse of modern social media has had many detrimental effects on Emirati society. One is relatively poorer marital relations or even their breakdown if the abuse of social media reaches a certain point. Another serious problem that has arisen as a result of misuse of the new social media concerns girls, especially adolescent girls, fleeing their homes as a result of getting to know people online through internet “chatting” applications. In a conservative society like the Emirati society, this issue has caused great alarm.⁷

It is important to see that the growing social role of modern mass media is not fully to blame for the emergence of all these societal issues. Those issues would inevitably have occurred anyway, either because of weak family relations, or because of urban changes that would affect the Emirati family. But there is no doubt that these means have accelerated the growth of these problems, due to their central place in people’s lives and their communication.⁷

The culture of the Emirati society is undergoing significant changes as a result of changing ways and means of social communication affecting that culture. There is no doubt that this cultural transformation that shapes the lives of UAE citizens like others in the rest of the world has changed many of the traditional social lifestyle patterns, while opening the UAE society to the cultures of others and their lifestyles.⁷



⁷ ECSSR, Report, 2013. https://www.ecssr.ae/reports_analysis/التأثير-وسائل-التواصل-الاجتماعي-في-الثق. [accessed 26 January 2020].

5.2. THE FUTURE VISION OF EMIRATI RADIO & TV

Media is in general the mirror of society and reflects the progress of the latter. The success of the Emirati media is similarly measured by its ability to deliver the UAE's message to the world, highlight the UAE's accomplishments, and fortify society against destructive ideas. In addition to these efforts of the local media, especially the radio and television sectors, must interactively remain abreast of rapid changes and developments. These include technological developments in equipment, means, platforms, and digital transformation, as well as developments concerning content. The challenges that the local media faces and must focus on in the future include producing competitive content capable of addressing the world, and influencing the trends of the international public opinion on certain key issues. So far, the radio and television sectors have largely paid attention to content targeting only the local audience, without taking into account outside audience and how it can positively influence them (Bu Samra, 2020).

What requires more focus in the future is empowering the sector to enhance its role in society by attracting a higher number of competent individuals, honing already existing skills, unleashing energies, and directing them towards creating more competitive and influential content. Similarly, its hitherto lack of focus in media management needs to be remedied by investment in more deliberate training plans, better coordination with universities and other institutions of training, and searching for young talented people with creative ideas, who can put their mark on the Emirati media landscape (Bu Samra, 2020).

There seems to be many young people willing to work in front of the camera, to the point where it causes a shortage in other areas related to production and content creation. Media institutions must prioritize principles that guarantee national competency in various areas of media work, especially in TV presentation and media management (Bu Samra, 2020). There is still a lot of room for improvement and development for the radio and television sectors, especially with regard to initiative taking, proactive thinking, and responsibility taking, both in the local arena and for strengthening the UAE's reputation abroad (Bu Samra, 2020).

6. DISCUSSION

To summarize the main points in this study, we can say that the decline in the popularity of traditional mass media, especially TV channels, is due to the lack of awareness among those who are in charge of the major changes. The media landscape has been redrawn due to the strong competition presented by the new social media networks, online channels and websites, as well as other new alternatives such as specialized news channels. This is true despite the fact that Radio and TV channels owned by government have tried to get closer to the audiences, by offering public programs that address people's concerns and enable them to discuss these concerns with government representatives who are responsible for the development of services.

It must thus be recognized that there are real challenges facing mass media in the UAE, but that the negative effects of these can be minimized. This can be done through a better awareness on the part of the politicians and decision-makers in the region of the importance of the media's role in society, especially in revealing the truth and expressing the concerns and aspirations of the people about a better future.

Media freedom is linked to the transparency of information and its sources, so that there is no withholding of important public information from media professionals. It thus becomes urgent to issue media laws and regulations that are appropriate to the era of the information revolution, in consultation with the media professionals in the country. This is especially crucial for countries that still use old laws and regulations.

This study has revealed that the proportion of local media professionals in the UAE mass media institutions and channels, including channels broadcasting in English language, is very small. Accordingly, it is recommended that the authorities responsible for the development of the media sector should work to accelerate the process of localization in the national mass media, because local knowledge about the conditions of the society is indispensable in the media enterprise. Also, the content of the national media discourse cannot be imported from abroad. Rather, it must be an authentic discourse emanating

from the depths of the local community. The media content, like security and defense, is not something that can be received from outside.

Public opinion polls and studies constitute one of the most successful methods to strengthen the role of the media. Any media institution that does not listen and respond to reactions coming from the consumers about its programs and their content cannot succeed in achieving its media goals. And those who know about and follow the UAE's and the surrounding region's media acknowledge the absence of such studies and their neglect by officials.

I believe that one of the media fields in the UAE where there is considerable room for improvement and development is digital media, which can be done through various platforms, and by providing more attractive and internationally competitive content in multiple languages that meets the requirements of our society characterized by diversity.

We should also not lose sight of the importance of the availability of information for the media people to enable them to fully play their roles. They should be supported to enhance their capabilities to access information and handle current events in a more professional and effective manner, knowing that the absence of information negatively affects the media message and limits its impact.

I hope that the innovative content can be provided by the Emirati media so that it contributes to the positive image of the country and strengthens national identity, while also encouraging originality and creativity, and enhances the UAE's position regionally and globally.

7. CONCLUSION

The emergence of mass media in the form of journalism, news agencies, radio, Internet, television and satellites, was a major breakthrough in human life, as these media facilitated the process of communication between individuals and societies, and between cultures and nations, making the world one global village in which the temporal and spatial restrictions fade. Furthermore, these media have played important roles in the development and improvement of societies in all aspects, including the social, cultural and educational, thanks to their complex and diversified functions.

Radio and television in the United Arab Emirates are some of the oldest media of public communication, and no one can deny that they are among the most powerful ways that can affect various segments of society.

This study concludes with the following eight recommendations:

- a. Media content is an essential basis for the development of media institutions, which as such demands more sensitivity to the needs of the public, as well as better commitment to media work ethics and the development of the capabilities of workers in the sector.
- b. It is important to review and amend policies in many media institutions by launching positive initiatives, including research centers, that contribute to the credibility and adequacy of information.
- c. Better training for workers in media institutions through specialized training programs for workers. The most important training programs concern skills about information transfer and the speed of this transfer, as well as achieving the highest level of credibility in light of the vast electronic space.
- d. Upgrading and developing media content to keep pace with the requirements of modern media and the aspirations of modern society, and moving from creation of descriptive content to an interactive one that addresses the recipients in an effective and smooth manner and in a way that attracts their interest.

- e. Building the capabilities of the media sector to address the societal diversity in the UAE, unifying media messages addressed to the world, and activating clear communication channels with foreign media.
- f. The importance of developing a more balanced media discourse, taking into account the current developments and circumstances that have created a blurry image for the public.
- g. The necessity on the part of all media cadres to adhere unflinchingly to their responsibility towards society and the country, and to raise public awareness about the reality of what is happening around them, without paying attention to what is being promoted by some malicious media with suspicious inclinations.
- h. In addition to addressing the external audience, providing attractive and competitive content in multiple languages that meets the requirements of our society, which is characterized by a high population diversity, as language is key to delivering messages to the target audience.

The success achieved by the Emirati media in a short time after its beginnings could not be possible without its local creative workforce and the support and attention that the founders and leaders of this country bestowed on them, most notably among them Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, and Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum.

Finally, we must remember that there is tremendous responsibility for every media person for uplifting the media profession and its role, as well as abiding by the principles of honesty and objectivity, and refraining from intimidation, misrepresentation, or false coloring of facts, ultimately so that the ship, which includes the three main parties of society, government, and the media as the guardian of the word, will keep sailing.

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