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▪ بحوث باللغة الإنجليزية

Twitter: The Framing process on Twitter by the analysis of Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia

Preparation

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Abstract:

Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram offer important methods of conveying information around the world. This information is shared by groups and individuals and is deemed by many media commentators as a democratising force that has allowed ordinary citizens to call governments, businesses and powerful individuals to account. Social media have actually succeeded in depriving marginalised voices the space to offer their views and make them accessible to the governments. other traditional media organisations are also responsible for publishing news about events in order to serve a specific ideological agenda. With a view to evaluating the evidence for these claims, this paper has examined how the publication of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 strategy was reported in the mainstream press. Furthermore, in order to offer a comparative evaluation, the Twitter feeds of ordinary users were also examined. Using frame theory, the study has found that Twitter users were more willing to challenge many of the views put forward by the Saudi Arabian government, whereas traditional newsprint media is less capable of calling into question claims put forward as part of the Vision 2030 strategy.

ملخص:

منصات الوسائط الاجتماعية مثل Twitter و Facebook و Instagram تعتبر وسائل إعلامية مهمة لنقل المعلومات حول العالم. يتم مشاركة هذه المعلومات من قبل مجموعات وأفراد ويعتبرها العديد في وسائل الإعلام قوة ديمقراطية سمحت للمواطنين العاديين باستدعاء الحكومات والشركات والأفراد الأقوياء للمساءلة. وقد أدت إلى وصول الأصوات المهمشة ووجهات نظرهم إلى الحكومات. أما المؤسسات الإعلامية التقليدية الأخرى مسؤولة أيضًا عن نشر الأخبار حول الأحداث من أجل خدمة أجندة أيديولوجية محددة. فهذه الورقة العلمية تناولت الرؤية السعودية 2030 في الصحف التقليدية. ومن أجل تقديم تقييم مقارن، تم أيضًا تحليل منصة تويتر Twitter وتغريدات المواطنين السعوديين. وباستخدام نظرية التأطير، وجدت الدراسة أن مستخدمي Twitter كانوا أكثر استعدادًا لتحدي ومعارضة العديد من الآراء الإيجابية التي طرحت عن رؤية 2030، في حين أن الصحف التقليدية أقل معارضة وتحديا ومساءلة عن رؤية 2030.

Introduction

Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram offer important methods of conveying information around the world. This information is shared by groups and individuals and is deemed by many media commentators as a democratising force that has allowed ordinary citizens to call governments, businesses and powerful individuals to account. However, the liberal structure of social media platforms, in terms of regulation and what information can be published, has led to concerns that instead of opening up debate, traditional media organisations as well as political groups and organisations have actually succeeded in depriving marginalised voices the space to offer their views and to shut down debate. This problem has been exacerbated by recent revelations that the personal details of Facebook users had been sold by the company to data mining firms in order to micro-target individuals with politically motivated advertising campaigns. Although this is the most recent and prominent news story to bring to light these concerns, other traditional media organisations are also responsible for publishing news about events in order to serve a specific ideological agenda. With a view to evaluating the evidence for these claims, this paper has examined how the publication of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 strategy was reported on Twitter.

Social media presence has enhanced the communication processes (Singh et al, 2008) while Dickens (2003) suggests that globalisation as well as technologies advances have impacted on the use of social media on the eradication of barriers to communication. Those industries which have used social media to enhance their communicative processes have been able to positively interact with their 'followers' and produce messages which they can

understand. It should also be acknowledged that social media has become the platform for the disadvantaged (Castells, 2001) which is demonstrated in Saudi Arabia through the inclusion of women. Both Castells (2001) and Chaffey et al (2003) identify the popularity of social media with organisations becoming more aware and using these platforms to their advantage. The aim of this study is to analyse the methods used by ordinary Saudis, in Saudi Arabia, to frame the Saudi Vision 2030 policies. In this respect, social media coverage offers individuals an opportunity to be made aware of, and to evaluate, important issues that may affect their lives (Scheufele & Lewenstein, 2005). Several studies have demonstrated that mass media can have a significant impact on the behaviour of some individuals regarding their choices of consumer consumption or, in some instances, their voting patterns (Kulve, 2006; Macnamara, 2005). The current study is of particular interest because it examines how Twitter frames the political agenda among ordinary citizens, by studying the example of Saudi Vision 2030 and the release of its sometimes-painful policies.

The Context of Saudi Arabia

It is important to understand while there may be negative connotations with regards to Saudi Arabian society embracing social media, it has made the society more progressive. Saudi Arabian citizens use social media for a number of reasons including information gathering, however, it can also be used as a battleground. Abed (2016) acknowledges that a survey of 304 Saudi Arabian Facebook users identified that there was trust, a perceived usefulness and enjoyment which had significant positive behavioural effects towards social networking sites. Gunter & Elareshi (2016) identify that social media is a powerful force which is intent on infiltrating the lives of the user, however, it should also be noted that social media has become a way for users to communicate which allows users to feel more connected with others.

Women are being given more opportunities through the use of social media allowing for engagement in political and civil actions due to the historical changes which have sweep quickly over Saudi Arabia (Arab Social Media Report, 2011). According to Mellor & Rinnawi (2016) identify the importance of social media to attract the younger generations and this is particularly apt when identifying the empowerment that the nation has gone through. Saudi Arabia has the faster growing Twitter usage with the established media still attempting censorship. It has allowed citizens to connect with society and business as well as usage by government to connect with its citizens and to gauge public opinion. Social media platforms have given Saudi citizens the opportunity of freedom of speech while traditional media is restrictive and censored. Social media is mainly used by Saudi Arabians to share information and connect with family and friends.

Vision 2030 Strategy

The Vision 2030 strategy contains a great deal of information about Saudi plans for transforming the country. It therefore offers a useful basis for comparing the aspirations of the Saudi Arabian government and the perception of online media commentators.

The report *Vision 2030 and Saudi Arabia's Social Contract*, published by the independent policy institute and think-tank Chatham House, offers a useful overview of the aspirations of Saudi Vision 2030 (Kinninmont, 2017). The Saudi strategy is part of a plan to boost investment in the country's private sector and reduce the economy's reliance on oil production, which they view as becoming progressively less significant in the future (Kinninmont, 2017). The report recognizes that, in order to implement the full range of Vision 2030 strategic initiatives, the Saudi Arabian state needs to introduce extensive reforms of the education system, thereby reducing the power of the country's religious clerics,

and implement a platform of social, political, and cultural liberalization (Kinninmont, 2017).

The Chatham House report therefore provides a useful independent evaluation of the Saudi Vision 2030 strategy that can also be used as a comparative document when analysing online media reports and Twitter feeds. As part of Vision 2030, the Saudi government has offered an agenda to restore tax imbalances and has recommended their adoption by ordinary Saudis. These initiatives include additional taxation, such as a tax to curb consumption of harmful goods and adding VAT to previously exempt products.

Other plans include the privatization of state-owned enterprises, the introduction of a green card system, and a review of generous subsidies to private individuals and organizations. Vision 2030 also stresses that one of the most important challenges for the future of Saudi Arabia is the enforcement of a development agenda that can ensure the viability of the country's economy. To place this statement in context, in 2015, the budget deficit was 367 billion Saudi riyals (approximately $98 billion) or 15 per cent of the total budget (#الضريبة_المضافة, #added_tax).

With the suspension of allowances, the rise in fuel prices and electricity bills, and the addition of new taxes, these policies all affect ordinary Saudis, yet journalists continue to frame Vision 2030 in a positive way, ignoring the situations of ordinary Saudis. This study examines how individuals frame Vision 2030 on Twitter, and thus how, collectively, social media frames Vision 2030.

Public Sphere Theoretical Framework

It is necessary to understand the role of the public sphere in the analysis of social media and its democratizing effect. Habermas (2015) suggests that the historical structures of the liberal public sphere are still central to democratic theory, however the question which has been raised is can it be reconstituted

effectively under different cultural, political and socioeconomic conditions. This can be identified through the use of new media technologies, where the mass media had once been a function of public opinion where it now attracts public opinion.

The public sphere is used as a forum for public debate, which allows citizens to communicate more freely though new media technologies. Bjola & Jiang (2015) identify that social media is a powerful tool of the new public diplomacy. The evolution of the internet has created a new space – Twitterspace (Hofmann, 2017). Boundaries have been removed through digital technologies, allowing the user more freedom to connect and gather the information which they require. It is also appropriate to identify that information is instant, there is no need to wait for the information but rather applications such as Twitter bring them straight to the device of the user.

Theoretical Background to Framing Theory

Framing, Mass Media, and Audiences

Framing needs to be viewed as separate from other concepts of a similar nature in mass media studies and research. It is important that framing considers the larger historical contexts of research in the field of media effects studies. It is also important to establish and develop a general definition of framing requirements. To achieve this, a clear identification of theories that are common with many similar concepts should be identified. Subsequently, a definition of framing that can be applied to media effects research in general should also be established.

Borah (2011) identifies that there are numerous viewpoints which according to Hertog & McLeod (2001) allow for creativity and paradigmatic diversity which D'Angelo (2002) cites leads to a comprehensive view of the process of framing. The utilization of framing has lacked clear conceptualizations and operationalization (Scheufele, 1999) thus different research approaches have

been submitted. In the use of the different approaches and theories, many key points are contentious which is important to understand for any position to be clarified in a research study. While framing is closely related to agenda-setting it further expands the focus onto the essential issues rather than on a particular topic. Framing theory is based on the attention which the media focuses on in terms of particular events, placing them in the in a field of meaning.

Framing theory is influential and identifies the context to which something is presented to the audience. The frame works to organise, or structure meaning to the message and are used within the media to convey a certain piece of information in order to influence the perception of the news through the audience and this is the identification it has with agenda-setting, albeit secondary. Telling the audience what to think about as well as how to think about an issue. Through the work of Goffman (1974), he identified how people interpret what is going on around them – the primary framework as it is the taken for granted approach by the user. In terms of this framework, Goffman (1974) establishes that there are two distinctions – natural and social through which both have a role in helping individuals interpret data, thus experiences can be understood in a wider context.

While framing and agenda-setting can be closely equated, through the focus of both on how the media grabs the attention of its audience on specific topics. However, framing goes further to create a frame to how the news is presented. While this is usually a conscious choice for journalists through how they present the news through its format. The purpose of framing is to define and construct a piece of communicated information through how it is communicated, and it is an unavoidable piece of human communication.

Borah (2011) points out that problems have been identified by scholars in framing research but that there has been no real examination of the published literature. Many of the issues raised have been through unclear conceptualization

or a lack of research within specific areas. Borah (2011) also suggests that the media frames must be examined but that also the processes of the involvement of the audience must also be analysed. How frames are conceptualized is also important as Carragee & Roefs (2004, p. 217) suggest that "multiple problems have surfaced in how researchers define frames."

Frame building encompasses many studies in respect to impacting factors like organisational restrictions, the values of media professions, or what are the personal expectations of an audience as they begin to read media messages such as the news (Shoemaker and Reece, 2014). According to D'Angelo (2018: xxvii) identifies that "frame building has been conceived in macro-level terms as the societal, political, and economic conditions that shape the newsroom culture of newsroom frames and journalist frames. This frame building process uses mechanisms allowing journalists to process the information from sources into news (Schefele, 1999). According to Schudson (2011) there is an urge for frame building to be studied in reference to news cultures to move it beyond the bias.

Cobb & Elder's (1972) model looked at the types of organisational and structural facets of the media system, as well as considering how the journalist's individual techniques and views have an impact on how news content is framed. Gans (1979) and Shoemaker and Reece (2014) have also suggested three main influences, they are journalist-centred, selection of frames, and the influence of external sources. First, the journalist-centred influence involves the method of actively building frames that will be structured in such a way that makes sense of information (Donsbach, 1981). This information is subsequently manipulated in accordance to the method with which discourse, ideology and professional norms and boundaries are applied (Donsbach, 1981). The information is also altered through the techniques used by the journalists as a method of constructing and presenting news coverage, all of which in essence, is media framing. Second, selecting frames is deemed to be completed in accordance with the political

ideology of the organisation presenting the news. Third, the influence of external sources on influencing the framing of news, these include politicians, multimedia organisations and powerful private individuals or businesses. As a consequence, journalists will often take on the position of a particular political group and the shape of news events is influenced by an ideological bias. For example, the state-owned Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* is rarely critical of the military-led government, whereas, the independently owned *Al-Masry Al-Youm* will more frequently publish articles that question the actions of the state.

Framing as a Construction of Social Reality

McQuail has stated that the study of mass communication is founded on "the assumption that the media have significant effects" (2010, p.454). According to Scheufele (1999) in an article published in the *Journal of Communication*, this definition needs to be understood as only temporary, and as an outcome of academic discussions that is shaped by key changes in a number of paradigms in this field over many decades.

McQuail (2010) divides the history of effects communication into four phases. The first phase commences at the turn of the century until the last phase of the 1930s. This phase saw mass communication media through war propaganda during the First World War. This viewed the mass media in detrimental terms because scholars, philosopher and critics believed the mass media could influence people's attitudes and beliefs. The second phase, which ended in the late 1960s, re-evaluated the media effects theories and concluded that personal influence had the most powerful effect on changes of attitude. Klapper (1960) has summarised this phase by arguing that the mass media does not influence people but is actually responsible for reinforcing the existing personal attitudes and beliefs of people. The third phase began in the 1970s and has been dominated by a number of often competing discourses into the effects of the mass media (Neumann, 1973). This phase saw a shift away from traditional

media effects discourses towards an examination of the cognitive effects of the mass media (Biniger and Gusek, 1995). The fourth phase, which is still current, commenced in the 1980s. Its main feature is referred to as 'social constructivism'. Mass media is perceived to have an effect on individuals by constructing a version of social reality through the framing of images of events in a particular order, and which conform to social and cultural expectations (McQuail, 2010).

Political communication can also be framed within media discourses through a social constructivist approach. The media establishes frames that purposefully and intentionally shape messages that are subsequently broadcast to audiences, and which are then discussed and interpreted; however, because the media images and texts have been framed in a specific way it can have an influence on the way that individuals might think about a specific subject (Tuchman, 1978). In addition, individuals possess sets of values, pre-existing ideas, and processing skills that can also influence their interpretation of the mass media and political communication (Kosicki & McLeod, 1990).

Anspach (2017) identifies that there is often an overlap between the entertainment value of social media and news. Thus, due to the provision of entertainment and news in the same space, Anspach (2017: 590) identifies that "entertainment-seekers often encounter political news that they would avoid in traditional contexts." Mitchell et al (2013) identifies that when the user is accessing entertainment news, they are also accessing the political news (75%). The mobilisation of individuals who are interacting through social media platforms have radically changed how political agendas, petitions and debates are implemented. The user has been granted an ability to interact with the politicians, business, etc, through the use of social media, allowing them to have their voices heard.

Further research (Bakshy et al, 2015; Barberá et al, 2015) have also suggested that sites such as Twitter and Facebook have also introduced those

users who seek out partisan news to the exposure to other sources of ideological diversity. There is an evident difference in the attitudes of users to social media and the traditional media which the former allows the user to share and endorse news which has personally influenced them (Eveland, 2003). Kosicki and McLeod (1990) have identified three types of processing used by individuals: they are active processing, reflective integrators and selective scanners. Active processing refers to individuals who look for additional sources of information as a means of obtaining a non-biased and broader perspective about certain topics. Reflective integrators review the information broadcast and published by the mass media usually through discussion with friends, colleagues and/or family members. Selective scanners are believed to ignore mass media content on the grounds that they may find it boring or irrelevant to their everyday lives. As a result, selective scanners will often construct their own version of reality, which is usually based on their own personal life experiences and social interactions (Neuman et al., 1992). This interactive processing model has crucial features for influencing the conceptualisation of framing as a model of media effects. Mass communication has various multilevel factors that can be applied to a number of social sciences: for example, sociology, social psychology and political psychology. Therefore, accessing the appropriate framing model theory is essential (Gamson, 1992). Gamson (1992) noted that contemporary media discourses into media effects had revealed very few identifiable theories that looked at the inter-relationship between individuals who control and construct media images and the socio-cultural processes that present meanings. Gamson (1992) has also claimed that this has led to many theories being contested, and as a result, confusing this particular area of study.

Media versus Individual Frames

Frames need to be viewed as schemas that have a presenting phase and a comprehending phase. Media frames also have two components: media frames and individual frames. The purpose of frames is to serve as devices that are embedded in political discourse, and this is synonymous with the idea of media frames (Kinder and Sanders, 1990). Furthermore, they are also acting as internal structures within the mind, which is synonymous with individual frames (Kinder and Sanders, 1990). Additional definitions are related political communication, whereby frames are often unspoken and unacknowledged, and that they create an organisational structure for journalists to report the news, and for people who are dependent on their reports (Gitlin, 1980; Entman, 1991). Researchers such as Gitlin (1980) and Entman (1991) have conducted research into breaking down framing into a media context that has included framing audiences who respond to the media. Gitlin (1980) and Entman (1991) have also highlighted the connections between these two paradigms. There is a consensus within these studies that provides a connection between larger social and cultural spheres and general daily interactions. As a result, these studies have identified that framing theory should consider the existence and importance of different kinds of frames, and to ensure that any possible links between them are acknowledged.

Media frames have been defined as a centralised and organised idea or concept that establishes meaning as it unfolds (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987). Moreover, they also provide a structure that indicates what a particular issue or news event is and brings to light any controversy surrounding it (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987). Frames give journalists a means of identifying and classifying information and to subsequently broadcast these news events within an appropriate and effective media environment ready for consumption by audiences (Gitlan, 1980). In addition, Entman (1993) has defined media framing as selecting features of perceived reality and shaping it in a way that promotes how the media is then interpreted. Entman (1993) also points out media frames are

influenced by contextual discourse within the social and cultural environment that it appears in. How the media is framed and presented as news then affects the way in which the people receiving the news and subsequently interprets and comprehends the news (Price, Tewksbury and Powers, 1995).

Individual framing has been examined by researchers to understand how audiences make sense of political news and the presentation of media concepts (Scheufele, 1999). Individual frames are defined by the way that a person retains pre-existing ideas that subsequently influence how they then process those ideas (Entman, 1993). There are two types of individual frames that can be used as a method of interpreting the way that an individual processes media images – global and long-term/short term political viewpoints and issue related frames (Kempf & Thiel, 2012).

The second process associated with framing as a theory of media effects is predicated on the idea that frame setting is founded on the 'more or less' theory (McCombs and Rey, 1997; McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 1997). Agenda setting also examines the salience of issues and the features attached to either frame setting or secondary agenda settings. Empirical studies have noted that the perception of specific frames (that are perceived as important) need to be analysed and unpacked as a method of ascertaining variations and differences within the media images (Nelson, Clawson and Weaver, 1997). Therefore, frames function as an influential factor on certain opinions by placing stress on a number of key values, facts and other issues (Nelson et al., 1997). Furthermore, they have a greater relevance to the issue being framed when they are positioned within a higher value position (Nelson et al., 1997).

Finally, the salience of frames is seen as being representative of varied techniques that can measure similarities between social constructions (Tversky and Kahmeman, 1973); Hodges and Wilson, 1993; Houston and Fazio, 1998). This type of salience evaluates a frame's accessibility to the individuals it is

intended to influence. Easily accessible frames are made readily and easily available and retrievable from the memory or background of individuals (Hastie and Park, 1986; Lyengar, 1990). It is also important to recognise that any type of media framing that is used to directly assess both the perceived importance and the accessibility of frames are very different constructs of framing (Nelson et al., 1997).

Individual level effects of framing are defined as the influences of audience frames across various degrees of behaviour, both attitude and cognitive, which is examined from the inputs and outputs of the person receiving a particular media message. Much of the research covering individual level outcomes of framing made assumptions that there is a clear link between media frames and individual level outcomes. Moreover, the link between journalists acting as audience or viewer should also be evaluated in terms framing theory. The link between individual level variables and media frames is based on the concept that journalists and audiences are cognitive processors. Therefore, they are equally influenced by the frames they select to use as an interpreter of news events.

Lee et al (2008) has argued that the process of framing is routinely viewed as being hierarchical in nature. The hierarchy begins with the ruling elites, and various interest groups (Lee et al, 2008). By way of contrast, other researchers have referred to frames as themes (Fishman, 1977; 1980). Fishman (1977; 1980) has argued that journalists are also susceptible to being influenced by the media frames established by news media outlets. Furthermore, issue interpretation and framing on new media may also consist of selective interpretations.

Active Twitter users have the option of selecting a particular issue for presentation where their individual political preference is represented in a positive frame. For example, a number of controversial issues on social media can be interpreted as possessing a particular left or right wing ideological bias, depending on the media frame offered to the individual; for example, the Petraeus

Report on the Iraq War in 2007 and the dismissal of US Attorney General Alberto Gonzales in 2005 were all framed through the prism of the particular ideological bias of the Twitter user (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013).

Framing controversial news events as posted by social media platforms will vary in the techniques and characteristics used. The frames will depend on whether they have been mediated though the attitudes and values of either a right or left-wing perspective. In this respect, social media can be used to convey left wing and right-wing perspectives as a method of influencing audiences to support a political and ideological point of view(Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013).

In the field of public relations, specific strategies are employed (sometimes by politicians) to interpret and present events on Twitter, social media platforms, as well as the mainstream media such as television and radio news broadcasts or newsprint. The presentation of controversial news will frequently incorporate persuasive techniques such as appealing to emotions, inclusive language, visual images, and providing supporting statistical information. These techniques help to persuade individuals towards a particular point of view. In addition, a person's interpretation of events may also take into account any related news events or historical news stories.

Twitter updates can also apply shift framing values because they frequently incorporate the use of episodic framing, as opposed to thematic framing. Episodic framing utilises references to similar news events. It is important to note that the word limit restrictions on Twitter require an often-narrow interpretation of events. This can lead to confusion or misunderstandings on the part of readers.

A process model of framing

Process model of framing research has been created as a method of unpacking different processes, inputs and outcomes. In this regard, framing can be perceived as a continuous process in which the outcomes of some processes

function as input for other processes. Four processes have been examined: frame building, individual effects of framing and the link between these individual frames and concepts of media frames as practised by journalists and political elites.

The relationship between framing theory and social media

Framing theory also examines the method with which individuals construct a version of events that occur in the public sphere (Simon, 1957). Social framing of events that occur in the world utilises perceptual narratives that allow individuals to acquire meaning from certain issues (Goffman, 1974). One of the most significant uses of framing theory is the influencing of public opinion through linguistic mechanisms (Scheufele, 1999). According to Chong and Druckman, "the major premise of framing theory is that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations" (2007, p.104). In other words, an event can take on different meanings and interpretations because of the framing method used to broadcast that event. The process of framing an event allows the producer of the message a great degree of flexibility, as well as changing the possible meaning in order to meet specific ideological requirements (Borah, 2011). This means that the process of framing certain issues can have either positive or negative connotations when it is used to influence public opinion (Scheufele, 1999). For example, the framing of news events on Facebook has led to claims of voter manipulation by organisations that could benefit from certain outcomes (Slater, 2018).

Framing theory also focuses on the manner in media organisations can set an agenda that can subsequently inform public opinion. In this respect, the main purpose of news organisations in framing specific issues in a certain way is intended to construct a meaning that is intended to influence public opinion (Simon, 1957). For example, a comparative analysis of the headlines in *The*

Guardian and *The Telegraph* concerning the reporting of the Brexit negotiations will reveal the particular bias of the editorial team, even though they may be publishing stories about the same event.

Therefore, the framing of information can have an important impact on the political, social or cultural value attached to a particular news story. It is also worth noting at this point that framing theory assumes that the way in which a news event is presented to the public can have an influence on the way that the message is eventually interpreted by individuals. This is a point made by Claes de Vreese (2005) who has noted that framing processes are organised in order to convey a particular message in a particular way to the public. This is an observation also made by Steve Mithen (1987) who has pointed out that framing theory enables an appreciation of the manner in which certain issues are projected to the public in order to attain specific outcomes.

The framing of news events by media broadcasters enables the dissemination of a two-tier agenda. First, the selection of a specific news event, which can involve the marginalisation or setting aside of other events that may contradict the original event (Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996). Second, the selected news event is framed in a particular way so that the message enables the broadcaster to place an additional layer of meaning, which is subsequently interpreted by audiences (Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996). In this respect, the framing process forms an integral link between how the message is broadcast and the information contained in that message.

According to Goffman (1974), individuals interpret the world around them according to a primary framework. Therefore, there is a functional perspective that accompanies the process of framing. In other words, the process of framing is deliberately constructed in order to offer a specific perspective on events. Although individuals interpret reality according to their existing preconceptions and knowledge, social perspectives can be used to emphasise

certain issues in accordance with the ideological structure of media organisations (Goffman, 1974). As a consequence, social framing can be used to influence the way in which events are interpreted, and to meet the ideological interests of particular actors – in this case media organisations (Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996). As a process of framing events, the producers of news events will often make use of techniques such as metaphors, catchphrases, and artefacts aimed at capturing the attention of viewers and readers (Goffman, 1974).

In regard to social media, this method of reporting news events enables individuals and groups with a particular ideological agenda to disseminate their message in a more effective manner, because of the number of social media users' certain platforms can reach. As some media commentators have noted, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have democratised the dissemination of information into the public sphere (Chapman, 2013). In other words, anyone with access to a computer and an Internet account can create and publish messages that suit their particular way of looking at the world. In addition, social media platforms can allow people to frame issues in a manner that suits their personal political agenda (Mithen, 1987; Bruns et al, 2015). Social media has allowed access to a greater participation in events that can have an impact on the lives of ordinary people. As a consequence, the perception of news events that would have been controlled by media organisations is now open to a larger degree of debate within the public sphere (Wilkerson, 2001). This has enlarged the level of interaction between individuals around the world and enhanced debate on a variety of subjects (Wilkerson, 2001). For example, the 'Black Lives Matter' movement, which began as a localised issue has rapidly developed into a global phenomenon primarily because of social media.

The Twitter hashtag has proved to be a useful tool for quickly bringing to the attention of individuals important topics or matters of interest. An analysis of hashtags also demonstrates how they can be used to frame a particular debate; for

example, the topic of sexual harassment of females was disseminated through the public sphere by the #metoo hashtag. The #metoo hashtag offered a framing device that served to establish a common and shared experience, and in this regard, the hashtag frames the debate around solidarity and participation against sexual violence and intimidation. This solidarity of the #metoo against sexual assault has been instrumental in changing perceptions (Hillstrom, 2018). In this regard, important topics can achieve what Dietram Scheufele (1999) has referred to as a level of salience. In addition, this level of salience would not have been possible if traditional media had been used (Scheufele, 1999). This illustrates how social media platforms can be used to frame a variety of different issues that are of concern.

Nevertheless, social media can also be used to frame narratives that are deemed detrimental to healthy public discourse (Scheufele, 1999). This problem has been brought to light with the recent proliferation of so-called 'fake news' facilitated by social media platforms.

Faking news is not a new phenomenon and has been associated with "disinformation, propaganda, yellow journalism, conspiracy, or hoaxes" (Dice, 2017, p.1). Nonetheless, social media platforms such as Twitter are increasingly being used by political parties around the world to micro-target individuals in order to directly influence their voting choices. Goering & Thomas (2018) identify that the use of certain platforms can be advantageous to the influencing of voter choices.

The recent election of President Trump has brought to light the effectiveness of using social media as a platform to disseminate false information and has been held accountable for increasing distrust with individuals in the mainstream media, as well as contributing to the loss of the presidential election by Trump's opponent Hillary Clinton (McNair, 2018). Furthermore, the use of metaphors and catchphrases deployed through hashtags (as in the case of #MAGA –Make America Great Again) has increasingly led to a polarisation of

public discourse, which exemplifies how social media outlets may help to frame certain events and issues in a negative way (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

The process of framing in social media can be formed based on the literature reviews of framing and social media as it is showed in (figure 1).
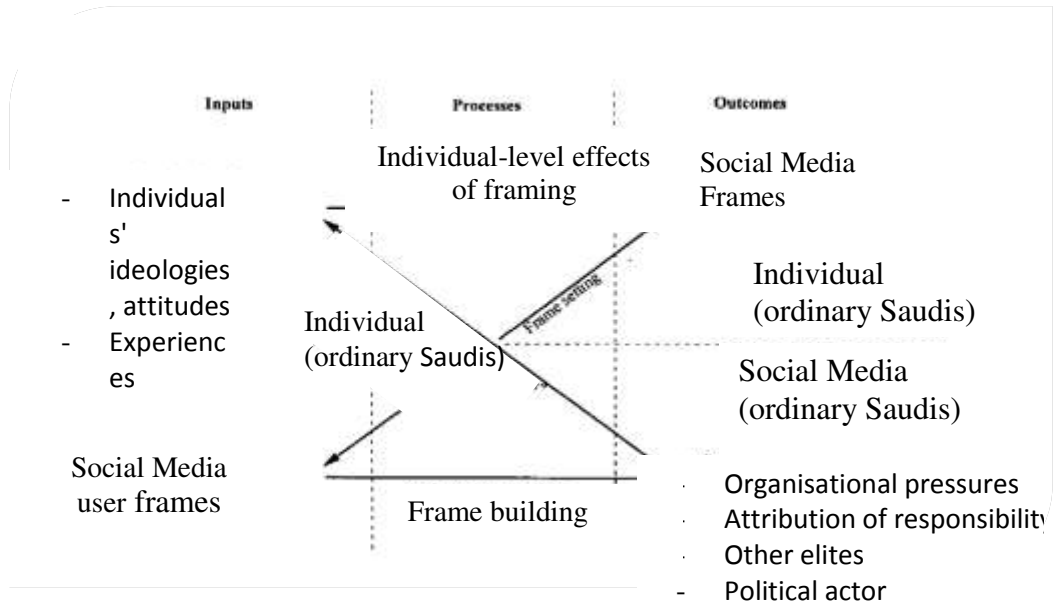
Figure 1: Social Media framing

Methodology

To meet the aims of this study, a corpus of Arabic Twitter posts, or "tweets," was compiled and analysed to explore, unpack, and decode the frames through which Twitter users utilized the platform as a method of evaluating the Vision 2030 strategy.

hoice of Data Source

The Twitter social media platform was chosen as the source of data for the following reasons (Parrack, 2013):

1) Twitter, unlike Facebook, is aimed at communicating broadly, rather than at maintaining relationships with friends, family, or others whom one might already know.

2) Twitter is known for breaking news and is a resource for tracking online trends. Hashtags play a part in this, and most of the trends listed on Twitter use this simple method of associating a tweet with a particular topic.

3) Celebrities participate in Twitter; while not every famous person is involved in the site, a significant number are, including politicians, who use the medium to promote themselves and their ideologies.

Tweets were retrieved using the Twitter advanced search option, which allows users to search Twitter's database using a specific keyword, time period, location, and other Boolean search terms. For this study, the keyword "Saudi Vision 2030", in Arabic, served as the basis for the search, which was connected most prominently with the following hashtags:

#Saudi2030Vision

#NationalTransformationInitiatives

#الغاء_البدلات# إعادة_البدلات# (#allowances_restoring)

#القيمة_المضافة# (#added_tax)

#فاتورة_الكهرباء# (#electricity_bill)

#العلاوة_السنوية# (#annual_bonus)

These hashtags were used to identify related tweets across a period from April 2016 to the restoring of worker's allowances and bonuses in 2017. This time frame provided a meaningful way to capture earlier discussions about the subject, as activists increased their social media activities during this period. The time frame was also long enough to capture a range of ways in which the issue was discussed.

The tweets returned by the search were then captured using a custom-made scraping tool that allows textual data from a Twitter search page to be collected and saved to a plain-text file, so it can then be analysed using other tools. In this case, the web-based corpus tool Sketch Engine was used. The data

was analysed and translated from Arabic into English, and later verified by a professional translator.

The flexible coding scheme is designed for any news analysis that includes frames – in this case, the Saudi Vision 2030 online news reports and any relevant hashtags found on Twitter feeds. This approach has been used in research studies Groboljsek and Mali (2012),. Research into the effects of political arrangements and implementations include Ling (2005) and Groboljsek and Mali (2012), and future applications have been analysed by Kamanlıoğlu and Güzeloğlu (2010), Kjærgaard (2010), and Lemańczyk (2013). No standard path was followed for the selection of the themes used in the news analysis because the spectrum was too wide, and completing a standard list was deemed too complex. General themes were therefore used, and the scheme retained flexibility that would allow for additional themes to be added during the analysis.

Research Design

Research design is an important part of the process in understanding the requirements of the study. It is also appropriate to how the results were initiated into the study. The research was correlated through the use of five research assistants who were unaware of the research questions, who helped to code the data for times 1 and 2. It was necessary for the coders to participate in four training sessions which were held over a two week period to ensure that they understood the key concepts thus to be able to apply the coding scheme effectively. Each coder coded more than 60 messages in the training sessions.

Research Results

The intercoder reliability measure used a randomly selected subsample of 100 messages from a separate dataset (Lohtia et al, 2003; Neuendorf, 2002).

In the coding of the tweets of the original data set, three of the coders coded a separate, non-overlapping portion of tweets collected at time period 1(Tweets when vision 2030 was launched), and the remaining two coders

coded a separate, non-overlapping portion of the tweets collected at time period 2(Tweets After Allowances Were Cut Off, Fuel and Electricity Prices Rose, and VAT) was Imposed. This, each coder was fungible, given the high level of intercoder reliability.

For the independent variables indicating strategy type, binary coding was used, where 1 indicated that the trait was present and 0 represented that its absence. A number of hashtags were recorded by the coders in each tweet so there was a binary variable where the hashtag was present (1) or absent (0).

Findings and Discussion

An analysis of hashtags and tweets on the Twitter platform revealed that the frames began to differentiate before the time when workers' allowances and bonuses were suspended.

Frames on Twitter when Vision 2030 Was Launched

The frames of Vision 2030 that emerged during the analysis of hashtags and tweets were initially quite supportive, positively framing the plan to affect public perception. This is consistent with de Vreese (2005), who claimed that the framing process is geared toward organizing the way in which a message is projected to the public, such as being supportive of a government agenda like Vision 2030. It is necessary for Government to highlight their policies and through the use of Vision 2030 and the subsequent tweets, it has gained recognition whether positively or negatively.

Lively society with a solid foundation

The first frame of Vision 2030 is a "lively society with a solid foundation." The frame was reflected frequently on Twitter to focus attention on the aspirations of Vision 2030. Being able to engage with the user is imperative and using language such as lively can improve the audience who will view these. Saudi Arabian society is described as "lively"; this word can be interpreted as active and energetic and is a theme regarding how society can incorporate new

ideas but, at the same time, offering assurance to readers that older Arabic traditions will continue to play an important role. Other tweets also referred to citizens being made aware of current and impending changes in society and culture. In this new digital age, users can find the information for themselves, however, using social media platforms to engage the audience has a greater effect if the audience think that they are valued for their opinion.

Vision 2030 was created to help citizens become responsible and more effective members of Saudi Arabian society. The following is an example of how the Vision 2030 strategy intends to deliver on these initiatives: We have established positive values in the personalities of our children by developing education, and the educational system with all its components, so that schools, in cooperation with the family, can strengthen the fabric of society by providing students with knowledge, skills, and good behaviour.

The narrative has also been framed as an example of the Saudi government's investment in the country's educational system, this highlights the government's plans to shift away from traditional teaching methods and embrace a newer, more progressive educational strategy. "Family" and "society" are also linked, which can be interpreted as an attempt to create an important connection between family and Saudi Arabian society – by improving the educational link between school and family, the country's social fabric will also improve. Educational achievement thus becomes linked with nationalism and demonstrating loyalty to one's country, a point which is emphasized by the document's reference to "strengthen," which, within this context, is deemed a positive attribute that is important for Saudi citizens to attain.

Top-down policy

The second theme extracted from Twitter is that of top-down policy, a frame mined from the tweets of ordinary Saudis and which appeared frequently, even before allowances were cut off and even after their restoration. One of the

tweets said, "Saudi Vision 2030 is a top-down policy with no communication with ordinary Saudis before launch." Another tweet said, "no participation by ordinary citizens, everything comes from the top to the bottom, we must agree and no objections are allowed."

It is apparent that there is a need to address such tweets and for a proactive nature in reference to responding is taken. Tweets stressed that there was a lack of necessary accountability and transparency at the macro level, merely the release of policies. This is inconsistent with Gamson and Modigliani (1989) and Kosicki and McLeod (1990), who said that mass media effects can be limited through the interactions that occur between the mass media and individuals. However, in this context it should be noted that while the studies undertaken by Gamson & Modigliani (1989) and Kosicki & McLeod (1990) were representative in the era they were situated, the media has changed with an outlook of immediate news and information which has a greater reaction time than waiting on traditional forms of media responding. In this respect, media-affected discourse can be interpreted as a process occurring within the construction of news narratives, which include public opinion, which can in turn can be manipulated by journalists. However, public discourse that takes place within spheres that are not dependent on mass media organizations, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, are not manipulated in this way, and there are no limitations imposed by the interaction between the media and individuals.

Frames on Twitter After Allowances Were Cut Off, Fuel and Electricity Prices Rose, and VAT Was Imposed

In early 2017, enthusiasm for Vision 2030 evaporated among ordinary Saudis, who, even though they were optimistic when the Vision was launched, began to complain when the Saudi government implemented the hard decisions to cut off citizens' allowances and cancel the annual increases in their salaries. After increases in electricity bills and fuel prices, and with the imposition of

VAT, people became angry, and Twitter saw many hashtags highlighting the contradiction between Vision 2030 and what was happening in Saudi Arabia. Accessing information can be positive in many respects, however, it is also necessary that a response is immediate in terms of the dissatisfaction of citizens to ease any repercussions which could damage internal relations thus the use of Twitter can present the feelings of citizens to those who implement policy.

When Saudi citizens began to complain about the reductions in their pay and how it was affecting their living standards, online articles failed to offer any support; in contrast, social media platforms, such as Twitter, allowed Saudis to express their dissatisfaction with the state. Both Dellarocas (2003) and Castells (2001) identify that social media has become the new format for word of mouth, allowing the citizens to voice their opinions and for those who respond to act upon them. One user said, after the public-sector cuts were announced in the autumn of 2016, "a lot of religious figures started to use 'religious quotes' in an attempt to stop ordinary Saudis from complaining about this unpopular government policy" (#Saudi_national_transformation). On Twitter, many Saudi citizens responded to this tweet by posting images of the late King Abdullah as a way of expressing their unhappiness with public-sector cuts.

This observation is supported by Thompson (2017), who has argued that Vision 2030 has often been framed in a negative way, but only after the decision by the Saudi government to cut allowances and bonuses. Consequently, instead of offering an optimistic vision for the future of the country, Vision 2030 has been perceived as indicative of the poor state of the Saudi Arabian economy.

Difficult transition

The Vision 2030 strategy has failed to account for the transitional period between the adoption of economic reforms and the beginning of plans to improve the economic well-being of the country's citizens. Ordinary Saudi citizens are currently experiencing a difficult transition period, which started with the

implementation of the Vision 2030 measures to reduce salaries and allowances, while, at the same time, property prices and fuel prices were increasing. These problems have been exacerbated by the lack of plans to help people on low incomes.

As the Twitter conversation highlighted, the state adopted several policies related to Vision 2030, but should also have addressed the consequences of the strategy, which included the rationalization of state expenditure, which in turn led to a reduction of government spending and the reduction of the private sector by 2 per cent. The liquidity crisis also had a detrimental impact on the Saudi economy, with the implementation of the economic measures envisaged by Vision 2030. These are all important considerations and due to the lack of insight in the implementation of Vision 2030 problems have arisen due to the lack of a set mandate. Twitter users complained that there needed to be a parallel plan of austerity based on mitigating the effects of any future changes to the Saudi Arabian economy.

Poor get poorer, rich get richer

On Twitter, Vision 2030 is framed as a vision of poverty, shown clearly in the #poverty_vision hashtag and the following negative tweet referring to the government's monetary policies: "increased oil prices and electricity bills and corporate bankruptcy is the poverty vision, and I cannot see any Vision 2030."

Despite positive steps toward the objectives of economic diversification, Saudi government announced that plans would be developed to address the economic disadvantages in both the public and private sectors. These plans, intended to reduce the budget deficit and the transfer of state assets, such as health and education, are viewed as a positive factor in increasing inward investment into the economy. Nevertheless, it has also been pointed out that this could result in a reduction in the number of jobs available to Saudi citizens and a corresponding increase in the rate of unemployment. One tweet claimed that

there would be "no health insurance, unemployment, and by the end of 2030 everything will have decreased and disappeared."

The narrative frame was therefore constructed around negative ideas, such as unemployment and the lack of health insurance, which are the opposite of the ideals of Vision 2030. Hashtags also pessimistically predicted that Vision 2030 would involve taking money from Saudi citizens, and that there would be no annual increase in salaries. Ordinary Saudis on Twitter were disappointed by the lack of tangible results; as one said, "Saudi Vision 2030 must be implemented correctly, but so far it is ignoring human capital."

Another said, "Saudi Vision 2030 is in the imagination, how will it be achieved when the situations of ordinary Saudis are getting worse? There is unemployment, no health insurance, and no housing, and these should be the foundation of Vision 2030."

The other narrative frame is that Vision 2030 is a good idea, and "nobody argues about that," but that it has become synonymous with "cutting salaries, taxing people, and stopping benefits." This perception is exacerbated by the fact that the cuts impact poor people the most, while the rich are little affected: "Proposed VAT is going to hurt poor people the most and, in my opinion, the government is making a big mistake." As another young student remarked, "I think it will affect the rich to some extent, but as they have so much money, it does not make any difference, so it is a case of the poor getting poorer and the rich richer." In fact, this is a major concern for many constituencies.

Limitations and Future Research

Mass media effects can have limitations through the interactions that occur between the mass media and individuals. In this respect, media effects discourses can be interpreted as a process occurring between the construction of news narratives, which includes public opinion (which can be manipulated by

journalists), and public discourse which takes place within spheres that are not dependent on mass media organisations (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Kosicki & McLeod, 1990. This can be viewed through the use of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. It is important and extremely necessary that the limitations can be identified in order to identify the need for future research.

It would also be appropriate to identify another country and their intended policy to see the reactions on Twitter. The culture of the country is an important consideration which must be identified through the recommendations process, particularly if policies of austerity are going to be implemented and the citizens of the country can be updated on progress through social media platforms. The importance of social media and in particular Twitter should be further examined to how countries, governments and citizens can interact, as well as providing more transparency and accountability.

Conclusion

These findings show that Vision 2030 was framed in positive terms when it was first launched, but after implementation started, it began to be framed by negative themes. While the frames from the government were quite positive, both before and after the enactment of the hard agenda, Twitter, and those who tweeted, framed it differently. Twitter feeds are usually independent from the direct influence of external actors, but this does not prevent individuals from discussing issues within an ideological frame, which is usually based on cultural or social frameworks.

The ability to self-publish has allowed individuals to take to social media and have real discussions on the situations they find themselves in. They also have the availability of up to date news and information, allowing them to make more informed decisions. In discussing the Saudi Arabian Vision 2030 strategy,

Twitter feeds were more likely to question the validity of some of the government's claims and were keen to open up the debate within the public sphere.

The study also found that the individual frames are independent variables, rather than outcomes, and can be treated as input into Twitter; this is in contrast to the model given in Scheufele (1999), but is supported by Gammson (1999), who said that individuals are the constructors on many issues. Social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, have democratized the dissemination of information into the public sphere (Chapman, 2013); ordinary Saudis with access to a computer and an internet account can create messages about the Saudi Vision 2030, and people can frame issues in a manner that suits their personal political agendas (Mithen, 1987). Twitter has thus allowed greater participation in events that have an impact on the lives of ordinary people, such as the cutting-off of allowances or the allocation of taxes.

Consequently, the perception of news events that would previously have been controlled by media organizations is now open to a greater degree of debate within the public sphere (Wilkerson, 2001). This has increased the level of interaction between individuals around the world and enhanced debate on a variety of subjects (Wilkerson, 2001).

The impact that Twitter feeds may have had on government policy regarding the Vision 2030 strategy is still open for debate, and only future studies within this area will be able to determine if individuals using social media platforms, such as Twitter, can actually have a direct influence on public policy.

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