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## **The Role of the Local Media in the International Relations**

### **Abstract**

Although much has been said about the role of the local media in the international relations, only limited attention and care has been given to the importance of local media's role in the international relations. This study investigates different authors' thoughts and writings about the roles of local media in the international relations. It is found out that the main purpose of the media is to inform, to entertain, to explore, to teach, to analyze, to enlighten and to educate society, but the media are used and controlled by leaders for their own purposes. It is further observed that media is a powerful means for states to develop their relations. This study contributes to the research in understanding the main roles of media in international relations.

**Keywords:** media, international relations, foreign policy, technology

### **Introduction**

The roles of local media in the international relations have been slightly examined by various authors. Since the mid-19th century, new technologies such as newspaper presses, radio, movies, and television provided access to huge number of people. All these types of media have different purposes and have different potential for the audience. —The arrival of many channels including the growing number of radio and TV stations, the rise of video recorders, the multiplication of

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cable networks, and the rise of the web led to audience fragmentation”(Turow 2014, 5). More than 200 years have passed since mass media success has become a reality that fully surrounds society and helps relations develop very fast. In order to deliver messages, information and news, media have formed a new culture. — In less developed countries new inspiring culture is the same with that of countries which have advanced information technologies” (Afsharpur 2013). Media play important roles for the national and international organizations. It is claimed that communication researchers stress that the media not only provide information but also they form the way people understand the issues. Media have a power to affect people act in regards to different issues (Melike Yagmur Savrum 2015). The aim of the media is to inform, to amuse, to entertain, to explore, to teach, to analyze, to enlighten, to educate, etc. In this case, media is regarded not the actors in the international system but they are a part of the broader social environment, i.e. they are considered to be beyond the international system. Despite the facts, in other circumstances, media can surely act as real international players (Tsvetelina Yordanova, 2012). —The established media do frame issues, establishes impressions, sets agendas, plus has an impact that influences interethnic and interstate relations” (Melike Yagmur Savrum 2015). Media do not always have a clear concept about their function either in foreign policy process or in international relations. —A better way for describing the complex media role on the international scene could be called —media-international relations interaction model” (Tsvetelina Yordanova 2012). Afsharbur states that, media is described, in the general, as using means to develop the foreign policy (Afsharpur 2013). At the same time the media analyze the positive and negative parts of people how they understand, perceive, react towards other nations, nationalities, groups and cultures and they inform what happen in the other part of the world and what should be done. Moreover, —media considered as the most important propaganda machine in psychological operations. Media diplomacy in psychological operations of international status refers to formation of hatred and envy against definite state, government or

authorities by another state or government. It includes political, cultural and psychological pressure, as well as rousing interest or sympathy towards definite other states” (Afsharpur 2013).

The central questions guiding the study are “What role do media play in international relations ? When media provoke actions / reactions by participants in the foreign policy process or by actors in international relations? What role does the media play in the overall implementation of the country's foreign policy?”

In the next session, the roles of the media in the international relations are examined.

### **The Role of the Local Media in the International Relations**

In this study, the roles of the local media in the international relations and foreign policy are investigated. Governors, leaders, while taking and making political decisions in order to solve problems, try to make decisions that will enhance and increase their image or develop a campaign that will influence the media which deal with the relevant international events and interactions. Moreover, it can be claimed that by using “public” campaigns or “press” or PR techniques leaders may influence or affect the environment, which the purposes means the mass media (Naveh 2002). It can be claimed that by using proper and right methods or techniques, governors, leaders and decision takers or makers can influence the surroundings by using the mass media. On the other hand, “for foreign policy, openness and transparency present opportunities and risks alike. Developments such as the revolutions of the Arab Spring and debates centering on e-democracy, e-government and e-campaigning have triggered discourse concerning what the Internet means for political communications and democratic movements” (Mensah 2015).

Almost every government and every state today gives more importance to the role of the media regarding its foreign policy. On the other hand, the world relies on a few powerful news organizations which have the necessary technology (satellite feeds) and were taken into consideration by a superpower intent on making sure that news

coverage was American(Philip Lee 2012, 3). –The centralization of ownership and wealth results in a situation in which a few actors dominate national and international public opinion and have a huge influence on public institutions such as the media, education, politics, culture and welfare”(Fuchs 2011, 110). For example, the United States pay too much attention to the importance of foreign policy propaganda. It takes one of the high ranks on the list of the U.S. government's priorities. The annual budget of the United States Information Agency (USIA) is close to one billion dollars which coordinates the U.S. foreign propaganda. There are 200 branches in 129 countries around the world. It is the biggest government propaganda organization today in the world (Kamuhanda 1989). U.S. media firms are so powerful internationally; this commercially driven perspective on journalism is spreading through the world (Turow 2014, 45).

The advanced and high technology in mass communication has helped media to reach very quickly every part of the world with vivid graphics. For this reason, the global media plays a significant role in international relations, and most policymakers follow the live news coverage provided by CNN and other channels (Ma 2014). It's not U.S. mass media companies have been ignoring the rest of the world, on the contrary, the television, radio, publications, movie, recording industries have all been distributing their products internationally for a long time. Media executives observe and consider, as part of the initial marketplace, countries around the world for their media materials. Besides, the internet supplies the opportunity for U.S. based media companies to reach large group of people (Turow 2014, 163-164). This helps the U.S. to be known by other countries and nations and it helps to develop its international presence.

The media are a crucial part of the foreign policy decision-making environment, an environment which should not be regarded only as the input stage of the process, but much more as a general context, and as an output environment in which leaders make policies. In a more subtle way, the media may be seen not only as part of the international environment, but also as part of the

internal environment of the state. In the state the media are not just information channels, they form a “communication network” influencing policy from within the state, as well as the party system, interest groups or the socio-economic stratification of society (Naveh 2002).

The mass media is one of the essential tools which create and maintain the relation among states and its society, conduct enlightening, educational activities and coordinate for creation of a democratic structure (Afsharpur 2013).

Sometimes, the roles of mass media is seen as destructive and counterproductive for the development of the third world societies. When the authorities completely control the power it is likely that media will play a negligible autonomous role (Tsvetelina Yordanova 2012). Nowadays, there are many examples in the world that governments control the media and they cannot say what and how they want. The countries which face more political risk may gain stability by increasing and developing the effectiveness of their mass media sector. —Numerous studies over the last 40 years from around the world have provided evidence of the catalytic role played by the media in providing information that influences public opinion leading to social change” (Media-Developments-Role-in-Social-Economic-and-Political-Progress-Literature n.d.).

Sometimes the media forces the governments in positive ways. For example, —in Somalia, US news media coverage of famine during the civil war of the early 1990s appeared to persuade President George Bush (Snr) to deploy 28,000 troops in support of aid workers” (Robinson 2013). Lots of governments have competitively engaged in a war of public diplomacy through media to make their countries look attractive and friendly to foreigners while also setting the stage for others to understand their positions in the international arena (Ma 2014).

Another important element in the media – international relations interaction model is the role of the public opinion. In foreign policy theory

media and the public are often used interchangeably and are seen as almost identical actors in the foreign policy process and international relations. The impact of public opinion on foreign policy and international relations is highly debatable and challenging issue in theory although significant in amount empirical research has been done” (Tsvetelina Yordanova 2012).

The mass media can change the people’s thoughts and perceptions about other countries and foreign policy. The news media are mainly responsible for the way people view and understand global and national events (Philip Lee 2012, 6).

According to Yordanova: under specific conditions media could exert significant pressure over foreign policy or international relations:

1. —1.when there is a lack of consensus in the elite over strategic issue or a specific policy option;
2. when the policy of the government or of international units is inconsistent and wavering;
3. in cases of loose political control over the situation;
4. when the foreign policy process is in its final stages;
5. in cases of bad communication to the public about the decisions taken;
6. when there is a high level of free access to information (Tsvetelina Yordanova 2012)

### **Recommendation**

1. The local media should be allowed to analyse and initiate freely the debates which are about national and international issues which influence, directly or indirectly the society in the country.
2. Communication between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the mass media should be arranged a monthly regular contact and briefings.

3. The discussion about the foreign policy, particularly the external economic relations should be encouraged in Parliament.
4. Public officials should be aware and be educated about the role of the mass media in the society.
5. Journalism training and conciousness must be upgraded to d the country level.
6. The media should not be dependent on politics or politicians.
7. The governments and leaders should use professionals, public relations specialists or marketing professionals in order to manage the mass media.
8. The professionals and specialists need to work together with the ministerial level and should be present while they are making or taking decisions.

### **Conclusion**

It is obvious from the explained, that having strong media means and technologies and using effective programming methods, any state can enjoy much more progress and accomplishments in comparison to those deprived of the two important tools. The states with no media is not equal to other states' media power and the target state enters this process and actively struggles against its opponents (Afsharpur, 2013). Efforts are still needed to enable the local media to play a more effective role in the implementation of foreign policy. Both the Party and government should create favourable conditions for the media to facilitate their work of projecting the country's foreign policy objectives to the outside world (Kamuhanda, 1989). In order to reverse this unhealthy trend and ensure that the national media play a more effective and positive role in the implementation of the Party's policy on foreign relations. Leaders and foreign policy decision-makers are influenced by the media. When an external international event occurs, leaders learn about it from the media information is processed via the various image components, and the policy or decision-formulating process is set in motion. The necessity of the

media in the international relations and foreign policy cannot be discussed.

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