



The Ethical Dimensions of Public Service Advertisements in the Middle East: The Case of Anti-Terrorist Campaigns

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Abstract

The anti-terror public media campaign started in Iraq around 2004 and was called 'Terrorism has no Religion' in order to combat the threats of Al-Qadea and other affiliated militant groups in the country and aiming at convincing the Iraqi public to cooperate with the US-led coalition forces. After the withdrawal of the US forces from the country in late 2010, the campaign stopped but a new one emerged whose advertisements mostly targeted the Saudi public. This new campaign that is called 'Say no to Terror' is still running and the two Saudi-owned pan Arab regional channels – Al-Arabiya and MBC- are instrumental in airing its advertisements. This article discusses the ethical dimensions of these media campaigns with special focus on the issue of overt violent scenes which they contain and the bias in depicting certain sects rather than the others.

Keywords: Public campaign; 'Say no to Terror'; 'Terrorism has no Religion'; media ethics; Arab public sphere; Arab media; public service advertisements

Introduction

Despite the importance of studying public service advertisements (PSA) in developing countries such as Arab states, no research has been conducted on them. Indeed, government-sponsored PSA in the Arab world are widely utilized for educational, health, public safety programs. Probably the most popular public campaigns are related to elections in the Arab world which has been mostly seen in Iraq, Lebanon, and Kuwait and more recently in Tunisia, Yemen, Egypt, and Libya especially after the events of the Arab Spring.

The Saudi government under the direct supervision of the King himself, for example, authorizes public campaigns to collect charity funds to help victims of natural disasters and war conflicts from around the world. Up to 2010, the total amount of money collected from the Saudi public reached over \$338 million which included campaigns to help victims in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Lebanon, Pakistan (Al-Yahya & Fustier, 2011, p. 14). In most cases, the public campaigns begin with a 'TV telethon to which the King and several senior princes make a personal donation' (ibid., p. 15). In Bahrain, a public campaign on aiding the victims of famine in Somalia became very popular as a related advertisement was aired on the official TV channel (Bahrain TV, 2011). Further, the Jordanian government ran a public campaign against Muslim extremists following Al-Zarqawi's hotel bombing in Amman in 2005 (Lynch, p. 39; Zayani, 2005, p. 21). Other public campaigns that are sponsored by Arab governments are related to encouraging tourism in countries like the UAE, Oman, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

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With the growing influence of pan-Arab channels, Arab viewers started to see more public service advertisements even if they are living in the diaspora. Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya, MBC, and more recently Sky News Arabia have their own promotional materials that can be viewed almost everywhere especially with the presence of the channels' online streaming. In some cases, certain groups are targeted. For example, MTV Arabia, which is run by the UAE-based Arab Media Group, aired several important and sometimes controversial public advertisements and campaigns aimed at Arab youths (Jaafar, 2007). The channel which was renamed MTV Middle East in 2011 attempted to challenge some traditional values and practices in conservative countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Abdullatif al-Sayegh, the former chief executive of Arab Media Group, once mentioned that 'What we are saying to young people is it's OK to have fun, it's OK to be naughty as long as you don't lose yourself' (Surk, 2007). One of the main target regions for MTV was Saudi Arabia as the channel directors met several Saudi youths before going on air. However, some programs created tensions in conservative societies especially in Saudi Arabia; for example, MTV's program 'True Life - Resist the Power, Saudi Arabia' which featured Saudi men and women living relatively liberal lives and freely expressing their views was regarded as insulting and resulted in heavy backlash and criticism directed against the channel (Karam, 2010). Further, in one of its programs, MTV Arabia aired 'Banat' (Girls) that showed Arab young girls voicing their ambitions and aspirations from different countries including Saudi Arabia (MTV Arabia, 2008c).

In relation to MTV Arabia public service campaigns, the channel sponsored safety driving advertisements due to the high number of casualties caused by car accidents in Saudi Arabia and the UAE (MTV Arabia, 2009a). Another popular campaign was about anti-cursing in the streets which was produced with humorous scenes (MTV Arabia, 2009b and 2009c). One of the most controversial public advertisements aired on this channel was a promotion for the channel itself, but it featured scenes depicting boys publicly harassing girls in the streets, and this anti-social behavior was presented as a manly, exciting, and favorable conduct (MTV Arabia, 2008a & 2008b). It is not clear why the channel chose to air these advertisements repeatedly, but it is an indication that it wanted to break the norms and traditional values to promote the channel. Dahl, Frankengerger, and Manchanda confirm that shock advertising 'attempts to surprise an audience by deliberately violating norms for societal values and personal ideals' (2003, p.269).

More recently, **the Internet is playing a very crucial role in organizing the public and uniting them to discuss certain issues.** For instance, an online public campaign on Facebook was organized by Arab women and it is called 'The Uprising of Women in the Arab World'. The page that was created in October 2011 has over 80,000 likes as of early December 2012 and over 3000 Twitter followers. The campaign calls for women to be 'fearless, free, and independent', and the Facebook page mentions the goal is to 'create a strong solidarity network, share our views, denounce the absurd laws of our respective countries, and share updates about the progress and changes that we are working on' (The Uprising of Women in the Arab World, 2012a and 2012b). On the campaign's official website, the organizers mention that their efforts are not directed at Arab women alone but extends to all other women from other ethnicities living in the Arab world like 'Berbers, Nubians, Kurds, Assyrians, Arameans, Syriacs, Armenians, Turks, Turkmen, [and] Circassian' (The Uprising of Women in the Arab World, 2012c). This online public campaign became so popular that even mainstream media outlets inside and outside the Arab world started covering it. Another online public campaign that recently emerged is concerned with



defending the Prophet Mohammed against the accusations that were made in the 'Innocence of Muslims' film. The Facebook page which was created on the 13th of September 2012 is called 'The Global Campaign to Support Prophet Mohammed' has over 105,000 likes as of early December 2012 (The Global Campaign to Support Prophet Mohammed, 2012).

Anti-Violence Public Campaigns:

The most important and relevant public campaigns to the focus of this study is related to combating violence and terrorism in troubled countries like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and more recently Bahrain. It is important to point out that in the case of Bahrain, the government is combating a Shiite uprising that was inspired by the events of the Arab Spring, but the official frame used to define the protest is terrorism. For example, a TV advertisement that was aired on the official Bahraini TV shows the negative consequences of the actions of young men shown to be burning tires and creating chaos, and by the end of the public service advertisement, a statement is shown stating 'Together to extinguish the fire of Terrorism' (Bahrain TV, 2012).

In Iraq, the Future of Iraq organization which seemed to be supported by the US government worked on strengthening the ties between the different Iraqi ethnic and minority groups especially between Sunnis and Shiites due to the tensions that were created after the 2003 War that culminated in the civil war that erupted in 2006 after bombing the Shiite holy shrine in Samara city. The organization's website, which is not functioning anymore, was created around 2004, and it carried the slogan of 'Future Iraq Assembly One Nation, promising future'. The organization produced tens of video advertisements that called for unity. On its website which was accessed through 'My Way Back Machine', the organization's objectives are: '(1) To convince all our fellow Iraqis that we have the will and the capability to progress; (2) To adopt a value system that has at its very heart openness and acceptance of the other; (3) To eradicate pessimism, fear, hesitation, and isolation from our fellow Iraqis' hearts and reinforce trust, initiative, and honest competition for the sake of a future Iraq that is worthy of the sacrifices we've made to regain our right to a decent living' (Future of Iraq, 2004 August).

The videos posted by the organization were mostly well produced which indicate a high budget and professional and specialized staff who are mostly lacking in Iraq; hence, it seems that the US administration was responsible for sponsoring its media campaigns. For example, Future of Iraq aired a famous advertisement on the dangers of civil war with a message 'In order not to be a lesson for history' in which scenes of casualties of civil wars and the number of people killed and maimed are shown from different countries like Bosnia, Rwanda, and Lebanon (Future of Iraq, 2007). Another campaign with the theme of unity shows a traffic policeman trying to organize a chaotic street and angry Iraqis are dissatisfied. In the end, order was restored with cooperation and understanding as the message reads: 'My Iraq is your Iraq' and a subtitle 'If we don't cooperate, how can we progress?', with a famous Iraqi national song in the background (Future of Iraq, 2008). Other advertisements called for unity by featuring different Iraqi faces talking about food or citing famous Iraqi proverbs with subtitles such as 'No matter how different we're, Iraq unites us' or 'No matter who you're, you're Iraqi' (Future of Iraq, 2009a and 2009b). Other advertisements focus on small Iraqi kids playing; for example, one advertisement features Iraqi protesters from the three main groups - Shiite, Sunni, and Kurdish - who meet angrily to fight but they change their minds after seeing their own kids play in front of them



(Future of Iraq, 2009c), while another advertisement shows different scenes like a teacher, a builder, a traffic man, an oil refinery worker, and a mother preparing her child to go to school to be contrasted with a ticking bomb that has a timer. The message says 'Our hands build it; our hands protect it' (Future of Iraq, 2009d). Another advertisement on unity features three young kids who appear to be strangers and their names are shown as subtitle 'Hussein' a Shiite name, 'Dulair' a Kurdish name, and Bakr a Sunni name who join later and seem to become friends after playing football. The message says: 'What is easy for our kids will not be difficult for us' (Future of Iraq, 2009e). Finally, another advertisement shows an Iraqi man packing a suitcase to go to the hospital to meet his newly born baby as his wife is giving birth, while the other scene shows a terrorist preparing his booby-trapped car to explode it. The two men meet on the street, and we hear an explosion. The new father is survived and he finally meets his wife and new baby at the hospital. The message says: 'When divided, we'll be defeated; when united, we'll defeat it' (Future of Iraq, 2009f).

Future of Iraq had other campaigns such as one that encourages Iraqis to vote for the constitution wherein scenes of rain drops representing hope and bright future are meant to be associated with voting (Future of Iraq, 2009g), while a different advertisement highlighted various aspects like human rights, equality between men and women, and democracy that can be gained by voting for the constitution (Future of Iraq, 2009h). A third advertisement that called for voting for the governorates elections on the 31st of January 2009 shows US soldiers departing Iraq while Iraqi kids watch them. With music in the background, the kids start playing football while a subtitle says: 'They leave and we stay' and 'Freedom is a responsibility, so practice it with awareness' (Future of Iraq, 2009i). All the above public service advertisements are meant to increase awareness and convince the public about the importance of unity. It is not clear, however, the real impact of these advertisements that used to be aired repeatedly on different Iraqi channels.

Anti-Terrorism Campaign in Iraq:

In relation to the anti-terrorist campaign which is the focus of this study, Iraq had one campaign running starting around 2006 which was called 'Terror has no religion' (Terror has no religion, 2006). The video and print advertisements produced for this campaign were aired and published on pro-Iraqi government TV channels and newspapers. According to the campaign's website which is not functioning anymore, the mission statement reads:

Our Mission is to expose the fallacy of the distorted and politicized Islamic teachings used by ungodly extremists to sanctify and justify terrorism.

It has become crucial to inform the Muslim and Arab people - particularly the Iraqi people- about the deceptions terrorists employ in distorting the peaceful teachings of Islam. These terrorists, who claim to follow the Islamic Faith, are in truth only drowning in an abyss of mistaken beliefs (Terror has no religion, 2006).

It seems that the main goal of the 'Terrorism has no religion' campaign was to highlight 'extremist ideology that breeds terrorism', according to the campaign unknown sponsors; 'we use Quranic Verses in their true Islamic meaning; free of the distortion committed by the misguided malicious terrorists' (Terror has no religion,



2006). The reason behind following this strategy was to show 'the true image of Islam and combat extremist ideology' as well as to 'reveal the true and ample doctrines of Islam, and expose the contempt these terrorists hold for the spiritual essence of our religion. These terrorists and their ungodly way are the ones responsible for making Islam an easily marked target in the eyes of the world, as well as causing Muslims to be the subject of criticism before the world community (Terror has no religion, 2010).

In the first advertisement, a suicide bomber explodes himself in a busy market. The explosion is produced with elaborate details and presented with carefully produced special effects (Terror has no religion, 2007a). On the English website, the advertisement is described as follows: 'Even the word, 'War' does not justify attacking secure civilians and turning the streets into a heinous scene that is open for the slaughter of both innocent women and children. The ethics of war – any war – refute this mass elimination, and we have, in the form of the Prophet, a decent example to follow (Terror has no religion, 2006). The advertisement which seems to be filmed in Morocco offers graphic violent scenes; for example, as the suicide bomber ignites his bomb in the market, dead bodies are scattered everywhere including the little boy whose shoe is the only thing that is left and shown due to the impact of the explosion. The advertisement seems to be mostly directed against Sunni salafists who also fought the US-led Coalition forces. Another advertisement shows a mysterious and sinister looking man wearing black cloak crossing the Iraqi border to suggest that those bombing themselves are not truly Iraqis. It is described as follows: 'Be alert people of Iraq. Terrorists trespass our borders to sow the seeds of death in our land' (Terror has no religion, 2006). It The man who walks around searching for a suitable target is watched by other fellow Iraqis with suspicion indicating that the presence of such persons must be reported to authorities. The man later ignites a bomb in the market, and the lethal consequences of his murderous act are highlighted (Terror has no religion, 2007b).

Similar to the Future of Iraq main focus, another campaign concentrated on unity among Iraqis. One of the advertisements is entitled 'Know your enemy' and is described as follows: 'For every disease there's a cure. The disease spreading in Iraq plants the seeds of fear, hatred, dissension and terrorism among its people. The cure to this disease is the unity of citizens in the face of those who compromise security, values and life. Know your enemy is a call for a unified front in refusing the criminal practices that endanger Iraqis' (Terror has no religion, 2006). The advertisement starts again with kids playing football and people seemingly living in peace when suddenly a convoy of cars filled with armed men enter the neighborhood. Everyone starts fleeing as bearded men who look like Sunni insurgents start shooting randomly and beating people. Suddenly, an Iraqi man who appears to be a tribal Sheikh stands alone to confront the armed men and he is later joined by other religious clerics who come from different sects based on their costumes. Afterward, a group of ordinary Iraqis join and hold hands to show unity while someone from the crowd lifts the Iraqi flag from the ground to stress the nationalist spirit. When the armed men see the number of people gathered who were advancing toward them, they start retreating. The advertisement then shows the messages 'know your enemy' and 'terrorism has not religion' as well as 'terrorism has no country' (Terror has no religion, 2007c).

The second campaign uses football as its theme aiming at generating positive feelings and associations due to the game's popularity in Iraq and the fact that the Iraqi national football team won the AFC Asian Cup Champions in 2007. The first advertisement is described as follows: 'Terrorism feeds on the division of people,



wanting to subjugate even the most basic of daily pleasures. The fight against terrorism is all the more potent when people come together in strength and when they refuse to allow sectarianism to divide their ranks' (Terror has no religion, 2006). The advertisement starts with a subtitle 'In a dark day, terrorism wanted to defeat Iraq' shows football players from Iraq's national team playing against terrorists wearing dresses similar to the Afghan Mujahideen ones which look like Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi's outfit. In the match, the terrorists use explosive devices, machine guns, and hand grenades which are all thrown away by the football players who win the match in the end. The message reads in the end: 'Terrorism has no country' (Terror has no religion, 2007d). Another advertisement was produced using testimonies from famous Iraqi football players who claim that there were doubts about their performance during the Asia Cup tournaments, but they managed to win with perseverance and unity. The advertisement highlighted the following message: 'We came from all around Iraq united under one dream' (Terror has no religion, 2007e).

Finally, the most controversial advertisement was related to a kidnapping theme. On its English website, the advertisement is described as follows: 'Terrorists are criminals who try to garner political gain by terrorizing people. They function devoid of morals or conscience. They nurture the illusion that they are fighting for a higher cause when in reality they use sectarianism to divide and conquer the Iraqi people' (Terror has no religion, 2006). The advertisement starts in the market showing ordinary Iraqis shopping in peace when all of a sudden a speeding car filled with armed men enters the market place and the men start shooting randomly and kidnapping few men. One of the kidnapped men whose name is Tariq is taken as a hostage and is severely beaten with the butt of a machine gun. One of the masked men whose face is not apparent starts shouting repeatedly: 'Answer me!' Are you Sunni or Shiite?' As the kidnapped man struggles to answer, flashback scenes show serene and peaceful images to be later contrasted with the violence shown. In the end, the man responds: 'I am Iraqi' after which he is summarily executed, and the message reads: 'Sedition is worse than murder' (Terror has no religion, 2007f).

It is important to note that all of the violent scenes were shown on the national Iraqi TV channel and other affiliated pro-government channels without any regard to scheduling or giving a prior warning to TV viewers about the violence shown. Further, in all of the advertisement produced by 'terror has no religion' campaign, there is an emphasis on a contrast between life and death, beauty and ugliness, peace and war or destruction, innocence and dirt or contamination, and happiness and sadness. As previously indicated, all of the advertisements show either verses from the Quran or Prophet Mohammed's sayings that urge Muslims to resort to peace and reject violence. Indeed, the Islamic texts inserted are meant to function as advertising appeals to increase the favorability and credibility of the messages sent to the public.

Anti-Terrorism Campaign in Saudi Arabia:

The second anti-terrorist campaign is called 'Say No to Terror' whose unknown sponsors produced twenty videos that are posted on YouTube and repeatedly aired on the Saudi-owned pan-Arabic MBC and Al-Arabiya channels. Except for two videos, all the other ones are designed to target the Saudi society. The new campaign is clearly a continuation of the previous one 'Terror has no religion' because both have the same style in terms of their anonymous sponsors, video production, print format, texts used from the Holy Quran, and similar objectives. Further, on the Facebook page of 'Terrorism has no religion' we find some of the videos used for the new campaign 'Say no to Terror' (Terrorism has no religion, 2010). Also, one of the videos



used in the new campaign contains the same message found in the previous Iraqi campaign such as 'know your enemy' followed by messages like 'there's no life where terrorism resides'. In this new advertisement, a convoy of cars filled with armed men enters a neighborhood and terrorizes it which is very similar to one advertisement described above (Say no to Terror, 2010b). As the US Army withdrew from Iraq, it seems that the interest shifted to Saudi Arabia whose conservative society is well known to breed many salafists who adhere to a very conservative version of Islam. For example, most of the Arab Afghan fighters who went to Afghanistan in the 1980s were from Saudi Arabia and most of the 9/11 hijackers were from the same country. Hence, it seems that the need to address religious extremism in this country is of a vital interest to the USA as well as the Saudi government.

The campaign has a website; however, it is hosted in Montenegro probably to conceal its real sponsors due to the anti-American attitudes in Saudi Arabia. Further, it has a YouTube channel with over 1,339,351 views as of late December 2012; the channel was first created in August 2010 (Say no to Terror, 2010a). Also, a Facebook page was created in August 2009, and it has over 847,000 likes though it is not clear whether people really like the page or not since the majority of posts are uploaded by the campaign organizers themselves. In addition, there is also a Twitter page with only 166 followers and 89 tweets (Say no to Terror, 2009). In its mission statement, the campaign organizers mention the following:

When we look at the reality of our Islam today, we find that it is threatened from within by those who claim to be defending it though Islam is innocent from them. A group of deviant people divide the society aiming at misleading our brothers and sons and distorting the image of Islam and the gracious doctrine by their criminal acts.... Our message is to reveal the deviant claims of the terrorists and disclosing their crimes and urging anyone who has a living consciousness to reject their criminal acts and destructive ideology in order to protect our societies from their harmful effect (Say no to Terror, 2009).

There are a total of thirteen campaigns, but three ones are highlighted on its website: 'The remorseful terrorist', 'the mother', and 'the returnee suicide bomber'. Basically, each campaign has at least one video and some posters that include the following: 'Awakened consciousness'; 'open your eyes'; 'The cry' where small children are used, 'the clowns', 'I'm innocent from what from your crimes', 'charity', and 'there is no life where terrorism resides'. The main target groups of these advertisements seem to be primarily directed at potential 'terrorists', their family members as well as neighbors. However, the non-systematic scheduling of airing the advertisements indicates that this is far from being followed.

Why Saudi Arabia?

As mentioned above, the Saudi government is supported by the USA in the attempts to combat extremist ideology represented in the hardline advocates of Wahabism. This kind of conservative views is manifested in different ways such as the criticism against MTV Arabia as cited above. Also, on the 21st of December 2012, Mohammed Al-Arefi, a well-known Saudi cleric, called for boycotting MBC3, one of the few Arabic channels for children, because it contains 'unacceptable programs' that might 'negatively affect children's lives'. Al-Arefi's impact is tremendous as he has a religious program on Dubai TV that is viewed by thousands of people and has over 3,489,147 followers on Twitter as of December 2012 which is among the highest



numbers of followers in the Arab world. On the 24th of December 2012, MBC Group responded angrily by referring to a previous decree issued by Al-Arefi in which he called on fathers not to sit alone with their daughters lest they should be tempted to have a sexual relation with them. In a press release, MBC said: 'Reason is not the means to discuss matters with such a person especially that such decrees are coming from someone who should be placed in a mentally ill hospital to be cured from his deviant thoughts instead of issuing fatwas' (MBC.net, 2012). This recent incident shows the kind of tension between the moderates and conservatives in Saudi Arabia.

Further, in a meeting between US diplomats and Khalid Al-Matraf, the regional director of the Saudi-owned Al Arabiya news channel, Al-Matraf revealed that MBC, which owns Al-Arabiya and many other entertainment channels, targets young Saudis because they are 'particularly vulnerable to the calls of extremists, and that the station now targets its moderate news broadcasts to the 14-18 year old demographic in short presentations of three minutes or less' (Wikileaks, 2009). Also, the regional director mentioned that there were concerns over Al-Jazeera channel influence in the region; hence, MBC channels aimed at presenting programming that 'counters the influence of al-Jazeera and fosters "moderate" perspectives among the country's youth' (Ibid.). In another meeting with the chief editor of the *Saudi Gazette* newspaper, Mohammed al-Shoukany, and his deputy, Abdallah al-Shehri, the two elaborated on the change in the Saudi government's media policy:

The government is pushing this new openness as a means of countering the extremists.... It's still all about the War of Ideas here, and the American programming on MBC and Rotana is winning over ordinary Saudis in a way that 'Al Hurra' and other US propaganda never could. Saudis are now very interested in the outside world, and everybody wants to study in the US if they can. They are fascinated by US culture in a way they never were before (ibid.).

Based on the above accounts, one can conclude that the Saudi government felt the need to counter the extremist ideology in the Saudi society with a moderate version of Islam that is done by opening up to the outside world and by using the media as a basic tool. This is mostly achieved through American entertainment programs and assistance in producing public advertisements like the ones discussed in this paper. In general, the Saudi and American goals are mutual since it is in the interest of the US government to have a stable Saudi society to ensure the continuous and steady flow of oil which will ultimately help in the recovery of the world's economy.

The Ethical Dimensions of Anti-Terrorist PSA

One of the basic requirements of public service advertisement is the need for segmentation. Dervin and Foreman-Wernet (2012) stress in their discussion of public campaigns the importance of targeting audiences according to demographics, interests and life situations, as well as cultural needs and values (p. 150). The anti-terrorism campaigns that are discussed above have **two main ethical issues**. The first one is related to **targeting the whole society without segmentation despite the fact that most of the advertisements shown on TV contain graphic images and very violent scenes of dead mutilated bodies**. Some of the advertisements used in the Iraqi and Saudi campaigns which are related to the suicide bomber and the kidnapping incident were too violent for children and are shown without any prior notification. We might justify the use of violence by citing two relevant arguments.



First, introducing shocking images might raise more awareness so that viewers might pay attention which is regarded by advertising scholars as the first step in persuasion (Grazer & Keesling, 1995). Pickton and Broderick stress that 'the use of shocking (unusual, provocative, controversial, intrusive) images in advertising [is] for the purpose of attracting attention and debate' (2005, p.234). In this regard, David Bevan discusses the different aspects of utilitarian ethical principles by referring to the example of showing dead bodies on public service advertisements designed to reduce car accidents. So he rightly asks the following question: 'Do the images of dead and seriously wounded people evoking a violently traffic accident cause public offence?' (2012, p. 230) William O'Barr further refers to the Australian and British public service advertisements that show graphic and explicit images to raise awareness about the dangers of smoking (2012). Based on the utilitarian principles, one might ask whether the car accidents awareness campaigns and anti-smoking advertisements could produce less harm though the reduction of car accidents and achieve better health results, then in the end, these shocking scenes 'would be beneficial to the society' (Bevan, 2012, p. 230). In the case of the anti-terrorist campaign, it is very difficult to weigh the impact of the advertisements on the society on the long or short terms, so it remains unclear what the negative or positive impact these advertisements have in the society.

Second, one might argue that Arab viewers are accustomed to seeing violence and dead bodies on TV screens that are mostly aired without prior notification. This is mostly seen on news channels like Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya (Lynch, 2006, p. 192), so what is presented in the PSA campaigns is not unusual to Arab viewers including children. This is probably true, but why do some Western scholars criticize Al-Jazeera channel for the nature of its news while the US designed anti-terrorist advertisements contain the same violent scenes if not worse?

The second ethical issue is related to targeting the Sunni sect rather than Shiites in Iraq who were also involved in the insurgency. The reason is probably related to the fact that the majority of attacks against the US-led coalition forces were organized and conducted by Sunni fighters. This kind of bias is unacceptable since it enhances the stereotypes in the Iraqi society against the Sunni sect as a whole.

Though Patrick L. Plaisance in his work, *Media Ethics*, does not refer to ethics in public service advertisements, he does mention ethics and values in advertising and marketing which is somehow related. Both the American Advertising Federation as well as the American Marketing Association stress the importance of following ethical standards in advertising. For example, the American Association of Advertising mentions in its Standards of Practice that it does not create advertisements that contain any 'statement, suggestions or pictures offensive to public decency or minority segments of the population' (2009, p. 32). This is of crucial importance because advertisements should not enhance or encourage sedition or schism in the society unlike the case of the anti-terrorists campaigns in the Middle East. Further, the UK Code of Broadcast Advertising (BCAP Code) states in the Harm and Offence sections the following details:

Advertisements must contain nothing that could cause physical, mental, moral or social harm to persons under the age of 18. Advertisements must not distress the audience without justifiable reason. Advertisements must not exploit the audience's fears or superstitions (UK Code of Broadcast Advertising, n.d.).



As for scheduling, the BCAP Code stresses the need to think of children when airing advertisements that contain some inappropriate scenes such as sex or violence: 'Advertisements that might frighten or distress children or are otherwise unsuitable for them... must be subject to restrictions on times of transmission to minimise the risk that children in the relevant age group will see or hear them' (ibid.). In the case of the anti-terrorist campaigns, many aspects like scheduling, children viewers, violence, and sensitivity toward ethnic minority were largely ignored which might ultimately lead to the rejection of such campaigns by the public.

Further, Dervin & Foreman-Wernet emphasize that raising awareness does not necessarily guarantees compliance (2012, p. 151) since 'people are willing to listen to that which collides with or is new to their worlds when those communicating at them change to communicating with them' (Dervin & Foreman-Wernet, 2012, p. 153). When there is one way communication, the PSA turns into propaganda, which was a practice widely followed by the US and German governments in times of crises especially during the First and Second World Wars (O'Barr, 2012). Other countries like China widely uses PSA in today's world by focusing on television in particular (Landsberger, 2009). Indeed, this was the major weakness of the anti-terrorist public service advertisement as the communication seemed to be directed monodirectional rather than multidirectional. Besides, would be insurgents are already labeled and framed as terrorists which obstructed the chance for reasonable and equal debate between the two sides. These two factors were probably the main reasons why we find tens of video parodies that mock the anti-terrorist campaign that are posted on YouTube as a reaction against what some regard as a foreign intrusion into their own beliefs.

To sum up, the anti-terrorist campaign in the Middle East are run by the US government in coordination with the Saudi and previously Iraqi governments in the hope of combating extremism in their societies. The US role is highly concealed to avoid any immediate rejection of the campaign due to the anti-American attitudes and the awareness that the Arab public will reject the idea that the US government is dictating to them what should be done, and it is very doubtful that these campaigns are successful and credible as there are many ethical issues surrounding them.

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