Research Proposal:

**Media Framing of the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait: Analysis of Gulf News Coverage**

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1. Abstract

The year 1990 was a pivotal moment in Gulf history, marking the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and subsequent Gulf War. This research proposal aims to analyse how the media framed these events, shaping public perception and understanding of the conflict. Through quantitative data analysis and qualitative content analysis, this study will examine the language, imagery, and narratives used by Gulf news outlets to portray the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Moreover, this study intends to investigate how the media represented the political positions of the Gulf nations throughout the crisis and the effects of this coverage on public opinion and regional relations. This research project aims to shed light on the influence of media framing during times of war by examining how the media shaped public perceptions of the Gulf War. Additionally, evaluate the degree of media power prior to the media being the phenomenon that it is today, highlighting the role that traditional media outlets had in influencing public opinion and political debate. Furthermore, the study will take into account how propaganda and censorship shaped the story of the Gulf War.

1. Introduction

On August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, causing an international crisis that eventually led to the Gulf War. This was led by Saddam Hussein, a populist figure motivated by economic and territorial aspirations. The invasion prompted a worldwide response, with the US spearheading a coalition of countries to free Kuwait. As a result, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was a pivotal point in Middle Eastern history, with far-reaching consequences for world politics and security. This study seeks to examine how Gulf News reported the invasion and its aftermath, offering light on the media's role in affecting public views and policy actions during times of crisis.

The invasion was known to as the Gulf War. The Gulf War not only constituted a turning point in regional dynamics, but it also demonstrated the power of media coverage in affecting public opinion and international action. Particularly because media in 1990 was restricted to traditional forms of media such as newspapers and television, it is critical to understand how these platforms affected public perception of the war. Furthermore, evaluating Gulf News' coverage can shed light on how media narratives influence diplomatic relations and military engagements in the area. The relevance of this research stems from the need to understand how the media presented the Gulf War and its ramifications for global politics, as well as how these narratives continue to impact perceptions of the Middle East today. By examining media coverage during this time period, we could develop a better understanding of how the media shapes public debate and influences foreign policy decisions.

1. Literature Review

Since the events of 1990, a rich body of research has emerged, providing different scopes for media coverage analysis. Mayda Topoushian delivers a comprehensive comparison of the articles on the Persian Gulf War from the New York Times (NYT), Globe and Mail (G&M) - Northern American news outlets and Ad Dustour and Al Ahram - newspapers from Jordan and Egypt, respectively (2002). Examining different aspects of the articles’ coverage, the author concludes that the US government was likely to influence dominant narratives and constrain the independence of media during wartime. James P. Winter similarly highlights the one-sided coverage of events and additionally explores the contribution of news outlets in dehumanizing Iranians and justification of the operation (1991). Accordingly, the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait challenged the myth of Arab unity, and the fact of West-East news flow revealed limitations in sources of information concerning the events of the war. Criticizing a lack of media independence, the author mentions a dramatic shift in the attitude of American journalists toward Saddam Hussein.

 Even though numerous scholars have evaluated the coverage of the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait, the majority of works have followed a similar approach and consequently lost some aspects from consideration. The articles by Hayes and Guardino (2010) or Rose and Lewis (2002) concentrated mainly on American news agencies and hardly took into account the media coverage in Arabian countries. Additionally, the researchers paid little attention to the role of television, even though the Gulf War I was one of the first conflicts to be represented comprehensively with the use of TV and radio. A survey by El-Sarayrah and Ayish (1992) was beneficial for understanding the cultural background of the news reporters and its repercussions on the way of events coverage, which other researchers lacked. Therefore, despite significant interest in the topic, the majority of the literature represents the Americocentrist point of view, failing to take into account the contribution of Arab journalists and the role of new technologies.

1. Research Methodology

For this thesis, I intend to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Interviews with audiences who read and saw these media messages throughout the relevant time period will provide the qualitative component, while content analysis of news stories and television shows will comprise the quantitative component. This mixed-method approach will offer a thorough examination of how historical media narratives continue to influence modern perceptions of the Middle East, revealing the long-lasting influence of historical representations on perception.

Regarding the quantitative data, my goal is to gather all accessible media sources that were released during the period in question, August 1990–February 1991, in several Gulf nations (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and the UAE). To pinpoint recurring themes and variations in media coverage around the area, I would also like to examine patterns and trends in how the Gulf War is framed in various sources. A more sophisticated understanding of how media narratives have changed over time to shape perceptions of the Middle East will be made possible by this comparative research.

In order to guarantee accuracy and legitimacy in my research findings, I would also want to cross-reference these media sources with official government comments and reports in order to assess their dependability. This will support the accuracy of my findings and offer a more thorough picture of the Gulf War's media environment. By combining data from other sources, I hope to give a comprehensive and fact-based analysis of how the media portrayed this momentous historical event and to fairly portray the parties' positions on the battle.

Finally, concerning the qualitative data, I would like to conduct interviews with viewers who followed media coverage of the Gulf War in order to learn more about their perspectives and understandings of the content that was provided. This will make it possible to comprehend how media depictions mould public opinion and attitudes towards the conflict in more detail. Furthermore, examining audience reactions from other Gulf nations will better understand how media portrayals change in various political environments. This comparative study will assist in identifying any trends or differences in the perceptions of the Gulf War across various audiences based on media coverage.

1. Feasibility and Limitations

Carrying out an analysis of the media coverage requires several skills, while an understanding of the possible limitations is vital for the successful formulation of an argument. First of all, choosing an appropriate research method and proficiency in qualitative and quantitative methods of evaluation are mandatory. The basic skills of critical thinking and information analysis will also be handy within the research framework. The media framing similarly implies the use of online sources in different languages, mainly English and Arabic. Therefore, fluency in these languages will help one understand the content correctly and make conclusions. More importantly, a researcher should take into account the context of the events depicted in media coverage and understand the specific traits of international relations in the Middle East. Media framing and quantitative evaluation will also require statistical competence to interpret the data collected and assess the credibility of the results.

Several limitations could have a negative impact on the research evaluations, but their understanding can minimize the risks. The first challenge to grapple with is access to information, which could be constrained due to the age of sources. Apart from that, the researcher must consider the possibility of the prejudged position of some journalists and the influence of the cultural background on the news coverage. However, not only editorial biases but also primary sources of information and government intervention in journalism, as well as other factors, can shape the content of news reports. The World has gone through dramatic changes since the 1990s, and analysis should consider the shift in news sources and technological advancement in recent years. Since the scope of the research is on the Gulf News coverage, the analysis has a limitation in its design. However, this fact by no means denies the need for objectivity and the importance of proper data assessment.

1. References

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