

The Effects of Media Campaigns on Different Cultures

B. Al-Jenaibi

Abstract—The paper examines the Most public relations spots and advertisements dealing with drugs. For this reason, public service advertisements show Americans in activities with drugs and alcohol. The way that the advertisements are produced, viewers from the Middle East say these ads are not for them. They recognize the ads as strictly for Americans trying to overcome their problems with drugs and alcohol. Also, this paper explores the development of the advertisements which are ineffective in other cultures like the Islamic because the limited scope of the message does not have a major effect on the Islamic beliefs and practices.

Keywords—Arab media campaign, Middle easy Advertisements, Islamic culture and American campaigns.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE majority of the people in the Middle East are followers of Islam. This is not just a religion that is isolated from the rest of the lives of the people. Islam is an integral part of every aspect of the lives of the people who are believers. The family life, the cultural attitudes and personal habits all follow the guidelines of the Quran, the holy book of Islam. The use of drugs and alcohol is not acceptable for any followers of Islam. For this reason, the cultural effects of media campaigns against drugs have very little effect on people of the Middle Eastern culture.

Fundamental Islam is an effort to take care of both the physical and spiritual aspects of life. Physical aspects of life are taken care of by religious laws while the spiritual aspects are taken care of by the teachings of the Koran. These two types of direction are completely intertwined in the nations of Islam. Any dictate that is given by the government had to conform to the guidelines established within the Koran or it is not acceptable. This belief ensures that the teachings and beliefs of the modern liberals are not allowed to pervert the true teachings of the Koran.

Islam teaches that life on earth is a period of testing for the life to come. This was a very important aspect of life that the Arabic people need. They were also concerned with the fact of what happened to them after their life had ended. The worship of idols gave many contradictory views of life after death. The Koran teaches that the angels in heaven record man's good and bad deeds. A person should therefore try his best to be

good and help others and trust in God's justice and mercy for his reward. Death is just the gate to eternal life.

All the heads of the families should treat all household members kindly and impartially. The wife has rights against her husband to protect her from cruelty and abuse. Arab teaching states that no one is allowed to refuse requests for help under any circumstances. These concepts help to draw the families, the tribes, and the nations closer together. The people were seeking some type of uniformity and equality in a world that is being pulled in many different directions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

American Commercial and Public Service Advertising

American commercial and public service advertising is often directed to a specific audience without realizing that it does not reach that audience for one reason or another. In order to understand the way that media must be focused, it is necessary to look at how advertising finds a target audience and then addresses the target audience. This is especially important when you are crossing cultural boundaries. Once you understand at least some of the key issues which are different from one culture to another, then you are able to approach other cultures with your own message and gain some success.

Drug War - Latin America

The drug war that is going on is affecting the entire world. The most direct involvement has to be in Latin America. Depending on which group you talk to, some people say that the war is being won. Others say it is not. The drug war in Latin America presents many unique concepts. The target of the war in Latin America is the poor and the indigent peasants.

It has to be remembered that in countries such as Peru, Bolivia and Columbia “. . . drug consumption is not a serious social problem” [19]. It is the exports of the drugs that are beneficial to the poor in Latin America. Many of the poor and the peasants have small farms. The drug traffic is very important to them because many have only one cash crop -- drugs.

According to statistics released about the production of the coca product, it has “. . . increased by a staggering 32%” [12]. The problem as far as Latin Americans are concerned is that if the war on drugs is won, they could completely lose any cash income from their farms. “. . . The people fear that if they stop growing coca, they will die of hunger” [12]. To the small

B.Al Jenaibi is with United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain, U.A.E. She is now with the Mass Communication Department, U.A.E University (e-mail: aljenaibi@uaeu.ac.ae).

farmers there is no economic alternative. If the war on drugs is won, the farmers have two options. They can “. . . go deeper into the jungle to grow more coca or to join the growing ranks of Columbia’s largest insurgency, . . .” [13].

The drug war in Latin America is much different than in the United States. The crops that produce the drugs are grown for survival. The drug war has not stopped the flow of illicit drugs into the United States. The market is still in place. The drugs are helping Latin America. As far as the farms to grow the coca, they only account for 1% of the land. The actual growing of the crop is not as large as many people are led to believe. According to The Washington Post, “. . . a year’s heroin supply for U.S. users can be made from poppies grown on just 20 square miles of farm land” [14].

In many cases the drug war has targeted the ones who are the least responsible for the problem. The poor blacks and Latinos in the United States are targeted by U.S. drug enforcement because they do not have the money to avoid detection. The poor in American society are neglected and are easy targets.

The war in the United States is focused on demand reduction rather than elimination. According to General Barry R. McCaffrey, “Use of cocaine has decreased by 70 percent in the last 15 years, . . . Use of all illegal drugs by young people aged 12 to 17 went down 21 percent” [1]. The focus on the American drug war is reduction. The focus on the Latin American drug war is destruction.

According to published figures by the United States government “. . . U.S. taxpayers have provided nearly \$290 billion for the war on drugs” [12]. Even though this huge sum of money has been spent, drugs such as cocaine and heroin are more readily available at cheaper prices than ever before. In a Newsweek inquiry into the Pentagon drug war, a report stated that the current actions “. . . involves thousands of U.S. and Latin troops, at a cost of more than a billion dollars per year” [18].

The major difference between the drug war in the United States and the drug war in Latin American is not financial. The people of Latin America look at drugs as a way of survival since it is a cash crop that generates income for the poor and peasants in the area. It is not a terrible illegal substance like it is in the United States.

The armies in Latin America consider the drug war a low intensity conflict. The drug cartels are motivated by money. It has been stated that “One of the principles of low- intensity conflict is that whoever has the will of the people wins the war” [24]. This one fact means that in Latin America, the people fighting against drugs have lost the war.

The drug cartels have thousands of corrupt officials and other employees working for them. They control the people who actually grow the poppies. Their money from buying the crops help the Latin American farmers survive.

This one factor means that they are willing to protect the people who pay them for their crops. This is the drug cartel. There can be no clear-cut definition or feeling of a victory in the drug war.

What is a problem and a danger to one group is survival and security to another group. As long as there is a benefit realized through the drug production, the war will never be won. As long as there is a market for the product, the product will be grown, processed and sold. The question has been asked many times about whether it is possible to win the war on drugs. In the foreseeable future, the answer is no.

Socialization of Islamic Women through Advertising in the Western World

Advertising is very aware of the role of gender in American society. Gender descriptions used in advertising present gender roles as what they are and what they are conceived to be. Many advertisements take advantage of the concept of how gender is perceived by the group being targeted rather than its actual place in society. In recent years, there have been an increased proportion of women in the workforce causing a major cultural shift in the United States. In order to respond to the cultural shift, new images of modern women have been developed and implemented. A whole new marketing base has emerged because of the changing role of women in society.

The traditional family model of the husband being the breadwinner and the woman being employed in the home is quickly changing. There have been many research projects that confirm this fact. Numerous research projects that have been done have found that the 1990’s advertising portrayal of women brings out four basic themes. These themes are:

1. Women are usually portrayed in traditional homemaker roles,
2. Women do not conduct important business or make any type of important decisions,
3. Men need women for every-thing,
4. Women are viewed as sex objects and decorations with no personalities [14].

The advertising campaigns today are trying to uphold traditional views of women and at the same time address the new concepts of women as members of the workforce. Many beer, alcohol, and cigarette advertisers still use the traditional concept that women are sex objects and decorations that the men are looking for. The commercials made primarily for men still portray women as sex objects but the ads that are structured toward mixed genders use both male and female as sex objects so that both genders will appreciate the ad.

The advertising community is faced with major conflict that it is having difficulty resolving. The advertisements tend to stereotype women and men but in reality the women who have entered the workforce are offended by many of the stereotype commercials. The ads may portray the women as sex objects but they do not take into account many of the current cultural changes. If advertisements are to be successful, they must reflect the society not traditional gender roles. “Women no longer view housework as solely woman’s work. They view it as appropriate for both genders . . .”[17].

Beer commercials create a problem in that they portray one-dimensional people. The females are stereotyped as sex

objects or decorations and the men are hunks. "We found no sensitive men in beer commercials . . . nor any thoughtful men, scholarly men, political men, or even complex men" [14].

The only men shown in any of the beer commercials were only one dimensional just as the women. Today's consumers are becoming too well educated to accept the concept of one-dimensional human beings. Use of provocative female models in commercials for boots, cigarettes or other products show the women as decorations. In alcohol commercials, the women add an extra dimension. This can be very dangerous because the women are in provocative dress and situations in the same commercial as the typical aggressive male. Many adults who watch these advertisements come from backgrounds where alcohol is not acceptable at all. Many adolescents cannot separate the images on the screen from real life.

Advertisers must be able to respond to cultural shifts by creating ads that keep pace with the changes in American society. It is no longer acceptable to accept advertisements that strictly stereotype the genders. Gender in American society is a continually changing role. The advertisements have to address the current gender situation if they are going to be effective. Only by keeping up with the gender situation can advertisements effectively present information that will appeal to the modern consumer.

As ideas changed, fashion changed. Women changed from being in the background to be in the limelight and staying there by portraying their sexuality openly -- often through fashion. "Erotic meanings are attached to clothes. . . . And styles must be consistent with the spirit of the times [20]. This philosophy is what changed the whole appearance of women in society. Women went from dominated and controlled spouses behind the veil to open, free spirits who did what they wanted to in a world, which had once been dominated solely by men. The question, which arises here, is, just how much did fashion and dress have to do with this transition? If Roach-Higgins and Eicher were correct in their assumptions, fashion and dress had everything to do with the transition. As they stated, we define self as a composite of an individual's identities communicated by dress, bodily aspects of appearance, and discourse, . . . can have a number of identities and contribute the total configuration of the self. . . [29].

The veil in the Middle Eastern societies ". . . stirs strong emotions in the West" [11] because the theory is held that the veil takes away from what the woman has become. Fernea and Fernea emphasize the point that Iran's 16 million women have come a long way since their floor-length cotton veil officially was abolished in 1935 . . . Today, with the resurgence of Islam, the veil has become a statement of difference between the Middle East and the Western World [11].

These women have come to the United States through college programs for international students and global marketing. As they spend more time in the Western cultures, they are taught more Western habits and give up more of their

own traditional ones. They also understand the American media campaigns as they become more Americanized.

General View for Drugs Problems in the United Arab Emirates

However the religious impediment in a Muslim country like the UAE, the United Arab Emirates policy against drugs follows different way these days because of the openness of the media, which affects on the youth and teenagers. The United Arab Emirates, by virtue of its position as a cultural and geographical gateway between the East and West, is not excluded from this extensive black market. In a bid to protect school children from the hazards of drugs, there are three ministries take care of it, which are the ministry of media and information, the ministry of health, and the ministry of interior. The Dubai Police Anti-Narcotics Department has launched an awareness campaign entitled "Bravery". The drive, organized in co-operation with Dubai Educational Zone, aims to raise awareness among youngsters and prevent them from falling prey to dangerous habits [33].

On the other hand, Dubai police are stepping up a media campaign to curb drug crimes as part of a strategy involving continuous education of the public about the hazards of narcotics. The Education and Guidance Section have drawn up the strategy at the Dubai anti-drug police department following reports of an increase in teenagers' involvement in drug crimes in the UAE, the report said, adding that, the move will upgrade the performance of anti-drug squads. Lieutenant Colonel Ibrahim Al Dibl, the Section Director said:" You should know that such crimes are now affecting teenagers. We have found that 8.16 percent of those who have been arrested for drug crimes are aged between 15-20 years" [5].

For this reason, a strategy has set just for focusing on an intensified information campaign and building a strong wall of values to protect the society. Besides all of this, the strategy also includes courses for policemen involved in fighting drugs with the aim of upgrading their educational and legal skills in the field of combating drugs. The media has conducted a survey which showed a large part of the public are not aware of the services provided by anti-drug section in the police department, that prompted the government to work on an extensive plan which also takes into account the vital role played by the media [24].

On the 26th of June every year, the United Arab Emirates celebrates the International day against Drugs. "The effort of the Ministry of Health to overcome the drug problem by first gathering factual data about the problem and basing their solutions on it is commendable! However, while collection of data is the first and important step in finding a solution, it does not provide a solution by itself. Analysis of the data to find the root cause of the problem is extremely important in finding the correct solution". [34].

The only way the world is going to make any progress on this is through working together by bringing the message of the dangers of drugs to the media and home; parents are

taking an active part in addressing the problem of drug using in any society.

REFERENCES

- [1] McQuail, D. (2000). The influence and effects of mass media. In *Media Power in Politics*. Ed. Doris Graber. CQ Press, p. 7.
- [2] Ames, Genevieve. "Research and Strategies for the Primary Prevention of Workplace Alcohol Problems," *Alcohol Health & Research World*, Winter 1993, 19-28.
- [3] Ackerman, Robert J. *Let Go and Grow*. Pompano Beach, Florida: Heath Communications Inc., 1987..
- [4] Ackerman, Robert J., ed. *Growing in the Shadow*. Pompano Beach, Florida: Heath Communications Inc., 1986.
- [5] Campaign against drugs launched, *Gulf News*, posted on 19/09/2002
- [6] Cauldron, Shari. "Teamwork takes Work," *Personnel Journal*, February 1994, 40-48.
- [7] Cicero, Theodore. "Effects of paternal exposure to alcohol on offspring development: paternal alcohol consumption may affect fetal development through a direct effect on the father's sperm or gonads," *Alcohol Health & Research World*, Winter 1994, 37-42.
- [8] Donkin, Richard. "How companies turn water into wine," *World Press Review*, December 1994, 41.
- [9] Dumaine, Brian. "The trouble with teams," *Fortune*, September 5, 1994, 86-91.
- [10] "Drug wars," *Current Events*, September 29, 2000, 1.
- [11] Fernea, Elizabeth W. and Fernea, Robert A. "Symbolizing Roles: Behind the Veil," in *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, 7th edition. Ed. by Spradley, James P. and McCurdy, David W. Harper Collins, 1986.
- [12] Frankel, Glenn. "U.S. war on drugs yields few victories," *The Washington Post*, June 8, 1997, A1.
- [13] Hafen, Brent Q. *Alcohol: The Crutch that Cripples*. St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Company, 1977.
- [14] Hall, Christine C. and Crum, Matthew J. "Women and 'Body- isms' in television beer commercials," *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, September 1994, 329-338.
- [15] Handelsman, Leonard, et al. "Morbidity risk for alcoholism and drug abuse in relatives of cocaine addicts," *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, September 1993, 347-358.
- [16] Hisnanick, John J. and Erickson, Patricia M. "Hospital resource utilization by American Indians/Alaska natives for alcoholism and alcohol abuse," *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, September 1993, 387-396.
- [17] Jaffe, Lynn J. and Berger, Paul D. "The effect of modern female sex role portrayals on advertising effective-ness," *Journal of Advertising Research*, July-August 1994, 32-43.
- [18] Kinney, Jean and Leaton, Gwen. *Loosening the Grip*. St. Louis: The C.V. Mosby Company, 1983.
- [19] Lane, C. and Waller, D. "The newest war," *Newsweek*, January 6, 1992, 18-24.
- [20] Lauer, Robert H. and Lauer, Jeanette. "A Case Study: The Bloomer Costume," in *Fashion Power: The Meaning of Fashion in America* by Lauer, Robert H. and Lauer, Jeanette C. Prentice Hall, 1981.
- [21] Lester, David. "Alcohol availability, alcoholism, and suicide and homicide," *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, February 1995, 147-151.
- [22] Marlin, Emily. *Hope*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1997.
- [23] McNerney, Donald J. "The *Facts of Life* for Teambuilding," *HR Focus*, December 1994, 12-14.
- [24] Media drive against drugs to be stepped up, *The Emirates News Agency, WAM*, posted on 05/07/2002
- [25] Meryman, Richard. *Broken Promises, Mended Dreams*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1984.
- [26] Miller, C. "Publisher says sexy ads are ok: but sexist ones will sink sales," *Marketing News*, November 23, 1992, 8-9.
- [27] Mumey, Jack. *Loving an Alcoholic*. Chicago: Contemporary Books Inc., 1985.
- [28] Plant, Moria. *Women, Drinking, and Pregnancy*. New York: Tavistock Publication, 1985.
- [29] Roach-Higgins, Mary Ellen and Eicher, Joanne B. "Dress and Identity," *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 10 (1992): 1-8.
- [30] Soderstrom, Carl A. "Alcohol's effect on trauma outcomes: a reappraisal of conventional wisdom," *JAMA*, July 7, 1993, 93-95.
- [31] Tracy, Don. *What You Should Know About Alcoholism*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1975.
- [32] Tsuang, John W., et al. "Drug use among primary alcoholic veterans," *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, November 1994, 483-494.
- [33] UAE steps up war on drugs, *Khaleej Times*, posted on 27/06/2002
- [34] Virendra Pandurang Marathe, *Sanatan Society for Scientific Spirituality, Sanatan Weekly Online*, April 6, 2003.
- [35] Youngers, Coletta. "The only war we've got," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, September/October 1997, 16-19.