

## The Development of Mass media in International Relations: In case of Al-Jazeera Effects in Middle East

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### ABSTRACT

The international network has a very important role in strengthening the solidarity and unity of the masses, in spreading information to the community by creating virtual communities. Al-Jazeera as one of the most reputable media outlets in the international arena and have considerable influence in society. They have a vital role in raising awareness to the people in case of religion, culture and issues in the world. In addition, more rapid and accessible information in the global media has been supported by information among countries that have changed the politics of the authorities. mass media in international relations that grow so fast recently by knowing that the media and politics are related each others with sharing the mutual benefit to each other. The author discusses Al- Jazeera achievements in changing and growing people's opinions on politics, the media as a vehicle for community empowerment, and more. By producing new concepts through information and news that raise awareness of the Middle East community, the region's unequal social and political conditions, and the Middle East's position. In the Middle East, things are changing, and people are becoming more aware of the value of freedom and democracy.

**Keywords :** Development; Mass Media; Al-Jazeera; Effect

### ABSTRAK

*Jaringan internasional memiliki peran yang sangat penting dalam memperkuat solidaritas dan persatuan massa, dalam menyebarkan informasi kepada masyarakat dengan menciptakan komunitas virtual. Al-Jazeera sebagai salah satu media terkemuka di kancah internasional dan memiliki pengaruh yang cukup besar di masyarakat. Mereka memiliki peran penting dalam meningkatkan kesadaran kepada masyarakat dalam hal agama, budaya dan isu-isu di dunia. Selain itu, informasi yang lebih cepat dan mudah diakses di media global telah didukung oleh informasi antar negara yang telah mengubah politik penguasa. media massa dalam hubungan internasional yang berkembang pesat akhir-akhir ini dengan mengetahui bahwa media dan politik saling terkait dengan saling berbagi manfaat satu sama lain. Penulis membahas capaian Al-Jazeera dalam mengubah dan menumbuhkan opini masyarakat tentang politik, media sebagai wahana pemberdayaan masyarakat, dan lainnya. Dengan menghasilkan konsep-konsep baru melalui informasi dan berita yang meningkatkan kesadaran masyarakat Timur Tengah, kondisi sosial dan politik kawasan yang tidak setara, dan posisi Timur Tengah. Di Timur Tengah, banyak hal berubah, dan orang-orang menjadi lebih sadar akan nilai kebebasan dan demokrasi.*

*Kata kunci:* Pengembangan; Media Massa; Al-Jazeera; Efek

### Introduction

The international media is a tool that can easily enter into a state in a subtle and sometimes unaware way of bringing interests that could threaten the existence of a country or other actors. This international media can also be a tool that helps the country to expand the issues it wants to raise. However, this media still has the authority to side with them. Today, the media appears to be more community-centered, it is also the power of the international media to influence society because it is considered more voiced by the interests of the people. But it can not be denied too, the media are deeply affected by the interests and conditions in which they are sheltering. For example, Al-Jazeera's

media is more inclined towards positive coverage of Iraq while CNN is more pro-US. This is called the media being the propaganda power of a country.<sup>1</sup>

The media also has the ability to be an investigator of an issue. The media will see from the side of the government or the authorities and from the public side. The results of this investigation will be a source of information for the parties in need. Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, including people who strongly believe the results of surveys and media statistics. In addition, the international media effectively mediates between countries in response to specific issues. The role of the media is very important when the media becomes a forum for channeling opinions from one side then responding again, so the media becomes a kind of feedback for the parties concerned.

One of the most influential mass media in the world is Al Jazeera which is a new source of alternative for the state and citizens to interact with each other and give the people an opportunity to express their values and their personality it's kinda independence, at least in the world of education and information, with a lot of information sources. Al Jazeera that is located in Global South became the only broadcaster company who aired Internationally from there, as a new alternative form that can change the processes and the subject that is involved in modern political decision-making. Al Jazeera also became very prominent in advocating the voices of the people compared to other media in the Middle East. Al Jazeera's network as a global mass media network not only producing news informations about politic that are considered as serious thing, but also about cultural programs, sports, and children, Al Jazeera also trigger as enemy for western society because Al Jazeera being a community representative to criticize Western news and programs while on the other hand, they use Western technologies and style adapted and developed to suit the historical and socio-cultural conditions of the Arab world, especially Muslims.<sup>2</sup>

For international politics, media activities play a role in reporting and reporting political events, then the event is delivered to audiences, for the next public or audience will interpret the text of the text presented in the media. State policy and international issues are presented by the mass media through its political news, so it has a huge influence on citizens in various fields. This dynamic makes the mass media through the content of elements of tension, conflict of interest, dramatic aspects of each event involving various policies and issues raised. Such aspects, it is enough reason for the mass media to make it as a journalistic report. Political figures involved in the country to make it worthy to be made news.

Media becomes an effective vehicle for propaganda because it has the ability to influence society or mass. Media functions others in propaganda are able to influence deep social relationships. Through the media, audiences learn what's going on inside society and so will influence the growing opinion in society, so no wonder if it can sometimes lead to change in a society. As recently as late 2010, in the Middle East region has been a phenomenon that has become a hot topic all over the world. The phenomenon is closely related to the existence of online activities. Utilize online media, people in Middle Eastern countries have made changes demanding a more democratic government. This is not surprising because in the region the supreme power is held by the king.

Events demanded that democratic change, theoretically divided into two phases, namely the phase of liberation from authoritarian rule and the establishment of a democratic constitution. The phenomenon of change towards the democratization of the Arab Spring is also known as Arab Spring,

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<sup>1</sup> Shawn Powers, "The al Jazeera Effect," *Review of the al Jazeera Effect Journal of Middle East Media* 6, no. 6 (2010): Phillip Seib.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

where the beginning of the emergence of the event originated from Tunisia in December 2010 until the end of 2011 before it finally spread to other countries such as Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, etc. (Arabic, Arabic, Resurrection Arabic or The Arab Uprising / Arab Awakening, and Jasmine/Jasmine Revolution).

This relationship makes the existence of an international political system conducted by diplomatic officials (including the foreign policy of a country) with the media of mutual influence-influencing, this can be seen from some things marked in the form of a country's political policy, in determining the pattern of mass media operation in the country, from ownership, content display, to supervision. The communication revolution is run by the mass media, making its position placement important, because the mass media serves as a bridge to convey messages that can enable power, while officials give information to the press to be submitted to the audience.

Responding to the influence of mass media in international relations especially to shape and control the public opinion among society it means that mass media nowadays has been developed very fast, furthermore, in this paper, I want to answer how Al Jazeera developed their influence in the society. And how effective mass media influence the public opinion and playing a role in decision making, and what we could have learned from this particular case which is Al Jazeera effects.

## **Literature Review**

In this paper, I use some special terms, namely the international media, Al Jazeera, CNN, propaganda, and autonomy. The international mass media means disseminating news and information to a wide audience, internationally. Meanwhile, Al Jazeera is an Arabic and English-language television station based in Doha, Qatar. In addition to the main news channel, Al Jazeera also operates several other special TV channels, including Al Jazeera English, Al Jazeera Sports, Al Jazeera Live, and Al Jazeera Children's Channel. In addition, Al Jazeera also operates Arabic and English websites.<sup>3</sup> Cable News Network (CNN) is a US cable news channel established in 1980 by US media conglomerate Ted Turner. CNN is the first television channel to broadcast 24-hour news coverage and the first news channel in the United States.<sup>4</sup> Propaganda is a series of messages aimed at influencing the opinions and behaviors of a society or group of people. Propaganda does not convey information objectively but provides information that affects the party or hears it.<sup>5</sup> Regional autonomy is the right, authority, and obligation of autonomous regions to regulate and manage their own government affairs and the interests of local communities in accordance with laws and regulations. Literally, regional autonomy comes from the word autonomy and the region.<sup>6</sup>

The author's novelties in this article are that mass media has a significant impact on the community, and that this study can also verify that mass media has been established to influence public opinion. The use of modern mass media by governments to manipulate public opinion reflects the growth of modern mass media. In politics, the media is frequently utilized to transmit information and messages to the public that are both effective and efficient, particularly to elicit public sympathy. Also,

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<sup>3</sup> Mohammad Ferandy, "Sejarah al Jazeera: Media Yang Mengubah Berita Timur Tengah," Satu Jam, June 21, 2016, <https://satujam.com/sejarah-al-jazeera/>.

<sup>4</sup> "Sejarah Berdirinya CNN," April 11, 2018, <http://unknown-mboh.blogspot.com/2012/11/sejarah-berdirinya-cnn.html>.

<sup>5</sup> PROPAGANDA POLITIK, "Apakah Yang Dimaksud Propaganda Politik?," Dictio Community, September 1, 2017, <https://www.dictio.id/t/apakah-yang-dimaksud-propaganda-politik/4571/2>.

<sup>6</sup> Pratarmadia, "Apa Pengertian Otonomi? - Brainly.co.id," brainly.co.id, September 24, 2016, <https://brainly.co.id/tugas/7526028>.

how Al Jazeera's innovation and strategy to alter people's thinking views the media itself, namely, that the media contributes to all innovations and reforms that occur in society, as well as the media as a tool to empower people. By generating new concepts through information and news, situations in the Middle East were changed, and people in the Middle East were awakened to the importance of freedom and democracy.

## **Methodology**

Researchers used a qualitative research methodology in this study. This research is descriptive, with a focus on subject analysis. Another reason, looking at the Development of Mass Media in International Relations: The Case of the Al-Jazeera Effect in the Middle East, qualitative is considered more important. The data for this research comes from various sources, including the publication of opinions of experts in the field of mass media. Journals, government reports, articles, newspapers and online media relevant to the issue of Mass Media Development, Al-Jazeera, Effects, and certain keywords as well as previous studies on Al-Jazeera are also included.

### **a. Hypodermic Needle Theory**

Hypodermic needle theory or also known as the theory of bullets is one of the theories of mass communication, especially the theory of mass media effects initiated by Harold Lasswell in the 1920s when writing a book " Propaganda Technique " during the world war.

The hypodermic needle theory is one of the linear communication models that focuses on the power of media influence on audiences. According to the hypodermic needle theory, the message is described as a magic bullet that enters the minds of the audience and injects some special messages. This theory also explains how the media controls what audiences see and what audiences hear. According to this theory, the effect of media on mass audiences is immediate or delayed in the future.

The use of the term needle and bullet is to describe the powerlessness of mass audiences as the impact of public opinion or public opinion built by the mass media causing behavioral changes to the mass audience. The hypodermic needle theory was influenced by the flow of behaviorism media around the 1930s. According to Berger, the hypochromic needle theory or bullet theory assumes that media messages are like bullets fired from media guns into the heads of audiences.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Application of Hypodermic Needle Theory**

Example Implementation of Hypodermic Needle Theory in case of mass media development especially the effect of Al-Jazeera. Al-Jazeera's branding transformation of alleged terrorist spokesmen into credible and highly reputable information has made the Middle East public of this Qatar Government media network a darling medium and a voice-concealed aspiration bearer. A transition that inspires the movement of massive change in the Middle East and makes Al-Jazeera as one of the cable carriages that propel the Arab Spring wave in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>8</sup> The presence of such media as Al-Jazeera also contributed to the Arab Spring event through the news it

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<sup>7</sup> "Teori Jarum Hipodermik - Asumsi - Konsep - Kritik," Pakar Komunikasi.com, May 27, 2017, <https://pakarkomunikasi.com/teori-jarum-hipodermik/>.

<sup>8</sup> "Berita Nasional Terkini Dan Terbaru Hari Ini - SINDOnews," nasional.sindonews.com, May 9, 2018, <https://nasional.sindonews.com/read/1214073/18/krisis-qatar-dan-efek-al-jazeera-1497571333/13>.

conveyed. Through the news, Al-Jazeera directly does not allow the people of Tunisia to participate in and activate it down the streets to protest.

## **b. Theory of Constructivism**

Constructivism has at least two major notions that are pertinent to the study of International Relations : first, the belief that shared ideas, rather than material forces, determine the structures that unite human beings. This view symbolizes the idealistic perspective that previously dominated the discipline of international relations, particularly prior to World War II; and second, the belief that shared ideals, rather than natural circumstances, determine the identities and interests of actors. This suggests that each actor's behaviors are molded more by interactions between individuals in the surrounding environment than by their own goals, reasoning, and interests (social, political, economic, cultural structures and so on). As a result, this viewpoint represents Structuralism in theory Constructivism.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, Constructivism theorists think that the social world is not predetermined, that its laws cannot be discovered through scientific inquiry and described through scientific theory, as offered by Behaviorism and Positivism. The social world, on the other hand, is an intersubjective space.<sup>10</sup>

Constructivism examines various dimensions of the construction of ideas as a result of interactions between actors, such as discourse, opinions, issues, values, identities, norms, culture, and so on, in contrast to mainstream perspectives such as Realism, Liberalism, and Structuralism, which place a strong emphasis on actors and various patterns of relationships between them. Theorists of constructivism think that these varied constructions of collective ideas are the result of various empirical interactions of actors.

The process of developing ideas is fluid, and it becomes a variable that affects how actors perceive themselves and their surroundings. Actors in the field of international relations define their identities, interests, and, ultimately, actions in this framework. According to constructivism, human nature is more free and noble since it has the ability to reject or embrace the international system, restructure mutually advantageous relationship models, or do whatever it wants based on rules, structuration, and comprehension in speech acts.<sup>11</sup>

## **b. Application of Theory of Constructivism**

According to the point of constructivism, the media not only have the role of channeling messages, but as subjects in social construction, which have their own views and partiality. The mass media is a social construction actor that defines reality. News read from the mass media not only provides social reality, but also shows the social construction of the media. The mass media forms the social reality through the news that it does.

The mass media is actively shaping social reality by taking the framing of an event to be reported to the public. The media not only have the role of selecting events and news sources, but also defines the events and sources of the news according to the mass media. Al Jazeera tries to conjure up

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<sup>9</sup> Bob Sugeng Hadiwinata, *Transformasi Isu Dan Aktor Di Dalam Studi Hubungan Internasional: Dari Realisme Hingga Konstruktivisme* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2017), 107.

<sup>10</sup> R Jackson, *Classical and Modern Thought on International Relations* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Adi W, A. Konstruktivisme dalam Pembelajaran Hubungan Internasional (2009, July 11), p. 45.

public thinking about the values of democracy in Middle Eastern society as well as freedom in opinion and expression on Arab society.<sup>12</sup>

## Analysis

### a. Al-Jazeera's Media Influence

The growth and development of Al-Jazeera both Arabic and English versions have brought a big impact in the politics of the Arab world and even internationally. Is the Al-Jazeera Effect, which is a term used to describe the impact of the emergence of new media in a global society, especially in the political and social fields. The term Al-Jazeera Effect itself began to be widely known since 11 September 2001. The Al-Jazeera Effect refers to the ability of the media in shaping public opinion and foreign politics through its portrayal and strong coverage. According to El-Nawawy himself in his book entitled "The Al-Jazeera Effect", the term is related to Al-Jazeera's efforts to gain an audience through the internet that aims to create a debate space through the Arab world and criticize governance in both the Arab and Western world. Efforts and consequences taken by Al-Jazeera is what came to be called the Al-Jazeera Effect. Furthermore, the term has been used in political science or in the study of mass media to describe the impact of a new media - in this case Al-Jazeera - on global politics, such as reducing media monopolies by the government in terms of information, and empowering groups that previously had limited speech.

In the case of Al-Jazeera, the influence it has provided has a new perspective, broke the censorship and propaganda, and has sent information from the East and South to the West. In other words, Al-Jazeera has played a major role in liberalizing Arab media. The Al-Jazeera Effect symbolizes a change not only for the media network itself, but also in the flow of information in Arabia and throughout the world. In this case the media plays the biggest role in making this happen. Through news the public can learn and know about which opponents and friends, about a sense of nationalism and rebellion, or even both. That is why many of the governments are trying to control a media, because if the media is in his hands then the country will be easily controlled and under its control.<sup>13</sup>

Before the emergence of Al-Jazeera, many media oriented towards Western media such as CNN with their point of view were certainly more inclined to the West. But after its emergence, Al-Jazeera has become its own symbol in the world of global mass media. Al-Jazeera began to give a new perspective on the Arab world in every story. On the one hand it is a positive thing, but on the other hand Al-Jazeera is considered a challenge for governments in the Middle East region. Not quite up there, after the outbreak of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Al-Jazeera began to develop its influence at the international level. But other risks must be faced when Al-Jazeera has to deal with American forces that feel Al-Jazeera will only carry a bad image. Overall, however, The Al-Jazeera Effect has symbolized the influence of new media freedom on global society.

The amount of influence brought by Al-Jazeera to the global community is inseparable from the high level of popularity. As explained earlier, by carrying out a new vision and mission and perspective, Al-Jazeera proves to its viewers as quality and trustworthy media. This is consistent with

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<sup>12</sup> Phillips Andrew, *Constructivism" International Relations Theory for the Twenty-First Century an Introduction* (USA: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Mohamed Zayani, *The al Jazeera Phenomenon : Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2005).

what was said by Faisal Qasim - a former BBC employee who later became an employee of Al-Jazeera, said that freedom of expression and opinion in Al-Jazeera, which is not owned by other media has become an important factor for Al-Jazeera's success.

Al-Jazeera's success is also inseparable from the innovations he took in producing something new in the Arab world. With the condition of the Arab region which is somewhat chaotic due to frequent conflicts and wars, many problems began to emerge - be it in the political, economic, or relationship with other countries - which need to be studied and discussed together. Al-Jazeera also opened a debate space among the public by studying and discussing matters relating to issues surrounding the Arab region. With the government's strong control over the media, people who have limited information about what is really happening, eventually get a lot of insight and new insights. Al-Jazeera's efforts to encourage openness and debate have provided strong influence on Arab society. Then over time the influence is also felt by the global community that was previously closed to what was happening in the Arab world.

To various levels throughout the world, media connectivity has brought about an identity and a global political structure that continues to expand. This changes the way the State and its people interact with each other and gives individuals the opportunity to increase their intellectual level because of the abundant availability of information. Many Middle Eastern experts themselves say that Al-Jazeera has raised the level of debate and opened the door to wider and more accurate news in the Arab world.

With its great influence, Al-Jazeera is considered a 'gift' for Arab viewers, who have been credited with providing access to censorship-free news channels in Arabic, by Arabs, and for Arabs, who for years have been dominated by channels foreign media such as BBC and CNN. That is why as previously mentioned, Al-Jazeera has become a symbol in the phenomenon itself. Regardless of the pros and cons, whether it is considered an unreasonable demand or not, Al-Jazeera has certainly had a strong influence in each region of the world, both in the political and social fields - society.

#### **b. The Role of Al-Jazeera's Media**

Since its appearance, Al-Jazeera has become a phenomenon in its own right in the Arab world. Bearing an image as an independent media that focuses on discussing important events in the Arab world, Al-Jazeera has attracted the attention of the public in getting the most up-to-date news. With the reputation and quality of the news that is presented as is and does not take sides, it is not uncommon for Al-Jazeera to get criticized and angered by various MENA countries. They felt Al-Jazeera was only spreading slander and disgrace for the MENA countries.<sup>14</sup> In other words, Al-Jazeera is loved by the people and hated by Arab governments. But the Arab government's displeasure with Al-Jazeera has in fact added to its popularity among the Arab community.

Arab society's trust in Al-Jazeera's dedication as a media that provides quality news began to increase when Al-Jazeera covered important events such as the war against America that occurred in Iraq and Afghanistan. With the style of reporting as it is and not biased like most Western media do, Al-Jazeera is able to provide every detail of the incident based on the facts in the field. For this reason, Al-Jazeera is able to attract the belief of the people so that it can influence their mindsets. So in other words independent and free media - in this case Al-Jazeera, can influence and carry out social control

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<sup>14</sup> Mohamed Zayani, *The al Jazeera Phenomenon : Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2005).

functions. Where it is controlled not only by the authorities, government, parliament, judiciary, military, but also the community itself.<sup>15</sup>

Not only in the events of the American war in Iraq and Afghanistan, Al-Jazeera again played its role in the recent events of democratization in several MENA countries, which were better known as the Arab Spring. Many written sources say that the role of Al-Jazeera in the Arab Spring incident is something that has never happened before, especially in the events of the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. The Tunisians themselves, who were the pioneers of the Arab Spring, praised Al-Jazeera's speed and agility in channeling news about the resignation of Ben Ali's power in Tunisia. Furthermore, Al-Jazeera's coverage of the fall of the power regimes in Tunisia and Egypt further helped to increase the channel's popularity. The coverage has inspired the people in Libya and Yemen to take the same action in their respective countries. Automatically makes the role of Al-Jazeera, in this case the satellite television Al-Jazeera in that event increasingly unquestioned.<sup>16</sup>

The Arab Spring incident attracted quite a lot of attention from the world community as a series of revolutionary events in several Arab countries that began in Tunisia in January 2011. Since then, many Western media have simply described it as an aspirational event demanding freedom and demoralization, promoted by people who for years have lived under the dictatorship of power. In fact, the Arab Spring incident means more than that. The Arab Spring occurs because of a combination of different natural factors, ranging from demographics to economics, and from religion to ideology. Realizing that, Al-Jazeera tried to play its role in wrapping these factors into a neat system before they are conveyed to the wider community.

In the case of the Arab Spring that occurred in Tunisia in 2011, Al-Jazeera has become an unrivaled media in the ongoing news coverage. Al-Jazeera has enjoyed its popularity as an independent and trustworthy news source. This was proven based on the survey results of the Arab Advisors Group, which stated that in 2005 Al-Jazeera was considered as a very trusted media by 85.7% of respondents in Egypt, 63.8% of respondents in Jordan, and 69% of respondents in Saudi Arabia<sup>142</sup>. The predominance of trust gained by Al-Jazeera largely occurred during its coverage of the American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Where in the incident Al-Jazeera has played its role as the voice of the voiceless. And Al-Jazeera was able to re-prove its role in the Arab Spring incident in Tunisia.

The Arab spring event in Tunisia, which was preceded by Mohammad Bouazizi's self-immolation, triggered protests from various groups throughout Tunisia that eventually demanded the removal of Ben Ali from power. The first protest took place at Sidi Bouzid, whose documentary video uploaded on Facebook attracted Al-Jazeera's attention. Al-Jazeera, who was looking for news material about the Arab world on Facebook, accidentally found the video and in the afternoon aired it directly on the Al-Mubashir channel. Since then Al-Jazeera's existence was not only to present a story, but also to try to keep it alive. Al-Jazeera continues to provide the latest developments on what is happening in Tunisia through videos, photographs and other matters concerning its viewers. When the incident was taking place, Al-Jazeera even had time to stop some of its programs and focus on presenting developments in the news of the revolution so that the public could obtain maximum information.

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<sup>15</sup> Jamhur Poti, "Demokratisasi Media Massa Dalam Prinsip Kebebasan," *Jurnal Ilmu Politik Dan Ilmu Pemerintahan* 1, no. 1 (2011).

<sup>16</sup> Ahmad E Souaiaia, "Qatar, al Jazeera, and the Arab Spring | MR Online," *mronline.org*, November 17, 2011, <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2011/souaiaia171111.html>



Revealed by Abderrahim Foukara, head of the Al-Jazeera station in Washington in his interview with Lawrence Pintak - Foreign Policy magazine journalist about the privilege of Al-Jazeera in presenting news to his viewers. He said that the genius of Arab TV satellites - in this case Al-Ajazeera - was his sensitivity in capturing something existential which is often called an Arab feeling of sensibility and turning it into a picture of a story that represented the heart of the Arabs.<sup>17</sup>

The above shows that Al-Jazeera's role is not only as a reporting media, but also as a form of news. By increasing people's awareness and knowledge about what is happening, Al-Jazeera has indirectly motivated them to join in the struggle to make changes. Making the role of Al-Jazeera not only as news reporting media, but as media that has opened the way for change through raising awareness and shaping public opinion. Al-Jazeera has also helped in constructing narratives by connecting together each separate event and giving meaning and orientation to it. The narrative that has been built and formed is then displayed on the Al-Jazeera screen, where viewers can get a comprehensive story covering their historical background, political context, and analytical framework. The role played by Al-Jazeera is evident in the Arab Spring incident in Tunisia.

Al-Jazeera played its part by broadcasting news about what was happening in Tunisia. By relying on sources in the form of videos uploaded on facebook and twitter by the demonstrators, it has allowed news to be spread and known to the wider public. The spread of this information to the whole community, makes them aware of what is happening, and what conditions they are experiencing. The fact that for many years they lived under the Ben Ali government with poor economic conditions and political pressure, made them feel embarrassed and demanded change. The existence of protests carried out by Bouazizi finally motivated them to protest demanding a better change, which made them from before only an object into a subject that played an active role in realizing their desires.

Although Al-Jazeera has become an important factor, the fact that the role of social media such as Facebook and Twitter is the first factor causing the emergence of a revolution in Tunisia cannot be ignored. But it was Al-Jazeera who first paid attention to the event before the local media began to pay attention, until it finally succeeded in attracting the attention of the wider community and continued to broadcast it repeatedly. Al-Jazeera along with other television stations in general are factors that facilitate and accelerate changes. Previously the government in Tunisia had increased its control over the use of the internet and social media such as Facebook and Twitter, but technically the government could not control satellite television. So Al-Jazeera is able to provide information openly via satellite which is very difficult to be prevented by the Tunisian authorities. For this reason, the government closed the Al-Jazeera headquarters in Tunisia.

### **c. Al-Jazeera and the Arab Revolution**

Back to the role of Al-Jazeera as a media that is able to influence public opinion and attitudes, the news coverage it presents is able to convey an idea about something great is happening. Al-Jazeera was able to make the protesters as heroes, making them feel an important part in achieving a much better life. This also motivated the people who saw the news to take part in the existing change process. The sympathy and solidarity of the people who protest can finally be transmitted to viewers who see it. So that people from various walks of life and ages also took part in the historic event.

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<sup>17</sup> Lawrence Pintak, "The Al-Jazeera Revolution: The Satellite Television Station Is Seizing the Message Away from the Bland Propaganda of Arab Autocrats," *Foreign Policy*, February 2, 2011, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/02/02/the-al-jazeera-revolution/>.

Seeing from these facts, in the end the role of Al-Jazeera satellite television in the Arab Spring incident in Tunisia is something that is real and inseparable.

Al-Jazeera, which is one of the Arab mass media originating from Qatar, has played an important role in the emergence of the Arab Spring in several MENA countries. With its ability to mobilize and bring the community into action in a process that demands change under the rule of the regime which has ruled for many years, which finally succeeded in overthrowing that authoritarian power, many consider Al-Jazeera to be the main key to the event. So it is not surprising that many consider the Arab Spring incident as an Al-Jazeera Revolution or Al-Jazeera's revolution, given its quite large role compared to other mass media.

In the case of Al-Jazeera, as a media that has many achievements and has succeeded in covering important events including the Arab Spring, its ability to mobilize the masses to participate in the revolution cannot be doubted. In fact Al-Jazeera was able to influence public opinion about what was really happening. But despite having a large role in it, saying the Arab Spring as the Al-Jazeera Revolution seems to be less precise.

The revolution that occurred during the Arab Spring incident may indeed not be the Al-Jazeera Revolution, but the generation that led the revolution and who participated in it was the Al-Jazeera generation. Wadah Khanfar, former president director of Al-Jazeera also agreed.

In other words, Al-Jazeera cannot be called the party that created the revolution, but its role in covering the news needs to be emphasized more. Al-Jazeera needs to be seen as one of the important factors supporting the success of the revolution. Through its role, in the end the revolution can spread and inspire other people to do the same. So it can be concluded that the assumption about Arab Spring is an Al-Jazeera revolution is not right.

## **Conclusion**

From all of the above it can be concluded that there are several important points first. Since its appearance in 1996, Al-Jazeera as a media based in Doha - Qatar has proven its ability as an international media that is able to compete with other media, especially Western media. As a media that considers itself the voice of the voiceless, Al-Jazeera is able to provide exclusive news that is different from other Western media. In addition, Al-Jazeera has also done what previously was not able to be done by other media, namely bringing all the united Arabs, under one umbrella, together to express their thoughts. So that the presence of Al-Jazeera is not only as a news media but also as a media that has opened a debate space among the people, especially the Arab community. In other words the presence and influence of Al-Jazeera in the Middle East and even in the international world is very strong and has become a phenomenon in itself until now. The second point is that the role of Al-Jazeera itself in Tunisia's political transformation in the Arab Spring event is very important. The role of Al-Jazeera is to inspire and move the Tunisian community through the news it broadcasts so as to be able to influence the public to take action. His other role, Al-Jazeera, has produced something called news dissemination. That is an activity aimed at groups or individuals so that they obtain information, awareness arises, receive, and finally utilize the information. With the dissemination of news brought by Al-Jazeera was able to give birth to the Arab Spring event in Tunisia.

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