Disinformation in news reporting in the current crisis of Syria

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Reviving the past and keeping up with the future – the libraries' role in preserving and providing access to newspapers and news media

Hamburg State and University Library

الأبجدية الأوغاريتية موقع رأس الشمرة الأثري-القرن الثالث عشر قبل الميلاد

Abstract

This paper deals with factual and analytical evolution of the Syrian media over the past five years by describing the relationship between media coverage and the reporting of news in the digital and social media era and new media. The transfer of reality and events between professional versus citizen journalism is discussed. The confusion happening in contradiction between media titles for the same the event is also discussed.

On the other hand, the paper discusses the vast amount of information during the Syrian crisis, and the extent of the digital Arabic content cognitive evolution and how users take advantage of the digital newspapers and magazines groups as cultural heritage in the Syrian libraries now, especially after the devastation and destruction of a number of libraries, museums, mosques and monasteries containing treasures of manuscripts, books and newspapers.

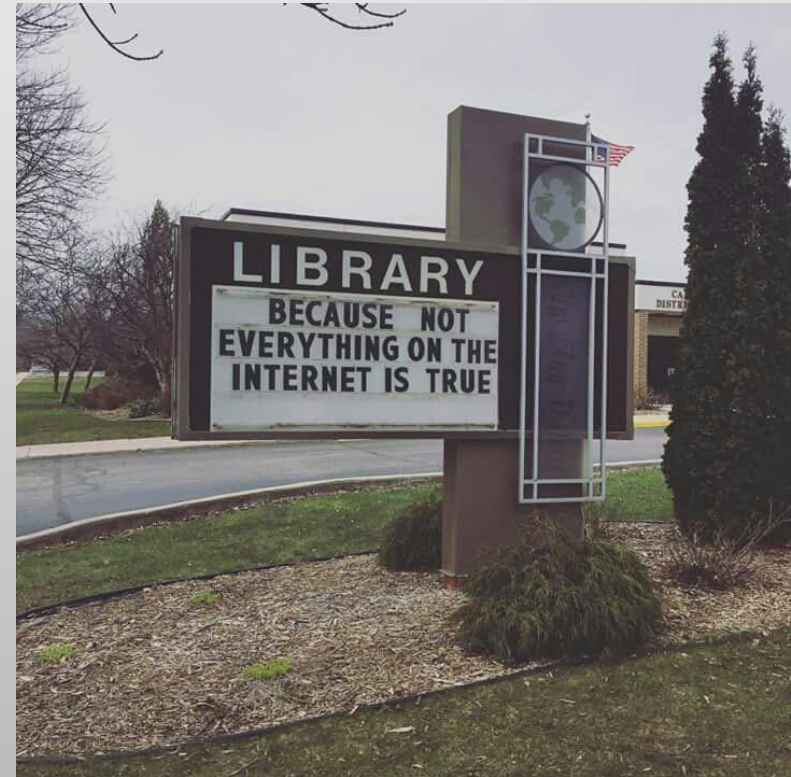# Disinformation in news reporting in the current crisis of Syria

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Introduction

The information revolution experienced by the world in the current age constitutes an information war by disseminating information via electronic news where information is considered as a major supplier in the management of crises and wars.

Among the most important results of this information revolution are the major changes that have taken place in the media industry and partnership in the industry and the use of this information.

Introduction

Hence the effect of disinformation, which is the result of daily monitoring all the time, appears in the Arab and western media, public and private, and follow covering the crises of the world in general and in the events of Syria in specific. Then the coverage of the news is assessed by the public, and they reach a conclusion that some of the media is a tool serves the interests and goals of the owners of those media institutions and whoever who is behind them.

Introduction

The Syrian crisis is illustrated by the absence of accurate and documented information and throwing accusations between all the local, regional and international parties, in an atmosphere of tension like a war between multiple world powers available on the Syrian land.

The start of the Syrian crisis

Unknown Syrian activists Called for a "Syrian anger day" on Facebook, constituting the first spark of the events of the Syrian crisis, which actually began in the middle of March of 2011. A limited number of demonstrations in several regions of Syria were done, and they were calling for freedom and releasing political prisoners from jails and removing the state of emergency from the country. The ceiling of demands raised up gradually to the request of overthrowing the Syrian regime.

The start of the Syrian crisis

In 31st of the same month, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad gave his first speech, which included the reform package promised to implement in an attempt to control the limited demonstration.

After the 21st of April 2011 the Syrian opposition began to speak through the media for dozens of deaths in the so-called great Friday, to begin a series of video films of the two sides the government and the opposition, and also photographs to prove the presence of armed or fabricating events. The Syria citizen could not know what is the truth. Since that date, the use conflict information began in various means of social communication with the innovation of different terms to express status and transfer of news

ما هي وظيفة الأمم المتحدة يا أبي ؟
-إستبدال الأوطان بالمخيمات يا بني !

The start of the Syrian crisis

The Syrian crisis is considered as one of the major international crises that has several parties and holding events, and Syria turned into a field of interventions of many countries.

Some argue that the geopolitical location of Syria necessitates internal crisis turning into a regional and international crisis to become between the two camps.

The start of the Syrian crisis

It is known that the crises are of interest of the media, which play an important role in guiding the local and international public opinion, as the media is considered as a weapon active in covering crises and we should not forget the relationship between the official media with the political power and its various organs.

The Syrian media is known to be weak in its capacity and it does not generally allow for complete freedom in Journalistic work.
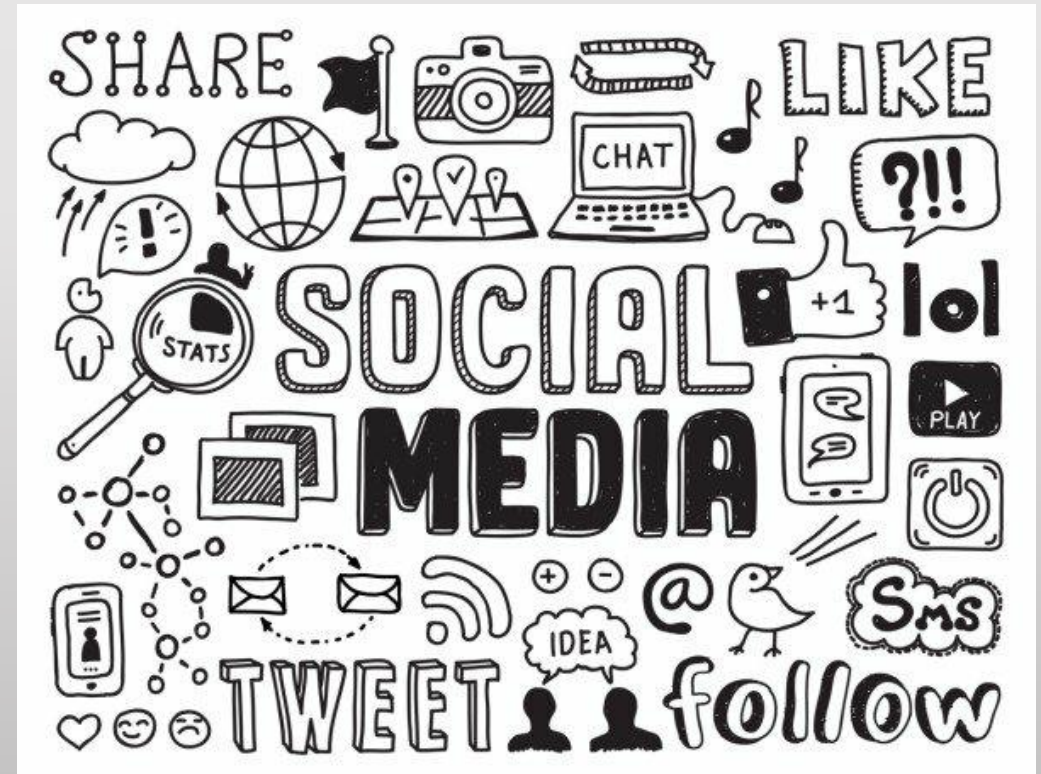
Differing in Titles

Since the start of the crisis, there was different titles given through the development of the conflict:

Is it a war of crisis, or is it a conspiracy, or terrorism, or a revolution, or a conflict.

The Regime in Syria: The legitimate government, the Syrian Arab Army, sovereignty, security grip, lost legitimacy regime, parties, the two conflict parties, government militia.

The Opposition: The armed opposition, the armed opposition, the free army, rebels, the armed terrorists, mercenaries, terrorist, opposition parties, Treason, the silent people, the supporting people, the opposition people.
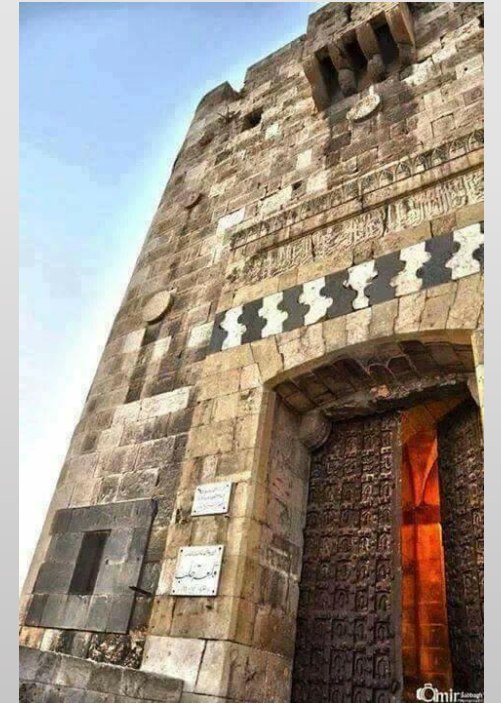
Differing in Titles

Since the start of the crisis, there was different titles given through the development of the conflict:

Strong relations with Russia, the distinguished relations with Iran, recruiting media, regional instigation, foreign intervention, occupation, conspiracy, colonization, war on terrorism, Islamic terrorism.

Difference in the numbers of martyrs and the dead, from the army or from the civilians, the numbers of the injured and the number of the refugees according to the government or the UN or the opposition.

Difference in the estimates of the cost of the Syrian war, the economical losses, the difference in the number of martyrs, difference in the number of refugees and the number of missing.

Differing in Titles

Since the start of the crisis, there was different titles given through the development of the conflict:

Difference in the news according to media source: The Government: Turkey fund terrorism, Media Consultant Dr. Bouthaina Shaaban: The Syrian Arab Army frees cities seized by terrorists. The opposition says: the army is bombarding civilians .... Dr. Shaaban accusses Turkey by funding terrorism and passes the terrorism to Syria, and accuses Turkey of attacking Syria ... while Turkish President Erdogan says we will not remain silent in front of half a million civilians were killed in Syria. There is special relationship between Iran and Syria, while this is seen by the opposition as the bombing of the Russian, and shooting of Iran on the opposition areas.

Disinformation and incitement of Media

Robert Fisk: Syria's ancient treasures pulverised

The nation's extraordinarily rich historical heritage is falling victim to the looting of war.

Now the Homs museum has been looted – by rebels and by government militias, who knows?

The regime's media sites say that there are lies, campaign media to incite against Syria and the conspiracy targeting Syria's security through inflaming public opinion, hatred and strife between people of one country. This hate is created through some of the media and the Arab world that work to raise all sorts of problems down to trying to show the outside intervention as humanitarian mission.

Disinformation and incitement of Media

**Fake movies that have been filmed from mobile phones and processed then broadcast on YouTube the biggest proof.
There are many cases were pictures are taken from the gatherings in Hamidiyah market in Damascus, then combined with images of the Palestinian uprising or from the events in Libya, Egypt and Yemen, to make a film that form the protests in Syria.**

Disinformation and incitement of Media

Opposition websites consider that the opposition activists movies (example: Rami Aljarah, one of the founders of an organization's site, "Ana Press" and director of the radio station "Voice of Damascus", who played a prominent role in shedding light on the ISIS and exposed its practices).

One of the most famous activities of Aljarah is filming inside Syria, in which he tried to show the situation in Syria, and many of the Arab and Western media focused spotlight on him and on those videos that he made as testimony of history.   Among those videos is the filming of people of Aleppo, as the first activity of this type he made in Aleppo. Aljarah made reports to show the Syrian situation after the airstrikes made by the Russian

The Syrian journalist Zaina Erhaim is considered one of the top hundred arab influencing women for the year 2016 recognizing her courage in reporting from inside Syria throughout the conflict

Social networks

 The new concept of media is linked to evolution that has occurred in the social networks
The new media depends on the individual's ability to
produce digital media content and to publish ideas he has,
information and opinions, documents, photos and video …
etc.

At the same moment of an event information and photos
and video films are published live via social networks and
other applications and tools of the new media.

Social media applications contributed clearly to gather
people in each side of the conflict, and help in its isolation
from the other side.

Social networks

Therefore, we find that the event is shown in the modern social networks and other new media tools with visions of different views, which contributes often to create confusion and give more ambiguity on the attitude of the crisis.

The adoption of the traditional media of the press and TV on what is produced by individuals is increasing, especially in light of attempts to crack down on reporters of media, and the difficulty of access to some security settings or because of the fighting battles.

Social networks

The new media, is recording evidence of the facts and events provided by the public opinion voice and image at the same moment of the event.

When Israel launched a rocket attack on a scientific research center in Jamraya in the countryside of the capital Damascus on May 5, 2013, and immediately after the fall of the first missile, the BBC and based on scenes taken from a video clip broadcast by activists on the Internet immediately after a series of powerful explosions, one of which illuminated the sky of Damascus and led to a plume of fire and other explosions.

The new media presents the event in a more than one document, and this presentation may be identical or it may be contradictory.

The absence of accurate and documented information

Statistics on the size of the human and physical destruction differ after five years of the Syrian crisis, but they intersect on that half of the Syrians's 23 million people are now displaced at home or abroad. Estimates suggest that as the war continued another four years will raise the cost of the loss to $ 1.3 trillion.

The United Nations estimates the number of victims of the war in the past five years about 250 thousand, while the «Syrian Center for Policy Research» estimated the number of victims by 470 thousand. In addition to them about a million people have had direct disabilities and tens of thousands of detainees are captured.

The absence of accurate and documented information

Syria's neighboring countries host 4.8 million refugees and Syrians form 29 percent of the 1.2 million people sought asylum in Europe last year, including 158 thousand registered in Germany. In addition to them hundreds of thousands of unregistered refugees and 6.5 million internally displaced inside Syria. Witnesses said they observed in the recent period the presence of newborn infants left in the streets of Damascus.

Libraries and digital local Arabic content (media blogging) to save the cultural heritage

Website for Assad National Library: The library collects the creative Syrian Arab national heritage in order to document, scan and save it in Microfilms or DVDs (Newspapers and manuscripts). Through the website of the Library, one can search the library catalog for the required materials. The library can be used for browsing the Internet and on a wide range of magazines, newspapers and specialist periodicals. They can get hard and digital copies of library information.

www.alassad-library.gov.sy/

Disinformation in news reporting in the current crisis of Syria

Libraries and digital local Arabic content (media blogging) to save the cultural heritage

Many Syrian websites worked in transferring news, political, social and formal events, civil societies and the private pro-opposition.

the Presidency of the Syrian Arab Republic

2013

Welcome to the official Facebook page for the Presidency of the Syrian Arab Republic, offering updates on Presidential news and events:

vk.com/syrianpresidency

twitter.com/Presidency_Sy
www.youtube.com/SyrianPresidency

instagram.com/syrianpresidency

telegram.me/SyrianPresidency

Syrian Arab news Agency

telegram.me/SyrianArabNewsAgency

www.youtube.com/syrianarabnewsagency

twitter.com/SanaAjel

www.facebook.com/SanaNews

www.instagram.com/p/BEJj8yHqKJ7/?taken-by=syrianarabnewsagency

vk.com/syrianarabnewsagency

WhatsApp 0940777186
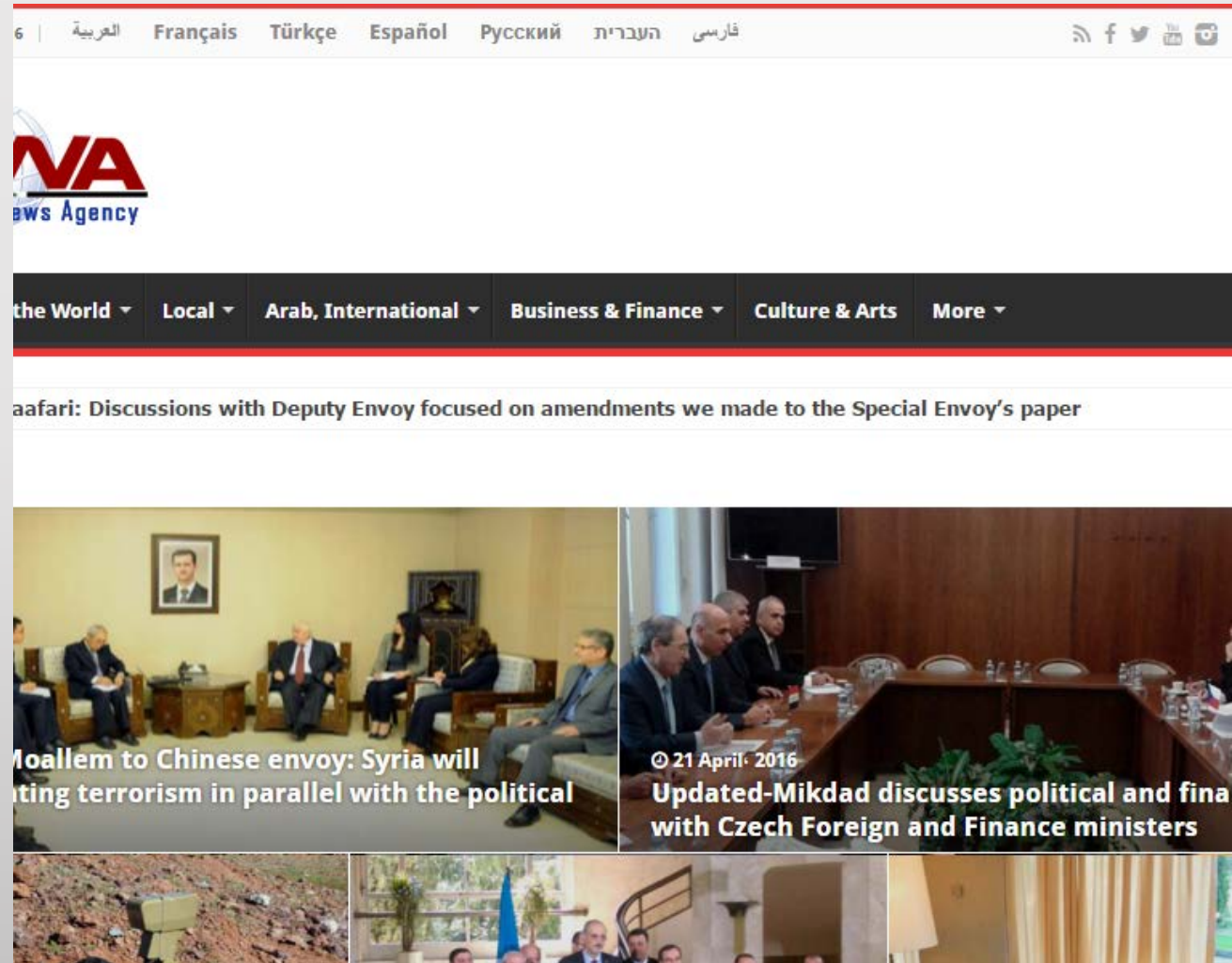
Libraries and digital local Arabic content (media blogging) to save the cultural heritage

Among the most famous websites that have contributed before and during the Syrian conflict in the field of digital local Arabic content, the blog homeland eSyria. This is one of the Syrian Computer Society projects that adopt the method of media blogging, and which establishes the digital content, Arabic cybernetic, by exploring the elements of the local community and all human, natural and historical elements and geography, also the dissemination of the positive culture of knowledge and encourage in the cases of innovation and excellence, despite the war imposed on "Syria"

www.scs.org.sy

www.esyria.sy/

Libraries and digital local Arabic content (media blogging) to save the cultural heritage

eSyria website founded in 2008, has published over 90.000 articles about Syrian community, these articles have become important source of knowledge. The project of blog homeland eSyria has an important role in recording the local life apart from politics. The project transferred and disseminated a number of activities and aspects that represent a mosaic of social and cultural situation in the province of conditions "Hasaka", for example. The blog homeland eSyria has a significant role in keeping the Syrian social inheritence and transmit it to future generations.

The importance of the blog homeland appears also in keeping the material and immaterial heritage, through the codification to survive in these difficult circumstances of the current history of Syria. It is also characterized by its role in the Special documenting and recording musical movement in "Syria".

www.esyria.sy/

Libraries and digital local Arabic content (media blogging) to save the cultural heritage

A workshop was held in the headquarters of the Syrian Computer Society (SCS) in Damascus under the title of "the blog homeland eSyria": networking media model, at 20 January 2016.

The eSyria website (www.esyria.sy) is one of the SCS academic projects www.scs.org.sy

But we must develop a content management system and website development services in line with the readers of the information and technology age.

It is necessary to verify the accuracy of the information and its sources, the permanent information documentary, the importance of the information sought by the researcher.

The importance of the blog is especially seen after the devastation and destruction of a number of libraries, museums, mosques and monasteries containing treasures of manuscripts, books and newspapers.

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الجسر المعلق قبل وبعد هدمه

Libraries and digital local Arabic content (media blogging) to save the cultural heritage

Reuters
Islamic State militants have desecrated numerous churches, including this one in Maaloula, Syria.

Some of the residents of the town of Maaloula still speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus Christ.

Libraries and digital local Arabic content (media blogging) to save the cultural heritage

Maaloula, Sednaya and the whole region, contains many historical, spiritual and cultural treasures such as some of the world's oldest Scriptural manuscripts, icons, churches and so forth.

Disinformation in news reporting in the current crisis of Syria
Libraries and digital local Arabic content (media blogging) to save the cultural heritage

IFLA (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) encourage institutions, organisations and individuals holding unique documentary heritage collections to register their collections with the IFLA Risk Register project.

IFLA has developed an online webform to enable libraries and holders of documentary heritage collections to easily and effectively register their collection..

www.ifla.org/node/9656

Libraries and digital local Arabic content (media blogging) to save the cultural heritage

The 17th century fortress-like Alma Arra museum in the northern Syrian province of Idlib is starting to suffer from daily bombings. The museum is known for its mosaics.

The destruction hit sites registered in the United Nations tables as World Heritage Sites, among them the old market in Aleppo, the second largest Syrian city, and in old Homs, and devastated Tel Mardikh (Ebla) and Mosaic Museum. Destruction reach also the dead cities in Idlib province and the historical suspension bridge in Deir al-Zour which is controlled by ISIS. historic

Libraries and digital local Arabic content (media blogging) to save the cultural heritage

Palmyra was damaged due to ISIS deliberate acts of demolition. ISIS controlled the historical city of Palmyra in middle of year 2015. In the recent time President al-Assad urges the UN to help in Palmyra restoration and the fight against terrorism.

Libraries and digital local Arabic content (media blogging) to save the cultural heritage

President al-Assad said that Economic damage related to the Syrian infrastructure is estimated to be over 200 billion dollars. Economic damage can be repaired immediately after things settle down in Syria. But the infrastructure may take a long time.

The Syria Trust for Development called upon different international organizations and bodies, mainly the UNESCO, to take their full responsibilities, exert all possible efforts and take all required measures to protect historic Palmyra and the Syrian cultural heritage. with just the denunciation or condemnation only can not protect historical places in Syria.