Folklore Songs as Means of Raising Awareness or Enforcing Nationalist Differences: Arab Idol as a Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study critically explores whether folklore songs performed in Arab Idol enforce nationalist differences or tend to raise awareness of current political and social issues. Using an inductive framing approach, the audience's comments on four Arab Idol videos of four contestants performing folklore patriotic hymns are analyzed, described and categorized according to Thompson's (1990) five semantic process through which ideology is articulated. Findings show that folklore and patriotic hymns performed by contestant in Arab Idol amplify nationalist differences more than they tend to raise awareness among Arabs.

Keywords: Folklore, Mass Media, Framing, Ideology, Arab Idol.

1. Introduction

For many centuries, the use of the oral traditional form of folklore has proven to be a prominent mechanism through which pleasurable and meaningful experiences are conveyed to different audiences. The conveyance mechanism within which different manifestations of applied folklore, including narratives; folk festivals; various folk song and dance ensembles; and folklore festivals, are embedded may be factual or fictional (Harvilahti, 2004). A keen observation of interactions within different social communities reveals that manifestations of applied folklore may form the bedrock of most social interactions from the most mundane communication to the very complex exchanges. Folk song is at the core of applied folklore, and through the lens of the narrative theory we can claim that it involves the sequential ordering of time and place related information into a series of consecutive events often portraying causes and effects and presented in such a manner that a beginning, middle and end can be easily ascertained (Branigan, 1992). From the definition above it is clear then that folk songs irrespective of cultural factors or media of delivery have certain common characteristics. However, depending on the culture and medium, the story within a song can be told in varying manners. In addition, one key observation is that most songs fit certain established ideological and social hues for which a patronizing audience have certain expectations that enable them better understand, perceive, and reflect on the song.

As suggested by Harvilahti (2003), in studying folklore, theorists tend to tackle the subject matter by dividing folklore into loosely defined genre groups and lend themselves to the exposition of key techniques, frameworks and guiding principles that shape how 'stories' of all kinds are sequentially ordered. While there are different approaches to theorizing applied folklore, this paper focuses on the social roles folk songs play as well as their inherent audience engagement mechanisms that influence the audience perception of those songs through different media. At the micro level of analysis, the study uses the inductive framing approach to analyze, describe and categorize the audience's comments on four Arab Idol videos of the contestants performing folklore and patriotic hymns. Moreover, this study adopts the theoretical perspective of Thompson's (1990) five semantic process through which ideology is articulated to explain the varying patterns of perception of folk and patriotic songs as influenced by the varying cultural and ideological settings within which they are often perceived.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Arab Idol (broadcast by the MBC network) is an adaptation of the British reality singing competition Pop Idol created by Simon Fuller (British television executive). Four seasons were broadcast in 2011/2013/2014 and 2016 respectively. The show aims at finding an idol who in the preliminary audition rounds is selected by a panel of judges and is then voted for by the public. The show has a high reputation among audiences as evidenced by the (1,502,736,020) views and (2,660,353) subscribers to their YouTube channel (as of 27.11.2016). However, such popularity is not without consequences since any form of mass media is believed to have the power to attract and/or direct public opinion, influence behavior, define reality, and confer status and legitimacy (McQuail, 2010, p. 87). Besides classic Arabic and English songs contestants have the tendency to perform folk and patriotic hymns to serve national and pan-Arab causes. Referring to one of the contestants, Jamal Abu Qumsan, a board member of the Gaza Association for Culture and Arts stated that: "He has struck a chord with Palestinians" and provided them with a "sense of stability" that they lack (Naylor, 2013). Yet, the perception of those folk and patriotic hymns may differ in light of the ideological inclinations and social hues of the audience. Using an inductive framing approach, this study aims to critically investigate whether folk and patriotic songs tend to amplify nationalist differences among the audience or raise awareness concerning particular political or social causes.

1.3 Hypothesis of the Study

To attain the before-mentioned purpose, this study proposes the following comparative hypothesis:

Folklore songs performed in Arab Idol enforce nationalist differences more than they tend to raise awareness of current political and social issues.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Framing Theory

The concept of frames was originally derived from Goffman's (1974, p.24) "primary framework" which functions as a conceptual tool that "allows its user to locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms" (p.21). Since then the concept has been further extended and applied to various disciplines including media and communication research. Framing involves the processes of "selection and salience" and "highlights some bits of information about an item that is subject of communication, thereby elevating them in salience" (Entman, 1993, p.52). Therefore, from a constructivist perspective, Gamson and Modigliani (1987) define a media frame as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning" (p.143). In the same vein, journalists are seen as "information processors" who provide "interpretive packages" on which the audience draw to form their opinions (D'Angelo, 2002, p.877).

Since framing can operate both as a macro-level construct: a template that journalists follow in their construction of a story, and as a micro-level construct: a frame of reference that guides audience in their perception of events (Scheufele,1999), framing research on media discourse examines both the construction of frames by mass media and their reception by audience. The central role discourse plays in the construction and processing of frames is stressed by media scholars as journalists perform within a "reservoir of stored cultural meanings and patterns of discourse" (Schudson, 1995, p.14).

In addition to approaching frames from a textual perspective, media scholars approach frames from a cognitive perspective, whereby a frame is defined as "a set of schemata for different aspects of reality" (Scheufele, 2006, p.65). While a cognitive scheme refers to a particular object or to a relation between objects, a cognitive frame is formed by a set of schemata that deals with objects or relations that belong to the same aspect of reality. In media practice, schemata that form a frame follow the same standards, no matter of how fitting they are in a particular context (Scheufele, 2006). As media studies show clear correlations between media frames and audience frames (D'Angelo, 2002), frames can be said to affect audience's schemata about certain issues and direct them in making sense of a perceived reality. From a

critical perspective, core frames and their elements (schemata) function as working routines (Gitlin, 1980) that stem from individualistic and/or institutional orientations.

Moreover, two major types of frames are identified in framing research. They are generic frames and issue specific frames (De Vereese, 1999). Different framing processes can be analyzed in terms of generic frames such as episodic and thematic frames (Iyengar, 1991). The frame of conflict, which underlines disagreement between two parties, is an example of generic frames (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) that can be applied to different media content which cover different issues in different countries (Han, 2007). Issue-specific frames, on the other hand, address particular issues within a particular coverage and cannot therefore be applied to the coverage of other issues. For example, in covering elections the game frame is an issue-specific frame as it describes the specific winning tactics in a particular campaign but not in another. However, the two types of frames are not mutually exclusive as they can co-exist in media (Han, 2007).

2.1.2 Articulation of Ideology

Within the same lines, the definition of ideology has been widely debated in literature since ideology is presented as a neutral, positive, or negative feature of modern society. However, Baradat (1997) defines five comprehensive properties that are essential to the definition of ideology. First, ideology is a political term which can be used in other contexts. Second, a view of the present and future is provided by ideology. Third, ideologically-structured actions are yielded by ideology. Fourth, ideology is intended to influence the audience. Finally, to attain its purpose of influencing the masses, ideology is constructed or framed in layman's terms.

In this regard, Van Dijk (1993) states that while ideologies influence discourse; they are simultaneously constructed through it. He also claims that ideologies are constructed and perceived in terms of the '*us* versus *them*' dichotomy or what he calls an 'ideological square' of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. The ideological square emphasizes positive things about us, emphasizes negative things about them, de-emphasizes negative things about us, and de-emphasizes positive things about them (Van Dijk, 1996).

Ideological hegemony of the ruling class is projected through its social agencies that help stabilize and naturalize the dominant ideology through excluding, absorbing, or transforming other ideologies (Gramci, 1971). Taken in this light, Thompson (1990) views ideology as a means through which meaning constructs and sustains established relations of power and domination. For him, ideological power can be articulated through different semantic processes. *Legitimation* is the first process through which an act or incident is represented as legitimate to create or maintain unequal power relations. Three legitimation grounds are defined in Weberian sociology (Weber, Gerth & Mills, 1946): *relational* grounds that rest on the legality of the rule of law, *traditional* grounds whereby validity of authority is based on traditional tents, and *charismatic* grounds which are based on devotion to a particular individual. In terms of *dissimulation*, power relations are concealed, denied, or obscured in a particular context. Three strategies are said to construct dissimulation. The first strategy is *displacement* which refers to the process through which a term or a person is used as a substitute for another and therefore positive or negative characteristics are transferred to the other term or person. *Euphemization* is the second strategy that refers to elevating the status of certain actions by using some expressions that mitigate the negativity of such actions. Finally, *trope* refers to the utilization of language in a figurative or symbolic manner.

The third process through which ideology is articulated is the process of *unification*. This is a process which consciously seeks to highlight the similarities between certain groups or individuals despite the fact that a glaring difference exists between them. In effecting this process, a two stage process is normally embarked upon. The first of these is the process of *standardization*, a process which entails the adaptation or inculcation of symbolic forms to or into a larger more widely acceptable framework of symbolic forms. This standardized framework automatically becomes the generic, widely accepted, and shared standard of symbolic interaction. A typical example of the process of unification through standardization is the widely accepted practice among multilingual nations where an official language is identified and designated as the generic and widely accepted standard of communication within the nation's borders. The

second stage in the unification process involves efforts taken to reflect unity. This process, also known as the *symbolization* of unity stage of the unification process, entails all of the constructs or symbols within a particular group or groups which express or communicate the unity, collective identity, or means of identification of the individual members of such group(s). From the perspective of nations, such items as a nation's national anthem, the symbolic design and appearance of its flag, coat of arms, inscriptions, and even the fonts and shapes with which such inscriptions are made all indicate items which symbolize the unity of the citizen of such a nation.

The fourth process through which ideology is expressed is the process of *fragmentation*. In this process, latent differences among members of a particular group or groups are identified, amplified, and exploited to create division among such groups or individuals with the sole aim of dominating or maintaining a dominant position over members of such group(s) by the fragmenting party. The process of fragmentation is usually affected through two distinct processes: the processes of *differentiation* and *expurgation*. The process of differentiation can be described as constituting actions taken to identify and emphasize differences, distinct features, elements, and factors which divide individuals within a particular group or individual groups within an aggregation of groups. In particular, it focuses on identifying those critical factors or characteristics which create or are capable of creating disunity among such members, thereby inhibiting their collective ability to evolve into a formidable force or party likely to compete for access to power or challenge the dominant custodian of power. The second stage of the fragmentation process involves expurgation. This process involves the use of salient distinguishing features within members of a group to build a particular segment of the group into an enemy of the other segment or segments of the group. The aim of such construction is to portray the constructed enemy as seeking to harm members of other segments of the group, and upon this basis, rally members of other segments of the group to collectively expurgate or challenge the constructed enemy-segment. It is important to note at this point that the two stages of the fragmentation process described above are singularly aimed at dividing and controlling members of a group or an aggregate of groups with the intention of discouraging their collective access to power or preventing them from challenging an established dominant custodian of power.

The fifth and final process of the articulation of ideology is the process of *reification*. According to Thompson (1990) this process involves making temporary occurrences or situations to appear as though they were normal, long-lasting, and will remain so indefinitely. The process of reification is often carried out in three phases- these include the *naturalization* phase, the *externalization* phase and the *nominalization and passivization* phase. The naturalization phase is a phase in which occurrences or situations which are direct or indirect consequences of societal or historical activities or events are deliberately construed, interpreted, or presented as natural events or consequences of natural elements which are unavoidable. The second phase in the reification process, externalization, is a process which involves diminishing the historical aspect of socio-historic events. In other words, events which are a combined product of societal conditions within a certain period in history are made to seem like they are a product of all societal conditions at all times. Here, the emphasis is on diminishing the importance of the particular period in history under which those societal conditions existed. Thus, such phenomena are presented as recurrent and eternal in nature. The final phase of the reification process is the nominalization or passivization process. Simply put, this process entails blurring or eliminating the presence and effect of causal or interfering agents in explaining occurrences or processes. The resulting effect is the presentation of events as a natural occurrence devoid of any historical influences.

This section provided a succinct explanation of the various processes through which ideology can be articulated. These processes can be viewed through the lens of van Dijk's ideological square. A summary of this perspective is the notion that among groups or   individuals, attempts are made to generate, portray, or promote notions of the positive self and negative other using processes of dissimulation, legitimation and unification for the former and fragmentation for the latter.

The possession of the language, with which ideology is articulated, of itself is not sufficient to ensure the dissemination of that ideology; certain channels are necessary for the successful conveyance of this ideology through language. Through these channels ideological discourse is usualy normalized. In other words, language enables the

establishment and propagation of dominant ideologies which by extension allows for the legitimization and de-legitimization of certain individuals, groups, agencies, or events.

From a framing perspective, Carragee, and Rofes (2004) claim that examining framing as a means of constructing social and political reality should involve a deep investigation of the contexts within which social power is distributed. The authors claim that linking framing research to media hegemony scholarship satisfies the demand of early as well as contemporary research on framing whereby framing research is expected to enrich social theory (Entman, 1993). In this regard, turning an eye toward the integration of ideology into framing research is pointed up. They argue that by neglecting the influence of ideology on the framing process, researchers ignore the fact that conflicting frames and ideological inconstancies may be present in the perception of the same story. They also fail to show how the same issues may be constructed over time and how certain frames are naturalized in media discourse and seen as transparent reflections of reality. In the ensuing section, a description of the research design, alongside information on the sampling and data collection and analysis techniques is presented.

3.1 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative methodological approach and relies on secondary data retrieved from the comments on four YouTube Arab Idol Videos (Farah Yousuf: /qudu:d hələbijah/; Mohammad Assaf: ja: Teir elTajir; Salma Rashid: ləzrə' lək bista;n wrood; Berwaz Husein: ja: Teir elTajir). From a procedural perspective, data collection and analysis was guided by the inductive framing theory. This entails a three-stage inductive process beginning with the observation and description of a phenomena, categorization of outcomes of the observation and description, and developing statements of association among categories and outcomes (Carlile, Clayton, & David, 2005; Entman, 1993; Pan and Kosicki, 1993) In order to carry out the observation/description and categorization phase of the analysis, four Arab Idol music videos of the contestants preforming folklore songs were chosen from the Arab Idol channel on YouTube because of the popularity of the show among audiences as evidenced by the (1,502,736,020) views and (2,660,353) subscribers to their YouTube channel (as of 27.11.2016). In particular, the four videos have garnered a total of (26.526.856) views including (78.213) likes and (6.044) dislikes, and (10.903) comments (as of 04.01.2017).

Upon examining the videos, qualitative content analysis was used to identify and isolate the five frames (derived from Thompson's 1990 semantic processes) within the comments on each video. The coding of the first hundred comments on each video (as of 400 comments) was carried out by two coders and an inter-coder reliability of 0.72 was obtained.

4.1 Findings and Discussion

Frequency of occurrence of the five frames, extracted from Thompsons (1999) semantic processes, in the first hundred comments on each of the four analyzed Arab Idol videos is presented in Table (1) below.

Table (1): Frequency of occurrence of the five frames within the analyzed comments

Frames		Frequency of Occurrence			
		M. Assaf	B. Husein	F. Yousuf	S. Rashid
1.	**Legitimation**				
a.	Relational grounds	52	68	45	33
b.	Traditional grounds	10	-	-	-
c.	Charismatic grounds	42	26	60	39
2.	**Dissimulation**	-	-	-	-
a.	Displacement	-	2	-	1
b.	Euphemization	12	10	-	6

c.	Trope	-	4	-	6
3.	**Unification**	-	-	-	-
a.	Standardization	-	-	-	-
b.	Symbolization	4	-	2	-
4.	**Fragmentation**	-	-	-	-
a.	Differentiation	6	-	-	-
b.	Expurgation	8	-	-	-
5.	**Reification**	-	-	-	-
a.	Naturalization	2	-	-	3
b.	Externalization	2	2	3	9
c.	Nominalization	8	2	5	2

4.1.1 Preliminary Notes:

1. Table (1) is a candid representation of the actual occurrences of each frame within the analyzed comments. It is important to note here that the number of occurrences is not commensurate with the number of comments analyzed only because two or more frames were used in some individual comments.

2. The frames included: relational, charismatic, traditional, euphemization, expurgation, differentiation, symbolization, trope, normalization, externalization, and naturalization frames. However, the charismatic and relational frames recorded high occurrences as opposed to other frames.

As the comments were analyzed the following aspects were taken into consideration:
1. Is the comment transliterated, written in English, or Arabic colloquial?
2. Do commentators use original or nicknames?
3. Is the personal data provided in comments real (e.g. the nationality of the commentator)?

And it was noted that:
1. The user names' of some commentators elucidate their identification with the contestants.
2. Some commentators use contestants' photos as their profile pictures.
3. Some comments contain spelling, typographical, grammatical, semantic, lexical, and stylistic mistakes which were not corrected.

The following paragraphs provide succinct analysis of the four most prevailing frames; namely the relational and charismatic, externalization and euphemization frames.

4.1.2 The Relational Frame
First: Comments on Mohammad Assaf's Song

As shown in Table (1), the actual occurrences of each frame within the comments on Assaf's song are: 52, 10, 42, 12, 4, 6, 2, 2, and 8 occurrences of the relational, traditional, charismatic, euphemization, symbolization, differentiation, naturalization, externalization and normalization frames respectively. The total number of occurrences (138) exceeds the number of comments (100) as a result of one or more frames present in a single comment.

One of the comments on the video states that "it is not Iraqi folklore, it resembles it though! Palestinians are 'the people' of esteemed art, aesthetics, science, and culture. I am Palestinian and proud of it" (Colloquial Arabic: لا مش فلكلور عراقي اللحن بس فيه منّو من الفلكلور العراقي الفلسطينيين أهل الفن الراقي والجمال والعلم والحضارة فلسطيني وافتخر). This particular comment introduces the reader to an occurrence of the aspects of the relational frame in such a manner that forces the individual reader to draw his/her own conclusions. This is because literally translating the comment simply places a directional association between the success of the song and its origin as a part of the Iraqi or Palestinian folklore. The

commentator makes effort in using two explanatory phrases to further clarify the comment by drawing a direct connection between the nationality of the singer and the success of the song coupled with the fact that the commentator himself is Palestinian.

In a subsequent comment "We love you Palestine", the commentator expresses his love to Palestine and hence to the song and the singer. Within the same vein and in a bid to emphasize the relation between the contestant and the state, another commentator says: "Congratulations Palestine" (Colloquial Arabic: Alf Mabrouk Palestine), and another states: "He is the greatest singer for a long time, good for him and all the Palestinian" and "I adore assaf and I love Palestine". Although the comments may seem to mince words, the commentators tend to successfully personify Palestine and present it to the audience as an entity to whom they offer their congratulations.

While the following comment: "Greetings from Algerians to Palestinians" (Standard Arabic: تحية من الشعب الجزائري للشعب الفلسطيني) is similar to the previously discussed comments as it draws a subtle connection between the success of the song and the nationality of the singer, it differs slightly in the sense that in its entirety the comment emphasizes from the lens of an Algerian the alliance between the two countries and their people. After all, the Palestinian cause, nationalism, and Pan-Arabism escalated a wave of support to the contestant as the comments suggest. However, this may not always be the case as the following example shows.

Second: Comments on Berwaz Husain's Song

As shown in Table (1), the actual occurrences of each frame within the comments on Berwaz's song are: 68, 10, 26, 2, 10, 4, 2, 2, and 8 occurrences of the relational, charismatic, displacement, euphemization, trope, externalization and normalization frames respectively. The total number of occurrences (114) exceeds the number of comments (100) as a result of one or more frames present in a single comment.

A comment reads: "You are great Berwaz, you honored Kurdastan and Iraq, May God protect you (Colloquial Iraqi: رائعة يا برواس رفعتي رأس كردستان والعراق والله إيحفضج). By referring to Berwaz as a 'Kurdish Iraqi' singer, the commentator sought to portray Berwaz as a symbol of Kurds in particular and Iraqis in general. Although, the success of the song is ascribed to Berwaz's talent, the support stems from nationalistic grounds. Within the same lines, other comments contain colloquial Iraqi praising words (e.g. فديتك، كلّش ،موفّقيّة)which entail that the support is based on the same nationalistic sentiment. To drive home this point, another commentator states: "I would not watch the show if you are eliminated, you are an Iraqi queen. Although she is Kurdish, she is a sister of Iraqis; they are of the same origin. You people should understand, I extend my greeting to all Iraqis from Dahuk" (Colloquial Iraqi: والله ما شوف البرنامج بعدك..إنتي مليكة عراقية وصحيح هي كردية لاكن أخت عراقيين وأخوات من نفس البيت افهمتوا يا عاقلين...تحياتي من دهوك لكل العراقيين). As can be gleaned from the usage of the adjective "Iraqi" repeatedly throughout the comment, the commentator provides a very clear and unambiguous reference to the nationality of Berwaz and shares the same common nationalist outlook with previous commentators in supporting the contestant.

Other commentators further provide support to Berwaz by claiming that: "I did not know that you can pay less to vote, I hope you spread the word, so all Iraqis can vote for Berwaz" (Colloquial Iraqi: ما كنت أعرف أنه سعر التصويت انخفض.. أتمنى أن تنشري هاي المعلومة وتنشرينها بكل مكان حتى كل العراقيين يصوتون إلها). This is another attempt to encourage Iraqis to vote for Berwaz by highlight measures taken by the program to stimulate voting. A subsequent comment "The Kurdish vise-president came to support Berwaz, while even a police officer did not come to support other contestants" highlights the (Colloquial Iraqi: "جابت نائب رئيس كردستان... ولكم من كل المتسابقين اللي مشاركين حتى شرطي ما أجا منهم") unprecedented support of the Kurdish government for Berwaz in a deliberate bid to encourage Kurdish people to follow the traces of their government in supporting the contestant.

As the previous comments entail, efforts are recorded to have been made by the commentators to persuade Kurds and Iraqis to stand firmly for the contestant who represents both. This is evident by the (68) comments with relational connotations, all of which share the same nationalist appeals to conquer difference between Iraqis and Kurds for the sake of stimulating voting for Brewaz.

4.1.3 The Charismatic Frame

First: Comments on Farah Yousuf's Song

The charismatic frame recorded a high frequency of occurrence within the comments on Farah's song (60 times). The comments in their entirety are focused on the physical and charismatic attributes of the contestant. Examples include: "You look amazing bless you, love you the most, Farah is the princess of the East, I adore you, the moon of Arabs, the best song ever, Farha made it better" (Colloquial Arabic: "بتجنني الله يحميكي"، و"على حبك ما في حب"، و"فرح أميرة الشرق"، و"بموت فيك" و"قمر العرب"، أو "أروع الأغاني على الإطلاق، وفرح زادتها روعة) among other comments that highlighted the physical attractiveness of the contestant.

Second: Comments on Assaf's Song

Frame indicators which sought to drum up support to Assaf by highlighting his charismatic attributes recorded high occurrences within the comments on his song (42 times). Some of the English comments include: "He is the greatest singer for a long time, I love you so much, I'm a huge fan, he is truly an amazing person, I don't understand Arabic but I still listen to Assaf's song every day when I'm free, and he really is a gifted singer (from Afghanistan)". A French comment reads: "un geant vraiment" which means he is a legend "giant". As can be gleaned from the abovementioned comments, the commentators spare no opportunity to paint the contestant in the best light and present him as one of a kind.

4.1.4 The Externalization Frame
Comments on Salma Rashid's song:

While the previous discussed comments highlight the superiority of some contestants over others, other comments resulted in a generally negative portrayal of contestants including Salma Rashid. This is carried out by not only emphasizing but also amplifying the perceived weaknesses in her vocal range. Some of those comments include: "She has a poor control over her voice, her voice lacks emotive vocal impact, she imitates Asala, this is a Syrian tone and she is Moroccan" (Colloquial Arabic: صوتها بنشّزززز" و "صوتها ما فيه طرب"، و "تقليد لأصالة، وهذا الصوت شامي وهي مغربية). A series of criticisms has been levied against Salma in these comments as the commentators tend to belittle the singer by emphasizing that she is nowhere near a standard to compete with other contestants. Such externalizing comments do not necessarily mean that the contestant does not have supporters as evident by the 33 and 39 relational and charismatic frames that the comments on Salma's song contained.

4.1.5 The Euphemization Frame
Comments on Mohammad Assaf's song

An Arabic comment reads" I had chills, my friend!" (Colloquial Arabic: قشعرت بدني يا خي). While a French comment reads:" He is a legend" (French: Un geantvraiment). Other commentators expresses approval of Assaf's performance by commenting: "Bravo,Bravo,million Bravo, super performance, the best song in the world, he *have* real voice *assaf coming legend"*. All the previous comments are intended to elevate the status of Assaf and confer legitimacy on his perceived superiority by using exaggeration and overestimation expressions.

5.1 Conclusion

From the analysis of the most prevailing frames within the comments on the four songs, it could be seen that on average the relational and charismatic frames recorded higher values than other frames. In the case of the relational frame, support for a particular contestant stemmed fundamentally from the commentators support of the Palestinian cause, or from nationalist and Pan-Arabism affiliations. Commentators had no inhibitions playing the national identity

card to evoke support for their contestants whether Palestinians or Iraqis. As for the charismatic frames, the commentators expressed their fascination in light of the physical and/or charismatic attributes of their favorite contestants. The externalization frame, on the other hand, recorded low occurrence in comparison to other frames. The lack of originality as well as talent was the basis to belittle a contestant and disqualify him/her to compete.

On the contrary, commentators tended to express their admiration of the contestants using exaggeration and overestimation terms excessively. It is thus obvious that folklore and patriotic hymns presented in Arab Idol enforce nationalist differences among Arabs more than they tend to raise awareness of current political and social issues. In the Kurdish case, however, folklore songs aimed to mitigate differences and unite Iraqis and Kurds under one banner in supporting their contestant. However, at the national level, commentators of the same nationality tended to pitch readers against contestants from other countries by reaffirming differences among groups of different ideologies. Therefore, it may be safe to conclude that any attempt of commentators to enforce national unity was at the expense of amplifying dissent at another level.

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الدور الاجتماعي لأغاني الفلكلور: محبوب العرب (أرب أيدول) حالة دراسية

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ملخص

تتلمّس هذه الدراسة بمقترب نقديّ ما إذا كانت الأغاني الفلكلوريّة المؤدّاة في برنامج (آراب آيدول) (محبوب العرب) تعزّز الفروقات الوطنية أو هي تنمّي الوعي تجاه قضايا سياسيّة واجتماعيّة. وباستعمال منهج استقرائيّ للتأطير، من خلال تعليقات الجمهور على أربعة تسجيلات فيديو لأربعة من المتسابقين، وتحليلها، ووصفها، وتصنيفها وفاقا لنموذج ثومسون (1990)، ظهرت خمس عمليات دلاليّة تتجسّد من خلالها الأفكار. وأظهرت النتائج أن الأغاني الفلكلورية والوطنية التي أدّاها المتسابقون عملت على تعظيم الفروقات الوطنيّة أكثر مما عزّزت الوعي في المجتمعات العربيّة

الكلمات الدالة: عمليات دلالية، تأطير، فكر، آراب آيدول (محبوب العرب).

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