

The representation of Arab masculinity in advertising: A semiotic analysis

Abdullah Kassem Abdullah^{1a}  Noha Mellor^{1b} 

¹ College of Communication, University of Sharjah, Sharjah UAE.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Abstract

The aim of this study is to utilize Semiotic analysis to analyze the representation of Gulf men in advertising a Kuwaiti brand. Based on two YouTube commercials as a case study, this article asks, *How is Arab masculinity represented in advertising?* The findings indicate the existence of masculinity in flux, suggesting a subtle form of socialization and identity negotiation between foreign and local ideas, especially regarding gender relations and the representation of Arab masculinity. The analysis highlights the contrast between traditional and modern forms of masculinity, as represented by local and foreign football teams in the advertisement, suggesting that modern (or Western) forms of masculinity can be used to counteract oppressive local practices. The study argues that masculinity is not a fixed or objective concept and is instead shaped by the social and cultural context in which it exists. Here, the media's representation of masculinity is particularly influential in shaping how young people understand and internalize this idea.

Keywords: Gulf society, Arab masculinity, Media representations, Semiotics, Modernism.

OPEN  ACCESS

^a E-mail address: u20105306@sharjah.ac.ae

^b Corresponding author: E-mail address: nmellor@sharjah.ac.ae, +44 7765 463169

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33282/abaa.v16i64.1208>

Received: 17/01/2024, Revised: 05/04/2024, Accepted: 07/04/2024, Published: 29/06/2024

Introduction

There is an emerging body of literature that documents and discusses the social changes taking place in the Arabian Gulf region, covering various domains such as social, cultural, economic, and political aspects (e.g., Rahman & Al-Azm, 2023). This literature aims to advance knowledge about the region and stimulate discourse on the direction and magnitude of social change in the Gulf region. An especially noteworthy change has been the emergence of fresh perspectives and concepts regarding gender dynamics, focusing on gender roles, patriarchy, masculinity, and feminism. Nonetheless, there is a research gap about the concept of masculinity and how it is represented in old and new media. While gender studies have predominantly focused on women and minorities, the roles of masculinity in the Arab region have received limited attention in this realm.

This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing media representation of masculinity, considering the changes taking place in the region regarding gender relations. With the rapid alterations in the roles and relationships of men and women in various Arab societies, it is essential to examine how the Arab media portrays masculinity, and in so doing, this research aims to contribute to the budding body of literature about Arab masculinity, seeking to gain a deep understanding of the image of Arab masculinity. Overall, this research enhances our understanding of the complex roles of masculinity in the Arab region, shedding light on a topic that has not been explored in depth in the realm of gender studies. Thus, this study contributes to the field of media representation of masculinity as a social construct (Miller, 2016) and how this construction is dominated by pre-established perceptions within the GCC society, as well as by the effects of dynamic Western perceptions about masculinity.

This study focuses on GCC societies, analyzing how Arab men are represented in advertising and using two popular YouTube commercials as a case study. The choice of the GCC societies is deliberate, given that these societies are characterized as more conservative and tribal than, for instance, countries in the Arab Mashreq, such as Egypt and Lebanon.

Specifically, the study poses the following research question: *How is Arab masculinity represented in advertising?*

In answering this question, the article proceeds as follows: First, we provide an overview of the literature on masculinity, with a focus on the Arab context. Next, we will introduce our research methodology (Semiotics) before presenting the findings. Finally, we will conclude with a general discussion of the main findings and suggest topics for future research.

Masculinity in the Arab Context

Masculinity is often taken for granted and seen as an invisible concept, although it is also an ever-changing and contradictory construct that dictates what men should do in their lives (Reeser, 2010, p. 23). Studies on masculinity have gone through different waves, from analyzing it in relation to dominant ideologies to questioning it as a mediated concept and analyzing it in relation to power (Itulua-Abumere, 2013, p. 43; Harris, 2004, p. 178). The most prominent conceptualization of masculinity was Connell's (2005, p. 71) categorization of masculinity into four main groups: The first, hegemonic masculinity, is the ideal image of a man, which is seen as the standard to strive for, and the other three categories include those who conform to hegemonic masculinity, those who are adversely affected by its imposition, and those who reject it. Hegemonic masculinity is a gendered practice that rationalizes the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. In any given society, multiple forms of masculinity may exist, but only one is typically considered the most respected way of being a man. The characteristics of this archetype are the most respected or desired in a particular context. Other forms of masculinity are marginalized through hegemonic processes (Messerschmidt, 2015, p. 10), which arise from the interplay between gender and other structures such as class and race. White, middle-class, able-bodied men typically benefit the most from this hierarchical arrangement (Magrath et al., 2020, p. 6).

In Arab culture, men are held to high standards of courage, self-restraint, and honor. Unfortunately, this can result in suppressing emotions and appearing vulnerable, which is considered dishonorable. The ideal is to live virtuously and strike a balance that is often referred to as the "golden mean" (El Halabi et al., 2019, p. 9). There is generally a growing concern for the well-being of men and boys, due to the shifting roles and expectations of men in society and within the family unit (Farrell & Gray, 2018, p. 12; Reeves, 2022, p. 45). The Arab region has also been affected by this issue, especially with the economic and political obstacles faced by men in the area. Financially supporting their families is a critical component of an Arab man's masculinity and a fundamental responsibility expected of him (Aamer, 2019, p. 570). Failure to meet this expectation can lead to emotional distress and a perceived loss of true masculinity. Masculinity is also being challenged by cultural globalization, especially through the proliferation of Western media. This threat emerges from the imposition of prevailing Western cultural values, which often clash with the unique cultural identities of non-Western communities (Sebkhaoui, 2018, p. 700).

Studies on Arab masculinity have linked male identity and culture by examining a range of practices (Sinclair-Webb & Ghoussoub, 2000, p. 8; Inhorn, 2012, p.

42). It is argued that Arab masculine identity is constructed through recognition from others, whether men or women (Quayle et al., 2018, p. 55), with men often associated with reason and public life (Ghannam, 2013, p. 10). It is also argued that Arab masculinity is in a state of transition, with the traditional form of Arab masculinity no longer fully existing, and a new, egalitarian form is yet to emerge fully. This reflects a masculinity crisis where Arab men can no longer solely rely on their financial prowess to exert control, especially as many young Arab men now face economic challenges (Inhorn, 2012, p. 45; Al-Dailami, 2019). Thus, scholarship on masculinity can be broadly categorized into two main topics: one that sees masculinity as a combination of desirable roles that men should possess, and the second focuses on the crisis that men and boys are experiencing.

According to the Social Cognitive Theory, media plays a crucial role in shaping men's perception of their role in society (Bussey & Bandura, 1999, p. 680). When men see images of other men in the media, they pay closer attention because they believe they are expected to do the same things (Hust & Brown, 2008, p. 100). This suggests that masculinity is a social construct that is influenced by cultural norms and values. Therefore, it is important to conduct comparative and cross-cultural analyses to better understand how masculinity is mediated in different societies (Darling-Wolf, 2004, p. 290; Ricciardelli et al., 2010, p. 66).

Media representation and gender contestation

Media typically reinforces gender stereotypes and can shape cultural views, such as in advertising, which is believed to actively contribute to shaping gender images. Advertisers may represent men in a narrow perspective of hegemonic masculinity, focusing on limited traits such as toughness or dominance (Ricciardelli et al., 2010, p. 70; Benwell, 2004, p. 10; Mahalik et al., 2003, p. 18). For instance, hegemonic masculinity is usually linked with muscularity and a strong physique. Thus, advertisers often reinforce prevailing gender norms, cultural practices, and attitudes by carefully selecting and crafting images in their ads. These images often depict traits of hegemonic masculinity, and through ads, men are taught to emulate the characteristics of dominant breadwinners, aggressors, and authoritative leaders (Vokey et al., 2013, p. 570).

Moreover, the media shapes perceptions of masculinity and gender roles, often perpetuating unrealistic and stereotypical images of men. Such representations can influence societal expectations and promote an unbalanced vision of gender roles. Media has also a significant impact on shaping beliefs and attitudes related to gender, contributing to reinforcing ideas about what it means to be a "real" man in society (Carter et al., 2014, p. 474; Rao et al., 2022, p. 390). Thus, media technologies

impact gender stereotypes, especially with the lack of women in top positions in the media industries (Al Obeidli, 2020, p. 91). Women's underrepresentation in the media, especially in the Arab region, can perpetuate traditional gender roles, while masculinities are often associated with violence, virility, and career achievements (Skalli, 2023, p. 8). It also argued that Arab men tend to be represented in video clips as less conservative and even “weak” compared to traditional representations in drama, such as the Syrian series Bab el-Hara with its evocation of a mythic past with its anti-modern representation of men (Zaatari, 2015, p. 20).

In the GCC states, women have achieved higher education levels thanks to the governments' efforts to promote women in the workforce (Ridge, 2014) interpreted by some scholars as part of these states' nation branding (Allagui & Al-Najjar, 2018). Saudi Arabia, for instance, is changing its traditional image of being a country characterized by radicalized masculinity and is moving toward a more feminist outlook. This shift in perspective is aimed at earning international recognition and legitimacy, with women playing a pivotal role in dispelling the old image (Al Rasheed, 2013). However, despite an increase in the number of women participating in the labor markets in the GCC states, gender biases still exist, hindering women's ability to access leadership positions. Here, family connections (or *wasta*) and links to powerful men often play a role in determining success (Naguib & Madeeha, 2023). For instance, the public sector in the GCC states is still highly masculinized (Langworthy & Naguib, 2024). The fact remains that the Gulf states may prioritize women's empowerment to reap certain social and economic benefits: Socially, the states address competing forces advocating for female market engagement, while economically, they ease pressures to create jobs for women graduates (Ennis, 2019).

On the other hand, media representation, such as advertising, reinforces gender norms and prescribed gender identities, using stereotyped masculinity and femininity to create meaningful differences in consumption practices (Muhtaseb, 2020). For instance, Western media promotes a certain image of women from the GCC states, often depicted in a negative light, framed within a context of victimization and deprivation, underscoring their lack of rights (Altohami & Salama, 2019). Moreover, Western governments and media's adoption of feminist terminology has led to a skewed interpretation, as neoliberal and neoconservative agendas intersect, resulting in gender parity initiatives being criticized for being depoliticized and superficial (Al-Ali & Pratt, 2009).

The Arab region is currently experiencing a significant shift in gender relations, specifically in relation to gender roles, masculinity, and feminism (Hasso, 2019). Digital media here has played a pivotal role in this change, by raising awareness and

allowing individuals to express their opinions. Social media platforms, for instance, have provided women with a platform to voice their experiences, leading to greater awareness and support for women's rights and gender equality (Alsaggaf, 2019). However, there is a concurrent discussion regarding masculinity and whether it accurately reflects the aspirations and actions of men.

Indeed, media images, including in advertising, may contest such images by propagating a neo-liberal practice and discourse that seeks to create a new class of individuals who are deeply entrenched in the successful growth of neoliberal capitalism (Al-Ali & Pratt, 2009). Thus, contemporary advertising provides a space for representing, reinforcing, and even contesting gender relations and identities and offers possible solutions to gender tensions, especially the crisis of masculinity. Advertisements then represent a form of visual communication that links aesthetics and political symbols (Schroeder & Zwick, 2004) while serving as a sphere of gender contestation involving various social, cultural, and political dynamics. Such a contestation reflects a struggle between traditional patriarchal norms and the ongoing push for gender equality and women's rights, and this takes many forms, including challenges to traditional gender roles.

This study contributes to the emerging literature on gender contestation as represented in advertising with a unique focus on Arab masculinity as it is commodified in commercials (Zayer et al., 2020). It focuses on two examples of commercials that were very popular on YouTube, harvesting millions of views, and broadcast in 2015, the peak time of political turmoil in the Arab region with the rise of ISIS and its securitization of Arab masculinity. The study focuses on the societies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), where citizens are expected to always maintain a respectable image as they cannot separate their identity from that of the state. However, with the rise of social media, individuals are now able to create their own image, which is often viewed as conflicting with the national image by the state (Alhusein et al., 2021). Here, television and YouTube commercials are a unique set of multimodal meanings that form a semiotic technology, and this study utilizes Semiotics as a lens through which to analyze selected commercials from the GCC states.

Method – semiotic analysis

The study utilizes semiotic analysis, and Semiotics here is defined as the study of signs to identify the underlying meanings that are not directly apparent (Worden, 2013). Since the middle of the last century, semiotics has expanded to become a huge field of study, including the study of body language, arts, visual communication, media, language, clothing, and everything that is used or invented

or used by humans to generate meanings (Danesi, 2004). The use of semiotic analysis emanating from linguistics and literature to analyze and study advertising is a well-established approach (JIANG, 2012).

The sign has several orders of signification, in which the first one is the denotation or the literal meaning of the signifier. According to Fiske and Hartley (2004), connotation is the second-order sign system, and it refers to the values, emotions, and attitudes signified by signs. For instance, TV uses several methods to connote meaning, such as music, lighting, camera angle, camera movement, and editing. At the third level, there is mythology or ideology, where the various myths of the second level gather to reflect the broad principles of culture in society through which its members view reality. This shared understanding is shaped by cultural influences and is a key expression of cultural identity. Myths, functioning within this intersubjective realm, are not random but are organized into coherent systems, forming what can be termed a mythology or ideology (Fiske & Hartley, 2004).

As per Chandler (2022), the semiotic analysis should focus on the connections between signs that are present in the text and those that are not. This can be done by performing a commutation test, which involves substituting one sign for another within a paradigm to observe changes in meaning. This helps in identifying the patterns and codes of the signs used and is particularly useful in analyzing gender representation in advertisements or other media. By examining deliberate reversals or changes in gender portrayal, we can understand the nuances of how gender is portrayed in media and the potential impact it might have on our perceptions.

In this research, syntagmatic analysis is conducted by studying spatial relationships (right/left, top/bottom, center/margin, foreground/background), and sequential relationships (how all text units, such as frames or shots, relate to each other, and the relationships between them) (Chandler, 2022). Ads are analyzed by taking one frame from each shot, and then conducting the analysis in terms of the signifier, signified denotation, connotation, and mythology. The following sections present only a selection of the shots due to the limited scope of this article.

Panofsky (1955), an art critic, developed a model for analyzing visual communication works, particularly in paintings; this model outlines three meaning levels in an image, each revealing deeper insights upon exploration (Dyer, 1982):

- The first level involves primary or natural subject matter. This includes basic elements like light, color, shape, and movement, along with a fundamental understanding of depicted subjects such as people, objects, and their interactions.
- The second level, secondary or conventional subject matter, connects to broader

cultural contexts. Here, motifs and their combinations are associated with various themes and concepts. Panofsky categorized certain motifs as images and their assemblies as stories or allegories.

- The third level pertains to intrinsic meaning or content. It uncovers the underlying principles reflecting the attitudes of a nation, era, social class, or philosophical beliefs, subtly influenced by individual creators and manifested in their works.

To decode the messages in advertisements with human subjects, it is essential to understand the key non-verbal communication methods: appearance, manner, and activity. These elements collectively convey complex meanings within the advertisement's context (Dyer, 1982).

In sum, semiotic analysis highlights the processes that shape our understanding of social realities, particularly the nuanced dynamics of gender and masculinity. By examining the meanings of signs in media representations, such as commercials, we can uncover the layers of meaning that contribute to constructing gender roles and expectations in society. Here, YouTube commercials represent a techno-cultural artifact that communicates messages connected through the social practices that shape them (Poulsen & Kvåle, 2018), and therefore, it is crucial to analyze each message within its social context.

This study focuses on YouTube as the primary source for these advertisements, considering its status as the leading global platform for video sharing and the second-largest search engine worldwide, next to Google (Global Media Insight, 2023; Osman et al., 2022). YouTube's significant user base, particularly its male majority (54.4% male versus 45.6% female), aligns with the study's exploration of masculinity in advertising. In terms of demographics, YouTube is predominantly used by males aged 18-55, with a notable decline in usage as users age. The 18-44 age group is especially active, justifying the study's focus on this demographic as they represent the majority of YouTube users (Global Media Insight, 2023).

Through a search conducted on YouTube using the keyword "إعلان" E'lan" (advertisement) and sorting the results by most watched, numerous advertisements emerged. The sample was to be selected from YouTube, utilizing specific selection criteria to ensure relevance and consistency. These include that the ads should not feature musical content, each ad must include at least one male and one female character but not celebrities, the ad should originate from a Gulf country, and be relatively recent (i.e., within the past 10 years). These criteria are designed to ensure that the selected advertisements are representative of typical watched media content in the Gulf region, while also avoiding the potential bias introduced by celebrity endorsements.

The search was carried out on January 13, 2023, and yielded eight possible ads; from them, a narrower sample of two commercials was selected for this study. The two commercials were chosen based on the number of hits on YouTube, and consequently, the most viewed advertisement was from the Kuwaiti telecommunications company VIVA, with a total of 34 million views, while the second advertisement from the same company accumulated 21 million views. These advertisements form a two-part series; the first ends with a question, "What do you think will happen?" to pique the audience's interest in the second part, which continues the narrative of the first. The selected commercials promote the Kuwaiti telecommunications company, previously known as VIVA, and then rebranded as STC. According to its website, STC Kuwait is a leading brand in the telecommunications industry. Incorporated on July 22, 2008, it was established to operate the third GSM mobile system in Kuwait, and STC, a subsidiary of the globally renowned STC Group, was founded in December 2008. The two commercials are available in two parts on YouTube: https://t.ly/a_ABd; <https://t.ly/YmVuB>

Both commercials were broadcast in 2015 and have since been on YouTube, garnering 21 million views (part 1) and 34 million views (part 2) respectively, making them two of the highest viewed in the past decade. The commercials were aired in Ramadan 2015. It is to be noted that although Ramadan is known for its focus on luxury and charity advertising (Keenan & Yeni, 2003). The Ramadan campaign was part of a series named "Golden Generation" that focused on the signing of a sports partnership between VIVA and the Kuwaiti Federation to sponsor the national football teams (Al-Anbaa, 2015). The campaign aimed to raise awareness against bullying and involved children in its message delivery. Usually, bullying involves using fear or threat to force others, but the advertisement sought to show a different perspective where the main players were the Real Madrid team brought by a local girl, who acted as the mastermind in coordinating with the players to play against a bullying local team. The idea was to highlight the active, wise, and supportive role that girls can play in these situations.

Findings

"VIVA Ramadan TVC teaser 2015: What do you think will happen? Part 1"

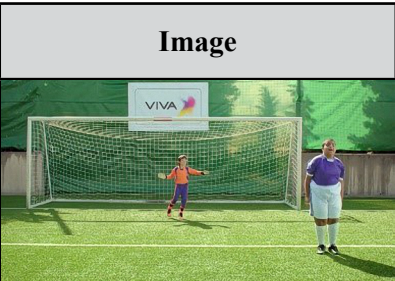




The core concept of the advertisement involves children playing on a soccer field who are bullied and ousted from the field by a team of men. Then, a girl devises a plan with the assistance of Real Madrid players to help the children regain access to the field for playing.

In the ad's first scene, three boys play soccer and imagine themselves as

The representation of Arab masculinity in advertising...

international stars. The roles they take on seem inappropriate, with one chubby boy as a forward and the smallest boy as the goalkeeper. The boys are playing soccer, but only one has a moderately athletic body. They seem enthusiastic and are enjoying themselves. The scene is humorous and relatable to the audience. The music adds to the excitement and conveys their feelings. The boys appear to be from the middle or upper-middle class and represent the generation in the Gulf countries. Football is popular in the Gulf region, making it relatable to a large audience. The sky and clouds suggest dreams and success, while the ball represents the opportunity to achieve that dream.

Table 1: selected shots

Shot no.	Image	Description
1		Three children playing soccer
14A		An adult man catches the ball, preventing it from reaching the child, while the child falls on his back in the background.
14B		The camera focuses on the face of man A, capturing his angry expression as he holds the ball.
18		The shot shows the man with his comrades scolding the children in a harsh voice, ordering them to leave the field.
25		A girl addresses the man, questioning why they drove the boys away. She stands with one hand on her hip in a challenging posture.

32		The man leans in, sneering, looking at the girl, and challenges her.
34A		The girl challenges the man to leave the field if he loses the game against her team, and the man accepts the challenge.
39		The girl uses her tablet to contact someone asking for help
43		A shot shows a non-Arab athletic young man in a white sports suit, with a large empty stadium in the background, holding his mobile phone and talking to the girl.
47		Fade into the telecommunications company's logo, and at the bottom of the screen appears this question in Arabic: "What do you think will happen?"

On the field, one of the boys attempt a bicycle kick which is thwarted by a group of men, leaving the boy on the ground feeling humiliated. The local men mock the boys, and the scene highlights themes of oppression, survival of the strongest, and shattered childhood dreams. In the scene, one man, the goalkeeper, is portrayed as the villain through his angry expression, aggressive tone, and gray-colored shirt. The use of gray color represents sadness, frustration, and morally questionable behavior (Jonauskaitė et al., 2020). The advertisement seems to critique the social norms that restrict creativity, play, and freedom.

In the second scene, a girl is sitting in a warm-toned living room using her pink tablet. The decor is simple and enhanced by decorative plants and daylight. The pictures show the family's love for football. The girl is wearing light clothes in

yellow and pink, which are associated with positive emotions. The commercial reflects several myths regarding femininity and motherhood (Hemphill, 1996). The girl in modern clothes with a tablet goes with the boys to the field to confront the threatening men. The scene challenges gender stereotypes and represents a shift towards the empowerment of girls.

In the following scene, the goalkeeper appears in the parking lot, closing his Mustang GT's trunk. The confrontation of the girl accompanied by the scared boys occurs in the traditionally masculine space, with the bullying men on the right representing traditional masculinity and the girl on the left, with the boys behind her, representing women's empowerment and upcoming social changes (Radu, 2011). In this scene, a girl stands with a tablet in her hand, signifying a challenge. The pink color of her tablet represents her identity as a girl who is armed with technology and knowledge. The scene represents a reversal of gender roles and expectations, where the girl takes on the role of protector. The low-angle shot of the girl enhances her perceived bravery in the face of social power represented by the men. The girl challenges the men to defeat her team of "friends" and raises her pinky finger to seal the deal with the goalkeeper; thus, the scene represents the myth that the modern girl challenges traditional authoritarian masculinity and social oppression (Gilmore, 1990). In the final scene, the girl conducts a video call in English, suggesting that modern communication technology empowers girls to achieve their goals and improve their quality of life. The scene ends with the telecommunications company's logo and the question, "What do you think will happen?"

"What do you think will happen? Part 2"

In the second part of the advertisement (shots 1-6), we see a girl entering the field, followed by boys. The girl is wearing a stylish pink sports outfit, adorned with a badge on her chest, and walks erectly. She holds a pink iPad in one hand and confidently places her other hand on her hip. The girl's body appears athletic and attractive. In contrast, the boys are shown with curved backs and bowed heads. The boys, dressed in Real Madrid's white kit, walk behind the girl, looking around at the audience in wonder. Regarding positional communication (Dyer, 1982), the relationship between the girl and the boys is apparent: The girl is in a position of superiority, as indicated by her placement in the center of the screen, her manner of walking, and the boys trailing her and asking her questions, all suggesting that she is the leader.


The iPad serves as a prop, signifying the integration of digital tools into daily life, including traditional activities like sports. It represents modernity, education, and advanced technology. The myth here is represented by the modern woman

breaking into fields traditionally dominated by men, armed with technology and knowledge, taking over the roles of leadership and influence from men in this era.





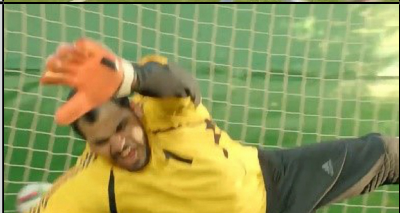
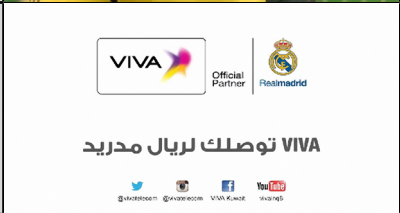

Overall, the bullying men's team is dressed in black, while the children's team enters along with four players of Real Madrid's team, all wearing white. The appearance of Real Madrid players represents the turning point or plot twist, shifting the balance in favor of the children's team, who were previously the underdogs. These scenes, accompanied by rousing music and cheers following the appearance of Real Madrid players, suggest that the main characters in the story have gained support from a stronger party, and the imminent defeat of the rival (local men's team). The facial expressions and body language of the local men's team convey tension and fear after seeing Real Madrid players, indicating they underestimated the girl's capabilities. Real Madrid players look indifferent, and the boys' and crowd's joy and cheers suggest the arrival of a savior, in this case, the Real Madrid players. On the other hand, whistles of derision were directed at the local men's team, suggesting scorn and undesirability, and portraying them as rivals in this competition.

The connotations suggest the humiliation of the local men's team, with Real Madrid and the boys scoring seven goals, showing complete dominance over the local men, who are completely defeated. The myth in these shots represents the superiority of the Western man who helps the oppressed groups and punishes the weak and domineering Arab man. This myth is prevalent in Western media, where the Arab man is demonized, and empathy is reserved for women or children. As Ghannam (2013) explains, there's a skewed focus in Western media, with female issues like the hijab and circumcision receiving extensive attention, often framed in a Eurocentric, paternalistic light, overshadowing similar practices affecting men. Concurrently, there is a pervasive portrayal of Middle Eastern and Muslim men in American media as violent extremists and oppressors, particularly post-September 11. This narrative tends to dehumanize men, casting them either as villains deserving punishment or threats requiring control, thus perpetuating a biased and unbalanced representation of gender and cultural identities.

Table 2: selected shots from the second ad:

Shot no.	Image	Description
1		A rear-angle shot shows the three boys and the girl entering the football field.

The representation of Arab masculinity in advertising...

9		The goalkeeper looks down scornfully at the girl, surrounded by his team with stern expressions.
10A		The girl points to foreign friends standing behind her in the out-of-focus area, and they are four Real Madrid players.
13		The captain of the local men's team, looks defiantly at the foreign team.
21		The match proceeds and the Real Madrid players win over the local team while helping the local boys score goals.
47		A closer shot of the rival goalkeeper falling after failing to block the ball.
54		Fade in - the company's logo, Viva, and the official partner logo, Real Madrid Football Club, linked with the Arabic sentence, "VIVA connects you to Real Madrid."
59		The children laugh and scream in joy with the Real Madrid players.

At the third level of signification, there's a shared understanding within a society or culture, where the following myths emerged:

- In Gulf and Arab cultures, boys are often portrayed as innocent, imaginative, and having broad aspirations, but happy childhood dreams may not always come true. On the other hand, young men are seen as oppressors, and only the strongest survive.
- The modern Arab girl is depicted as an empowered leader equipped with technology and actively involved in challenging and transforming traditional masculinity.
- Western men are often perceived as superior, as they assist oppressed groups while punishing the domineering Arab man. They are also depicted as interacting compassionately with oppressed groups, who find inspiration with them and may, therefore, aspire to go to the West.

The ideology articulated through the myths presented in the advertisement portrays a narrative of Arab society in change, where the established roles and stereotypical images of men and women are in a state of transformation. Nevertheless, the ordinary man in this setting is portrayed as a cruel individual, clinging to his traditional authority and dominance, embodying old-fashioned conceptions of masculinity that are increasingly out of step with the realities of the modern era. Conversely, the Western man is characterized as a figure of moral and civilizational ascendancy who, with the aid of media and advanced communication technologies, lends support to those oppressed within the region. The local men's team goalkeeper emerges as a metonymy for the conventional Arabic man striving to uphold customary masculine traditions, yet these attempts are shown to fail in the face of the presence of a new generation of women in the Gulf, backed with progressive Western forces and technology.

In summary, the findings illuminate the nuanced interplay between media representations of gender and the evolving landscape of gender roles within the Arab region, especially against the backdrop of cultural and technological shifts. This research underscores the media's role not just as a mirror reflecting societal norms but as a potent force in shaping and contesting these norms. Recent literature, such as that by Al-Ali and Pratt (2009), situates these media narratives within broader neoliberal and neoconservative agendas, highlighting the complexity of gender discourse in a globalized context. Furthermore, the study's focus on the portrayal of masculinity and femininity in advertising reveals a critical site of gender contestation, where traditional patriarchal values are both reinforced and challenged. The semiotic analysis offers a rich lens through which to understand how gender identities are constructed and contested within the media. The selected commercials serve not only as reflections of societal norms but also as active participants in the negotiation of gender identities, particularly in the context of the Arab region's

ongoing sociopolitical changes. This adds an important dimension to the existing body of literature on media and gender, which has predominantly focused on Western contexts, by shedding light on the specificities of Arab masculinity and femininity as they are commodified and contested in the media.

Discussion

Arab masculinity, as embodied by the local male team in the advertisements, is represented as dominating weaker groups in society, such as the boys and the girl. In this depiction, masculinity forms a social problem and a source of conflict and chaos. However, this form of masculinity cannot withstand the new generation of women empowered by technology, science, and Western modernism. Physical and material strength, which traditional masculinity represents, is no longer the standard of true strength. Armed with education and technology, contemporary women have become equal to, and even surpassed, men. This idea was mentioned by Alteneiji, (2023), who noted that some Gulf women stated that boys have become a source of conflicts and problems, in addition to their weakness in education and employment. Conversely, some mothers expressed that women's empowerment and education have contributed to making women highly valued in modern Gulf society, where they can be considered a source of income. In addition, women have become a driving force in modernization and social change.

At the heart of this mythology is the depiction of a modern girl embodying empowerment enabled by technology and education. She represents a break from traditional gender roles, challenging and reshaping the cultural narratives around femininity and leadership. This figure of the girl with the iPad connotes progressive values, where beauty and goodness are intertwined with intelligence and technological prowess. The media, coupled with modern communication technologies, is depicted as empowering a new generation of women within the region to venture beyond traditional boundaries and contest the restrictions previously imposed upon them. This mythology idealizes the West as a supporter of progress and empowerment for those who suffer from backwardness or oppression. Simultaneously, it suggests an ongoing renegotiation of gender dynamics within the Arab world, reflecting a society in transition, where traditional roles and expectations are being questioned and redefined by a new generation equipped with global perspectives and digital tools.

Although the semiotic analysis of the above two YouTube commercials offers new insights, it is essential to acknowledge that this narrow sample size has inherent limitations, as the conclusions drawn from analyzing only two commercials cannot be generalized. The limited sample may overlook the diversity and complexity of

semiotic codes and messages found in other commercials within the same genre or industry. However, despite these limitations, the analysis provides an in-depth examination of specific commercials designed by a Western advertising agency, which allows for a nuanced understanding of its semiotic strategies and possible implications. First, the above findings should not be interpreted as suggesting a significant shift in societal norms in Gulf society, especially in terms of adopting Western values. This is particularly the case given the growing literature suggesting that Gulf societies still adhere to traditional and rather strict gender roles (e.g., Tlaiss, 2014; Al Orami, 2011) despite the massive economic and social development in the last few decades (Wang & Kassam, 2016). This is perhaps why each GCC government has taken significant steps to promote gender equality, measured by increasing the rate of women in education and the labor market, not to mention the political sphere, balancing this development with the perception of masculinity as entrenched in strong moral values while linking it to power, money, and virtue. This is shown, for instance, in previous literature highlighting traditional values in GCC societies (e.g., Tantawy, 2021).

Instead, the findings suggest a subtle form of socialization and identity negotiation between foreign and local ideas, especially regarding gender relations and the representation of Arab masculinity, which is divided between Western modernity and traditional heritage. This is particularly evident when considering the growing literature that focuses on authenticity in Gulf society (AlMutawa, 2019). It is also apparent in the increasing production of cinematic and television content that emphasizes traditional heritage as a means of promoting authentic Gulf identity (Mirgani, 2020). Thus, there is currently a new form of hybrid identity coined as "tribal modern" (Cooke, 2014), which suggests a balance between the desire for modernization and a commitment to preserving cultural identity.

Moreover, the above analysis highlights the contrast between traditional and modern forms of masculinity, as represented by local and foreign football teams. This contrast adds another layer to the debate on the representation of Arab masculinity, by suggesting that modern (or Western) forms of masculinity can be used to counteract oppressive local practices. However, it is important to note that the above commercials were produced by a Western agency, and it is not certain how a similar campaign would look if it were designed by a local agency.

Finally, this study argues that masculinity is not a fixed or objective concept and is instead shaped by the social and cultural context in which it exists. Here, the media's representation of masculinity is particularly influential in shaping how young people understand and internalize this idea (Vandello et al., 2008).

This study underscores a shift in the discourse surrounding gender roles within media representations, particularly within the Arab context. This research contributes to the broader field of gender studies by highlighting the complex interplay between media representations and societal norms. The semiotic analysis of commercials within the GCC context reveals not only the perpetuation of traditional gender roles but also the subtle contestations and negotiations of these roles, pointing towards a dynamic and evolving landscape of gender identities.

Finally, this study contributes with an exploration into the role of media and advertising, in particular, in reinforcing and challenging hegemonic gender norms. By focusing on Arab masculinity and its representation, the research adds to the ongoing discourse on the power of media as a transformative force in society. It sheds light on how media narratives can contribute to a reimagining of gender roles, moving beyond simplistic binary oppositions towards a more nuanced understanding of gender fluidity and intersectionality. Moreover, the discussion on the dual influence of global and local forces in shaping media representations of gender highlights the complexities of navigating modernity and tradition. This interplay is crucial in understanding the current renegotiations of gender identities within the Arab world, suggesting a landscape marked by both continuity and change. The study's emphasis on the role of technology and education in empowering women, juxtaposed with the persistent challenges of traditional masculinity, offers a critical lens through which to view the ongoing struggle for gender equality.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the portrayal of masculinity in the media within the Arab region. There is a significant research gap in the field of gender studies, specifically in how Arab men are represented in advertising in the Gulf Cooperation Council societies. To bridge this gap, this study focuses on two YouTube commercials as a case study. The study utilized Semiotics, a method of analyzing signs and symbols, to examine the selected commercials and provide meaningful insights into gender contestation in advertising.

According to this study, masculinity is not a fixed or objective concept. Instead, it is influenced by the social and cultural context in which it exists. The media plays a significant role in shaping how young people perceive and internalize the idea of masculinity. Moreover, the research contributes to an understanding of the ways in which global forces, such as Western modernity, intersect with local traditions and values, leading to complex forms of identity negotiation and gender dynamics. As such, this study aligns with and expands upon existing scholarship by demonstrating the critical role of media representations in both perpetuating and challenging

traditional gender roles, offering insights into the ongoing renegotiation of gender identities in the Arab region amidst rapid social and technological changes.

In conclusion, this paper explores the intricate dynamics between media representations and gender contestation within the Arab region and underscores the media's dual role as both a reflector and shaper of gender norms. By employing a semiotic lens to dissect commercials, the study reveals the complex negotiations of gender identities, challenging traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. It highlights the transformative potential of media in redefining gender roles, emphasizing the interplay between global influences and local cultural practices. Future studies can look into comparative images of masculinity comparing the GCC with the rest of the Arab region in order to identify similarities and differences in the ways that masculinity is constructed and perceived across different contexts.

Funding

None

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

None

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest

References

- Aamer, M. A. F. A. (2019). Male health after forty between concepts of masculinity and masculinity, a study in biological anthropology. *Journal of Scientific Research in Arts*, 20(2), 565-593. <https://doi.org/10.21608/jssa.2019.40709>
- Al-Ali, N., & Pratt, N. (2009). Gendering War and Transnationalism in the Middle East. *Women and War in the Middle East. Transnational Perspectives*, London, New York, 253-269.
- Al-Anbaa. (2015, 7/10). "VIVA" attracts record views on YouTube during Ramadan. <https://www.alanba.com.kw/ar/economy-news/571302/10-07-2015#>
- Al-Dailami, A.-S. (2019, September 17). *Towards a new Arab Masculinity*. <https://bit.ly/3SvUGGd>
- Al Obeidli, N. (2020). *Emirati women journalists bargaining with patriarchy in search of equality (Doctoral dissertation, University of Westminster)*. <https://doi.org/10.34737/v291v>

- Al oraimi, S. Z. (2011). The Concept of Gender in Emirati Culture: An Analytical Study of the Role of the State in Redefining Gender and Social Roles. *Museum International*, 63(3-4), 78-92. <https://doi.org/10.1111/muse.12009>
- Alhussein, E., Rafaei, D. A., & Hussein, M. A. (2021, April 1). *Fashla: The Politics of Image-Making in the Gulf*. <https://bit.ly/4267Ixx>
- Allagui, I., & Al-Najjar, A. (2018). From women empowerment to nation branding: A case study from the United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Communication*, 12, 68-85. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/7319>
- AlMutawa, R. (2019). "The mall isn't authentic!": Dubai's Creative Class And The Construction of Social Distinction. *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development*, 48(1/2), 183-223. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45173363>
- Alsaggaf, R. M. (2019). Saudi women's identities on Facebook: Context collapse, judgement, and the imagined audience. *THE ELECTRONIC JOURNAL OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES*, 85(2), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1002/isd2.12070>
- Alteneiji, E. (2023). Value changes in gender roles: Perspectives from three generations of Emirati women. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9(1), 1-30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2184899>
- Altohami, W. M., & Salama, A. H. (2019). The journalistic representations of Saudi women in the corpus of contemporary American English (COCA): A corpus critical discourse analysis. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 9(6), 320-336. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v9n6p320>
- Benwell, B. (2004). Ironic Discourse: Evasive Masculinity in Men's Lifestyle Magazines. *Men and Masculinities*, 7(1), 3-21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X03257438>
- Bussey, K., & Bandura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory of gender development and differentiation. *Psychological Review*, 106(4), 676-713. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.106.4.676>
- Carter, C., Steiner, L., & McLaughlin, L. (2014). *The Routledge companion to media & gender*. Routledge.
- Chandler, D. (2022). *Semiotics: The Basics* (4th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003155744>
- Cooke, M. (2014). *Tribal modern: Branding new nations in the Arab Gulf*. Univ of California Press.
- Danesi, M. (2004). *Messages, signs, and meanings: A basic textbook in semiotics and communication* (3 ed.). Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Darling-Wolf, F. (2004). Women and New Men: Negotiating Masculinity in the Japanese Media. *The Communication Review*, 7(3), 285-303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714420490492193>

- Dyer, G. (1982). *Advertising as Communication*. Routledge.
- El Halabi, S., Founouni, Z. N., & Arawi, T. (2019). Social Construction of Arab Masculinity and Its Effects on Mental Health. In I. Laher (Ed.), *Handbook of Healthcare in the Arab World* (pp. 1-11). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-74365-3_175-1
- Ennis, C. A. (2019). The Gendered Complexities of Promoting Female Entrepreneurship in the Gulf. *New Political Economy*, 24(3), 365-384. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2018.1457019>
- Farrell, W., & Gray, J. (2018). *The boy crisis: Why our boys are struggling and what we can do about it*. BenBella Books.
- Fiske, J., & Hartley, J. (2004). *Reading television* (2 ed.). Routledge.
- Ghannam, F. (2013). *Live and die like a man: Gender dynamics in urban Egypt*. Stanford University Press.
- Ghoussoub, M., & Sinclair-Webb, E. (2000). *Imagined masculinities: Male identity and culture in the modern Middle East*. Saqi Books.
- Gilmore, D. D. (1990). *Manhood in the Making Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*. Yale University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vm2vj>
- Global Media Insight. (2023, August 17). *YOUTUBE STATISTICS 2024 DEMOGRAPHICS, USERS BY COUNTRY & MORE* <https://www.globalmediainsight.com/blog/youtube-users-statistics/>
- Harris, I. M. (2004). *Messages men hear: Constructing masculinities*. Taylor & Francis.
- Hasso, F. (2019). Decolonizing Middle East men and masculinities scholarship: An axiomatic approach.
- Hemphill, M. (1996). A Note on Adults' Color-Emotion Associations. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 157(3), 275-280. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221325.1996.9914865>
- Hušt, S. J. T., & Brown, J. D. (2008). Gender, media use, and effects. In *The handbook of children, media, and development*. (pp. 98-120). Blackwell Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444302752.ch5>
- Inhorn, M. C. (2012). *The New Arab Man, Emergent Masculinities, Technologies, and Islam in the Middle East*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400842629>
- Itulua-Abumere, F. (2013). Understanding Men and Masculinity in Modern Society. *Open Journal of Social Science Research*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.12966/ojssr.05.05.2013>
- JIANG, C. (2012). *MEN'S MAGAZINES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY IN TAIWAN* [PHD Dissertations, Southern Illinois University Carbondale]. <https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/dissertations/474/>
- Jonauskaitė, D., Abu-Akel, A., Dael, N., Oberfeld, D., Abdel-Khalek, A. M., Al-Rasheed, A. S., Antonietti, J.-P., Bogushevskaya, V., Chamseddine, A.,

- Chkonia, E., Corona, V., Fonseca-Pedrero, E., Griber, Y. A., Grimshaw, G., Hasan, A. A., Havelka, J., Hirnstein, M., Karlsson, B. S. A., Laurent, E., . . . Mohr, C. (2020). Universal Patterns in Color-Emotion Associations Are Further Shaped by Linguistic and Geographic Proximity. *Psychological Science*, 31(10), 1245-1260. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797620948810>
- Keenan, K. L., & Yeni, S. (2003). Ramadan Advertising in Egypt: A Content Analysis With Elaboration on Select Items. *Journal of Media and Religion*, 2(2), 109-117. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15328415JMR0202_04
- Langworthy, M., & Naguib, R. (2024). Through the Eye of the Needle: Lessons in Women's Empowerment and Public Policy from the Arab Gulf. In R. Naguib (Ed.), *Women's Empowerment and Public Policy in the Arab Gulf States: Exploring Challenges and Opportunities* (pp. 147-185). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-6006-4_7
- Magrath, R., Cleland, J., & Anderson, E. (2020). *The Palgrave Handbook of Masculinity and Sport*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-19799-5>
- Mahalik, J. R., Locke, B. D., Ludlow, L. H., Diemer, M. A., Scott, R. P. J., Gottfried, M., & Freitas, G. (2003). Development of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 4(1), 3-25. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1524-9220.4.1.3>
- Messerschmidt, J. W. (2015). *Masculinities in the Making: From the Local to the Global*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Miller, C. F. (2016). Gender Development, Theories of. In *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies* (pp. 1-6). <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663219.wbegss590>
- Mirgani, S. (2020). Making the Final Cut: Filmmaking and Complicating National Identity in Qatar and the GCC States. In T. Ginsberg & C. Lippard (Eds.), *Cinema of the Arab World: Contemporary Directions in Theory and Practice* (pp. 45-70). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-30081-4_2
- Muhtaseb, A. (2020). US media darlings: Arab and Muslim women activists, exceptionalism and the "rescue narrative". *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 42(1-2), 7-24. <https://doi.org/10.13169/arabstudquar.42.1-2.0007>
- Naguib, R., & Madeeha, M. (2023). "Making visible the invisible": Exploring the role of gender biases on the glass ceiling in Qatar's public sector. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 98, 102723. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2023.102723>
- Osman, W., Mohamed, F., Elhassan, M., & Shoufan, A. (2022). Is YouTube a reliable source of health-related information? A systematic review. *BMC Medical Education*, 22(1), 382. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-022-03446-z>
- Panofsky, E. (1955). *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Papers in and on Art History*.

University of Chicago Press.

- Poulsen, S. V., & Kvåle, G. (2018). Studying social media as semiotic technology: a social semiotic multimodal framework. *Social Semiotics*, 28(5), 700-717. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2018.1505689>
- Quayle, M., Lindegger, G., Brittain, K., Nabee, N., & Cole, C. (2018). Women's Ideals for Masculinity Across Social Contexts: Patriarchal Agentic Masculinity is Valued in Work, Family, and Romance but Communal Masculinity in Friendship. *Sex Roles*, 78(1), 52-66. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-017-0772-9>
- Radu, M. (2011). Ford Mustang Is the Most Manly Car in the World, UK Survey Finds. *Autoevolution*. <https://www.autoevolution.com/news/ford-mustang-is-the-most-manly-car-in-the-world-uk-survey-finds-38533.html>
- Rahman, M. M., & Al-Azm, A. (2023). *Social Change in the Gulf Region: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. Springer Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-7796-1>
- Rao, S., Abdul, W. K., & Kamel, Y. (2022). Empirical Investigation on the Effects of Culture on Knowledge Sharing and Organization Citizenship Behaviour: Study from UAE. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, 20(3), 381-393. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14778238.2021.1895687>
- Reeser, T. W. (2010). *Masculinities in theory: An introduction*. Wiley Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444317312>
- Reeves, R. V. (2022). *Of boys and men: Why the modern male is struggling, why it matters, and what to do about it*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Ricciardelli, R., Clow, K. A., & White, P. (2010). Investigating Hegemonic Masculinity: Portrayals of Masculinity in Men's Lifestyle Magazines. *Sex Roles*, 63(1), 64-78. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-010-9764-8>
- Ridge, N. (2014). *Education and the reverse gender divide in the Gulf States: Embracing the global, ignoring the local*. Teachers College Press.
- Schroeder, J. E., & Zwick, D. (2004). Mirrors of Masculinity: Representation and Identity in Advertising Images. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 7(1), 21-52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1025386042000212383>
- Sebkhaoui, H. (2018). Islamic education and its role in challenging the risks of globalization. *AL TURATH JOURNAL*, 8(4), 694-714. <https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/76355>
- Skalli, L. H. (2023). Introduction to Gender, Media, and Communication in MENA. In L. H. Skalli & N. Eltantawy (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Gender, Media and Communication in the Middle East and North Africa* (pp. 1-9). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-11980-4_1
- Tantawy, N. (2021). School Boys' Academic Underachievement in the UAE.

- Academia Letters*. <https://doi.org/10.20935/al2227>
- Tlaiss, H. A. (2014). Women's entrepreneurship, barriers and culture: insights from the United Arab Emirates. *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 23(2), 289-320. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0971355714535307>
- Vandello, J. A., Bosson, J. K., Cohen, D., Burnaford, R. M., & Weaver, J. R. (2008). Precarious manhood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95(6), 1325-1339. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012453>
- Vokey, M., Tefft, B., & Tysiaczny, C. (2013). An Analysis of Hyper-Masculinity in Magazine Advertisements. *Sex Roles*, 68(9), 562-576. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-013-0268-1>
- Wang, Y., & Kassam, M. (2016). Indicators of Social Change in the UAE: College Students' Attitudes Toward Love, Marriage and Family. *Journal of Arabian Studies*, 6(1), 74-94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21534764.2016.1192791>
- Worden, E. A. (2013). *Life, love, and hegemony on daytime TV: A critical analysis of three popular soap operas*. The University of Southern Mississippi.
- Zaatari, Z. (2015). Desirable Masculinity/Femininity and Nostalgia of the "Anti-Modern": Bab el-Hara Television Series as a Site of Production. *Sexuality & Culture*, 19(1), 16-36. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-014-9242-5>
- Zayer, L. T., McGrath, M. A., & Castro-González, P. (2020). Men and masculinities in a changing world: (de)legitimizing gender ideals in advertising. *European Journal of Marketing*, 54(1), 238-260. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-07-2018-0502>

تمثيل الذكورة العربية في الإعلانات: تحليل سيميائي

عبد الله قاسم عبد الله¹ نهى ميلور¹

¹ كلية الاتصال، جامعة الشارقة، الشارقة، الإمارات العربية المتحدة.

مستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استخدام التحليل السيميائي لتحليل تمثيل الرجال في الخليج في إعلانات علامة تجارية كويتية. بناءً على إعلانين تجاريين على موقع يوتيوب كدراسة حالة، يتساءل هذا المقال: كيف تُمثل الذكورة العربية في الإعلانات؟ تشير النتائج إلى وجود ذكورة متقلبة، مما يقترح شكلاً دقيقاً من التنشئة الاجتماعية والتفاوض على الهوية بين الأفكار الأجنبية والمحلية، خاصة فيما يتعلق بالعلاقات بين الجنسين وتمثيل الذكورة العربية. يبرز التحليل التباين بين أشكال الذكورة التقليدية والحديثة، كما تمثلها فرق كرة القدم المحلية والأجنبية في الإعلان، مما يقترح أن أشكال الذكورة الحديثة (أو الغربية) يمكن استخدامها لمواجهة الممارسات المحلية القمعية. تجادل الدراسة بأن الذكورة ليست مفهوماً ثابتاً أو موضوعياً، بل تتشكل بالسياق الاجتماعي والثقافي الذي توجد فيه. هنا، تمثيل الإعلام للذكورة له تأثير خاص في تشكيل كيفية فهم الشباب واستيعاب هذا المفهوم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مجتمع الخليج، الذكورة العربية، تمثيلات الإعلام، السيميائية، الحداثة.