

Encrypted sports channels and the right to inform

A study from the knowledge gap perspective

القنوات الرياضية المشفرة والحق في الإعلام

دراسة من منظور الفجوة المعرفية

YAHIA TAQIYEDDINE¹

¹ University Mohamed Boudiaf - M'sila , takieddine.yahia@univ-msila.dz

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Abstract :

At the present time, the public's right to the media is increasingly being called, especially with the technological development and the ever-changing technology at the level of the medium, but at the same time we find that an investment trend in media capital maintains the need to display various media contents for a fee, especially in light of the market monopoly. This is the case with encrypted sports channels in the Arab world. The owners of these channels always seek to monopolize the media material and present it to a certain group only through monthly or annual subscriptions that benefit high-income earners, a phenomenon that we find a scientific explanation for in The theory of the knowledge gap, which assumes that the economic and social level plays an important role in determining the knowledge gap from the media, if our study aims to determine the validity of this assumption through a field study on a sample of followers and non-followers of the encrypted Al-Jazeera sports channels as a living model to test this perspective in Arabic context.

Keywords: Media coding ;The right to media ; The knowledge gap ; The sports channel

المخلص :

يتزايد في الوقت الحاضر المناداة بحق الجمهور في الإعلام، خاصة مع التطور التكنولوجي الحاصل والتقانة الدائمة التحول على مستوى الوسيلة، لكن في الوقت نفسه نجد ان اتجاه استثماريا في الرأسمال الإعلامي يحافظ على ضرورة أن يتم عرض مختلف المحتويات الإعلامية بمقابل مادي، خاصة في ظل احتكار السوق الإعلامية من قبل مؤسسات إعلامية معينة، وهو الأمر الحاصل لدى القنوات الرياضية المشفرة في العالم العربي، فيسعى أصحاب هذه القنوات دائما لاحتكار المادة الإعلامية وعرضها لفئة معينة فقط عن طريق اشتراكات شهرية أو سنوية يستفيد منها أصحاب الدخل المرتفع، وهي الظاهرة التي نجد لها تفسيراً علمياً في نظرية الفجوة المعرفية حيث تفترض أن

المستوى الاقتصادي والاجتماعي يلعب دورا مهما في تحديد الفجوة المعرفية من وسائل الإعلام، إذا ستهدف دراستنا إلى الوقوف على مدى صحة هذا الافتراض من خلال دراسة ميدانية على عينة من المتابعين وغير المتابعين لقنوات الجزيرة الرياضية المشفرة كنموذج حي لاختبار هذا المنظور في السياق العربي.

- الكلمات المفتاحية : التشفير الاعلامي ; الحق في الاعلام ; الفجوة المعرفية ; القناة الرياضية

introduction:

The phenomenon of sports channels and encrypted sports programs has become one of the most important topics discussed in the media and various sports, political and economic circles. Interest in the subject has evolved due to the growing volume of investments in the sports field, in addition to the fact that sports have become one of the most important means of tourism and cultural promotion.

The rapid spread of some sports also led to an expansion of public interest in them, and millions of fans flocked to the media that offer various games and sports arts, and the phenomenon attracted the interest of investors who are now pumping a lot of money into this sector of human activity.

And the growing popularity of sports and huge investments revealed the emergence of the phenomenon of encrypted sports channels and programmes, and the issue of buying and monopolizing the broadcasting of many sports and sporting events became the subject of fierce competition between the various stations and television channels.

Sports public opinion was divided about the phenomenon between a supporter arguing that the proceeds of encryption are used in the development of sports and in financing its various projects, and an opposition opinion that sees encryption as an infringement on the rights of the masses to access sports information and its right to knowledge, and therefore the need to work to

recover these rights Confiscation by the owners of encrypted sports TV stations and channels.

Accordingly, the study seeks to research the subject through a theoretical and field side, in which it tries to identify an explanation for this phenomenon within the framework of the knowledge gap theory

Study problem:

In its theoretical aspect, the study aims to address the problem of encryption for sports channels and programs by reviewing the historical context of the phenomenon and by explaining and interpreting its manifestations and effects on sports and on habits and patterns of following and watching sports channels and programs, and the controversy surrounding encryption and its relationship to the right to information and rights The intellectual property of the author, from which the right to invest in sports derives, and the right to own the show and broadcast rights for various programs and sporting events.

As for its field aspect, the study seeks to answer two pivotal questions, from which it branches Sub-questions, as follows:

First: What are the patterns and habits of the respondents watching encrypted sports channels and programmes?

The following questions arise from it:

1. To what extent do the respondents watch sports programmes?
2. Where do the respondents prefer to watch sports programmes?
3. What are the preferred televised sports by the respondents?

Second: What are the attitudes of the respondents towards encrypted television channels and sports programmes?

The following questions arise from it:

1. What is the attitude of the respondents towards encrypted TV channels and sports programmes?

2. What is the position of the respondents on coding some sports and not others?
3. What is the position of the respondents on coding the most important tournaments and sports dates?

Study concepts:

- TV encoding system: It is a TV signal that changes some of its values according to complex mathematical operations by computer, and this signal can only be viewed by a device or card bearing the same encoding values entered on the signal, and these operations differ from one company to another, and the reason is competition intense between them (Romain Gambarelli ; 2009)
- Sports TV channels: It is a form of satellite channels, as it is divided into university or various channels and specialized channels. Accordingly, sports channels are those channels that are specialized (thematic) in presenting various sports programs, and sports channels can be divided into general sports channels, that is, they offer various sports programs or sports channels specialized in sports, as if their activity is limited to one sport such as football or car racing and others.

And sports channels in general are classified according to the classification of the "Arab States Broadcasting Union" within the knowledge channels that include public, private, inclusive (diverse, public) and specialized channels, and they are channels with serious contents that respond to the viewer's needs for knowledge, information, culture, education and Delightful, responsive to the literal specifications of television work (Françoise Papa ; 2011)

- The right to information: Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states the following: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and this right includes the freedom to hold

A study from the knowledge gap perspective

opinions without any interference, and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any means and regardless of geographical boundaries.”(Christian Brochand; 1992)

Other rights have been included, including the right to obtain information, which in international conventions means "the right to obtain information for the individual and the group to know what is happening in public life and to be informed about it." (v Suzan; 2001)

The right to information and the right to obtain information have been decided as a basic principle and need for the individual and the group Both in the articles that stipulated the right to freedom of opinion and expression in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which included “the freedom of a person to seek, receive and impart information of all kinds without regard to borders,” and this includes all types of information, including official information, Written or recorded, broadcast, photographed or computerized, except for cases of necessity (CHATAH;2009) .

- **Knowledge Gap Theory :**

This theory was first proposed in 1970 by Philip J Tichenor, then Associate Professor of Journalism and mass Communication, George A. Donohue, Professor of Sociology and Clarice. N Olien, Instructor in Sociology, all three researchers in the University of Minnesota. They defined the Knowledge Gap theory, “as the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases higher socioeconomic status segments tend to acquire this information faster than lower socioeconomic status population segments. Hence the gap in

knowledge between the two tends to increase rather than decrease.” In simple words , as the access to mass media increases those particular segments of population inevitable gain information faster and hence the wide gap increases with the lower economic status of the population. The world is yet to see the complete effect of the new technologies but as the globe turns out more technological and the expense rises, it more goes out of the league of the poor. As a result the knowledge gap also widens and the people of the higher economic class gain the benefits more. If the Information services are not made equal for the entire society, this gap of information will increase over the years.(Sandrapol ;1996)

In this theory knowledge is treated as any other commodity which is not distributed equally throughout the society and the people at the top of the ladder has more easy access to it. This theory was used in the presidential election and it is was seen that when a new idea invades in the society, the people of the higher strata understand it better and hence the gap expands. But, events such as debates, free talks may help to reduce this gap. Few reasons have been stated of why this pattern of gap exist :(Mehana ; 2001)

Communication Skills— As a person receives more education, his communication skill increases and hence gathering information becomes easier for him. Along with this reading, understanding mad memory skills also become better and thus he understands the issues of various spheres better.

Stored information— Via classrooms, textbooks, discussions, educated person is exposed to much more topics than a less educated person and hence his awareness is more.

Relevant Social Contact— A person with more education has more social integration. This helps him to counter various perspectives, diverse stories etc which makes his understanding of public issues better.

Selective Exposure— An educated person knows well of how to use optimum use of a medium while on the other hand a person with no knowledge is unlikely to know it. Hence he will be less aware of the issues around the world and less interested and may not also know of how it may affect him.

Media Target Markets— For every product, news or any commodity a certain segment is targeted and it is usually the higher strata of the society who is targeted and hence the lower strata remains unaware.

Ways of Reducing the Gap George A. Donohue and his other colleagues by the end of 1975 came up with three variables after a survey on local and national issues, which will help to reduce the gap and that failed this theory upto a certain extent.

Impact of local issues— It was seen that local issues that directly impacted the people had aroused more of social concern than national issues that did not have such a great impact and hence in these issues widened gap could be reduced.

Level of social conflict surrounding the issue— Until a communication breakdown, issues with more perceived conflict tends to grab more attention and weakening the knowledge gap hypothesis.

Homogeneity of the community— If it is a homogeneous community, the gap tends to be lesser than a wider heterogeneous community.

(Matlar ; 2006)

Previous studies:

When we searched for previous studies that dealt with the subject of encryption for specialized channels, including sports, as well as some TV programmes, we noticed the lack of academic studies on this subject, either because of its novelty or because it is considered a purely technical subject, or an economic subject related to the fields of money and business, and generally we have monitored some of the studies Related to the subject of our research can be summarized in the following studies:

Mekhalfi Anissa, a study entitled: Pay TV Piracy in Algeria. The study started from the observation of the increasing demand for watching and following the programs of encrypted foreign satellite channels in the world during that period. programs, and in light of what these "packages" contain Art" is one of cultural values and ideas, and considered by the country's authorities as an ordinary commodity, like other consumer and food commodities.

Study Françoise right to information : The study dealt with a problem that has been under discussion since the beginning of the third millennium under the title: Mathematical information is a commodity or a right? The researcher proceeded from the idea that the economics of sport and its financing methods led, over time, to the funding agencies controlling and monopolizing the distribution of sports information, under the pretext of financing and

developing various sports activities, which also granted them the privilege of exclusive broadcasting of many sporting events and events. The researcher believes that television is one of the most important means present in the field of "commodification" of sports information, through the emergence of a number of television channels, as is the case in North America and its tendency towards financing sports and sporting events.

The study population and its sample:

The research community is represented in the category of the audience who follows sports in the university community at the University of M'sila in Algeria, And for a sample of faculty members, members of the administrative staff and students, with a total of 150 items distributed.

Equally, that is, 50 items for each category, and the sample was distributed according to gender, with 127 for males and 33 for females. The application forms sometimes take several weeks.

Study Approach:

The study relied on the field survey method to study two main axes:

First: What are the patterns and habits of the respondents watching encrypted sports channels and programmes?

The purpose was to identify a number of indicators, including: the extent of watching sports programmes, the places to watch sports and favorite programmes, the type of watched TV channels, the sample's participation in specialized sports TV channels, the most important encrypted sports channels, and the motives behind subscribing to them.

Second: What are the attitudes of the respondents towards encrypted television channels and sports programmes?

This was addressed through questions about the attitude of the respondents towards encrypted TV channels and encrypted sports programmes,

the trend towards encrypting some sports and not others, and the attitude towards encrypting the most important international sporting events and tournaments (the World Cup of football, the European leagues, the American basketball championship). ..etc.. In addition to questions about the attitude of the respondents towards piracy of encrypted sports channels and programmes, and what the sample under study suggests of solutions to the problem.

The questionnaire began with an axis that included socio-demographic questions that included data on gender, occupation, monthly salary and residence.

honesty and persestence:

Scientific and academic studies emphasize the necessity of applying procedures of honesty and reliability in research and scientific studies. Therefore, we presented the study form to refereed professors and specialists in media and communication sciences. The percentage of agreement between the arbitrators was 89%, thus fulfilling the condition of credibility.

The general results of the study:

The study reached a set of results, which we summarized in the following two axes:

First: Results related to the patterns and habits of watching encrypted sports channels and programs:

1. The study revealed an equivalence in the percentage of sports follow-up between permanent viewing (50.7%) and non-watching. permanent (49.3%) and this was related to the quality of the sample members distributed among the faculty members, the administrative staff and the students, where we find that the category of students is more interested in sports and the impact is attached to it as a young age group tends to practice sports and enjoy it through watching and watching .

2. With regard to the preferred place to follow and watch sports, television outperformed the rest of the spaces and means by 52%, followed by stadiums and social networking sites. This result confirmed the superiority of television as a means of presenting sports entertainment and spectacle through the image, and through the ease of access to sports information compared to other media and spaces.
3. The study showed the superiority of football over the rest of the sports in terms of monopoly on watching and watching, followed by Other sports such as basketball, tennis and athletics, which we believe are the most important sports to invest in for commercial companies and advertising companies, and it is the most practiced and followed-up mass sport.
4. With regard to the programs most favored by the study sample, sports matches and competitions ranked first, with a percentage of 38.2%, followed by sports news, with a percentage of 30,4%.
- 5 . The field study revealed an increase in the viewing rate for open channels by 40.7%, compared to a lack of demand for encrypted channels by 10% for reasons related to the budgets of the respondents and the professional and age composition of the respondents.
6. Regarding the question of whether or not to subscribe to sports channels, the study found that the ratio between subscribers and non-subscribers is equal, at 52% and 48%, respectively.
7. The study recorded the fluctuation of responses about the duration of participation, due to the novelty of the experience in the State of Algeria and in Arab region in general.
8. With regard to the encrypted sports channels that are the most followed and watched, the study concluded that these channels are progressing

BeINSport, followed by Abu Dhabi sports channels, then Dubai sports channels, which dominate the sports broadcasting space in the region, especially the BeINSport channels, the heir to Al Jazeera sports channels, Aljazeera sport+, the heir to the former ART sports channels. The Arabic language is mainly used in dealing with and commenting on sporting events.

9. The study showed that the most important program followed by the respondents is the Spanish League with 26 repetitions, followed by

In the English Premier League with 21, sports programs on Sport Bein channels. Returning to the world of sports and television broadcasting rights, we find that these two leagues are among the most expensive leagues in the world and one of the most popular leagues. Therefore, the results came to confirm what we went to in the theoretical aspect of moving towards the globalization of sports, especially football, and increasing its popularity among the masses, at the expense of other sports that are not well received. The same care and attention, considering the return from it is weak and useless.

10. The answers revealed that the main motive behind subscribing to sports channels and shows is

Love of sports by 64.2%, followed by the quality of the proposed sports programmes.

Second: Results related to the attitudes of the respondents towards encrypted sports channels and programmes:

1. The study showed regarding the respondents' attitudes towards encoding sports channels and programmes, that 64% do not support encoding compared to 10.7%, while 25.3% remained neutral. These results reveal that the majority do not support the encoding process and consider it a confiscation of their right to media, as well as Subscription costs are in order to follow the encrypted channels, and the consequent negative effects and burdens on the individual's

budget. This result is supported by a referendum conducted by “Al-Bayan Al-Sport” one of the supplements to the UAE newspaper “Al-Bayan” about coding the Arab Gulf League, in its second season, where the results revealed that 74% Of the participants in the referendum refuse to encrypt the league, and the referendum included sports officials, administrators, coaches and fans.

2. The study concluded with regard to the attitudes of the respondents towards coding some sports such as football, soccer

Basket, and tennis alone, indicate that the majority do not support encryption, with a ratio of 66% compared to 13.3% who support the process.

This clearly reveals the rejection of this sample of viewers of this encryption, which targets more sports

public, thus depriving a wide range of audiences of follow-up, and explains at the same time the perception of the sample

The respondent, why do the channels turn to encrypt such programs?

3. The study concluded that the respondents, at a rate of 68.7%, do not support encrypting the most important sports dates from

World championships and leagues, as important dates that the masses eagerly await, but encryption deprives a wide sector of them from enjoying and watching.

4. The study revealed regarding the results of the encoding process for sports channels and programs that 62% of the respondents believe that the encoding process serves the funding agencies, and 22% believed that the encoding divides sports fans into first- and second-class audiences, as is the case in the stadiums. sports. Whereas, 7.3% saw coding as serving sports and contributing to its development. Through these results, we discover that the sports audience still does not realize the positive aspects of coding as indicated by the regulations of international Olympic federations and bodies.

5. The answers regarding the respondents' attitudes towards piracy of sports channels and programmes, revealed that 43.3% of respondents do not support piracy, compared to 32% who support it, while the percentage of neutral attitudes reached 23.3%.

6. The study showed that 55.6% of the respondents believe that piracy entities violate broadcasting rights for encrypted channels.

7. With regard to the suggestions of the respondents to solve the phenomenon of piracy, they were close and ranged, according to the order, between:

- Reducing subscription prices

- Open encrypted channels

- Issuing legislation and charters that define the limits of encryption

- Punishment of the parties that carry out piracy

- Reviewing the laws regulating the rights of encrypted television broadcasting

Conclusion:

The study indicates that the beginning of the rise in sports revenues from television broadcasting, in which the percentage of the participation of television and commercial companies reached 90%, of which television acquired 50% and 40% for commercial companies. This trend has clearly revealed, especially in the United States of America, the dominance of the media, especially television, on the economics of sports. Study handled

A group of issues, including "the right to property and the right to information", which are the focus of controversy and debate taking place today in the media, financial and academic circles. The topic is as follows: "Sport is a show, but it is a media show, and the sports competition is owned by the one who organizes it, but at the same time it is the property of the public and the nation. The sporting event, especially if it relates to the representation of the nation, cannot be considered a commodity sold to the highest bidder."

In the end, let us put forward a set of results of television's domination of sports, which we can summarize in two:

- Individualizing the sports community and reducing its right to the media.
- The right to media has turned into the right to obtain sports results, and nothing else.

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