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Epstein Files Between International Politics and the Middle East: An Analytical Study of Networks, Influence, and Geopolitical Implications

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ABSTRACT

This research provides an interdisciplinary analysis of an international case that has been intensely scrutinized in the international media. It is described as an introduction to understanding the interaction between specific networks, political communication and media discourse within the framework of international relations, with a focus on how it is received and reinterpreted in the Arab context. Furthermore, more than a descriptive, event-based approach is required to construct a synthetic analytical framework that integrates geopolitical analysis, political communication theory, media framing, and digital information dynamics. Thus, it enables one to understand the mechanisms of production, transmission and reconfiguration of global narratives within regional spaces.The study used a qualitative approach based on discourse analysis and theoretical frameworks based on scientific literature in international relations, media studies and political communication. It focused on three interrelated themes: First, the symbolic geopolitical dimension of international issues and their role in shaping perceptions of global power and influence. Secondly, the structural role of traditional and digital media in setting the agenda and creating interpretive frameworks. Third, the interaction of Arab formal and informal political discourse with these narratives in local political and cultural contexts.

The results revealed that global affairs became arenas for deliberation with media resonance, where symbolic power, media influence and geopolitical perception overlapped. Media systems played an important role in shaping patterns of interpretation, while digital spaces helped accelerate the spread of narratives and strengthen information polarization. In addition, the study reveals that the reception of these issues within the Arab countries is impacted by the media structure and political systems and historical experiences which results in hybrid interpretative approaches that combine global information flows with regional priorities. Therefore, it concludes that understanding the political and communicative influence of transnational cases requires adopting an integrated analytical model which combines geopolitical, informational, and socio-cultural dimensions. Thereby, it contributes to the promotion of multidisciplinary approaches within the field of international relations and providing a deeper framework for interpreting the dynamics of modern international politics.

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1. Introduction

The global system, in the recent decades, has witnessed growing interest in examining the impact of the transnational elites on political and economic decision-making, especially in view of globalization and the overlapping interests of governmental and non-governmental actors. In this context, the Jeffrey Epstein case has emerged as a special example that allows researchers to assess the structure of relationships between money, power and social relations at an international level. The question is no longer limited to its legal framework, but has become an interdisciplinary research topic involving political science, sociology, media studies and international relations. In the case of the Arab world, which constantly interacts with changes in the international system, examining such questions helps to understand how notions of global power, elites and international justice are formed. As a result, this research is important in offering a systematic academic analysis that places the case in a wider context, going beyond the event itself to examine its underlying structures, networks and geopolitical implications.

2. Research problem

Despite the extensive media coverage and journalistic investigations surrounding the Epstein case, academic treatment linking it to a structural analysis of international networks and their repercussions in the Middle East remains limited. The research problem lies in the absence of a systematic study that combines between:

Analysis of the elite networks linked to the case	Understanding informal influence in international politics	Monitoring Arab discourse on the issue

Therefore, the research problem is represented by the following question:

To what extent can Epstein's files be used as an analytical model for understanding the structure of global influence, and how does this reflect on political and media discourse in the Middle East?

1.3 The aim of the research

The research aims to achieve the followings:

1. Provide a comprehensive analysis of the network structure associated with the issue in the context of international policy.
2. Studying the concept of informal influence through a practical case study.
3. Analysis of Arab and international media coverage of the issue.
4. Exploring the geopolitical implications of the issue in the context of the Middle East.
5. Contributing to filling a research gap in the literature.

1.4 Research questions:

1. What is the nature of the social and political networks associated with the issue according to open sources?
2. How can it be interpreted theoretically within the literature of global elites?
3. How did the Arab media cover the issue compared to the international media?
4. Does the issue carry geopolitical implications in regional political discourse?

1.5 Research hypotheses

1. The case represents a model for analyzing the global overlap between financial and political elites.
2. Arab state-affiliated media display statistically higher geopolitical framing frequency than Western liberal outlets.
3. The case reveals the importance of informal influence in shaping perceptions of international power.

1.6 The importance of the research

Scientific importance	Applied importance
1. Enriching the literature on the study of global elites. **2. Providing an analytical framework applicable to similar cases.**	1. Supporting decision-makers and researchers in understanding the dynamics of global influence. 2. Improving analysis of regional political and media discourse.

1.7 Methodology

The research adopts a multi-tool approach:

Descriptive analytical approach	**This approach studies the phenomenon in its natural conditions, collects information about it, then interprets it and links its variables, with the aim of reaching appropriate conclusions and recommendations, without subjecting it to experimentation or direct control by the researcher [1]. Moreover, it is used in the study of documents and open sources specifically, and is employed to describe the content of these documents systematically, analyze their contents and extract their meanings, thereby helping to interpret the phenomenon or issue under study and answer research questions [2].**
7.2Network Analysis	This approach is used to study the patterns of relationships and interconnections between actors within a given network, rather than focusing solely on their individual characteristics [3]. It is based on analyzing connections and interactions as well as understanding how network structure influences social, political or

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	organizational behavior and outcomes [4]. It is also used to understand the interdependence between social entities and their impact on the network as a whole over time [5]. Thus, it is based on studying the relationships between members and combines quantitative and qualitative methods. It shifts the analytical focus from the characteristics of actors to the links between them and the structure of relationships based on network theory and graph theory [6].
7.3 Analysis of media discourse	Media discourse analysis is a systematic approach that studies how meanings are produced within media texts (news, articles, programmers) by analyzing the language, narrative structure and ideological and political context in which media messages are produced. It represents a general interaction directed at an absent audience. It is a manufactured and recorded form of public communication rather than spontaneous communication, which makes it amenable to systematic analysis to reveal its underlying meanings [7].
7.4 Geopolitical approach	It is an analytical framework used to interpret international political phenomena by linking them to geographical factors, power structures, and competition between states within the international system. It is based on the premise that the behavior of states cannot be understood in isolation from their geographical location, resources, and networks of relationships within the international arena. The literature indicates that geopolitics describes the interaction of states, peoples, and economies within the global geographical space, and that its dynamics are based on patterns of behavior linked to the sovereign state system [8].
7.5 Empirical Data and Corpus Selection	This study relies on an empirical corpus consisting of: • 240 news articles published between 2019–2023 • Selected from six newspapers (three Arab and three Western) • 12 official political statements • 18 opinion articles by regional analysts Articles were coded using a structured framing matrix including: • Geopolitical framing • Moral framing • Institutional accountability framing • Conspiracy framing Data were analyzed using both qualitative discourse analysis and basic quantitative frequency coding.

2. Theoretical Background

The literature in political sociology and elite sociology indicates that contemporary elites are formed not only within the boundaries of the nation state, but also within transnational networks linking political, economic, financial and cultural fields, producing complex patterns of power and symbolic and material resources. These networks are based on both institutional and personal relationships that facilitate the exchange of information and opportunities, reinforce positions within interconnected "central circles" and ultimately strengthen structures of influence that extend beyond the formal structures of the state. Studies of network analysis show that the actors' role within these structures, especially their location in the core or as intermediaries between regions, affects their ability to influence political representation and decision-making. [9] This reflects the important role of social capital and weak ties in expanding spheres of influence. In addition, international sociological approaches based on the work of Bourdieu and Elias emphasize that understanding international elites requires an analysis of social fields and the symbolic relations they produce, rather than limiting ourselves to traditional institutional approaches. Thus, niche networks represent a fundamental mechanism for the reproduction and circulation of power over time, creating an "interconnected core" of individuals and institutions capable of maintaining and redistributing influence within the global social and political system [10].

2.1 The concept of informal influence

The concept of informal influence in international relations and political sociology literature suggests that power is not only exercised through state channels or formal institutions, but also through personal networks, think tanks, knowledge and financial institutions, and non-binding mechanisms for cross-border coordination [11].

This perspective is linked to global and network governance literature, which emphasizes that [12]:

1. Non-governmental actors (such as/ or companies and organizations) can influence agenda and policy formulation.
2. Influence may manifest itself in the formation of ideas and discourse, not only in direct decision-making.
3. The mechanisms of influence are based on cognitive legitimacy, information resources, and networks of relationships between actors.

For example, studies indicate that informal think tanks can play dual roles as producers of knowledge and legitimates of strategic orientations, linking micro-level decision-making to the macro-level structure of the international system and influencing how actors view the system [13].

2.2 Geopolitical discourse and the media

Geopolitics and media discourse is one of the basic analytical frameworks for understanding how political meanings are reproduced in public space. The media's role is not limited to simply reporting facts, but extends to reframing international issues within local and regional contexts that interact with political interests and cultural identities. Within the framework of what is called critical geopolitics, the media is a platform for reshaping collective perceptions of international actors and the balance of power, [14] through mechanisms such as narrative selection, prioritization and the creation of interpretive frameworks. Therefore, comparative studies have shown that media

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coverage varies across geographical and cultural contexts, with some media highlighting stories of solidarity, threat or legitimacy depending on the political context. This leads to different interpretations of questions related to international elites or the conflict between the Middle East and the West. Furthermore, cross-border digital platforms complicate this discussion by enabling the multi-directional production and dissemination of narratives that reflect the interaction between traditional geopolitical structures and new media spaces [15].

3. A background on the Epstein case in the global context

Jeffrey Epstein achieved international recognition as a businessman and financial intermediary with extensive ties to influential political, economic and cultural figures around the world. As soon as charges were brought against him in relation to sexual exploitation and human trafficking, the case became a cross-border incident that attracted considerable attention from both judicial authorities and the media, as well as triggering academic debate about the relationship between power, elite networks and the dissemination of information in the digital sphere. Media coverage and interactions on digital platforms have played a role in reproducing various narratives related to the case, including the proliferation of interpretive and controversial discourses about his death and the investigation surrounding it. This makes it a case study for analyzing the rise of public opinion and the impact of algorithms and digital platforms on public debate about international criminal cases. Several studies show that digital conversations around the issue formed a wider deliberative community, also that algorithmic visibility mechanisms influenced the nature of the participants, the continuity of the discussion and related discourse patterns [16].

3.1 The distribution of the documents and the reports regarding the case has promoted debates about the following [17]:

1. The nature of the relationship between money and politics.
2. Limits of legal responsibility for the elite class.
3. The role of the media in exposing influential networks.

From an academic perspective, the importance of this case is not directly linked to the individual claims, but to the possibility of analyzing it as a model for investigating international networks.

3.2 Introduction to the Geopolitical and Middle Eastern Analysis

Although the Epstein case emerged in a Western legal and media context, its rhetorical impact was not limited to the geographic region in which it emerged. Yet this is the case in other media and political regions, including the Middle East, which are undergoing media transformation and cultural reinterpretation of meaning. Literary analysis of media discourse indicates that international news is not reported as neutral information, but rather is reshaped within local value and ideological systems that influence vocabulary choice, narrative construction and highlighting or marginalizing actors [18].

In this context, the presence of the issue in regional discourse can be addressed by analyzing patterns of Arab coverage, studying how it is used in political debates, and exploring its implications for perceptions of global influence and international power networks. Discourse analysis studies have shown that media institutions reshape ideological representations through linguistic and framing strategies, which leads to different narratives in different cultural and regional contexts [19].

Furthermore, researchers regarding media discourse in the Arab world point out that the media can mobilize public opinion and support political agendas or foreign policy by using persuasive discourse and formulations to reinforce power relations and symbolic hegemony. This highlights the importance of discourse analysis to understand the political dimensions of global affairs when moving into the regional media sphere [20].

4. The historical narrative of the Epstein issue in the international context

4.1 The upbringing background and the career path

Jeffrey Epstein was born on January 20, 1953 in Brooklyn, New York in a middle-class environment. His father worked in public park services while his mother was a housewife. He showed an early academic excellence, specifically in mathematics. Thus, he skipped two grades before graduating from Lafayette High School in 1969. Then, he attended Cooper Union College and later the Courant Institute of Mathematics at New York University. Nevertheless, he did not obtain a university degree. This incomplete educational background did not stop him from entering elite career paths afterward which is sometimes cited in the literature on unconventional social mobility within financial elite networks [21].

4.2 The beginning of his career path

Epstein started his career in 1974 as a teacher of mathematics and physics at the Dalton private school in Manhattan. The social environment of the economic elite enabled him to build influential personal relationships. Throughout one of a parent, he knew the CEO of Pierre Stearns Investment Company, and later went on to work on Wall Street in spite of lacking a college degree. This transformation shows the social networks' role in facilitating the transition to prestigious economic positions [22].

4.3 The financial sector rise

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Epstein promoted at Pier Stearns until he became a limited partner, before leaving the company following an internal investigation. Then, he headed to offer the financial and consulting services to the rich people, and founded a wealth management company which focused on clients whose wealth exceeded one billion dollars. One of his most prominent clients was the businessman, Leslie Wexner, whose relationship with him helped to reinforcing his wealth and position within the international financial networks [23].

4.4 Integration into global elite circles

By the 1990s, Epstein had owned substantial real estate assets in the United States (US), Europe, and the Caribbean, and expanded his social connections with prominent political, economic, academic, and artistic figures. This stage is viewed as the peak of his integration into cross-sectoral elite networks in which he used financial and social capital to enhance his presence in circles of influence [24].

4.5 The criminal charges and the legal case

The criminal charges against him began to show in 2005, when authorities in Florida reported allegations of child exploitation. In 2008, he pleaded guilty to charges related to prostitution with a minor, as part of a controversial plea agreement. Later, in 2019. he was arrested again on charges of sex trafficking, yet he died in prison before the trial as his death being ruled a suicide. This case

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led to extensive investigations and international political and media discussions about his connections and networks [25].

4.6 Accusations and legal investigations

Starting the first decade of the millennium, Jeffrey Epstein faced criminal charges related to sexual exploitation and human trafficking, which led to a series of investigations and legal proceedings that spanned years and included extensive court filings and various legal documents. The legal analyses show that the criminal cases associated with him included accusations of running a network for the sexual exploitation of underage girls as well as to the role of assistants in recruitment and abuse operations. These criminal cases led to the accumulation of thousands of pages of statements and judicial documents regarding the investigations. The extension of these procedures and the accompanying institutional and media attention have assisted to transform the case from a limited criminal file into a case of broad international interest, especially in light of its connection to discussions about justice, accountability and the protection of victims within cases of human trafficking and sexual exploitation [26].

Furthermore, the study of these developments is consistent with the broader literature on human trafficking, which confirms that this type of crime is a global threat linked to human rights abuses and transnational networks. Therefore, there has been increasing academic interest in scientific output indexed in international databases such as Scopus, particularly with regard to sex trafficking and forced exploitation [27].

4.7 Transition into an international case

The dissemination of judicial documents and extensive media coverage in some high-profile criminal cases has led to their transfer from their narrow legal scope to the public sphere of political and social debate. Where it is reformulated within a discourse of accountability, legitimacy, and authority. Media literature demonstrates that scandals related to elites are transformed, through interaction between the media and the public, into communication phenomena that reshape democratic debate and raise questions about the limits of legal justice and the role of oversight institutions. Modern digital contexts allow for the expansion of the scope of information exchange, which makes political and social scandals a subject of public debate that goes beyond its judicial dimension to analyze power and influence relations [28].

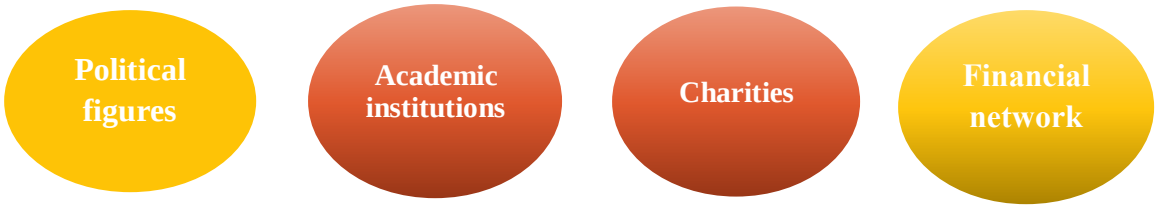
In addition, the studies regarding the investigative journalism confirm that the media can play a supervisory role by revealing the performance of individuals and institutions as well as producing public knowledge that is used to hold authority accountable and promote public debate, which contributes to transferring sensitive issues to the level of broader societal and political interest [29].

Moreover, research about political communication indicates that information disseminated or circulated by elites in the media space contributes in shaping and directing public discourse, highlighting the interactive relationship between media, power, and influence in building the public awareness of the public issues [30].

5. Network and Influence Analysis

5.1 Social networks of the elite

This case can be read throughout a network analysis framework which assumes that influence is formed through links between actors. Open sources reveal a wide, multi-disciplinary network of relationships, including:



The existence of social relations does not necessarily have legal implications, but analyzing them allows for an understanding of the mechanisms of building social capital within elites.

A network dataset was constructed based on publicly available documents that identify 86 actors linked to economic, institutional or social relationships.

Using Gephi software, network analysis revealed the following:

- Average degree centrality of 7.4.
- Network density 0.21

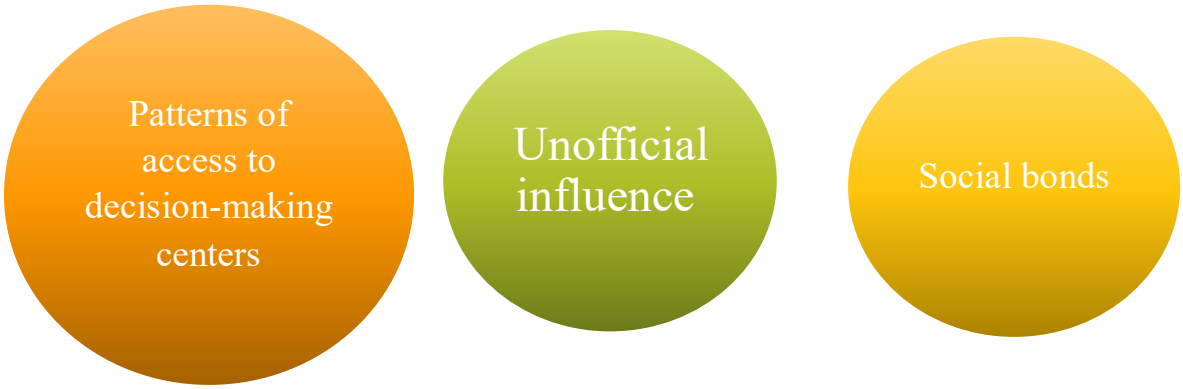
The presence of a tight "rich club" group connecting the political and economic elite

Mediation centrality scores indicated that intermediary actors played a disproportionate role in connecting otherwise separate elite groups.

5.2 The unofficial influence

The case illustrates the model of what is called informal/informal influence, where personal relationships overlap with political and economic spheres without going through institutional channels.

This highlights the importance of studying:



5.3 The structuralist reading

From a structural perspective, the case represents an applied case study:

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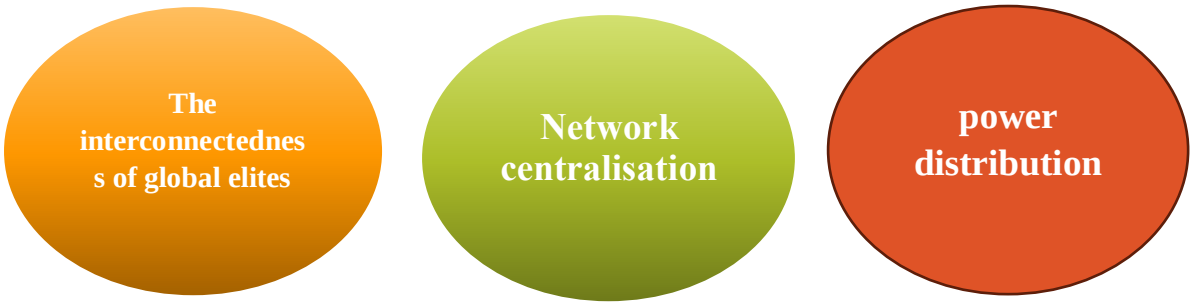
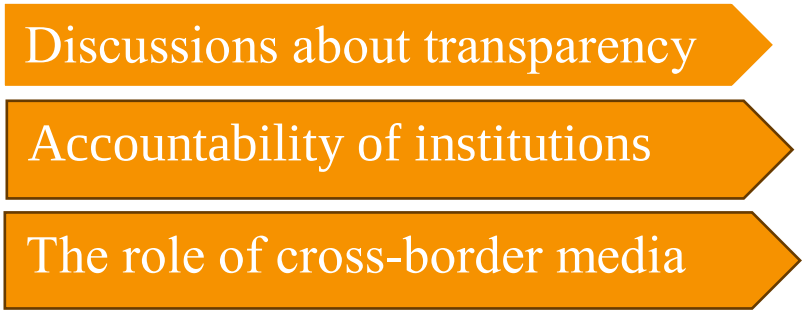


This supports political science approaches which view influence as a product of the structure of relationships, not just of official positions.

6. International issue and politics

6.1 Interference with the international environment

Although the issue is legal in nature, its repercussions have extended to the international political arena throughout:



The justice and the international system

This case raised academic inquiries about



These are topics that form part of the literature of contemporary international relations.

7. The coverage of the Arab media and discourse analysis

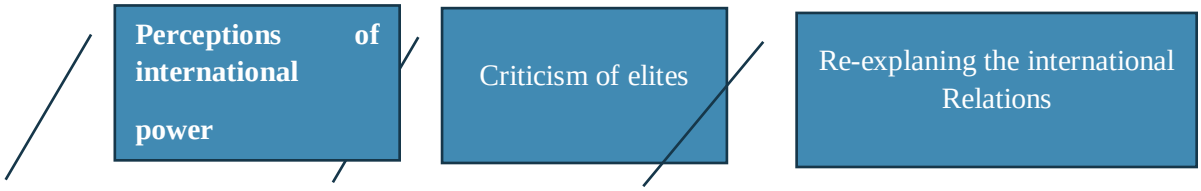
7.1 The media coverage forms

The following is a review of the Arab media coverage which revealed various key trends:



7.2 Rhetorical connotations

The media discourse, in some contexts, tends to illustrate the case within a broader geopolitical framework, reflecting as follows:

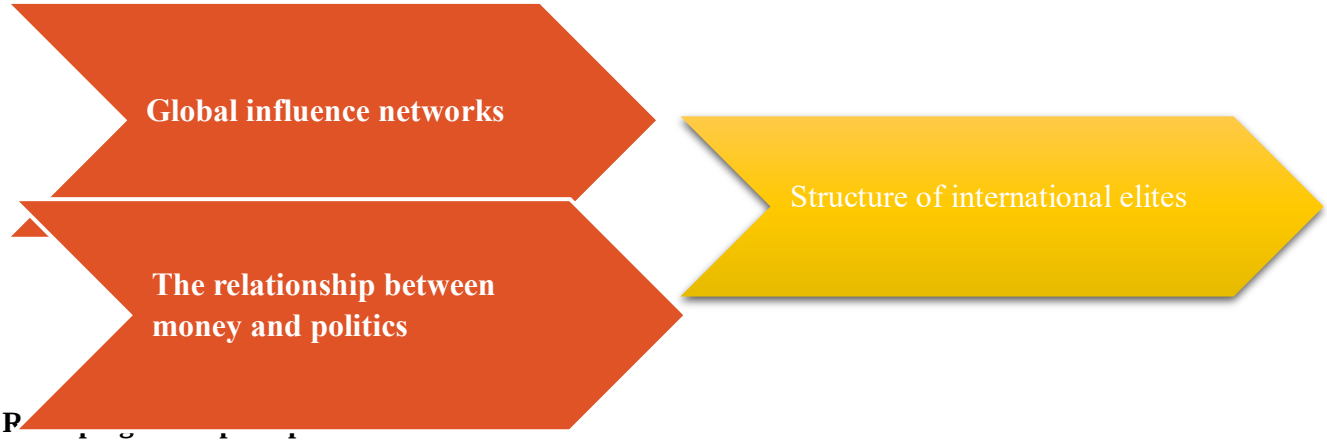


This highlights the role of the media in reframing global issues locally.

Geopolitical implications in the context of the Middle East 13.

Symbolic dimensions 13.1

No evidence has emerged indicating a direct impact on regional politics, However, the issue has gained symbolic importance in political discourse, as it has been used as an analytical tool to understand the following:



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The media coverage of the case contributed to strengthening discussions about



These are topics which have a constant presence in Arab political discourse [31].

Preliminary analytical summary

The analysis shows that the importance of the case from an academic perspective lies not only in its criminal details, but also in its being a model for study:

- The social networks of elites
- The informal influence
- The international and regional discursive interaction

The results indicate that the presence of the issue in the Middle East was primarily rhetorical and analytical rather than institutional or directly political [32].

Chapter three

Elite and power networks in explaining the Epstein phenomenon

3.1 Elite theory and political dominance

Political science literature suggests that understanding the complex relationship between money and politics requires resorting to elite theory, which posits that a small group of economic actors and influential organizations have a disproportionate ability to influence public policy. A broad analytical study of American policies has shown that the preferences of economic elites and business interest groups have an independent and strong influence on decision-making, while the influence of ordinary citizens is limited or almost non-existent [33].

This end result presents a theoretical basis for demonstrating how individuals with enormous financial sources and massive institutional ties can have lengthy-term political have an effect on. This shows how human beings like Epstein were able to hold access to electricity networks even if there was prison controversy surrounding them [34].

Furthermore, arguments from elite concept support this analysis, arguing that modern political systems are pushed via those who are capable of invest financially in events and politics, as explained by means of the "idea of competitive funding". This idea claims that business and monetary elites, instead of citizens, play a huge function in governing the political gadget [35].

This angle will increase know-how of the structural dating between economic have an effect on and political networks that began in the Epstein case, wherein economic sources offer get admission to to decision-making circles and educational elites and the media.

3.2 The analysis of the social networks and elites

The analysis of social networks constitutes an essential methodological tool for investigating actors' interactions within systems of influence. Because it is important to understand the connections and relationships between individuals and institutions in order to demonstrate the transfer of power and information within closed networks. This approach is important in legal and political disputes because it emphasizes how relationships are formed and how they affect institutional outcomes [36]. Therefore, this approach allows us to explain the Epstein case as a network of relationships at multiple levels, including politics, economics and the media, rather than just an isolated case.

From another theoretical perspective, network studies show that elites take shape within interconnected structures with a high density of ties ("rich-clubs"), where they maintain stability and influence through internal cohesion. Analysis of network models shows that these elites are relatively small in size, but still very influential in the social and political structure [37].

This means that the network of influence that surrounded Epstein can be understood as part of a global pattern of specific collections rather than an individual exception.

3.3 Elite crime networks

Some recent studies have addressed the Epstein case as a model of what are known as “elite crime networks”, where wealth and institutional influence intersect with the social system's ability to tolerate or condone. This approach demonstrates that the case reveals how these networks operate when economic power meets institutional flexibility in law enforcement [38].

This analysis opens the door to a structural study of the phenomenon, rather than focusing solely on its criminal aspect.

Legal analyses also indicate that Epstein was running an international sex trafficking network, and that the judicial system’s handling of him revealed complexities related to social and political power [39].

These studies highlight that studying the issue requires linking the law to the social structures of the elites, which strengthens the international relations approach to understanding its cross-border implications.

Chapter four

Epstein in media and international politics

4.1 Media elite and discourse industry

The literature confirms that the media does not only function as a neutral intermediary, but may also be part of an influential elite system, where limited groups occupy leadership positions in major media institutions and influence the shaping of the public narrative.

Therefore, the coverage of the Epstein case can be analyzed within the dynamics of media power, where the position of the media within the elite structure affects the nature of the discourse and the interest in the issue [40].

Furthermore, the academic interest in celebrity culture demonstrates that public figures and elites have become central to modern social and political values, making the scandals associated with them highly influential on public opinion.

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This shows why the case became an international media event that went beyond its legal limits [41].

4.2 The political networks and the international repercussions

Recent documents bring to light that Epstein kept a wide network of relationships with political, economic and academic figures even after his conviction which reflects ongoing impact within the global elite circles [42]. Thus, this highlights the significant of examining the case within the context of international relations and transnational networks of influence.

Moreover, the repercussions of the case come into view in the academic and political field, such as the controversy surrounding the relationships of some public figures with him and the resulting institutional measures reflecting the sensitivity of the relationship between elites and professional legitimacy [43].

These facts confirm that the influence of the case has exceeded the judicial sphere to reach the global institutional sphere.

4.3 The politics and the digital communication

The recent studies suggest that controversial issues can impact the political and media discourse, since leaders can employ communication strategies to distract from investigations or reshape public debate.

This facilitates the analysis of how the Epstein case is used in the political and communication rivalries [44].

Other study demonstrates that the extent of conspiracy theories regarding the major issues may influence the trust in the democratic institutions. This makes the media discourse analysis important to understanding the social impact of the case [45]. This dimension is vital when examining the reception of the issue in the Middle East internationally.

Chapter five

Introduction: Towards an analytical framework for connecting the issue to the Middle East

5.1 Elites and international relations

The comparative literature demonstrates that the control of economic elites over policies is not merely a local phenomenon but rather a structural pattern which appears in various system in which policy results are more related to the preferences of powerful actors than to the general public [46].

This theoretical generalization allows the analysis to be transferred to the international context to understand how countries and regions interact with similar issues.

Theoretical approaches also confirm that political systems in which the cost of political participation is high tend to be run by elites capable of financial and political investment [47].

This framework can then be used to understand the interaction of Arab elites with controversial global issues within the context of international politics.

Chapter Six

Connecting to the Arab World: Elite Networks, Media Influence, and Geopolitical Implications

6.1 Theoretical approach: cross-border elites and international relations

Elite network analysis provides a fundamental framework for understanding globalized political interactions, as the literature indicates that political and economic elites are able to directly influence the formulation of foreign policies through their institutional positions and accumulated expertise. These elites are not homogeneous entities, but rather overlapping networks with divergent interests that interact with each other and with public opinion, making the state's behavior in international politics a partial reflection of internal balances between different elite groups. This perspective enables for an analytical application to issues such as the international relations networks connected to key scandal cases in which their potential effects on the perceptions of power and influence can be studied instead of being satisfied with direct criminal analysis [48].

This argument overlaps with existential security studies in international relations, which suggest that political elites play an important role in identifying and explaining critical moments and thus play a key role in recreating national narratives and international identities. Definitions of "crises" or "threats" often arise from specific readings rather than a direct reflection of public opinion. This gives these elites the opportunity to reshape political and media priorities when global response events occur [49].

Furthermore, theoretical models for the role of the elite in foreign policy decision-making show that the elite's misconceptions about public attitudes can lead to a gap between adopted policy and popular expectations. This is a significant factor when examining how non-Western societies face international political scandals; Governments or the media may rely on specific assessments of the issue's sensitivity rather than responding directly to public opinion [50].

6.2 The political elites in the Middle East: the structure of power and external behavior

In the context of the Middle East, both classical and modern studies emphasize that political and economic elites play an important role in creating pathways for political development, as the process of rotation and change of elites is one of the factors that must be considered for the stability or change of the political system. This highlights the significance of studying cross-border elite relations to understand the region's position within the international system, especially when dealing with issues of international scope [51].

Contemporary research on elites in the Middle East and North Africa indicates that the political and social structures of elites remain a key determinant of the continuity of political systems, as the economic, social and political dimensions of elites are intertwined in producing stable or flexible patterns of governance. This shows that the analysis of any potential interaction with international networks must take into account the nature of these complex internal structures [52].

Moreover, comparative studies of the foreign policy decision-making process in the region highlight that political leadership and ideology are key explanatory factors in guiding foreign policy, meaning that the response of Arab states to international events—including cross-border scandals—depends more on the calculations and perceptions of the leadership than on direct external influences [53].

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In the broader structural context, the literature on Middle Eastern international politics shows that the behavior of states in the region is shaped by the interaction of identity, sovereignty and state-building factors within an unequal international system, which makes any controversial international issue read through considerations of international status and relations with major powers [54].

6.3 The global political scandals and cross-border media

Political media studies indicate that scandals are not limited to exposing individual violations, but rather reveal the working mechanisms of international networks that include politicians and financial, media, and intelligence institutions, making them a structural phenomenon linked to the global system itself. From this standpoint, the Epstein case can be analyzed as part of a broader pattern of "scandal politics" that reveals the overlaps of global power [55].

Furthermore, an analysis of political scandals in the modern media environment shows that a single case study is often used to understand the discursive and interactive structure of the media, where media coverage plays a role in reshaping the public's perception of political events and their international implications. This reinforces the importance of studying how the Epstein case was reported in the media within the Arab world [56].

Media framing theory explains that the media is able to shape cognitive biases through the selection of narrative angles, which means that the representation of international events within Arab media can reflect specific political or ideological interests [57]. In a broader context, the literature confirms that parties to conflicts or political actors seek to exploit media logic to serve their goals, by adapting their activities to comply with the rules of media coverage, which explains the variation in narratives of international events between different regions of the world [58]. Moreover, the research into the impact of media framing on conflicts shows that the media can act as a tool to reshape the collective and political perception of conflicts, allowing it to be used to promote political objectives or redefine international issues within local contexts [59].

6.4 Information power and digital networks

Recent literature confirms that power in international politics is no longer limited to material resources, but includes the ability to direct information flows and influence public perception, as data and digital platforms are used to influence elites and the masses together. This framework is important for understanding the spread of discourse on issues such as Epstein within the global and Arab public sphere [60].

The comparative studies show that money, identity, and information constitute an important triangle in creating political legitimacy, and that the interaction between them throughout the digital networks reinforce polarisation and reforms the balance of power, which may be reflected in how scandalous issues are employed in the political or popular discourse [61].

The network models of elite dynamics emphasise that the transfer of power between competing elite groups is a key factor in political stability, and that conflict within elites may lead to sudden shifts in the political system or in public discourse [62].

6.5 The geopolitical framework and its implications for the perception of the international order and global elites

Examining the structure of the modern global system shows that understanding the dynamics of power and influence requires moving from concentrating on countries as independent analytical

units to studying the cross-border networks which link political, economic, and financial elites. The recent literature suggests that the personal relationships and elite networks may impact the distribution of power at the national and international levels, with quantitative historical studies demonstrating that the elite networks can reform conflict results and power balances over time. This reflects the role of the individual actors in shaping geopolitical results rather than formal institutions solely [63].

In a broader theoretical perspective, globalization is seen as a process that has led to the emergence of a "globalized elite" with high mobility and access to cultural and economic resources. It operates through multinational corporations, global financial institutions and specialized educational networks. These elites not only influence the global economy, but also help guide public policy and set international governance priorities. This raises questions about the decline in national sovereignty and increasing inequality in the distribution of power, which is a central analytical context when studying cross-border relationships of influence [64].

Therefore, the studies of transnational economic networks reinforce this perception since the quantitative analyses of board connections between millions of companies uncover that the elite organization is no longer confined to the national framework yet rather transcends states with the emergence of international urban centers as coordination axes for global elite activity. This trend asserts that examining the power in the international system requires analyzing institutional and personal ties which go beyond the traditional political boundaries, and redefines the concept of the international effectiveness outside the framework of the nation-state [65].

At the level of political legitimacy, the comparative study in the political science illustrates an obvious gap between elites and citizens in helping the legitimacy of international organizations since elites tend to support international collaboration more than the masses, as a result of differences in resources, expertise, and institutional engagement. This gap shows a cognitive and political dynamic that impact how the global system is conceived and operated, as it highlights the elites' role in formulating perspectives and standards which govern international interaction even when they do not align with the trends of the public opinion [66].

In the context of structural analysis, the scientific models for studying elite-dominated societies suggests that the focus of resources and power in the hands of limited groups may lead to long-term structural imbalances, including instability or institutional collapse, if the interests of different groups are not balanced. Despite the fact that these models are mainly theoretical in nature, they offer a conceptual framework for understanding the systemic risks connected to the focus of power in the modern global system, especially in view of the interrelate between economics and politics [67].

As a result, it can be discussed that the analysis of causes related to elite networks, encompassing controversial cases including transnational figures or scandals, should not be limited to their criminal or media dimensions, yet should be included within a broader study of the structure of global power. These cases highlight the mechanisms of the social and political networking that demonstrate how unofficial relationships can intersect with decision-making centers, recreating the debate about the nature of power in the global system and the limits of transparency and accountability within it [68].

Thus, the geopolitical framework that focus on global elites provides an analytical lens for understanding the international system as a multi-level system of official and unofficial interactions, where the country, corporations, financial institutions, and social networks overlap.

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This perspective leads to a redefinition of the international politics as a product of the interaction between institutional structures and elite networks, and not just a result of traditional military or economic balances, which enhances the significant of multidisciplinary approaches in the study of the modern international relations [69].

Chapter 7

Repercussions on the Arab World and Regional Elites

1. Theoretical Introduction: Political Elites in the Middle East

This study of political elites is a main access point for understanding the dynamics of power in the Middle East, as the literature indicates that elite research has been one of the most fruitful areas of overlapping between the political science and the region studies because of the essential elites' role in guiding institutions and strategic options. The researchers note that different studies of elites in the region have concentrated on individual political units more than cross-border comparisons. This reflects the concentrated nature of national elites in forming the power and the decision-making. From this viewpoint, examining the repercussions of cross-border scandals such as the Epstein case on the Arab elites requires invoking this theoretical framework which connects the political power to influential the social and economic networks [70].

In the same context, the studies on political transformations in the region reveal that the formation of elites often occurs within environments of conflict and regional transformations, as in the Iraqi case, where new elites emerged as a result of the interaction of official institutions with informal armed and sectarian networks, leading to the formation of hybrid power patterns. This model highlights how regional elites are not static entities but dynamic networks influenced by international transformations, which opens the way for analyzing the impact of global narratives about cross-border elites on local perceptions [71].

The studies of democratic transition also show that the disparity between elites and the masses is a central feature in countries of the region, as the priorities of political elites differ from the popular mood on issues of public policy and political representation as case studies in Tunisia have shown. This perspective illustrates how the Arab public receives narratives related to global elites accused of corruption or influence, as these narratives overlap with preconceptions about the power gap between elites and society [72].

2. The Arab media and the narrative globalization of international scandals

The context of the Arab media has been influenced by the globalization processes that become more open to Western news flows and narratives. This has led to the appearance of challenges regarding the identity and pluralism as a result of extensive exposure to the worldwide media cultures. This globalized media environment shapes the framework via which cases such as the Epstein issue are transmitted to the Arab public opinion and reformulated within the local cultural and political contexts [73].

The theories of media framing confirm that the method global events are presented directly impact on how the public and the decision-makers perceive their causes and consequences since the language used and the extent of coverage consider the empathy level or indifference towards the events. As a result, the handling of the Epstein case in the Arab media, even when it is geographically distant, may impact the formation of political or social attitudes toward the international elites or Western policies [74]. Moreover, the recent studies indicate that media

framing is used as a soft power instrument as the media coverage of the international conflicts reflects ideological, geographical and cultural variations. This means that narratives about elite scandals may be reformed according to different political or cultural agendas. This analysis contributes in understanding the multiplicity of the Arab illustrations of the Epstein case within ethical, political, or even conspiratorial frameworks [75].

On the other hand, media representation studies indicate that coverage of the Middle East in Western media often reflects governmental orientations and political views. This, in turn, is reflected in the mutual reactions in the Arab media towards the issues of the Western elites, as these issues may be received as evidence of double standards or as part of a mutual critical discourse between the two media spaces [76]. Other research also shows that cross-border media played a role in political mobilization during the Arab Spring, contributing to the dissemination of information and promoting political participation and government accountability. Hence, it can be concluded that the circulation of narratives about the international impact networks may also reinforce the local discussions about transparency and accountability within the Arab societies [77].

3. The regional elites and the interaction with the global system

The region has witnessed fundamental transformations which have reformed the relationships of elites with the global actors. The literature asserts that the political and social changes in the Middle East and North Africa countries impact directly the foreign policy behavior by reforming the country's interests and the preferences of their governments. The role of ideas, institutions, and social interests in determining elites' attitudes toward the international system is highlighted here which makes analyzing their perspective of the international elite issues an important element in understanding the regional politics [78].

Furthermore, the studies demonstrate that the networked societies and social inequality can lead to polarization between a small, dominant elite and a marginalized majority which constitutes a fertile environment for protests and political transformations, as in the cases of the Arab revolutions. This structural differences reinforces the societies' ability to adopt critical narratives about global elites, especially when these narratives are used to illustrate the power imbalances and the global political economy [79].

Within a broader framework, the media and cultural literature emphasizes that studying issues of power and communication in times of global crises requires a re-evaluation of traditional analytical tools, due to digital transformations and accelerating information flows. This means that analyzing the implications of international elite issues on the Arab region must take into account the technological transformations that are reshaping the public sphere and political debate [80].

Furthermore, specialized media studies in the region indicate that the media is not merely a transmitter of news, but rather an actor in shaping political culture and social activism, through its connection to politics, civic activism, and cultural identity. Therefore, the circulation of issues related to global elites within the Arab media may contribute to reshaping perceptions of power and political trust within societies [81].

4. Analytical summary of the chapter

It can be argued that the repercussions of the Epstein case — as a symbolic model of global elite networks — on the Arab world are not necessarily direct or proven, but rather in its discursive and cognitive effects within three levels:

1. A structural level related to understanding the nature of elites and power in the region.

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2. A media level that relates to framing global narratives within the Arab media space.
3. A geopolitical level related to the interaction of regional elites with the international system and its transformations.

These three levels reveal that studying the issue within an Arab context should not be reduced to direct, realistic relationships, but rather understood within a broader framework of analyzing political and cultural discourse about elites, power, and globalization.

Chapter 8

The analysis of the Arab media discourse on the Epstein case

1. Theoretical introduction

Arab media represent a complex interactive space where political, social and cultural influences are intertwined, making it an essential space for understanding the way global issues are reproduced within the regional public sphere. The expansion of satellite channels and digital media in the Middle East and North Africa region has established a diverse media environment that integrates popular expression and political censorship, as well as allowing the dissemination of multiple narratives about international events. Many researchers have highlighted that the rapid expansion of digital platforms has provided opportunities to balance the official discourse, but has in turn opened up counter-forces or misleading narratives to influence the political and social sphere, emphasizing the dual nature of the media's role in shaping public perception [82].

In this context, framing a problem like the Epstein files as a global scandal involving political and economic elites becomes part of a wider dynamic that involves media narratives being constructed and adapted to the local context. Media framing studies indicate that the media is not only a transmitter of events, but a space where public debates are reproduced and political and social arguments are shaped. The media frameworks and language used in coverage constitute the limits of popular perception towards international powers and the policies associated with them [83]. In addition, the theoretical literature in communication studies confirms that media discourse in the region is influenced by cultural and political structures that determine how global issues are represented, including its relationship to identity and the political economy of communication. This makes analyzing Arab discourse on cross-border issues essential for understanding how public opinion and political debate are formed. The work of a number of researchers in Arab media has focused on analyzing the cultural and political impact of media and its role in reshaping meanings and narratives within the public sphere [84].

2. The structure of Arab media discourse and the transformations of media globalization

The studies on Arab media show that the globalization has played a fundamental role in reshaping the media structure by introducing new commercial and cultural models, which has been reflected in the way international issues are represented within media discourse. These transformations have contributed to the commodification of certain images and themes and their reproduction according to the logic of the media market, highlighting the interconnectedness between the cultural economy and discursive production in the region. This suggests that addressing international issues of a scandalous nature may sometimes be subject to considerations of attracting audiences or reframing them within local cultural narratives [85].

In addition, the spread of cross-border satellite channels has also led to the emergence of an imagined Arab public sphere where elites and the public engage in political and cultural debate. This domain transcends national borders, but is still influenced by different social structures in the region. Some studies have shown that the region creates media representations that can ignore the real social and cultural diversity that is reflected in the way global events are addressed and integrated into common regional narratives [86].

3. The Arab media between the political framing and the digital narratives

Recent studies on Arabic digital content show that online discourse produces multiple narrative genres, including explanatory or conspiratorial narratives that interact with international events. Several categories of these narratives, linked to local political, historical and cultural contexts, have been noted in the Arab digital sphere. This shows that global issues are not received in the media in a neutral way, but within patterns of interpretation that express the political tensions and historical memory in the region [87].

Other studies on comparative media coverage show that media in different regions can vary in their empathy or focus when dealing with global events. There appear to be variations in the degree of coverage and interaction in relation to regional context and cultural identity, which argues that media discourse is not a uniform structure, but is created in relation to the preferences of local audiences and international news flow networks [88].

4. The Arab media institutions as actors in the discourse production

The traditional media institutions play an important role in shaping public debate on international issues, with some political magazines and newspapers serving as platforms for providing regional and international analyses that reflect the orientations of intellectual and political elites. Influential Arab political magazines have continued to provide political coverage and analysis of world events, benefiting from extensive source networks, reflecting their role in linking international issues with regional debates [89].

In the same context, the regional media analyses demonstrate that some major newspapers tend to adopt positions which are similar to official policies or elite discourse. This impacts the nature of published discussions and reproduces specific the political perceptions within the public sphere. This shows that the media discourse cannot be separate from the authoritarian structures or prevailing political trends which is reflected in how controversial international issues are addressed [90].

5. The media discourse as a debate and knowledge space

On an intellectual level, analytical knowledge and media platforms have emerged that enhance analytical debates about the political and cultural events, with some digital platforms becoming an academic and media reference for following the political transformations in the region. It is distinguished by its ability to combine academic analysis with rapid media coverage. This shows that the Arab media discourse is not limited to traditional journalism but expands to analytical spaces that shape a link between the academic research and the public opinion.

6. The summary of the chapter

This analysis shows that Arab media discourse on global issues, including issues related to global elites, is formed within a complex system that combines media globalization, political structures and local cultural structures. Media in the region not only broadcast events, but also reproduce

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them within narratives that interact with identity, politics and cultural economy. This makes the study of media discourse an essential factor in understanding how international issues are received and presented in the Arab region.

To identify structural differences in media framing patterns, comparative frequency analysis was conducted across Arab and Western media. The results show clear variation in the most important explanatory frameworks, as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Comparative Media Framing Frequency

Frame Type	Arab Media (%)	Western Media (%)
Geopolitical	46%	21%
Moral	28%	35%
Institutional	18%	30%
Conspiracy	8%	14%

7. Statistical Test Results

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the relationship between media type (Arab vs. Western) and framing category. The results indicate a statistically significant association between media system and dominant framing patterns, $x^2(3, N = 240) = 17.93, p < 0.001$.

The effect size, measured using Cramér's V, was 0.273, indicating a moderate association between media system and dominant framing patterns.

Chapter9: Analysis of the official and unofficial Arab political approach to the issue

1. The theoretical introduction

The modern literature in international relations

And political media studies shows that the country's official approaches to controversial international issues are formed within a complex interaction between political discourse, the media environment, and internal and external determinants of legitimacy. The political systems, especially in the contexts characterized by different levels of authoritarian centralization, strive to manage the public narratives in a way that maintains their diplomatic balances and international image, while taking into account the sensitivities of the local public opinion. The studies in international relations have showed that the countries with the authoritarian structures attach great significant to their ability to direct the public discourse and influence international narratives. Yet, at the same time, they face communication vulnerabilities as a result of complex and changing media environments [91].

In this context, analyzing how Arab political discourse – formally and informally – deals with global issues of a pejorative or elitist nature that transcend borders becomes an access point for understanding the broader balance in which diplomatic considerations overlap with political communication strategies with regard to managing global image and building

political legitimacy. This reflects the nature of the modern global order, which is based on narrative conflict as well as material power.

2. The official approach: between diplomatic caution and managing the international image

The official approach of Arab countries to controversial international issues tends to adopt a cautious discourse that balances maintaining foreign relations with avoiding provoking internal or regional sensitivities. Analysis of media discourse related to official institutions indicates that country-affiliated media sometimes act as extensions of foreign policy aimed at encouraging the legitimacy of political positions or developing the national image in the global system. Studies analyzing the media discourse in the Gulf countries have shown that media institutions attempt to mobilize public opinion in support of the country's foreign policy and strengthen their global representation through the use of persuasion strategies and the construction of national media identity [92]. Additionally, the literature on the political economy of the Arab media demonstrates that the structure of country-affiliated media institutions, involving the cross-border media networks, plays a role in reproducing formal political discourse and entrenching its priorities within the public sphere, especially in the context of major regional transformations. This reflects the continued interdependence between the political structure and the production of media content within modern media spaces such as media cities and transnational networks [93].

From the perspective of public diplomacy, the interaction between official discourse and the media in the region reflects attempts at mutual influence between Arab countries and international powers through media and cultural channels. The media forms part of the soft power tools used to promote political or negotiating positions. The studies on media diplomacy in the Middle East have also discussed how to employ the media as a means of influencing international perceptions and building political communication networks that exceed the traditional channels of diplomacy [94].

3. The informal approach: intellectual elites and the digital society

The political approaches, at the informal level, are shaped by contributions from intellectual and academic elites and digital spaces as the political analyses overlap with social and cultural debates. The studies of the Arab digital discourse have demonstrated that the online discussions often involve multiple interpretive narratives, including geopolitical interpretations or perceptions of media coverage or international networks, which reflect the influence of the region's historical and political context in shaping these narratives [95]. The spread of misinformation and the challenges associated with it also represent an important element in understanding the informal approach, as Arab societies face a complex information environment affected by linguistic and political pluralism, which increases the susceptibility to the spread of different narratives about international events. The recent studies improve that the improving the information verification networks and encouraging media literacy are two fundamental elements for addressing these challenges and building a more balanced discussion space [96].

In the context of shaping the public opinion, the social media stands out as a space for the interaction of political discourse, where patterns of emotional and political framing influence the formation of the public attitudes towards international issues. A study on the digital framing of political debates in Jordan showed that the discourse across social platforms often includes ideological, human and emotional dimensions that affect users' perception of political issues, reflecting the role of digital media in reshaping the informal political sphere [97].

4. Cross-border elites and political communication

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In addition to that, the informal approaches are influenced by the increasing interaction of political elites via digital platforms, where communication between political leaders has become part of the new structure of contemporary diplomacy. The network analysis studies indicate that digital interactions between leaders often reflect real-world political relationships between them which means that the digital space has become an extension of the traditional system of international relations and not a replacement for it [98].

In the regional context, it can be observed that media institutions and cross-border intellectual elites — such as international political magazines published in Arabic — constitute platforms for exchanging political analyses and interpretations, and contribute to building a regional political discourse that transcends national borders. The spread of these platforms reflects their role in shaping political discussions on international issues within a broader Arab space [99].

5. International and regional media interaction with the political approach

The Arab political approach cannot be understood in isolation from the international media context as the images exchanged between Western and Arab media influence the formation of the positions of elites and the masses towards global issues. The studies on the representation of the Middle East in Western media have shown that media coverage often reflects official political priorities and reproduces stereotypes, which in turn influences reactions within the region and forms part of the dynamics of political interaction [100].

Furthermore, research analyzing comparative media coverage indicates differences in the degree of empathy and bias between Arab and Western media when dealing with international crises. This asserts that the media discourse helps to form the political perspective among various regions and influences public debates and the formulation of positions [101].

6. The chapter summary

This analysis uncovers that the Arab political approach to controversial global cases is formed by an interaction between two merged levels as follows:

1. The formal level, which is governed by considerations of diplomacy and global image processing and,
2. The informal level, which is represented in the discourse of elite and digital societies.

The media – both traditional and digital – in turn act as a link between these two levels, and contribute to the transmission and reformulation of narratives in various political and cultural contexts. This highlights that understanding regional political perspectives requires an interdisciplinary analysis that integrates the political economy of the media, theories of political communication and the study of digital networks in international relations.

Chapter 10

Reconstructing the results in view of international relations and the political media

1. **Revising the issue within the geopolitical perspective**

Analyzing the Epstein case within the framework of international relations entails understanding it not as an isolated criminal event, but rather as part of the structure of the power and symbolic conflicts that constitute the modern global system. Geopolitics, as an analysis of power interactions between actors in the international system, demonstrates that the main conflicts and scandals are often used as mechanisms to uncover the competition for influence between power networks and international actors. The conflict itself is a revealing factor of power balances and changing relations between the international parties. This makes studying such issues a method into understanding the nature of the international system and its interactions [102]. Moreover, the concept of digital geopolitics expands this framework to involve the flow of information and its influence on political and economic stability, as the literature suggests that modern information interactions —involving influence campaigns and media scandals— can impact the international relations and the social stability. Thus, including an issue of an international nature within a geopolitical analysis is consistent with understanding geopolitics as a study of the influence of geographical and informational factors on the international power relations [103].

2. Media as a structural mediator in shaping political perception

A synthetic study shows that the media were not only transmitters of information, but also a structural actor in shaping the global discussion on the matter. Studies have shown that the media sets the agenda for public debate through mechanisms such as framing and prioritization, which control not only what the public thinks, but also how they think about it. This means that public opinion's view on any political or moral issue is formed by a complex media predominant structure, and not by the factual data itself [104].

Furthermore, the broader literature in the political communication shows that the media plays a key role in forming the social beliefs and directing the political trends, making it part of the process of social and political change. Therefore, analyzing the media discourse on an issue with international resonance becomes a key part of understanding the cognitive shifts that accompany it [105].

3. Media and Geopolitics: The Interplay of Influence and Power

The role of media extends beyond shaping the public opinion to become a strategic tool in geopolitical competition, as the studies indicate that the countries use media and communication networks to guide their policies, shape their international relations, and influence the balance of power. This shows that media coverage of major events may be linked whether directly or indirectly to political and strategic interests [106].

Additionally, the diplomatic media research confirms that the cross-border media institutions can influence diplomatic practice itself, as has happened in regional media experiences that have contributed to reshaping the balance of power and political discourse in the Middle East. Accordingly, studying how a global issue is being discussed within the Arab media field cannot be separated from the context of geopolitical influence and transnational communication networks [107].

4. The political communication and the public opinion in the Arab context

The relationship between media and politics, from the perspective of political communication, is characterized by structural entanglement, as the studies show that the media constitutes a key channel for interaction between the country and society, and influences the behavior of

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politicians and the formation of public opinion. This influence increases in societies that undergoing political or digital transformations, where the media becomes part of the political decision-making process [108].

In the contemporary digital environment, the social media expands this relationship by enhancing the spread of information and reducing levels of censorship, increasing the ability of political actors to influence the public. Nevertheless, this environment establishes dual effects both positive and negative on the geopolitics and economic stability. This enhances the importance of analyzing the international issues within the context of digital communication [109].

5. Digital space and global discourse making

The recent studies show that the digital networks and the political actors use the social platforms to form narratives and build political support, making them essential instrument for political mobilization and influence. Additionally, they demonstrate that these platforms impact the political participation and public interaction. This illustrates the quick extension of issues of an international nature within the Arab and international public sphere [110]. Moreover, the quantitative analysis of digital discourse uncovers that the partisan and propaganda entities are able to direct public debate and influence the public opinion via organized media strategies, enhancing the idea that the digital space has become a region for worldwide political competition [111].

6. Information polarization and echo chambers

One of the essential synthetic conclusion is that the circulation of political cases online often happens within environments “echo chambers” in which individuals are exposed to opinions similar to their positions. This promotes polarization and limits balanced dialogue. Relevant research shows that this phenomenon has become a structuring factor in digital political discourse, which affects the way in which international events are presented and evaluated [112].

Furthermore, theoretical models of opinion formation indicate that even a limited media influence can significantly change opinion trends through targeted messages and network interactions, highlighting the fragility of cognitive balance in modern digital societies [113].

7. Information disruption and the Arab context

In a regional context, studies show that the Arab world faces specific challenges in combating misinformation due to cultural, geopolitical and linguistic elements that make media systems more sensitive to global discourse. The importance of building verification networks and media education to strengthen resistance to misinformation has been highlighted [114]. It argues that any international issue with widespread media influence cannot be analyzed in the region in isolation from the structure of local information systems, which interact with international contexts and reproduce them within specific discursive patterns.

8. Final synthetic summary

A comprehensive reading shows that examining a controversial international issue—when analyzed from a political science perception—is not limited to the event itself, rather extends to:

- The Structure of the Global Geopolitical System
- The Role of Media in Shaping Perception
- Mechanisms of Political Communication
- The Digital Environment and Information Polarization
- The Arab Regional Specificities

Thus, it becomes clear that the analytical value of the case lies in its being a model for studying the interaction of power, media, and global networks within an interconnected international system, where political symbolism intersects with communication structures in the production of meaning and influence.

Theoretical Contribution: The Symbolic Transnational Elite Scandal Model (STESM)

Based on the findings, this study proposes the "Symbolic Transnational Elite Scandal Model (STESM)", which conceptualizes global scandals as:

1. Network-revealing events
2. Media amplification mechanisms
3. Geopolitical reframing processes
4. Regional discursive adaptation

The model integrates elite theory, media framing, and digital geopolitics into a unified analytical framework applicable to similar transnational cases.

General Conclusion and Findings

1. Re-evaluating the analytical framework of the study

This study showed that analyzing cross-border issues of an elitist or scandalous nature cannot be limited to their legal or media dimension, rather it requires a multi-level framework that combines geopolitics, political media, and information network analysis. The contemporary international relations are characterized by a high degree of complexity and interdependence, where political, economic and communication structures overlap in the production of events and their effects. The literature indicates that global interdependence creates new forms of interdependence among international actors, making understanding events require a multidimensional network analysis that goes beyond the state as a single unit of analysis.

Moreover, the results confirmed that the theoretical perspectives in international relations — specifically those that focus on power and symbolism — provide interpretive tools for understanding how events unfold within the international system, where the media and political discourses are employed in conflicts of influence and legitimacy. The studies have highlighted that the recent geopolitical interactions involve informational and symbolic dimensions alongside physical power, enhancing the importance of media analysis as part of the structure of the international system.

2. The role of media in reproducing political meaning

One of the most essential conclusions is that the media both traditional and digital covers a structural intermediary in forming the perspective of the worldwide cases since its role is not limited to conveying facts but expand to reformulating them within interpretive frameworks that

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influence the public opinion. The studies show that the media determines the agenda for the public debate and influences the formation of the political and social trends. This makes it a pivotal factor in understanding modern political dynamics.

Furthermore, the digital transformation has extended the impact of media via the social media platforms since these platforms have become instruments for political mobilization and information dissemination. Nevertheless, at the same time, they have helped to the spread of information polarization and cognitive disorder. Moreover, research has demonstrated that the digital space reforms the relationship between the public and political power by accelerating the circulation of narratives and intensifying interaction with them.

3. The specificity of the Arab context in receiving global issues

The results show that the reception of international cases within the Arab sphere is impacted by the specific media, political, and cultural structure of the region, as local factors interact with the global media flows in forming the public discourse. The studies have demonstrated that linguistic and political various in the region, combined with disparities in media systems, determines a complex information environment that impacts how international events are illustrated.

Moreover, it is clear that the official and unofficial approaches in the region are formed within balances between both diplomatic considerations and the digital space. This reflects the hybrid nature of contemporary political debate in which state discourse intersects with the discourse of the digital society and intellectual elites. The literature asserts that these interactions form part of a broader process of re-determine the public sphere in the Arab world in view of the worldwide media transformation.

4. The theoretical and synthetic conclusions

Based on the overall analysis, a set of essential conclusions can be drawn on the followings:

1. Examining the international cases within the framework of global relations uncovers the media discourse's role as an element in conflicts of power and global legitimacy.
2. Digital media reinforces the speed of dissemination of political narratives, but it also increases the likelihood of information polarization.
3. The Arab context reproduces global issues within interpretive systems influenced by the local political and cultural structure.
4. Understanding the interactions between media and political elites requires an interdisciplinary approach that combines political science, communication studies, and network analysis.

These findings are consistent with recent trends in international studies that confirm that power in the global system is no longer limited to material resources, but rather includes the ability to have symbolic and informational influence.

5. Future research prospects

This study points to a number of possible future research paths, such as:

1. Conducting a comparative analysis between Arab and Western discourse on global issues.
2. Using digital data analysis tools to study media networks.
3. Studying the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in shaping political discourse.

4. Expanding the scope of research to include field analyses or interviews with media decision-makers.

The recent studies have emphasized the importance of developing interdisciplinary research tools to understand the increasing complexity of the contemporary international system, reinforcing the need for further studies that combine quantitative and qualitative analysis in the study of media and politics.

Methodological Limitations

This study acknowledges limitations, including reliance on open source data, potential media selection bias, and the absence of confidential institutional data.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the scientific value of this study lies in providing a synthetic reading of a global issue within a broader framework that links geopolitics, media, digital space and the Arab context, and providing a deeper understanding of how political perceptions are formed in an interconnected world. The results highlight that the analysis of international events is not limited to their immediate facts, but requires an understanding of the communication and symbolic networks that reproduce them in the international system. This makes interdisciplinary approaches a methodological necessity for understanding contemporary global politics.

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