

News Coverage on Iraqi Satellite Channels of the Population Census: Al-Iraqiya Channel as a Case Study

Dr. Marwan Khashlan Yusur

University of Thi Qar – College of Media, Department of Radio and Television

Abstract: This research aims to analyze the nature of the news coverage provided by Al-Iraqiya Satellite Channel regarding the population census in Iraq, considering it a pivotal national issue with strategic dimensions related to developmental, economic, and social planning. Al-Iraqiya was specifically selected for this study due to its status as the official state-run channel, which grants it a central role in shaping public opinion and raising public awareness about the significance and future implications of the population census.

The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach, utilizing content analysis as a tool to deconstruct and monitor media treatment patterns within related news bulletins and programs over a defined time period. The analytical framework was distributed across several elements, including: type of coverage, frequency of reporting, angle of approach, sources used, in addition to evaluating the level of balance and objectivity in the presentation.

The findings of the research revealed that Al-Iraqiya's coverage was characterized by a noticeable focus on official and procedural aspects of the census, with a relative weakness in deep analytical and interpretive treatment. The media coverage also showed significant interest in political and economic dimensions due to their direct impact on citizens' lives, alongside granting a reasonable space for the voices of citizens and civil society organizations. This contributed to enhancing plurality in the narrative and increasing public engagement with the issue.

The study recommends the development of future media coverage by adopting a more comprehensive and in-depth approach that integrates both informational and analytical aspects, thereby contributing to raising public awareness and strengthening the role of media in supporting national population policies.

Keywords: News coverage, satellite channels, population census.

Research Introduction

In recent decades, the world has witnessed remarkable advancements in media, particularly with the emergence of satellite broadcasting, which has succeeded in attracting wide segments of the audience and has played an active role in addressing public issues that impact individuals' lives and influence the shaping of public opinion. Today, satellite channels represent one of the most prominent tools of modern media, widely disseminated across the globe, broadcasting diverse programming around the clock without interruption—granting them increasing influence over various social, economic, cultural, and political aspects of life.

Within this context, satellite channels have emerged as central media platforms for addressing developmental issues, most notably the population census, which is considered one of the most critical national matters concerning both society and the state. Al-Iraqiya Satellite Channel stands at the forefront of those that have paid special attention to this topic, devoting significant coverage within its

news segments and programs with the aim of raising public awareness of its importance—as the primary and trusted source of population data on which governmental institutions rely for developmental planning.

Population censuses are regarded as the fundamental basis for demographic studies, as they provide comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data that help in understanding population characteristics, geographic distribution, growth patterns, and demographic composition. These data allow researchers and planners to analyze spatial disparities, identify population-related issues, diagnose their causes, and propose suitable solutions. Moreover, such information is instrumental in forecasting future needs at both the economic and social levels. Therefore, developed countries enjoy a competitive advantage in precise planning and sustainable development due to their reliance on regular, accurate, and comprehensive population censuses—unlike many developing nations.

Based on this importance, the researcher structured this study into three main sections: The first section addresses the methodological framework of the study, while the second focuses on the theoretical framework. The third section presents the practical aspect through the use of content analysis to monitor and examine the news coverage provided by Al-Iraqiya Channel on the topic of the population census. This aims to identify the nature of media treatment and the mode of discourse directed at the public.

Section One: Methodological Framework

1. Research Problem

The foundation of any scientific research lies in identifying a clear problem. Scientific standards dictate that a research idea should not emerge from a vacuum, lest it lead to inconclusive outcomes. One of the defining features of scholarly research is the existence of a specific, important problem that requires critical investigation and analysis from all angles in order to find viable solutions and overcome its challenges (Mohammed, 2006).

Given the strategic importance of the population census as a fundamental tool for developmental, economic, and social planning, the role of the media—especially satellite channels—in raising public awareness of this national event is pivotal to achieving its objectives and encouraging active societal participation. With the rapid development of satellite media, it has become essential to examine the nature of the coverage provided by Iraqi satellite channels on the subject of the population census, the extent to which they adhere to professional and objective standards, and their effectiveness in conveying information and explaining the dimensions of this issue to the public.

Accordingly, the research problem is defined by the following central question:

How have Iraqi satellite channels covered the topic of the population census in terms of form and content?

From this central question, several sub-questions emerge, which the study seeks to answer:

1. What are the most prominent forms of news coverage provided by Iraqi satellite channels regarding the population census?
2. What news content appears most frequently in coverage related to the population census?
3. What news-reporting styles are used in addressing the topic of the population census?
4. What types of sources are used in the news coverage of the population census?

2. Research Significance:

This study derives its significance from the importance of the topic it addresses—namely, the news coverage of the population census in Iraq through satellite channels, with a particular focus on Al-Iraqiya Channel, the official media voice of the state. Satellite channels—especially television—have become among the most prominent sources of information for the public, due to their capacity to

influence public opinion and report events in real time. This renders them a central tool in shaping citizens' awareness of major national issues, such as the population census.

The scholarly significance of this research lies in its contribution to filling a knowledge gap in the field of media studies, through a systematic and in-depth analysis of how the population census—an issue directly linked to strategic planning and comprehensive development—is covered by the media. Furthermore, this study contributes a recent academic source to libraries, which can benefit researchers and students in the fields of media, population studies, and development planning.

3. Research Objectives:

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the main forms of news coverage provided by Iraqi satellite channels regarding the population census.
2. To determine the most prevalent news content related to the population census as covered by Al-Iraqiya Channel.
3. To uncover the news-reporting techniques used in presenting the topic of the population census.
4. To determine the types of sources used in Al-Iraqiya's news coverage of the population census.

4. Type of Study and Methodology:

This research is classified as a descriptive-analytical study. The analytical survey method is employed in media studies to understand content trends and is considered one of the most effective methods due to its focus on observation and the study of thematic patterns in content analysis, as well as changes occurring therein. This method provides a clear representation of the phenomenon under study, aiding in data collection and adding a substantial body of factual and theoretical knowledge. This, in turn, helps in understanding the phenomenon and predicting its recurrence (Al-Najjar, 2009).

5. Study Population and Sample:

The study population is defined as the total number of items or units that the researcher aims to study in order to achieve the research objectives. It represents the target audience to which the researcher intends to generalize the results. However, due to the large size of this population, it is often difficult to access in its entirety. Therefore, focus is placed on the accessible population from which a sample can be selected.

In this study, the population consists of news bulletins, programs, and reports broadcast by Al-Iraqiya Channel that addressed the topic of the population census. These were selected based on necessary criteria to achieve the objectives of the study. The research adopted a purposive sample, as it was deemed most appropriate for the nature of the study.

6. Research Scope and Fields:

1. **Spatial Scope:** Al-Iraqiya General Channel
2. **Temporal Scope:** The study was conducted over a two-month period, from March 11, 2024, to May 11, 2024.
3. **Topical Scope:** This pertains to the subjects addressed in the main news bulletins of Al-Iraqiya Satellite Channel that are directly related to the research topic, titled *News Coverage on Al-Iraqiya Channel of the Population Census*.

7. Definition of Terms:

1. **News Coverage:** The continuous transmission of events from their location to the public, accompanied by commentary through a specific media outlet, with the aim of informing the public using various methods.
2. **Population Census:** In its narrow sense, the census refers to the enumeration of population figures collected through direct counting. It focuses on facts and numerical data.

3. **Satellite Channels:** A modern term commonly used to refer to television broadcasting. It is a modern construct referring specifically to digital television channels transmitted via satellites—these are networks of satellites orbiting the Earth along known trajectories, typically defined by specific compass directions and angles.

8. Previous Studies:

1. Aliwi (2017):

The researcher framed the problem of the study with the following main question: *What is the extent of news coverage of the Mosul liberation operations by the two channels under study?* This descriptive study used an analytical survey method on a sample of 60 main news bulletins (30 from each channel).

The research yielded several findings, most notably: both channels allocated extensive airtime to covering the Mosul liberation operations. However, the coverage revealed clear political framing. Al-Mayadeen Channel emphasized the Iraqi government's perspective while showing weak representation of opposing views. In contrast, Al-Jazeera adopted an opposing stance, giving voice to narratives that challenged the government's, including coverage of the militant group as an equal party in the conflict.

2. Fayhan (2017):

The central question of this study was: *What are the trends in news coverage on Arab satellite channels regarding the Yemeni crisis, and what are the implications of this coverage on the Iraqi audience?*

The researcher adopted a multi-stage cluster random sample and applied the survey methodology to derive results.

Key findings include the audience's ability to identify the reasons behind the bias in the news coverage of the two channels under study, which influenced their support for one side of the Yemeni conflict over another. Participants were also able to discern signs of neutrality or bias in the crisis coverage by the two channels.

3. Khalil (2015): *Standards of News Coverage in Conflict and War Zones*

This study aimed to shed light on the ethics of journalism in conflict and war zones, highlighting the challenges journalists face and the measures needed to ensure their safety. The researcher employed the descriptive method to outline the phenomenon under study.

Notable results include: the absence of effective legal protections for journalists operating in conflict zones in Arab countries, and the frequent alignment of media coverage with the interests of national governments during crises and wars.

Section Two

News Coverage in Satellite Channels

1. The Concept, Characteristics, and Methods of News Coverage

The news function of the media is closely linked to a fundamental human instinct, as it reflects an essential aspect of human social nature—namely, curiosity and the desire to be informed about events and to feel secure within one's environment or in the external world (Saeed, 2005).

Also referred to as *news reporting*, coverage is the process of collecting data and details about a specific event, including the circumstances surrounding it, the location, the names of those involved, how and when it occurred, and other relevant information that equips the event with the necessary elements to be deemed publishable. Coverage is what transforms an event into newsworthy material (Khazal, 2015).

News coverage is characterized by several features that relate to news treatment and the content of media messages, which journalists and correspondents strive to translate into deliverable reports during the course of their work. These features include:

1. Objectivity:

Objectivity in news work refers to impartiality and the avoidance of bias in selecting and presenting news stories. It involves portraying a balanced image of the event without distorting or undermining the credibility of the information obtained by the journalist. A report dominated by emotion or subjectivity becomes unreliable and lacks objectivity. In all societies, journalists uphold objectivity as a professional and ethical principle, avoiding bias in favor of one viewpoint over another, in line with journalistic ethics and codes of conduct (Anmar, 2016).

2. Accuracy and Factual Integrity:

News reports must present the full truth of an event without omitting essential details that would compromise its context. Accuracy and factual integrity are vital traits that must be maintained when covering any event. The reported facts must be real and verifiable—fabricated or false information turns the report into mere rumor. Unreliable reporting undermines the credibility of the media outlet and erodes public trust.

3. Media Outlet Policy:

This characteristic is specific to the institution itself—its ownership, specialization, and the objectives it pursues through its media work. This policy significantly influences the type of content selected for publication or broadcast, which must align with its editorial vision. Certain content, even if factual, may not be published if it contradicts the outlet's editorial policy.

4. Language Construction:

Language is a tool for communication and influence. Journalists may employ various forms and styles to convey information effectively to the audience. News stories, commentaries, investigative reports, and other journalistic genres are all built on the foundation of event coverage. This coverage requires the correspondent or reporter to represent the event using concise linguistic symbols that can be understood globally, across different known and lesser-known languages (Hashem, 2016).

5. Comprehensiveness and Completeness:

This feature refers to a thorough understanding of the background and details of an event. The editor or reporter must be fully informed of these aspects to provide a complete and coherent account. This includes explaining the event within the context of its surrounding circumstances, which constitute its natural backdrop.

Coverage Methods

Media institutions employ various editorial methods in their news coverage, including:

1. Simple News Coverage:

This method involves reporting a single incident or event by attempting to cover all its aspects and circumstances, citing eyewitnesses and relevant officials.

2. Composite News Coverage:

This type describes multiple events and connects them within a single reporting framework, often combining related incidents that lead to the same outcome. This style is typically expansive and integrative.

3. Narrative-Based Coverage of Events:

This style relies on recounting the sequence of events and tracking their details to present a complete and coherent picture of what occurred.

4. Narrative-Based Coverage of Statements:

This approach centers on reporting official statements or remarks made by public figures or responsible authorities, where the core content of the report is built around those statements. It is commonly used in press conferences and political speeches (Al-Fattah, 2009).

5. Narrative-Based Coverage of Information:

This method is structured around data, facts, and figures concerning a specific subject. An example would be a news report presenting data from a recent institutional report on its activities.

Types of News Coverage

News coverage can be categorized based on **timing** and **content orientation**:

A. Based on Timing:

1. Retrospective or Recorded Coverage:

This form covers events that have already occurred, focusing on gathering relevant details and facts—such as a minister's resignation, an earthquake, a plane crash, or the arrival of a foreign dignitary (Haybah, 2002).

2. Preparatory or Pre-Event Coverage:

This involves collecting information about expected or upcoming events that have not yet occurred but are anticipated based on certain indicators. Effective news coverage often begins with gathering background data ahead of the event.

3. Follow-Up Coverage:

This type tracks ongoing developments following a prior event. It requires the journalist to remind the audience of previous related updates to provide continuity and context.

B. Based on Content Orientation:

1. Neutral Coverage:

In this type, the journalist presents only the facts in a purely objective manner, without personal bias or interpretation. The report avoids adding new dimensions, background information, or commentary. It refrains from blending facts with opinions.

2. Interpretive Coverage:

Here, the journalist combines factual reporting with explanatory information to help readers understand the news more clearly, especially those who lack the time or resources to investigate further. This type of coverage includes context such as general atmosphere, location descriptions, character profiles, and supplementary geographical, historical, or economic information. It also includes cause-effect analysis and connects the event with similar past occurrences, based on studied insights (Fahmi, 2016).

3. Biased or Colored Coverage:

In this form, the journalist emphasizes a specific angle of the news while potentially omitting or exaggerating certain facts. They may distort aspects of the report or insert personal opinions, with the goal of shaping or manipulating the interpretation of the news.

3. The Concept of Satellite Channels

Satellite channels are defined as television broadcasts transmitted directly from a transmission station to an individual's television set without an intermediary. This form of broadcasting is characterized by its independence from temporal and spatial boundaries. Some define satellite channels as television programs and foreign or Arabic films that reach the viewer directly via a satellite dish installed on their home, bypassing state censorship and not being part of the government's traditional television services.

Satellite channels serve as media platforms affiliated with specific countries, presenting various types of content across different fields. They operate via satellite connections, allowing them to broadcast globally and are managed by specialized professionals.

Definitions of satellite channels include:

1. Channels that rely entirely on satellites for broadcasting, regardless of the methods or geographic regions involved, even if they also maintain terrestrial (ground-based) transmission.
2. Satellite television broadcasting that uses space-based satellites to transmit content, which is then received via satellite dishes (commonly referred to in foreign terminology as *SATELLITE*). The process involves transmitting media content from one country via satellite to be directly broadcast in other regions.
3. Channels that deliver satellite television broadcasts aimed primarily at audiences wherever they may be located (Al-Kanani, 2013).
4. A modern term referring to television channels that broadcast via orbital satellites. These satellites follow fixed trajectories around the Earth, usually defined by compass angles and directions, with each satellite carrying a group of channels broadcast from it.

4. Al-Iraqiya Satellite Channel

Al-Iraqiya Channel was launched by decision of the former U.S. civil administrator, Paul Bremer, following the fall of the former official Iraqi state broadcaster. It was established on the ruins of the Iraqi Radio and Television Corporation. The channel began as a terrestrial broadcaster on May 1, 2003, airing four hours per day, which expanded to eleven hours two weeks later. By August 1, 2003, the channel broadcast nineteen hours daily. In early 2004, it transitioned to satellite broadcasting.

The channel broadcasts on satellites including Arabsat, Nilesat, and Hot Bird. It initially utilized remaining equipment from the former Iraq Television and Youth TV channels. Al-Iraqiya is publicly funded and features a diverse range of programs, including news bulletins, political shows, as well as cultural, social, and entertainment programs.

The channel is licensed by the Communications and Media Commission as of January 1, 2010. Initially, program production and broadcasting were outsourced to foreign and regional companies—namely, the American company *Harris* and the Lebanese company *LBC*. This outsourcing negatively impacted the quality of the channel's content. However, on April 8, 2005, the Iraqi administration officially assumed direct control of the channel using national resources. This transition was supported by the rehabilitation of former Iraq TV staff and the training of a new generation of Iraqi media professionals, both locally and abroad, in addition to recruiting young media talents to work at the channel (Hamdi, 2005).

Section Three: Practical Framework

Content Analysis Results of the Selected Sample

Introduction

This chapter constitutes the core of the field study, as it presents a content analysis of the news coverage provided by Al-Iraqiya Satellite Channel on the topic of the population census in Iraq. As the official broadcaster that represents the state's media discourse, Al-Iraqiya plays a critical and leading role in shaping public understanding of this strategic national issue. The aim of this chapter is to reveal the nature of the media treatment adopted by the channel, assess its adherence to professional standards in information dissemination, and evaluate its effectiveness in raising public awareness regarding the importance of the census.

The analysis in this chapter is based on the data collected during the research period, and the findings are presented below.

Table (1): Frequency, Percentage, and Cumulative Distribution of Main Thematic Categories Related to the Census in Al-Iraqiya Channel News Bulletins

No.	Main Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Political	90	30%
2	Social	77	25.67%
3	Administrative	77	25.67%
4	Economic	42	14%
5	Religious	10	3.33%
6	Cultural	4	1.33%
	Total	300	100%

Analysis of Table (1):

As shown in Table (1), the political category ranks first with 30% (90 items), indicating a high focus on political statements, positions of political blocs, and controversies surrounding the census—especially in disputed areas. This suggests that the channel gave significant importance to the political dimensions of the census, viewing it as a highly sensitive and strategic issue.

The social and administrative/technical categories followed closely, each receiving 25.67% (77 items). This reflects a relatively balanced coverage between the social impact of the census on local communities and the administrative and technical challenges of its implementation. It also indicates the channel's recognition of the census's significance in managing both the state and society.

The economic category accounted for 14% (42 items), reflecting a moderate level of presence. This may be due to the limited linkage made between the census and economic planning in the channel's media discourse.

In contrast, the religious and cultural categories ranked lowest, with 3.33% (10 items) and 1.33% (4 items) respectively. This suggests a weak media focus on the potential role of religion and culture in supporting the census or a lack of media treatment of these aspects—despite their possible influence in public awareness and societal mobilization.

Table (2): Subcategories of News Coverage (Political Category)

No.	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage
1	Officials' Statements	39	43.33%
2	Government Preparations	25	27.78%
3	Political Debate	8	8.89%
4	Positions of Political Blocs	7	7.78%
5	Census in Disputed Areas	5	5.56%
6	Central-Regional Government Relations	4	4.44%
7	Legislation and Laws	2	2.22%
	Total	90	100%

Analysis:

Table (2) shows that *officials' statements* ranked first with 39 occurrences, highlighting the channel's heavy reliance on official sources. *Government preparations* followed with 25 occurrences, reflecting clear interest in showcasing state efforts. *Political debate* appeared 8 times, suggesting the presence of political discourse around the census. *Positions of political blocs* occurred 7 times, indicating modest coverage. The *census in disputed areas* (5 occurrences) and *relations between central and regional governments* (4 occurrences) were covered to a limited extent. *Legislation and laws* appeared only twice, reflecting weak attention to the legal framework of the census.

Table (3): Subcategories of News Coverage (Social Category)

No.	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage
1	Impact of the Census on Local Communities	30	38.96%
2	Citizens' Reactions and Social Challenges	16	20.78%
3	Community Awareness Regarding the Census	12	15.58%
4	Media Coverage and Awareness	11	14.29%
5	Role of Social Media in Shaping Awareness	5	6.49%
6	Role of the Communications and Media Commission	3	3.90%
	Total	77	100%

Analysis:

Table (3) indicates that *impact of the census on local communities* and related *social challenges* was the most reported subcategory (30 times). This was followed by *citizens' reactions* and *community awareness*, reflecting the channel's focus on public perception and outreach efforts. *Media coverage and awareness* was mentioned 11 times, while *social media's role* (5 occurrences) and *the Media Commission's contribution* (3 occurrences) received relatively minor attention.

Table (4): Subcategories of News Coverage (Administrative and Technical Category)

No.	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage
1	Role of Government Bodies in Organizing the Census	45	58.44%
2	Administrative and Technical Challenges	16	20.78%
3	Announcement of Results	10	12.99%
4	Use of Technology in Census Organization	6	7.79%
	Total	77	100%

Analysis:

Table (4) reveals that *government roles in organizing and implementing the census* dominated coverage with 45 mentions, suggesting a strong emphasis on official administrative action. *Administrative and technical challenges* followed with **16 mentions**, while *result announcements* and *technology usage* received modest attention (10 and 6 occurrences, respectively).

Table (5): Subcategories of News Coverage (Economic Category)

No.	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage
1	Impact of the Census on Economic Development	16	38.10%
2	Census and Economic Project Planning	8	19.05%
3	Impact on Labor Market and Unemployment	6	14.29%
4	Role of the Private Sector	3	7.14%
5	Census Implementation Funding	3	7.14%
6	Population Growth Rate	3	7.14%
7	Supporting Investment with Census Data	2	4.76%
8	Income and Expenditure Data	1	2.38%
	Total	42	100%

Analysis:

Table (5) shows that *economic development* was the most frequently addressed subtopic (16 times), emphasizing the census's role in planning. *Project planning* and *labor market impact* followed. The *private sector*, *funding*, and *growth rate* each appeared 3 times, while *investment support* and *income/expenditure data* were minimally represented, indicating underreporting of these potentially impactful areas.

Table (5) Clarification – Subcategories of Economic News Coverage

The data in Table (5) indicate that “Impact of the Census on Economic Development” ranked first with 16 occurrences (not 61, as previously misstated), highlighting the significance of such topics and their relevance for societal benefit. This was followed by “Census and Economic Project Planning” with 8 occurrences, and “Impact on the Labor Market and Unemployment” with 6 occurrences. Subcategories like “Role of the Private Sector”, “Funding for Census Implementation”, and “Population Growth Rate” each received 3 mentions, while “Support for Investment Based on Census Results” appeared twice, and “Income and Expenditure Data” was mentioned only once, indicating a relatively limited focus on these specific economic dimensions.

Table (6): Subcategories of News Coverage – Religious Category

No.	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage
1	Participation of Religious Leaders in Raising Awareness	6	60%
2	Religious Awareness Campaigns on the Importance of the Census	2	20%
3	Influence of Religious Messages on Encouraging Participation	2	20%
Total		10	100%

Analysis:

Table (6) shows that religious leaders’ participation was the most prominent theme (6 times), followed by religious awareness campaigns and motivational messages, each with 2 mentions. This reflects an overall weak media focus on the religious dimension of census awareness efforts.

Table (7): Subcategories of News Coverage – Cultural Category

No.	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage
1	Impact of the Census on Preserving Cultural Diversity	3	75%
2	Role of Cultural Institutions in Census Awareness	1	25%
Total		4	100%

Analysis:

Table (7) indicates that “Preserving Cultural Diversity” was mentioned 3 times, while the “Role of Cultural Institutions” appeared only once, signaling minimal attention given to the cultural dimension of the census in media coverage.

Discussion of Results

The cumulative frequency and percentage distribution of the main categories in Al-Iraqiya’s news bulletins regarding the census show that the political category ranked highest (30%, 90 items), demonstrating the channel’s strong emphasis on political statements, positions of political blocs, and controversies—especially in disputed regions. This prioritization underscores the perceived political sensitivity of the census.

The social and administrative/technical categories both followed closely with 25.67% (77 items each). This reflects balanced attention to the census’s impact on local communities and the operational challenges of its implementation, highlighting the channel’s awareness of the census’s governance significance.

The economic category, with 14% (42 items), received moderate coverage. This might be due to the limited framing of the census in connection with economic planning in the media narrative.

In contrast, religious and cultural categories received the least attention (3.33% and 1.33%, respectively), signaling a media gap in utilizing religious and cultural frameworks for public mobilization, despite their potential roles in awareness efforts.

Subcategory Highlights by Category:

➤ Political Coverage:

“*Officials’ statements*” led with 39 mentions, emphasizing reliance on official narratives. This was followed by “*government preparations*” (25), “*political debate*” (8), and “*political bloc positions*” (7). Coverage of “*disputed territories*” (5), “*central-regional relations*” (4), and “*legal frameworks*” (2) was minimal, pointing to a limited legal and federal discussion.

➤ Social Coverage:

The top subcategory was “*impact on local communities and social challenges*” (30), followed by “*community awareness*” (21), and “*media awareness campaigns*” (11). “*Social media’s role*” and “*the Media Commission’s role*” received marginal focus.

➤ Administrative/Technical Coverage:

Dominated by “*the role of government bodies*” (45), followed by “*administrative/technical challenges*” (16), “*announcement of results*” (10), and “*technology use*” (6), which was significantly underrepresented.

➤ Economic Coverage:

The most reported was “*impact on economic development*” (16), followed by “*project planning*” (8), “*labor and unemployment*” (6), and other categories like “*private sector*”, “*funding*”, and “*growth rate*” each at 3 mentions, with minimal focus on “*investment support*” (2) and “*income/expenditure data*” (1).

➤ Cultural and Religious Coverage:

These categories reflected the weakest attention overall. The religious dimension was dominated by “*religious leaders’ participation*” (6), while the cultural coverage mostly focused on “*preserving cultural diversity*” (3), with a single mention of “*cultural institutions’ role*.”

This analysis illustrates a clear tendency toward political and administrative framing in Al-Iraqiya’s coverage, with relatively weaker engagement with cultural, religious, and some economic dimensions that could enhance holistic public understanding and participation in the census process.

Conclusions

- The results of the study, based on the analysis of Al-Iraqiya Channel’s news bulletins, revealed that the political category ranked first with 30%, indicating a high level of focus on political statements, positions of political blocs, and the ongoing debate surrounding the census—particularly in disputed regions. This demonstrates the channel’s prioritization of the political dimension of the census, viewing it as a highly sensitive issue.
- The social and administrative/technical categories followed closely, each with 25.67%. This reflects a balanced coverage of the census’s impact on local communities and the administrative and technical challenges involved in its implementation—signaling the channel’s awareness of the census’s role in managing the state and society.
- The economic category accounted for 14%, indicating a moderate presence. This could be attributed to the limited emphasis placed on connecting the census with economic planning in the media discourse.
- In contrast, the religious and cultural categories were at the bottom of the list, with 3.33% and 1.33% respectively. This suggests a weak media focus on the potential contributions of religion and culture to the census process, despite their possible roles in public awareness and community mobilization.

Recommendations

1. The researcher recommends diversifying news coverage of nationally significant issues to enhance the comprehensiveness of the media message and contribute to building well-rounded public awareness of national matters.
2. The researcher stresses the importance of highlighting national activities that serve Iraq's long-term interests, and presenting them within clear media contexts that emphasize their developmental and strategic significance.
3. It is recommended to expand media focus on issues that reinforce national identity and support the country's future, through purposeful content that reflects a comprehensive developmental vision.

References

1. Al-Fallahi, H. A. I. (2014). *Traditional media and new media: Studies and perspectives on aspects of traditional and new media*. Amman: Ghaidaa Publishing.
2. Al-Saeed, M. I. (2020). The uses of social media networks by Saudi youth and their impact on the level of following traditional media content. *Journal of Media Research*.
3. Al-Najjar, F. J., et al. (2009). *Scientific research methods: An applied perspective* (2nd ed.). Amman: Dar Al-Hamed.
4. Abu Radi, F. A. (n.d.). *Introduction to quantitative methods in geography*. Alexandria: University House Press.
5. Al-Hadithi, T. H. (2000). *Population geography* (2nd ed.). Mosul: University of Mosul Press.
6. Al-Saadi, A. F. (2008). *Geography of Iraq*. Baghdad: University House Press.
7. Haiba, M. M. (2002). *News reporting and its applications* (1st ed.). Alexandria.
8. Al-Hanno, M. S. (2012). *Methods of writing and editing media news* (1st ed.). Amman: Osama Publishing.
9. Fayhan, M. M. (2017). *News coverage trends of the Yemeni crisis in Arab satellite channels and their impact on the Iraqi audience* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Baghdad, College of Media).
10. Al-Zahir, A. F., & Al-Maamari, A. K. (2014). *The impact of satellite channels on social and political values* (1st ed.). Amman: Ghaidaa Publishing.
11. Abu Zaid, F. (2010). *The art of news reporting: A comparative study* (2nd ed.). Cairo: Alam Al-Kutub.
12. Al-Badri, H. A. F. (2009). *News coverage of Arab satellite channels of President Obama's speeches: A descriptive survey study of media opinion leaders in Jordan* (Master's thesis, Middle East University for Graduate Studies).
13. Qarshoush, A. (2013). *Media coverage of Algerian newspapers on reform projects* (Master's thesis, University of Larbi Ben M'hidi Oum El Bouaghi).
14. Fleiha, A. N. (1998). *Population geography of Iraq*. Baghdad: University of Baghdad.
15. Al-Saadi, A. F. (2013). *Geography of Iraq*. Baghdad: Al-Ghofran Printing Services.
16. Al-Hashemi, A. M. (2015). *Security media and its role in crisis management* (Unpublished master's thesis).
17. Al-Kanani, M. J. (2013). *The role of Iraqi satellite channels in shaping students' knowledge and attitudes toward terrorism*. *Al-Bahith Al-I'lami Journal*, College of Media, University of Baghdad.
18. Hamdi, M. R. (2005). *The reality of talk shows on Al-Iraqiya Satellite Channel: Political programs as a case study* (Master's thesis, University of Baghdad).