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**Relationship between the Press, Opinion  
Leaders and the Public in Agenda-  
Setting of Local Issues in Yemen**  
*A Field Analytical Study*

**A Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for  
the PhD. Degree in Mass Media**

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**1430H**

## **Thesis Abstract**

This study examines and analyzes "Two-Step flow Model of Agenda-Setting" which is considered one of the modern research trends that have emerged in the context of Agenda-Setting Theory. The purpose of this study, in its theoretical framework, is to establish the interactive dimension of "Two-Step flow Model of Agenda-Setting" through researching in the roots of the theory of "Agenda-Setting Theory" and to highlight the aspects of similarity and difference between them.

In the applied framework of the study, the researcher examines the relationship between the priorities of each of the Yemeni newspapers and opinion leaders and the public in agenda-setting of local issues in Yemen. The study sample has been of seven (7) newspapers and thousand (1000) opinion leaders and the members of the public from "Sana" and "Rima" regions.

This study has followed the descriptive approach which aimed at investigating the relationship between the Yemeni newspapers of its different orientations, opinion leaders and the public in agenda-setting of local issues in Yemen during the presidential local elections through examining the priorities of the newspapers as to the local issues and compare them to the priorities of the leaders of opinion and the priorities of the public via the study of two different periods to identify the trend of influence "who influences the other?"

The issues have been identified by classifying the sub-themes into main collective issues. Opinions leaders' and the public's interests have been classified in their context before and after the elections to reach a common denominator.

The study comes in two parts; Part I: the theoretical framework of the study which consists of three chapters, namely: The theory of Agenda-Setting Theory; the relationship between Agenda-Setting Theory and the Two-Step flow; the trends of the press in Yemen. Part II presented the findings of analytical and field study and consists of four chapters, namely: the methodological procedures of the study and the characteristics of its sample; priority of local issues for each of the Yemeni newspapers with their various trends, opinion leaders and the public; relationship between the press, opinion leaders and the public; discussion of the findings and recommendations.

The findings of the study, in general, reflects that they do not support "Two-Step flow Model of Agenda-Setting" with its four probabilities, and they do not fully deny it, but they however stressed an important aspect of it particularly with regard to the relationship between

partisan newspapers, opinion leaders, and the public for the long run. The study reached several conclusions, the most important of them are:

1. Review of previous studies confirmed a remarkable shortage in Arabic Studies in general and Yemeni studies in particular that deal with the interactive relationship between social factors "who influences the other?" and its interactive effects within the social system; and that most studies have been conducted between two components of the community in short-term times, which indicate poor findings and defective generalizations.
2. The findings of the study disclosed that the partisan newspapers have been able to attract the attention of opinion leaders before the elections, and to influence it and set agenda for its issues for the long run after the elections. In turn, both private newspapers and official newspapers failed to achieve the same; as the relationship between opinion leaders and private newspapers (0.473) and the official newspapers (0.168) to the level of statistical significance at the level of (0.05).
3. The findings of the study disclosed that opinion leaders are the influential force in the Yemeni community. They were able to influence the public and set agenda for the long run as indicated by the findings of the correlation coefficient between their ranks (0.898 \*\*) reaching to the level of significance, which indicates that the relationship and personal interaction between opinion leaders and the public members have created consensus on priorities through which opinion leaders could successfully influence the public and set it local agenda whereas the public was unable to do so.
4. The findings of the study show that newspapers, subject of the study, collectively and individually and as per their trends have not succeeded in influencing the public and setting their local agenda. Likewise, neither of the opinion leaders nor the public managed to influence the newspapers, newspapers, subject of the study, collectively and individually and as per their trends and setting their local agenda for the short and the long runs.
5. The findings of the study reveal that the pattern of opinion leaders in their discourse was directed to provide opinion to convince others (86.6%). In turn, it comes out that the major pattern followed by the public was silence and listening more than talking (73.6%), which means that the Yemeni public is silent and recipient of the views and guidance of opinion leaders. This is due to several variables associated with the complexities of the social environment of the Yemeni people and its relationship to

traditional

social

forces

surrounding

it.