



Aljazeera's Coverage of the Qatar Crisis on June 5th 2017: A Frame Analysis

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Abstract

Qatar's foreign policy faced a turning point since May 1995 when Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani overthrew his father in a bloodless coup. Generally, Qatar maintained good relations with its neighbors before Hamad came to power. However, with Hamad coming to power, Qatar's foreign policy transformed to a policy that is intimidating to its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) neighbors. These changes were evident with establishing the Israeli trade office in 1996, making it the first Arab Gulf state to have relations with Israel. Qatar also developed good relations with Iran. By this stage, Qatar had already developed good relations with the region's rivals. Qatar also strengthened its alliance with the United States by hosting two U.S. military bases in Al Udeid and Sayliyah, Qatar. As Faisal Abu Sulaib states, Qatar's foreign policy has become hard to describe after 1995.

Keywords: Regional power; Regional power; Arab Spring

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Introduction

Hamad bin Khalifa wanted Qatar to be a regional power [1,2]. To achieve its foreign policy, Qatar mainly depends on its wealth from its oil and gas reserves. It has done so by buying large stakes in companies in addition to property in many countries around the world. Abu Sulaib [1] believes that Qatar diversified its economic investments to serve its foreign policy. Another factor that Qatar depends on to achieve its foreign policy is the use of its media networks. Aljazeera, being the most popular of the media networks of the country, has been used since its establishment in 1996 to serve the foreign policy of Qatar. Mediation is also one of the aspects that Qatar uses to achieve its foreign policy. Traditionally, large states like Saudi Arabia have leaded mediations in the region. Qatar is interested in having more influence regionally and to enhance its global image, and mediation is the tool Qatar uses to achieve its objective. Qatar's mediation efforts in Yemen, Lebanon, and Sudan did emphasize Qatar's presence internationally [3].

The shift in Qatar's foreign policy took place during the Arab Spring, when Qatar decided to use military intervention in Libya and support the Muslim Brotherhood with all the means they needed to get them into power [2]. The shift was also evident in Aljazeera's coverage of the protests in the Arab countries which encouraged the protests to continue and to achieve the overthrow of the leaders of those countries. This shift in Qatar's foreign policy has deteriorated Qatar's relations with its Gulf neighbors [3]. To be more specific, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain were the most concerned in this shift. This

was evident in the withdrawal of their ambassadors in 2014 and the current Gulf Crisis. The current crisis also includes Egypt which has shared similar concerns.

This dissertation will consider Aljazeera's coverage of the Qatar Crisis on its first day. Based on the work of Robert Entman [4], author has used frame analysis to look at the framing Aljazeera used to define and construct the Qatar Crisis on its first day. Author has also referred and relate to Herman [5] and Chomski's propaganda model, Daniel Stout's [6] work on mediated religion, and Soft Power by Joseph Nye. By looking at all the articles posted by Aljazeera on the June 5th 2017, author will look for sentences and keywords used to create certain frames. After finding the frames used author would analyze why such frames were used and whether the results prove the influence of the Qatari government on Aljazeera.

Theoretical Framework

Framing is one of the ways in which media narratives are interpreted. It is a process where a news organization defines and constructs a political issue or conflict. Professor of communication studies, Robert Entman, suggests that framing "offers a way to describe the power of a communicating text" (Entman, 1993, p. 51). He adds that the analysis of the framing shows the effect of the transfer of information on the human consciousness. Frames, as suggested by Entman, facilitate four tasks in critically analyzing

media narratives: define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements, and suggest remedies. Framing defines problems by figuring how a concerned agent, such as a broadcaster or news outlet, distributes information and what are the costs and benefits to the agent. Benefits are often orientated around power through ideological influence. They diagnose causes by figuring out the forces causing the problem. They make moral judgements by assessing the agents and their effects. Last but not least, they suggest remedies by offering and justifying solutions to these issues and predict the effects of these solutions.

Entman suggests that texts contain frames that are demonstrated by “the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, and stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements” [4]. For example, the news headline “Saudi Cleric Barks at Tourist” instantly conjures up an animalistic impression of the Saudi Cleric, and supports a long standing stereotype of Arabs being sub-human [7]. Entman also introduces the idea of ‘salience’, which is defined as making the information more memorable, easily noticed, and worth meaning. This is achieved by many ways including repetition, placement in text, and associating the information with symbols that are familiar to the audience’s culture. However, researchers have found that the presence of frames in texts does not guarantee their effect on audiences due to factors like existing schemata.

Entman places particular emphasis on frames used in political news. He highlights that in political communication; frames focus on some parts of the reality and ignore other parts. For example, in reporting a conflict, a news outlet may emphasize the aggression of one party over another. News frames are therefore used by politicians and journalists to compete with each other in influencing the ‘mental models’ or attitudes of people and representations of reality. Framing in political news clearly illustrates the use of political power, especially in a news text where the text shows the identity of the actors or their interests in dominating the discourse. One of the signs that such manipulation is taking place, according to Entman, is the inconsistency of particular terms. For example, use of words such as, ‘blockade’, ‘terrorist’, ‘war’ ‘genocide’ might be applied to certain contexts and not to others despite clear similarities, depending on how the event is intended to be represented. This may also cause a media outlet to lose credibility [4].

Entman uses the word ‘slant’ to describe “when a news report emphasizes one side’s preferred frame in a political conflict while ignoring or derogating another side’s. One-sided framing emphasizes some elements and suppresses others in ways that encourage recipients to give attention and weight to the evaluative attributes that privilege the favored side’s interpretation” [8]. Similarly, van Dijk’s ‘ideological square’ conceptualizes the biases of media narratives whereby the good of the self and the bad of the other are emphasized, while the bad of the self and the good of the other are de-emphasized. This is particularly relevant to reporting on groups of social, political or racial division. Slanted framing is common according to Entman even though mainstream news organizations claim to be objective. This concerns the idea of ‘content bias’ where, for it to exist, there must be a consistent pattern of slant that supports certain interests or actors that look

for power and disapproval of their opponents. Slants exist over a certain period of time and are evident in most influential media outlets. Decision-making bias as mentioned by Entman is often referred to when journalists’ personal beliefs effect the news they produce. Although many observers believe that journalists’ ideologies are what are causing slant framing, they ignore other forces that might effect what the journalists are producing, such as the political economy of the media outlet. The propaganda model introduced by Herman and Chomski is one of the scholarly works on the political economy of mass media. The model considers the other forces that have effect of the news being produced. Entman defines content bias as “consistent patterns in the framing of mediated communication that promote the influence of one side in conflicts over the use of government power” [9]. Therefore, to prove that content bias exists in the media, we have to prove that a pattern of slant exists that ‘prime’ audiences in favor of the interests of people in power or those that are seeking power.

In another article, Entman [9] connects agenda setting to the first function of framing which is identifying the problems which are worth the attention of the audiences. The second level of agenda setting includes three tasks of strategic framing which are: “to highlight the causes of the problem, to encourage moral judgements (and associated affective responses), and to promote favored policies” [9]. The main goal and intended effect of the actors behind the framing activities is priming. This refers to when the standards people use to make political evaluations change. For example, when a news outlet connects certain issues or benchmarks to the evaluation of politicians or governments [10].

Herman [11] in *The Propaganda Model: a retrospective*, also discussed biases in the media and explains that propaganda campaigns can occur when they are consistent with the interests of those controlling and managing the filters suggested in the propaganda model. For news to be published or broadcasted by a media outlet it must pass the five filters suggested in the model which are ownership, advertising (as primary income source), sourcing (reliance on information providers), flak (means of disciplining the media), and anti-communist ideology. An example of the latter is the U.S. media coverage of the Polish government’s crackdown on the Solidarity Union in 1980-1981, which received a lot of attention, coverage, and condemnation due to the Polish government being supported by the Soviet Union. Whereas, the Turkish military government’s crackdown at about the same time did not receive the same coverage or condemnation. This was because the U.S. government and the U.S. business community supported the Turkish government’s anti-communist stance. Herman adds that the “model does suggest that the mainstream media, as elite institutions, commonly frame news and allow debate only with the parameters of elite perspectives; and that when the elite is really concerned and unified and/or when ordinary citizens are not aware of their own stake in an issue or are immobilized by effective propaganda, the media will serve elite interests uncompromisingly.” [11].

Biases can also come about within media narratives through the influence of independent groups or parties. Daniel Stout in his book, *Media and Religion* [6] specifies a chapter for ‘The News’, where he highlights the fact that certain religious groups try to have political influence on the media. Some organizations try to

maximize their impact on as much media channels as possible and this situation is called 'media synergy'. This is a result of the number of channels that these organizations have to compete with. Stout refers to Neil Postman, who argues for a balance of comparative religion and religious texts in media narratives, which could encourage compassion and ethical conduct. Postman warns about insularity, which is the ignorance of or lack of interest in the other that could lead to intolerance and separation.

Nye [12] in his article *Soft Power* suggests that a representation of the Middle East region cannot depend solely on the status and characteristics of its superpowers, but also depends on the presence and influence of transnational religious groups, oil companies, and terrorist organizations. He points out that the role of states is very important but more complex coalitions affect the outcomes. Military force still remains the ultimate form of power but the use of force is becoming more costly. Instruments like communication, organizational and institutional skills, and manipulation of interdependence have become increasingly important in influencing both domestic and international attitudes.

Traditional power resources are used today by major states, however, in many cases, private actors and small states have become more powerful using non-traditional means. For Nye, five trends have contributed to the diffusion of power: economic interdependence, transnational actors, nationalism in weak states, the spread of technology, and changing political issues. Nye clarifies that new power sources like effective communication and the development and use of multilateral institutions are more relevant to deal with the dilemmas of the modern world.

Nye suggests an alternative power to the traditional 'hard' way or a second aspect which is co-optive or soft power. Soft power is the opposite of hard power which is known as 'command power' or when a state orders others by force. Alternatively, soft power is achieved by intangible power resources like culture, ideology, and institutions. More importantly, Nye states that soft, co-optive power is as important as hard, command power. If a state makes its power look legitimate it will receive less resistance to its wishes. Co-optive power allows a state in a certain situation to make other countries develop preferences or define their interests that are consistent with it the state's own preferences and interests

Case Study

The Qatar Crisis started on June 5 2017 when Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt decided to cut diplomatic ties with Qatar and close all air and land routes to Qatar. According to Gasim [2] there are several factors that led to the crisis. Most importantly Qatar has established its independent foreign policy which in many instances, clashes with the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states have raised concerns about Aljazeera since its establishment. It was not until the Arab Spring when the political contention between Qatar and its GCC allies increased due to Aljazeera's coverage of the Arab Spring. Qatar's foreign policy adopted the movements and adapted a pro-Arab Spring policy. Another reason stated by the boycotting countries is Qatar's close relations with Iran. Qatar

responded by normalizing its diplomatic relations with Iran in August 2017.

Pradhan [3] in his article *Qatar Crisis and the Deepening Regional Faultlines*, explains that the four countries have accused Qatar of supporting extremist and terrorist groups, having close ties with Iran, undermining the security and stability of the Gulf states, and using Aljazeera as a propaganda tool. In addition, a list of demands was set by the four countries for Qatar to accept in ten days in order to end the boycott. Some of the demands are: cutting ties with Iran, the closure of the Turkish military base in Qatar, to end the support and funding to terror groups, paying compensation to the states, and to end any contact with opposition groups in the states. However, Qatar denied the allegations set by the four countries and considered their actions a violation of international law and a violation of its sovereignty. Qatar has also refused to accept the conditions set by the four countries.

On the 10th of July 2017, CNN was able to access leaked documents of the 2013 and 2014 Riyadh agreements that were breached by Qatar according to the boycotting countries. The first Riyadh agreement of 2013 was signed by King Abdulla of Saudi Arabia, Shaikh Sabah Amir of Kuwait, and Shaikh Tamim Amir of Qatar. The agreement states that the countries agreed on the following principles:

1. No interference in the internal affairs of the Council's states, whether directly or indirectly. Not to give asylum/refuge or give nationality to any citizen of the Council states that has an activity which opposes the country's regimes, except with the approval of the country; no support to deviant groups that oppose their states; and no support for antagonistic media.
2. No support to the Muslim Brotherhood or any of the organizations, groups or individuals that threaten the security and stability of the Council states through direct security work or through political influence.
3. Not to present any support to any faction in Yemen that could pose a threat to countries neighboring Yemen.

The supplementary Riyadh agreement of 2014 came after Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain withdrew their ambassadors from Qatar. This agreement unlike the first was signed by the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE. They agreed on the following points:

1. Stressing that non-commitment to any of the articles of the Riyadh Agreement and its executive measure amounts to a violation of the entirety of the agreement.
2. What the intelligence chiefs have reached in the aforementioned report is considered a step forward to implement Riyadh agreement and its executive measures, with the necessity of the full commitment to implementing everything stated in them (agreement and the Intelligence report) within the period of one month from the date of the agreement.
3. Not to give refuge, employ, or support whether directly or indirectly, whether domestically or abroad, to any persons or a media apparatus that harbors inclinations harmful to any Gulf Cooperation Council state. Every state is committed to taking all

the regulatory, legal and judicial measures against anyone who [commits] any encroachment against Gulf Cooperation Council states, including putting him on trial and announcing it in the media.

4. All countries are committed to the Gulf Cooperation Council discourse to support the Arab Republic of Egypt, and contributing to its security, stability and its financial support; and ceasing all media activity directed against the Arab Republic of Egypt in all media platforms, whether directly or indirectly, including all the offenses broadcasted on Al-Jazeera, Al-Jazeera Mubashir Masr, and to work to stop all offenses in Egyptian media.

The boycotting countries have stated that they believe Qatar continued to support the Muslim Brotherhood and other groups that threaten the stability and security of their countries. This support also includes Aljazeera and other Qatari-owned media outlets support to these groups and using these media platforms against the interest of the boycotting countries.

Methodology

The methodology author will answer his research question is frame analysis. Author looked at all the news articles posted by Aljazeera on June 5 2017, which is the day the four countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Bahrain) decided to cut their diplomatic ties with Qatar. June 5 is therefore the first day of the official crisis. How a news source first represents an event will usually be the precise dynamic they wish to convey, and it is from this framework that they will build upon in successive publications. Therefore author have selected all the articles published on June 5, which would make the frames used by Aljazeera clearer for me to recognize and analyze.

A pattern of the frames used are noticeable to the reader after reading a few articles. Author was able to access the news articles from Aljazeera's English website.

Article 1: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, Bahrain cut ties to Qatar

Article 2: Leaders and markets react to Gulf diplomatic rift

Article 3: Qatar diplomatic crisis: How it affects air travel

Article 4: Social media reacts to Gulf diplomatic rift

Article 5: How the world reacted to the GCC diplomatic rift

Article 6: Economic impact of Gulf diplomatic rift

Article 7: Qatar: 'No justification' for cutting diplomatic ties

Article 8: Qatar: Decision to cut ties violates our sovereignty

Article 9: Gulf diplomatic crisis: Qatar's reaction in full

Nine news articles were posted on that day, one of which was the defending statement released by Qatar's Foreign Ministry. After critically reading the eight remaining articles author has noticed three main frames used by Aljazeera:

- The conspiracy frame
- The Saudi Arabia and the UAE as a source of the conflict frame
- The negative economic effects frame

Having established the three main frames, author looked for references to each frame in every article. Author started looking for stylistic clues like language choices and modes of reference. These can be in the form of specific sentences, key words, and emotive language used to convey a certain meaning or narrative. Researcher have decided not to use quotations from other sources found in the articles as one could argue that these quotes are exact words said by individuals and the language used was not determined by Aljazeera (however, their choice to include these quotes is still noteworthy). After highlighting each stylistic clue, researcher started matching each clue to one of the three frames. This procedure was repeated on all of the articles. To ensure accuracy, author read the articles more than once and at different times to make sure that the stylistic clues were all taken into account and were matched to the right frame.

All of the results will be shown in a table for each frame where every stylistic clue will be clearly displayed. Author intended to analyze the results by relating them to the relevant theories researcher have stated in the theoretical framework and other related studies. In addition, researcher have looked at what these frames highlight as important, what they take for granted, what these frames exclude from discussion, what views are these frames reinforcing, and finally if other frames would lead to a better informed society [13].

Limitations

Although 8 news articles are enough to recognize frames used, they remain limited to Aljazeera's coverage of the Qatar Crisis on that particular day. In addition, the news articles from Aljazeera's English website are only one part of Aljazeera's coverage of the Qatar crisis. The television broadcasts in Arabic and English could have used different frames on that day. Moreover, frames used in media usually change with time and Aljazeera's frames of the current crisis could have changed and developed. However, some studies have shown that the frames used on the first day are still used one year after the beginning of the crisis.

Results

Aljazeera's coverage of any Qatari issue has been questioned due to the fact that the news network is based in Qatar and is financially supported by the Qatari government [1]. This fact makes the coverage of the current Qatar crisis somewhat controversial; therefore author has decided to look into Aljazeera's coverage of the crisis on its first day. The results below are all of the stylistic clues of the three frames found in the eight articles posted on June 5, 2017 (**Tables 1-3**).

There were 15 references in the conspiracy frame. The main messages being sent through these references is that a conspiracy was taking place in at least three forms:

- The Qatari News Agency was hacked;
- A falsely attributed statement of the Qatari Emir was being aired despite being officially denied, and
- That the actions taken by the four countries were coordinated moves.

Table 1 Conspiracy Frame.

	Stylistic Clue	Article
1.	"The [Saudi] statement appeared to be timed in concert with an earlier announcement by Bahrain"	1
2.	"The dispute between Qatar and the Gulf's Arab countries escalated after a recent hack of Qatar's state-run news agency"	1
3.	"UAE-based Sky News Arabia and Al Arabiya kept running the discredited story, despite the Qatari denials"	1
4.	"The move [cutting diplomatic ties with Qatar] escalated a row following a recent hack of Qatar's state-run news agency"	2
5.	"What is happening is the preliminary result of the sword dance," he [Hamid Aboutaleb] added in an apparent reference to Trump's recent visit to Saudi Arabia"	2
6.	"Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE, Bahrain, Yemen, and Maldives announced they would suspend relations with the Gulf state on Monday, escalating a row following a recent hack of the Qatari state-news agency"	4
7.	"The move escalated a row following a recent hack of the Qatari state news agency"	5
8.	"Asked [U.S. Secretary of State] about the coordinated moves against Qatar"	5
9.	"Similarly, Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries traditionally account for only about 5 to 10 percent of trading on the Qatari stock market, according to exchange data, even a total pullout would not sink the market"	6
10.	"Saudi Arabia had called on "brotherly" countries to join its measures against Qatar."	7
11.	"The dispute between Qatar and the Gulf's Arab countries escalated after a recent hack of Qatar's state-run news agency. It has spiraled since."	7
12.	"UAE-based Sky News Arabia and Al Arabiya kept running the discredited story, despite the Qatari denials."	7
13.	"The dispute between Qatar and the Gulf's Arab countries escalated after a recent hack of Qatar's state-run news agency. It has spiraled since."	8
14.	"Following the hacking on Tuesday comments falsely attributed to Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, were published"	8
15.	"UAE-based Sky News Arabia and Al Arabiya kept running the discredited story, despite the Qatari denials"	8

Table 2 Saudi Arabia and UAE as source of conflict.

	Stylistic Clue	Article
1.	"Saying it [Saudi Arabia] was taking action for what it called the protection of national security."	1
2.	"The [Saudi] news agency released a statement in which it accused Qatar "	1
3.	"UAE-based carriers Emirates, Etihad Airways and FlyDubai said they would suspend flights"	1
4.	"A Saudi-led coalition which for more than two years has been fighting Iran-backed rebels in Yemen separately announced that Qatar was no longer welcome in the alliance."	1
5.	"The economic fallout loomed immediately, as Abu Dhabi's state-owned Etihad Airways, Dubai's Emirates Airline and budget carriers FlyDubai and AirArabia said they would suspend all flights to and from Doha from Tuesday morning until further notice"	2
6.	"This time, Saudi Arabia has promised to "begin legal procedures for immediate understandings with brotherly and friendly countries and international companies to apply the same procedures as soon as possible" "	6
7.	"Saying it was taking action for what it [Saudi Arabia] called the protection of national security"	7
8.	"The [Saudi] news agency released a statement in which it accused Qatar"	7
9.	"As part of the measures, Saudi Arabia said it would pull Qatari support from the Yemen war."	7
10.	"The [Saudi] news agency released a statement in which it accused Qatar "	8

The Saudi Arabia and UAE as source of conflict frame had a total of 10 references in the 8 articles. These references focused on how

- Saudi Arabia is accusing Qatar, claiming that it is taking these actions against Qatar for the protection of its national security,
- That the removal of Qatar from the coalition in Yemen is Saudi-led,
- That UAE-based channels were playing the falsely attributed statements even after the Qatari denials, and finally
- That UAE-based airlines stopped their flights to Doha. The focus on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates by Aljazeera in the articles as the source of conflict is quite clear.

The third frame, which is the negative economic effects of the actions taken by the four countries, had a total of 13 references. Most of the references focused on

- That Qatar's stock market experienced loss and the price of oil increased,

- That the boycotting countries stock markets also faced losses, and

- That the GCC economy will suffer if the dispute continues.

In total, Aljazeera used three frames to create an image for the reader that a conspiracy took place against Qatar. It is conveyed that the source of the conflict is Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and that the actions taken by the four countries have negative economic effects on the whole region. The focus on the hacking of the news agency and that the statement of Qatar's Emir was being aired although they were denied, were clear references to a conspiracy. In the second frame, Aljazeera tried to represent Saudi Arabia and the UAE as sources of conflict by linking their name to any pressuring action taken by the four countries. In the last frame Aljazeera was linking the actions

Table 3 Negative economic effects.

	Stylistic Clue	Article
1.	"[cutting diplomatic ties] sent stocks in gas-rich Qatar plunging and the price of oil rising"	2
2.	"The Qatari stock index sank 7.6 percent in the first hour of trade, with some of the market's top blue chips hit the hardest."	2
3.	"Other GCC stock markets also fell, with Dubai losing 0.8 percent and Saudi Arabia falling 0.2 percent."	2
4.	"The diplomatic rift has wreaked havoc with airlines in the region"	3
5.	"[Alan Peaford] said Qatar Airways will see greatest impact"	3
6.	"[cutting diplomatic ties] sent stocks in gas-rich Qatar plunging and the price of oil rising"	5
7.	"The diplomatic rift between Qatar and its Arab Gulf neighbors may cost them billions of dollars by slowing trade and investment and making it more expensive for the region to borrow money as it grapples with low oil prices"	6
8.	"With an estimated \$335bn of assets in its sovereign wealth fund, Qatar looks able to avoid an economic crisis over the decision on Monday by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain to cut air, sea, and land transport links."	6
9.	"Qatar's main stock index fell more than 7 percent Dubai stocks fell 0.7 percent and the main Saudi index also fell before reversing course to rise half a percent."	6
10.	"But parts of the GCC economy could suffer badly if the dispute drags on."	6
11.	"The region's carriers, which have made Dubai, Doha and Abu Dhabi travel hubs, are likely to face losses owing to the diplomatic rift"	6
12.	"Some foreign bankers said the whole region could end up paying more to borrow if the diplomatic tensions persisted."	6
13.	"The announcements roiled financial markets, with the price of oil surging and Qatari stocks and shares falling."	7

taken by the four countries to short-term and long-term negative economic effects.

Analysis

The results of the framing analysis on the Aljazeera articles are clearly an example of what Entman (1993) has suggested about frames. Keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, certain sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements were all present in the articles. Aljazeera has also used 'salience', which is a term Entman defines as making the information more memorable. Aljazeera has achieved salience by using repetition; as noticed in the frame tables many of the keywords/phrases/sentences were repeated in more than one article. At first, one may question why a news organization would repeat the same information which in some cases have been copied and pasted into another article. It is now clear that Aljazeera wanted to make the information more memorable to the readers. Although many readers will be affected by the repetition, other readers will not be affected due to existing schemata which do not confirm to the media discourse, as suggested by van Dijk.

Aljazeera articles gave almost no attention to the boycotting countries statements and only focused on Qatar's statements and other statements supportive of Qatar's side of the conflict. This is common within framing in political news as suggested by Entman. Frames in political communication focus on some parts of the reality and ignore other parts. Entman also provides an example of how in reporting a conflict, a news outlet may emphasize the aggression of one party over another. This is what Aljazeera has practiced in reporting the Qatar Crisis on its first day. Minimal information has been provided on why the boycotting countries took action against Qatar. Each country of the four boycotting countries has released statements that explained their country's reasons for such action. For example, none of the articles mention Bahrain's reasons for cutting ties with Qatar which include Qatar's support and finance of terrorist activities in Bahrain. Saudi Arabia also included Qatar's support

of terrorist activities in Bahrain as one of Saudi's reasons to cut diplomatic ties with Qatar. These statements were not discussed, while on the other hand a whole article was specified for Qatar's Foreign Ministry's statement.

Slant was evident in most of the articles posted by Aljazeera on June 5 2017. Entman describes slant as when a news report emphasizes one side's preferred frame in a political conflict by focusing on some elements and ignoring others to give attention and weight to the favored side's interpretation. Aljazeera has achieved this by emphasizing Qatar's preferred frame in the Qatar Crisis. Moreover, Aljazeera focused on the actions of the four boycotting states and ignored the causes of such actions. Van Dijk's concept of 'ideological square' could also be used to describe Aljazeera's media bias narrative where the good of the self and the bad of the others are emphasized, while the bad of the self and the good of the other are de-emphasized. For example, all of the articles being discussed do not include Qatar's actions that led to the crisis nor do they mention the previous two agreements between the Gulf States that were later violated by Qatar as the statements of the boycotting countries clearly state.

In author reading of sources addressing Aljazeera's role in modern political discourse, the following three themes were common:

1. Aljazeera and Qatar's foreign policy,
2. Aljazeera and Muslim Brotherhood Ideology, and
3. Aljazeera news coverage during the Qatar Crisis.

In the following paragraphs researcher have related results to these themes.

Aljazeera and Qatar's Foreign Policy

Research results have found that Aljazeera was trying to frame the Qatar Crisis by using Qatar's narrative. The main points Aljazeera focused on in the conspiracy frame are that

- The Qatari News Agency was hacked and relating it to the cutting of diplomatic ties;

- A falsely attributed statement of the Qatari Emir was being aired despite being officially denied, and
- That the actions taken by the four countries were coordinated moves.

Aljazeera serving Qatar's interests is no surprise since they control many of the filters in the propaganda model, suggested by Herman and Chomsky. For example, the first filter in creating propaganda is ownership, and Qatar clearly owns Aljazeera. Sulaib [1] suggests that in 1996, Hamad bin Khalifa, Qatar's previous Amir, provided \$137 million to Aljazeera's founding team to establish the channel. In addition to financing the channel directly, state-owned companies advertise majorly on Aljazeera, which could be considered as controlling and managing another filter identified by Herman and Chomsky, which is advertising. Herman [11] clarifies that the model serves the interests of the elites and are often considered elite institutions. They thus commonly frame news and allow debate within the parameters allowed by the elites. The propaganda model and what it suggests clearly demonstrates how an elite institution like Aljazeera is controlled and managed by the state of Qatar and will serve its interests unquestionably. Abdul-Nabi [14] interviewed Wadah Khanfar, the former managing director of Aljazeera, who states:

"it can't be showed that Al-Jazeera is fully independent like BBC or CNN. We are an Arabic channel based in Qatar. But we have been always aware of our bias. We are aware that we should never become the voice of the foreign affairs of Qatar, or Sunni majority in the Middle East, or a voice of this part against another. We are aware of that. Given the fact that we are in Qatar, we may by one way or another be influenced by certain narratives... So to answer your question, we try not to be the voice of Qatar and author has thought he have succeeded to a large extent, but can't say that it is a 100 per cent independent organization. It's funded by Qatar and we try to find the balance regardless of this fact."

Sulaib [1] highlights that the timing of Aljazeera being founded came after the liberation of Kuwait, which Saudi Arabia played an important role financially and logistically. Therefore, Abu Sulaib suggests that to counter Saudi's influence, Qatar founded Aljazeera. He also adds that to bring Iraq back to the power equation in the region, Qatar and Aljazeera launched a campaign to weaken the international and regional siege against Iraq. Zainab Abdul-Nabi has found that some media scholars argue that Aljazeera was founded partly to challenge Saudi Arabia and weaken its influence in the region. According to a Qatari official, Qatar's previous Emir, Hamad bin Khalifa, founded Aljazeera as a political self-defense against Saudi Arabia, which owned many media channels at that time. Abdul-Nabi refers to a study conducted by Samuel-Azran where he sets a theory called the hybrid model. He defines this model as when a state-sponsored station operates independently in routine affairs and this gives it credibility, but it turns into state-sponsored-style broadcasting during a state-involved crisis. Samuel-Azran's hybrid model, therefore, overlaps with Entman's definition of 'slant' which is when a news report emphasizes one side's preferred frame in a political conflict.

The results of research frame analysis show how Aljazeera tries to picture Saudi Arabia as a source of the conflict. This is

a negative representation which was the case in earlier conflicts between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. A study Abdul-Nabi mentions is by Samuel-Azran and Pecht's, where they analyzed Aljazeera's coverage of Saudi politics from 2001 to 2008 and found that there was a strong consistency between Aljazeera's Arabic channel and Qatari interests. The study found that during the Saudi-Qatari conflict from 2001 to 2007, there was a dramatic rise of negative news about Saudi Arabia while there was an absence of negative news in the year that followed after the historic resolution in 2007. The US Ambassador to Qatar at the time, Joseph Lebron, in a WikiLeaks cable revealed that the toning down of Aljazeera was part of the resolution between the two countries. Abdul-Nabi also uses a quote by a news editor of Aljazeera who explains to the New York Times that before the resolution, the top management of Aljazeera used to force-feed news staff negative news about Saudi Arabia, while after the resolution they were not able to discuss any Saudi issue without going back to the top management. This negative representation continues to be evident in this current study; however, in the current conflict Aljazeera has also included the UAE to be another target of its negative news coverage.

Abdul-Nabi also refers to another WikiLeaks document where Ambassador Lebron states that Qatar will continue to use Aljazeera as a bargaining tool with countries that are disturbed by Aljazeera's broadcasts. This is the case in the current crisis as well since the four countries have asked for the closure of Aljazeera, while Aljazeera continues to report negatively on the four countries starting on the first day of the crisis. Aljazeera tried to frame the events of the crisis as a conspiracy as seen in the conspiracy frame results. This frame supports Qatar's version of the story and shows the narrative Qatar, through Aljazeera, wants its audience to believe. The Qatar Crisis proves once again that Aljazeera is one of the tools Qatar uses to achieve its foreign policy. As Faisal Abu Sulaib states, Aljazeera is one of the most influential aspects of Qatari diplomacy.

Aljazeera and Muslim brotherhood ideology

Aljazeera could be considered as using 'effective communication,' which is one of the new power sources Nye mentions. Joseph Nye in his article "Soft Power" clarifies that at current times, states are not the only players in the international arena. Soft power is achieved by intangible power resources like culture, ideology, and institutions. When a state makes its soft power look legitimate it will receive less resistance to its wishes. As such, Aljazeera could be considered an intangible power resource of Qatar as a media institution.

Although the role of sovereign states is important, complex coalitions with non-state actors also affect the outcomes of events. Qatar's coalition with the Muslim Brotherhood is an example of that. In fact, Nye specifically mentions transnational religious groups as having a role in the region. Stout [6] in his book *Media and Religion* also supports this by adding that religious groups try to have influence on mainstream media and some religious organizations try to maximize their impact on as much media channels as possible. Stout calls this 'media synergy'. Religious groups also use media for political reasons to spread their ideology within the social and political spheres.

Qatar's coalition with the Muslim Brotherhood is one of the main sources of conflict. Although, Qatar's positive relations with Iran is also an important reason, it is driven from the good relations the Muslim Brotherhood enjoys with Iran. Part of the Muslim Brotherhood's coalition with Qatar is its usage of Aljazeera as a platform to connect with their followers and influence others. This is evident in previous examples like the television show that airs the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood weekly. In author review of the 8 articles, none of them mention Qatar's support of the Muslim Brotherhood to be part of the conflict. Instead, Aljazeera blames Saudi Arabia and Qatar as the source of the conflict as shown in research results.

Research results have found that Aljazeera was trying to frame Saudi Arabia and the UAE as the main source of conflict. It focused on the following points to support this frame:

- Saudi Arabia is accusing Qatar, claiming that it is taking these actions against Qatar for the protection of its national security,
- That the removal of Qatar from the coalition in Yemen is Saudi-led,
- That UAE-based channels were playing the falsely attributed statements even after the Qatari denials, and finally
- That UAE-based airlines stopped their flights to Doha.

Gasim [2] raises an important point which is that Qatar's support of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was important in the post-Mubarak era. This was a turning point in Qatar's relations with two important members of the GCC: the UAE and Saudi Arabia. While Saudi Arabia was not pleased with the treatment of the previous president Mubarak, the UAE was concerned with the region's stability after the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood to power. This explains Aljazeera's usage of the 'Saudi Arabia and UAE as a source of conflict frame' in its coverage of the Qatar Crisis on its first day.

Prasanta Pradhan states that that Qatar's engagement with the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, which are banned by Saudi Arabia, is one of the main reasons of the growing Saudi discontent towards Qatar. Zainab Abdul-Nabi also raises the fact that Qatar embraced the Muslim Brotherhood ideology and believes that it has done so to avoid relying on Saudi scholars and jurists. The spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Yusuf AL-Qaradawi, was welcomed in Qatar and has been a regular guest on Sharia and Life, which is a weekly television show on Aljazeera that has been described as a propaganda tool for the Muslim Brotherhood. Abdul-Nabi also mentions an incident where in July 2013, 22 staff members of Aljazeera Egypt and four Egyptian editors based in Aljazeera's headquarter in Doha resigned because of the channel's bias editorial policy that was in favor of the Muslim Brotherhood. A former Egyptian anchor on Aljazeera, Kareem Mahmoud, had stated in an interview with Gulf News that each staff member was asked to favor the Muslim Brotherhood. This is a perfect example of what Entman suggests that framing is either shaped from journalists' personal beliefs or the forces that affect the news produced by journalists.

Aljazeera's coverage during the Qatar crisis

Research results have shown that Aljazeera has tried to link

the actions taken by the four boycotting countries to negative economic effects generally. The negative economic effects frame focused on

- That Qatar stock market lost and the price of oil increased,
- That the boycotting countries stock markets also faced losses, and
- That the GCC economy will suffer if the dispute continues.

In his article *The Politicization of Arab Gulf Media Outlets in the Gulf Crisis: A Content Analysis*, Alshabnan [15] does a content analysis of material from Al Arabiya and Sky News Arabia on the Saudi/UAE side and Aljazeera Arabic on the Qatari side. His report looks at the approach and narratives of the media outlets in four areas which are: difference in pre-crisis and post-crisis reporting on the Yemen conflict by Aljazeera, reporting on economy of the opposing side, human rights, and terrorism accusations. In the economic content Alshabnan found that Aljazeera focused on showing Qatar being able to overcome the economic storm caused by the sanctions and that the boycotting countries' economies, mainly Saudi Arabia, was facing economic challenges that have an effect on social cohesion.

Interestingly, Alshabnan notes that Aljazeera was pointing out the negative effects of the crisis on the boycotting countries, which was included in the third frame of research frame analysis. The third frame in research results which was the 'negative economic affects frame' and the results were very similar to the findings of Alshabnan. Research results also show that Aljazeera was framing Qatar's economy to be strong enough to handle the sanctions. Author has not focused on this point in results because it was only mentioned once. From Alshabnan's findings Aljazeera strongly used this point in its future economic news content of the crisis. While Aljazeera was contradicting itself in research results by showing the current and future negative effects on Qatar's stock market and Qatar Airways. Furthermore, Alshabnan and research results confirm that Aljazeera has tried to picture the economies of the boycotting states as facing economic hardships due to the current crisis.

In research results, one of the main points of the 'Saudi Arabia and UAE as source of conflict' frame was that the removal of Qatar from the coalition in Yemen is Saudi-led. In author opinion, this was the turning point in Aljazeera's coverage of the Yemen War. In his study, Gamal Gasim examined the coverage of the Yemen War by Aljazeera before and after the Qatar Crisis. His aim was to identify any variation in the news coverage and to examine the degree to which Aljazeera is independent from Qatari influence. The study found that there was 125% increase in negative news articles that blamed the Saudi-led coalition for the negative outcomes of the Yemen war after the beginning of the Qatar Crisis. Gasim also concluded that news coverage of the Yemen war increased significantly after the Qatar Crisis. It is worth noting that the Qatari troops were part of the Saudi-led coalition, but with the start of the Qatar crisis the coalition ended the Qatari military support and ordered the withdrawal of the Qatari troops in Yemen. The study concludes that Aljazeera may have chosen to rally behind the Qatari state by its selective coverage of the Yemen war. This trend also exists within media outlets in liberal democracies during foreign crises.

Alshabnan finds that Aljazeera's coverage of the Yemen war has changed significantly after the Qatar crisis. Before the crisis he states that the coverage was more positive and emphasized the dangers of the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels and the ousted Yemeni President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, who is aligned with the Houthis. Aljazeera's coverage of the Yemen war after the Qatar Crisis focused on the civilian and humanitarian toll that the coalition has caused and have framed the operations of the coalition as failing to achieve their goals and instead causing devastation. The two studies by Gasim and Alshabnan in addition to research results confirm Qatar's involvement in the narrative used by Aljazeera. Another important finding Alshabnan notes is the change of the terminology used by Aljazeera from the "Arab Coalition" to "Saudi-led Coalition". In research frame analysis Author has also noted the terminology Aljazeera uses to describe the coalition. The change in their terminology of the coalition was the beginning of their negative coverage of the coalition in the Yemen War.

In general, research results and the studies author has mentioned support the idea that Qatar controls the narrative of Aljazeera and that Qatar uses Aljazeera to pressure the boycotting countries. It has pressured them by its negative coverage of the coalition in Yemen, using the 'conspiracy frame' in the current crisis, using the 'Saudi and UAE as source of conflict frame', and using the 'negative economic effects frame'.

Conclusion

One could argue that Aljazeera has been used by Qatar in many of its conflicts. There have been studies carried out in the past that clearly state that Aljazeera's coverage does change with the Qatar's stance in a conflict. The Qatar Crisis is another example of Aljazeera's changing narrative according to the Qatari government's stance. The frame analysis author has conducted shows the clear influence of Qatar's government on Aljazeera coverage of the Qatar Crisis. Other studies researcher mentioned confirm the change in the narrative of Aljazeera on an issue like the Yemen war. Since Qatar does not have military power or huge influence on the region, instead it uses Aljazeera as a power tool and it continues to do so in the current crisis. However, author believes that viewers in the Arab world are now more aware that Aljazeera is owned and financed by Qatar and is achieving its foreign policy.

Qatar's coalition with the Muslim Brotherhood which also affects Aljazeera's narrative is one of the main sources of the current conflict. However, Aljazeera frames Saudi Arabia and the UAE to be the main source of the current conflict. None of the articles posted by Aljazeera made any reference of the Riyadh agreements which were signed by Qatar in which Qatar would stop supporting the Muslim Brotherhood and change Aljazeera's narrative towards the GCC states and Egypt. The conspiracy frame used in the articles supports Qatar's story and narrative.

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The coverage of Aljazeera has always changed whenever Qatar was involved in a conflict. In particular, the change in its coverage during the current crisis was evident in the economic effects frame where Qatar was trying to frame the boycotting countries as being in economic hardship while its own economy as being strong enough to overcome the sanctions. Similar findings by other studies also proved the change of its coverage of the Yemen War and its coverage on the boycotting countries. The focus of the coverage changed from showing the dangers of the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels to the humanitarian toll caused by the coalition and the coalition's failure to achieve its goals. This change once again proves Qatar's involvement in the media narrative of Aljazeera and its usage as a tool by Qatar to achieve its foreign policy.

Independent and neutral media are descriptions that are very ideal and somewhat unrealistic. Although audiences would definitely prefer such media, the way media institutions are established and managed make them almost impossible to be fully independent. The propaganda model suggested by Herman and Chomsky shows how factors like ownership, advertising, and sourcing all have an effect on the production of media outlets. In author opinion, although these facts are acceptable and many of the audiences are aware of the influencing factors, it could still be problematic. For example, when the narrative of these media outlets cause conflicts between states or encourages chaos within states. Aljazeera for instance has always been part of Qatar's conflicts with other states, and it is evident in the current conflict as one of the thirteen demands stated by the boycotting countries is the closure of Aljazeera. The narrative of Aljazeera is also problematic if it is used as a communication tool for the Muslim Brotherhood, which is considered a terrorist organization by some countries.

More than a year after the beginning of the Qatar crisis, Qatar's narrative remains similar to the frames used by Aljazeera on the first day of the crisis. Qatar's Amir Tamim bin Hamad delivered a speech on September 25, 2018 at the General Debate of the 73rd Session of the General Assembly at the United Nations in New York. The speech framed the crisis to be a conspiracy by stating that there was "pre-arranged campaign of incitement against it, beside the insinuation and fabrications used to create the crisis" (Peninsula, 2018). In addition, the sanctions were described as an economic warfare that was launched to hinder the development process of Qatar, which was very similar to the negative economic effects frame. Further research could be done to study the changes in Aljazeera's framing of the crisis. The relation between Aljazeera and transnational Islamic groups like the Muslim Brotherhood could also be studied and researched further to see the effect of political Islam on media. Many researchers and viewers have become more aware of who controls the media, but the extent to which media outlets can truly be held to account for the social and political upheaval caused by their coverage remains questionable.

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