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Chair: Diplomacy and Negotiation

Al-Jazeera and Qatar Foreign Policy: Asset or Liability?

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List of Abbreviations

Al-Jazeera Arabia=AJA

Al-Jazeera English=AJE

Edition=ed.

Et cetera=etc.

Example=e.g.

Figure=fig.

Government of Qatar=GOQ

Gulf Cooperation Council=GCC

Idem=id.

Journal=J.

No date=n.d.

No place=n.p.

Number=no.

Page=p.

Pages=pp.

The United Arab Emirates=UAE

Translated by/translation/translator=trans.

Volume=vol.

Volumes=vols.

Work cited=op.cit.

Introduction

This thesis explores Al-Jazeera's evolving role as a foreign policy tool, and its relationship to Qatar which founded and sustains funding it. Pragmatically, the interplay between Al-Jazeera and Qatari foreign policy renders Qatar favorable rebound as well as intractable predicament. Considering the personal character of Qatari foreign policy, it is hard to distinguish whether Al-Jazeera serves foreign policy as a tool or reshape it to keep pace with the tone of the station as a motivation. And what is further perplexed is the increment in deliberation of whether Al-Jazeera is a great asset or an embarrassing liability to Qatar.

The issue proposed practically

Since its establishment in 1996, Al-Jazeera has dedicated to provide for distinctive perspectives with freedom which it is claimed that other major Western networks are short of. However, it is far from immune from reflecting Qatari foreign policy perspectives. As a major media player, Al-Jazeera succeeded. According to a survey paper in 2001, Al-Jazeera was described as "the most famous satellite TV station in the Arab world" and "the new Arab media phenomenon"¹. Breaking some taboos, originally Al-Jazeera presented "much buffing of the ruler's ego"², and "had changed the landscape of Arab media forever"³. Based in and founded by Qatar, Al-Jazeera correspondingly makes the state influential internationally and does not avoid affecting politics and perceptions in other countries.

While Al-Jazeera has promoted Qatari perspectives on significant foreign policy issues, the advantaged condition created by this state-sponsored/private-operated station does remold Qatari orientation and application of foreign policy. After all, the mass media can perform a significant function as a mechanism for propaganda of governments. As a result, the former U.S. ambassador to Qatar, Joseph Lebron, called Al-Jazeera "an informal tool of GOQ (that is, the government of Qatar) foreign policy"⁴ in 2009. In that way, how does Al-Jazeera per se perform as a diplomatic tool of GOQ? Was it from one day designed to comply with Qatar foreign policy, or alternatively did the latter adjust itself to accord with the former? In view of the U.S. military presence in Doha, what role exactly does the U.S. play pertaining to Qatar foreign policy? To what extent did Al-Jazeera reshape the world politics and the national image of the minor state? And how does Qatar employ this tool to position itself as a successful and prolific microstate with grand diplomacy

¹ Bahry. "The New Arab Media Phenomenon". *Middle East Policy* (June 2001), p.88.

² Miles. *Al Jazeera: the inside story of the Arab News Channel that is challenging the West*. New York: Grove Press, 2005, p.23.

³ Miles. "Thinking again". *Foreign Policy* No.155(2006). Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25462058>(Last access on 24th May, 2018).

⁴ Lebron. "US embassy cables: Qatar using Al-Jazeera as bargaining tool, claims us". *The Guardian*. November 19, 2009. Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/235574> (Last access on April 19th, 2018).

and high-profile mediation?

Regretably, the credibility and objectivity of Al-Jazeera has been regarded as suffering a disastrous decline and depravation since the Arab Spring in 2011. What is complicated is that there are differentiated conditions between Al-Jazeera Arabic and Al-Jazeera English. According to some surveys, Al-Jazeera English, regardless of website or station, is more objective and reliable than Al-Jazeera Arabic which is of powerful influence in the Persian region. Definitely, the framing style of the coverage on Al-Jazeera English and Arabic is of great distinction. Does the divergence between the two channels happen by chance or by intention? In virtue of Al-Jazeera's public sympathy to Muslim Brotherhood, ISIS, al-Qaeda and Hamas, Doha has provoked intense hatred and universal condemnation in the Islamic world. The serious state of affairs is that in June 2017 Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE, Bahrain and Yemen announced to sever ties with Qatar. They held that Qatar funded militant groups ISIS, Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda, which was denied by Qatar. Interestingly, Al-Jazeera was requested to shut down according to these countries' list of demands to Qatar. In addition, Qatar was also deemed to make efforts to improve the relationship with Iran which enjoys a leading role of the Shiite. Is Qatar really in league with these terrorists? Is it its authentic intention to side with these radical extremists? Is there any political end sheltered by the interwoven relationship with them? Equally, is there any political interest for these countries that accused Qatar of connection with terrorists? Alternatively, is the religion itself likewise a real political interest? Then what about the modus operandi of Qatar's efforts to concentrate international prestige and national security strategy? Combining the achievement of national image-building with the accusation of notorious orientation-propagating and the current crisis of severing diplomatic relations, whether has Al-Jazeera become an asset or liability to Qatar? What will the balance sheet look like? To solve these queries, the following chapters may explore tentative analyses.

The significance borne academically

With the globalization of information, nation states increasingly attach importance to capitalizing on the mass media to boost national images, thereby enhancing the emphasis placed on the media by the scholars who engage in international relations. With regard to Al-Jazeera, periodical articles and research papers have been flourishing, albeit a great number of which depart from the footing of communication or journalism to analyze the rising of Al-Jazeera and its impacts. However, there are few analyses on the perspective of international relations. Considering the deficiency of the comprehensive research of the interplay between Al-Jazeera and Qatar foreign policy, this thesis makes effort to extend it energetically.

The successful pragmatism of Qatar foreign policy may bring useful enlightenment of leveraging with diplomacy to other small countries. The small power with grand diplomacy ought to deserve more concentration from scholars. In particular, more researches are required to figure out that to what extent the

unique model of Al-Jazeera contributes to the realization of Qatar's policy objectives. Aware of Al-Jazeera's contribution to as well as effect on Qatari foreign policy, there may be the possibility to provide some significant references in portraying the national image and the diffusion of soft power.

Simultaneously, the head-scratching straits brought by Al-Jazeera's dire reportage should afford lessons that merit attention. What is to the point is that communication-based public diplomacy should be exercised within moderation, which is likewise an art of theory. The current diplomatic crises around Qatar bear its profound process, after all, Rome was not built in a day. Academic analyses are expected to be inspired to explore the deep roots. Combining the evolution period of Al-Jazeera with the phased transformation of Qatar foreign policy, supplemented by case studies, this thesis is desired to initiate an innovative approach of the study on foreign policy and international relations.

Argument and methodology

According to efforts to survey Al-Jazeera since its establishment, Qatar foreign policy and the influence Al-Jazeera exposes on the state internationally, this thesis is designed to indicate that Al-Jazeera promotes Qatari perspectives on significant foreign policy issues; meanwhile, although the subtle relationship with the Qatari government and the elite has constrained the station's independence and credibility, the advantaged condition created by Al-Jazeera has as well remolded Qatari orientation and application of foreign policy. If Al-Jazeera, as a tool or an approach, had always been regard as an asset of Qatar before the Arab Spring, it is now hardly to say it is not a liability to Qatar considering the disastrous repercussion owing to its public sympathy to the Muslim Brotherhood or the tendency to fostering cordial relationship with Iran, as well as other Persian countries' hostility and resentment generated by Al-Jazeera.

In order to sketch the aforementioned dynamics, the emergence of Al-Jazeera, along with a definition of public diplomacy, is conducted in the first place, followed by an analysis of the covering style and a demonstration of the evolving role of Al-Jazeera, implying to what extent the conformity with Qatar political strategy is expected. In light of the unique hybrid model and the influential reportage, a comparison between the coverage of Al-Jazeera Arabic and Al-Jazeera English is subsequently made, including a case study. In the second place, a systematic elaboration of Qatar foreign policy and its phased evolution are examined. Obviously, the policy changes have a subtle nexus with the process of Al-Jazeera. This indicates how Qatar employs this tool to position itself as a successful and prolific microstate with grand diplomacy and high-profile mediation. Furthermore, several significant components that are imperative to Qatar foreign policy are clarified respectively, including the U.S., Iran and Islamic religion. In the third place, a couple of case studies are illustrated to explore the interplay between Al-Jazeera's inciting coverage and Qatari diplomatic targets, thereby construing how Al-Jazeera performs as an asset, as well as a liability to Qatar foreign policy. Definitely, Al-Jazeera has performed as a diplomatic tool of GOQ and likewise has reshaped

Qatari orientation and application of foreign policy correspondingly. Finally, based on the arguments above, several conclusions can be come to, which can afford deserving references to Qatar and other states akin to Qatar. Al-Jazeera is designed to comply with Qatar foreign policy, and the latter likewise has to adjust itself to accord with the former. The interplay between the both does exist. Although Al-Jazeera created embarrassing liability to Qatar, it remains a valuable asset to Qatar. According to the success and so-called failure of Al-Jazeera, the experience of national image-building and political objective-actualizing can be drawn.

Based on diplomacy and international relations, as well as communication, public relations and management, this thesis makes reference to either primary or secondary sources. As for the former, official documents, such as statements, policy papers, etc., and quantitative data or statistics take a part. In this regard, valuable insights origin from the network of Al-Jazeera English which is comparatively more objective and less radical than its Arabic counterpart. The secondary sources derive from the most recent academic achievements on Al-Jazeera and on the dynamics of Qatar foreign policy. Some statistics, quoted from some famous researches on comparative quantity, concentrate on supporting the case study. And the latest news is likewise taken into consideration, conducive to the corroboration of this sort of research.

Chapter one: The emergence and evolution of Al-Jazeera

To explore the evolving role as a Qatari foreign policy tool, it is imperative to gain a blow-by-blow account of the advent of Al-Jazeera in context. It is not surprising that the mass communication has long been a tool of governments to implement public diplomacy strategies. The exact implication of public diplomacy consequently deserves a clarification.

1.1 Public diplomacy and media propagation

Public diplomacy is one of the most significant concepts of political communication, which manifests beyond the interaction between the public structures and beyond the traditional diplomacy, containing dimensions of international relations, forming the public opinion from other nations. As an open exchange of ideas and information, it comprises of the governmental support for the programmes in the cultural, informational and educational domain, the exchange of citizens, the missions oriented towards the foreign audience's information and influence⁵.

Based on the complex relation of three major components---mass-media, public opinion and government foreign policy⁶, it is of a powerful function. And the way public diplomacy manages to convince the internal and external public does result in the promotion or decline of the positive perception for the nation's image. Evolving day by day, the role of public diplomacy in international relations is increasingly vital. However, it is difficult to achieve any universal frame to integrate all the relevant knowledge from communication, public relations to strategic studies. Until now the main actors in the specialty literature have been the cultural diplomacy and the information's dissemination with the help of the international broadcasting networks⁷. The usage of the internet for self-promotion is an extremely efficient way in the public diplomacy⁸. And the country brand, diaspora, internet, NGOs, public opinion, and international exchanges are nearly disregarded⁹. And the evaluation of the public diplomatic activities is ignored as well. Although there does not exist a clear delimitation of the public diplomacy, it can be deemed as an international institution, as well as a national one, with the purpose of promoting the national interests through addressing to others countries' citizens.

⁵ Adriana Grigorescu and Al Zink Fawaz. "Public Diplomacy". *Valahian Journal of Economic Studies* 5(19)(2014). p.103.

⁶ Soroka. "Media, public opinion, and foreign policy". *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* Vol.8,No.1(2003), p.28.

⁷ Adriana Grigorescu and Al Zink Fawaz. "Public Diplomacy". *Valahian Journal of Economic Studies* 5(19)(2014). p.104.

⁸ Weimann. *Terror on the Internet: The new challenges*. Washington, D.C.:United States Institute of Peace Press,2006. p.215.

⁹ Gilboa. "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy". *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Vol.616,No.1 (2008), p.67.

Definitely, the specific connotation can be various according to different scholars. As far as Manheim is concerned, public diplomacy indicates "efforts by the government of one nation to influence public or elite opinion in a second nation for the purpose of turning the foreign policy of the target nation to advantage"¹⁰. It is a process of two-level cognitive construction in the unit of nations. The two-level cognitive construction is based on the distinction between the self-cognition and the cognition of others. The diplomatic communication is to construct the cognition of other countries based on self-cognition constructed in one's own country.

The consensus is that the passion for public diplomacy began in the 20th century when diplomacy started to be in the opinion attention of the public owing to the mass media¹¹. Yet as a tool of public diplomacy, the implement of international broadcasting can date back to World War I. The media was connected with public diplomacy as an instrument which the government knew how to use to shape the public opinion¹².

Distinctive from official diplomacy, public diplomacy is the way the international political actors, governments or international organizations, communicate with citizens of other states¹³. The great attention paid to public diplomacy performs as a globalized communication function, thereby the audience encounters with the policy and plays a momentous part in national problems and in the proliferation of the communication mechanism¹⁴. That is, the culture and communication play a significant role in building the dialogue with various nations' population¹⁵.

The mass media play a significant role in modern politics at both national and international levels, as well as a profound role in producing and reproducing identities of self and others, identities that underpin discourses of both integration and conflict within and beyond the region. The new media have become ideational battlefields on which competing political, religious, economic and social narratives are fighting it out, shaping perceptions of the world beyond borders and articulating respective voices for projection into the wider realm. Some scholars have even defined the mass media and new communication tools as the fourth estate. The mass media has become the major outlet for political communication which can portray the relationship between the three traditional powers-the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. When a political system faces problems in the functioning of these three powers, the media will play a strong and

¹⁰ Manheim. *Strategic public diplomacy and American foreign policy: The evolution of influence*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994, p.4.

¹¹ Gilboa. Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Vol.616,No.1 (2008), p.55.

¹² Sadri. *The Role of Digital Media in Empowering Individuals: Public Diplomacy, the Blogosphere, and the Digital Divide*. Proceeding of the Politics and Information Systems Technologies and Applications (PISTA) Conference. Orlando, Florida, 29 June -3 July 2010. Retrieved from: http://www.iiis.org/CDs2010/CD2010SCI/PISTA_2010/PapersPdf/PA601UL.pdf. (Last access on 26th May, 2018).

¹³ Pamment. *New Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century: A Comparative Study of Policy and Practice*. New York: Routledge, 2013, p.1.

¹⁴ Cull. *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the past*. CPD Perspectives on Public Diplomacy. Los Angeles: Figueroa Press, 2009, p.46.

¹⁵ Servaes. "Soft power and public diplomacy: The new frontier for public relations and international communication between the US and China". *Public Relations Review* Vol.38,No.5(2012), p.643.

key role in the new type of "mediated politics"¹⁶. It seems to be the case for international politics in the New World Order that took shape after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989¹⁷.

Mediated public diplomacy increasingly aims at "organized attempts by a president and his foreign policy apparatus to exert as much control as possible"¹⁸ over the framing of the nation's policies in world news networks. The new Arab media have become the iconic faces of the Arab world for those on the outside looking in: Al-Jazeera provides a global platform to contest the hegemonic worldview of American satellite television, Jihadist websites take centre-stage in the Western security consciousness, and Facebook becomes the frontline of popular political mobilization¹⁹. Obviously, Al-Jazeera has often been understood as a counter-hegemonic force challenging the existing political order and its prevalent social discourse²⁰. Qatar has been making effort to employ soft power, which refers to the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment, combining its hard power resources to exert a smart power strategy. Political leaders have long understood the power that comes from setting the agenda and determining the framework of a debate²¹. Therefore, Qatar seeks to set the agenda and attract others in world politics, instead of merely applying economic weapons under the circumstance of weak military and comprehensive perspectives.

Soft power depends on a nation's resources of culture, values, and policies and the ability to shape the preferences of others. The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)²². Carrying out a successful public diplomacy strategy hugely rests on the government's competence of exerting communication strategy to sell favorable framing of events to the potential international audience. In general, the conformity of the news agenda with the state's national interests is deemed essential to a successful communication strategy, ultimately mobilizing enough pressure to induce other countries to revise policies²³. Diplomacy aimed at public opinion can become as important to outcomes as the traditional classified diplomatic communications among leaders. Unfortunately, the evaluation of public diplomacy is exercised much less than the disseminating activities.

¹⁶ Shanthi Kalathil, *Taylor. Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact of the Internet on Authoritarian Rule*. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003, p.94.

¹⁷ Ahmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. pp.1-18. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press,2012. p.1.

¹⁸ Entman. Theorizing mediated public diplomacy: The U.S. case. *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 2008(13), p.4.

¹⁹ Mhjoob Zweiri. *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press,2012. xv.

²⁰ Wojcieszak, "Magdalena. Al-Jazeera: A Challenge to Traditional Framing Research". *The International Communication Gazette* 69(2007), p.115. .

²¹ Joseph S. Nye. "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power". *The Annals of the American Academy* (March 2008), p.96.

²² Joseph S. Nye. "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power". *The Annals of the American Academy* (March 2008), p.97.

²³ Serra. The killing of Brazilian street children and the rise of the international public sphere. In J. Curran (Ed.), *Media organisations in society*. London: Arnold. 2000, pp.151-153.

Public diplomacy has a long history as a means of promoting a country's soft power. It is an important tool in the arsenal of smart power, while smart public diplomacy requires an understanding of the roles of credibility, self-criticism, and civil society in generating soft power²⁴. Modern politics is more and more shaped by mass communication tools²⁵. The free flow of information challenged the one-side discourses of national governments from within and without²⁶. The mass media constitute a major symbolic arena in which rival groups and individuals compete to establish the accepted definition of reality²⁷.

Effective public diplomacy is a two-way street, which entails both listening and talking. In light of the exchange is usually more effective than the mere broadcasting, it is important to understand better what is going on in the minds of others and what values you share. Face-to-face communications remain the most effective, which can be supplemented and reinforced by the Internet. The Internet can be employed interactively in combination with exchanges. Public diplomacy, aiming at getting audiences to want the same outcomes you want, requires an understanding of how they are hearing your messages and adapting them accordingly. Otherwise public diplomacy that degenerates into propaganda not only fails to convince, but also can undercut soft power²⁸.

1.2 The emergence of Al-Jazeera

Al-Jazeera was the first Arab channel to introduce proper investigative journalism, as well as the first to entertain all kinds of previously off-limits guests on its talk shows, tackling controversial topics such as suicide bombing, corruption, female empowerment and the existence of God. Al-Jazeera International is estimated to reach approximately 80 million viewers throughout the world²⁹. Its uniquely iconoclastic programmes demolished social, political and religious taboos and set a new standard of reporting in the region. It introduced concepts like democracy and human rights and drastically extended the boundaries of free speech. It also deeply disturbed other governments in the region since none of them, with the exception of post-revolutionary Tunisia, enjoys a popular democratic mandate, thereby they fear anything that might weaken their grips on power.

²⁴ Joseph S. Nye. "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power". *The Annals of the American Academy* (March 2008), p.99.

²⁵ Ahmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. pp.1-18. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press,2012. p.3.

²⁶ Ahmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. pp.1-18. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press,2012. p.1.

²⁷ William A. Gamson. *Talking Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp.3-7.

²⁸ Joseph S. Nye. "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power". *The Annals of the American Academy* (March 2008), p.108.

²⁹ New York Times. "Times Topics: Al-Jazeera" .(14January 2009). Retrieved from:
http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/a/al_jazeera/index.html?scp=4&sq=Al%20Jazeera&st=cse.

1.2.1 The birth of Al-Jazeera

Based in Doha, Qatar, Al-Jazeera began broadcasting in November 1996. When took control of the government, the former Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani set out to carry out a series of reforms towards democracy and modernization. His decision to launch Al-Jazeera happened to coincide with the closure of the BBC Arabic channel. The abortive attempt to establish a BBC Arabic service in Saudi Arabia left a number of highly qualified Arab journalists available³⁰. An editorial team of 20 BBC Arabic veterans were hired by Al-Jazeera that became the first Arabic-language channel to be directly critical of Arab regimes while being located on Arab soil³¹.

It is not exaggerated that the sponsorship of the Qatari government gave birth to Al-Jazeera. The station has always asseverated independent from Qatari interests since its inception, albeit the former Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani funded it with \$137 million to support its first five years' broadcasts, with the understanding that it would become self-sustaining after that point. In public, the Emir alleged that the funding was a loan rather than a grant, which Al-Jazeera was expected to repay and eventually transfer to private hands by 2001. However, when Al-Jazeera failed to create gains in 2001, covering only 35%-40% of the costs from advertising, the Emit made up his mind to enlarge the loan of indefinite duration³².

In 2006, Al-Jazeera initiated an English-language service and its Arabic service continues to be the most prominent news source in the Arab world³³. Pursuant to Forbes magazine, Qatari government had invested more than \$1 billion until 2009 in Al-Jazeera English, which covered more than \$100 million per year in losses for Al-Jazeera Arabic's operations³⁴, in addition to an annual budget of \$300 million³⁵.

Despite the generous funding, the Emir persistently asserted that Al-Jazeera's staff members, who are Western-educated reporters with work experience in major international broadcasters, are trained to adhere to professional norms regardless of the station's sponsor³⁶. The Al-Jazeera management team likewise stresses that the station adheres to its promise to provide access to "the opinion and the other opinion", citing its decision to be the first Arab channel to interview Israeli officials³⁷. Al-Jazeera officials have also repeatedly stated that Al-Jazeera actually embroiled Qatar in clashes with Iran and several Arab countries

³⁰ Milton L. Mueller. *Ruling the Root: Internet Governance and the Taming of Cyberspace*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002, p.21.

³¹ Jon W. Anderson. New Media, New Publics: Reconfiguring the Public Space of Islam. *Social Research* 70(2003).p.898.

³² Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1297.

³³ Ahmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. pp.1-18. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012, p.12.

³⁴ Helman. Will Americans tune to Al Jazeera? *Forbes* (13 July 2009). Retrieved from:

<http://www.forbes.com/forbes/2009/0713/comcast-al-qaeda-will-americans-tune-to-al-jazeera.html>. (Last access on 17th May 2018)

³⁵ El-Ibiary. "Questioning the Al-Jazeera Effect: Analysis of Al-Qaeda's media strategy and its relationship with Al-Jazeera". *Global Media and Communication* Vol.7,No.3(2011), p.199.

³⁶ Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1299.

³⁷ Samuel-Azran. *Al-Jazeera and US war coverage*. New York: Peter Lang, 2010, p.49.

due to the station's criticism of various regimes, including Tunisia, Jordan, Kuwait, and the Palestinian Authority, and that several scoops that damages the Muslim world's image were broadcast on Al-Jazeera in the name of objectivity, such as the early 2001 images of the Taliban destroying the Buddha statues in Afghanistan. Qatari officials vehemently insist that Al-Jazeera's team of reporters, which comprises individuals of 45 ethnicities and 50 nationalities, is evidence of its international nature. Based on 30 interviews with Al-Jazeera staff, British journalist Hugh Miles concluded that the Al-Jazeera's staff indeed "do not stop to think for a second about the nationality of their station or its financier"³⁸.

1.2.2 The evolving process of Al-Jazeera

The evolving process of Al-Jazeera can be divided into three time periods.

The first stage: before "9 • 11". In this period, Al-Jazeera was famous in the Arab world for its novel program forms and the coverage of major events in the Arabian region, which enabled it to begin to enter the eyes of Western media and audiences. The launching of Qatar's Al-Jazeera TV in 1996 had as well marked a new stage in regional and international politics. On the one hand, it allowed the voices of the previously silent masses to be heard, challenging the communicative monopoly of the authoritarian Arab regimes in the region. On the other hand, these voices were often of those who rejected the unipolar New World Order led by the United States. Al-Jazeera's successful broadcasting in Arabic dethroned the CNN and the BBC as the main international disseminators of news in the Arabic-speaking world. Moreover, this challenge was carried to the English-speaking world by the later launching of Al-Jazeera International broadcasting in English³⁹.

In order to curb the production of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the U.S. and the UK forces launched a military operation named 'Operation Desert Fox' on December 16 of 1998, destroying more than a hundred targets in Iraq within 70 hours. Al-Jazeera was the only news media that witnessed laser-guided bombs and cruise missiles continuously attacking Baghdad. The exclusive coverage on the 'Operation Desert Fox' military campaign boosted the impact of Al-Jazeera. It was the first milestone in the history of Al-Jazeera's influence⁴⁰.

In October 2000, the Palestinian people launched a national uprising against the Israeli presence in the occupied land, which is known as the second national uprising of Palestine. It was of great significance in the history of Al-Jazeera TV in that its reports not only had a profound social and political impact in Palestine and Israel, but also in the Middle East and other regions. For one thing, it promoted the unity of the Arab countries and strengthened the national consciousness of the Arab people. For another, it made the events in Palestine known to the world, prompting the nations of the world to begin to care about the events

³⁸ Hugh Miles. *Al-Jazeera: The inside story of the Arab news channel that is challenging the West*. New York: Grove Press, 2005, p.356.

³⁹ Mhjoob Zweiri. *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012. p.2.

⁴⁰ 龙翔:《半岛电视台的影响力探析》, 硕士学位论文, 北京外国语大学, 2014年5月。

in Palestine, which to a certain extent promoted the peace process in the Middle East. In fact, during the uprising, Al-Jazeera was not the only choice for the audience. There were more than 30 Arabic satellite television channels, including Abu Dhabi television, Saudi orbiting television station, Hezbollah's Al-Manar, covering twenty-two Arab countries. In addition, the BBC and CNN were available to many Arab families. However, Al-Jazeera stood out from all its competitors⁴¹.

In the 'Operation Desert Fox' military engagement, Al-Jazeera began its rise to fame, and displayed remarkable skills in the second national uprising in Pakistan. Al-Jazeera, known in the Arab region for its open, highly liberal, arguing and inciting programs, has brought varying degrees of change to the Arab world economically, politically, and culturally. The most important thing is that its appearance has brought a conceptual impact on the conservative Arab world. Mark Lynch wrote in his book, the emerging of Al-Jazeera greatly changed the political and cultural environment. It not only gave the audience images, but also made them aware of the debates and opinions that appeared in elite media and high-level forums. It did not create but rather reshaped the Arab people's views on key issues⁴². Thanks to its uniqueness in breaking through tradition, the balance reporting that caused widespread concerns and the conflicting news framing with sensational effects, Al-Jazeera then really entered in the eyes of the world, and gained a certain degree of international influence.

The second stage: after the "9 • 11" and before the Arab upheaval in 2011. During this period, Al-Jazeera was known by the world for its coverage of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, becoming an international media. Thanks to the two wars, Al-Jazeera TV has truly become a world-wide media with more than 65 million⁴³ audiences worldwide. And for the first time, the international information flow was reversed.

The war is often deemed as an excellent platform for television stations' accomplishments. The world knew the famous *Time Magazine* because of World War II. This time, the international community made the acquaintance of Al-Jazeera located in Doha. Al-Jazeera TV reporter Mufta Suvaidan proudly stated, "The Gulf War was a good time for the *Time*. Now this is our chance. We are the only one with reporters in Kabul"⁴⁴. Within the area under the control of the Taliban in Afghanistan, only Al-Jazeera's journalists and the U.S. Pentagon could learn of the ongoing events, apart from the local people and the Taliban. The Pentagon might observe the situation through spy satellites and the reporters from three international news agencies who had no camera to record any image, only with satellite phones. Therefore, Al-Jazeera TV station monopolized the coverage of the news in Afghanistan without rival.

In the first several weeks, Al-Jazeera TV station conducted a series of reports, some of which often contradicted with the statements from the U.S. Department of Defense, including the inhuman indications of

⁴¹ 龙翔:《半岛电视台的影响力探析》,硕士学位论文,北京外国语大学,2014年5月。

⁴² Marc Lynch. *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today*. Columbia University Press, 2013, p.132.

⁴³ 陆晔,展江:《战火中崛起的半岛电视台》,载《今传媒》,2004年第5期,第21页。

⁴⁴ 张翠容:《半岛电视台:一夜战胜CNN》,载《书摘》,2003年第1期,第36页。

the attacks by the coalition forces. Al-Jazeera reported, the Taliban claimed that the U.S. bombers had killed more than 100 doctors, nurses and patients in a military hospital on the outskirts of Herat, which were denied by the Pentagon. A lot of this kind of incident was disaffirmed likewise. And the U.S. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld said that Al-Jazeera's reporting of civilian casualties was 'ridiculous'⁴⁵. However, when the scenes of Afghani children, who had been bombarded with severe burns and lay in the hospital, crying bitterly, appeared on the Al-Jazeera TV station, it was embarrassing for the U.S. to disavow. In principle, receiving sources, the Pentagon firstly had to delete the parts disadvantageous to the U.S. When the major media in the United States obtained the deleted information, their respective directors and reporters reprocessed the information. Only the modified picture can be seen in the U.S. media, and the real situation in Afghanistan could not be got. Therefore, Al-Jazeera's coverage on civilian casualties has undoubtedly filled a large gap in the war's coverage, and it was considered to be a reflection of the actual situation of the war from another perspective. At the time in Washington, 79% of those surveyed admitted watching Al-Jazeera⁴⁶.

The reportage of the war in Afghanistan paved the way for the coverage of the war in Iraq afterwards. Before the start of the war, Al-Jazeera had adequately prepared for reporters. Simultaneously, it clarified its distinctive stance from other Arab television stations. Al-Jazeera's news reports and reviews revealed the division and disunity demonstrated by the upcoming war in the Middle East, where there was a great deal of disagreement on the position. Al-Jazeera criticized the quarrel between leaders of Arab countries in a high-profile manner. News commentators of Al-Jazeera analyzed how Egypt and Saudi Arabia had been marginalized by the United States, as well as the U.S.'s violation of other small Arab nations. No Gulf State stood up in good faith to criticize the United States for its preemptive strikes on Iraq. Commentators of Al-Jazeera repeatedly stated the above point of view in stark contrast with other Arab media's low-profile ignorance. In addition, Al-Jazeera often antagonized the American media. The Iraqi authorities expelled the CNN two days after the beginning of the war, while Al-Jazeera stayed in Baghdad, which contributed to the decision of other U.S. networks to retreat⁴⁷. Then all major US radios and television networks reached an agreement with Al-Jazeera to purchase footages from Baghdad. Al-Jazeera became a reliance of the Western media, to which the journalists of Al-Jazeera became freelance contributors.

While Al-Jazeera was hailed by many in the West as a harbinger of a new, more liberal-minded Middle East, American officials reviled Al-Jazeera as little more than a terrorist propaganda outlet. In the aftermath of 9/11, the U.S. officials became severely critical of Al-Jazeera, accusing it of performing as a mouthpiece for al-Qaeda⁴⁸. The media became not only the medium but also the voice itself⁴⁹. Combining Western

⁴⁵ 欧阳国忠:《阿富汗战争-半岛电视台一枝独秀》,载《媒体活动实战报告》,2005年版,第123页。

⁴⁶ [英]迈尔斯著,黎瑞刚等译:《意见与异见:半岛电视台的崛起》,上海·学林出版社,2006年版,第103页。

⁴⁷ 田川:《半岛电视台与CNN的异同》,载《新闻世界》,2009年第12期,第88-89页。

⁴⁸ Ahmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. pp.1-18. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012. p.16.

journalism with Arab specialty, Al-Jazeera succeeded to promote its international influence with various scoops. From an independent viewpoint, Al-Jazeera won a reputation for reporting on behalf of humanity.

The third stage: since the Arab upheaval in 2011 until now. During this period, Al-Jazeera was under suspicion because of its serious imbalance in reporting, with the accusation for being intervened by the government. Its influence was accordingly reduced⁵⁰. However, it still adjusts its tone to the Qatar foreign policy.

The Arab upheaval, as well known as the Arab Spring in 2011, was caused by an incident of self-immolation in Tunisia. Then political changes in Arab countries were triggered. The role of internet media therein could not be ignored. Although Al-Jazeera played an important role as an iconic television station in the Arab countries in the early stage, it was benefited little from the Arab Spring. On the contrary, its coverage was met with incredulity from the Arab public and its influence dropped dramatically.

During the recent years, a stream of never-ending diplomatic crises kicked off between Qatar and every other country in the region except Oman, as well as many non-Arab nations. The network's myriad enemies used every trick in the book to try to shut it down, from arresting correspondents and closing bureaus to deporting family members of employees, harassing potential advertisers, launching frivolous lawsuits and, in the case of the US, bombing its offices twice and killing members of its staff⁵¹. The station fiercely maintains its independence from Arab governments and delivers an editorial line which is often hostile to these governments, as well as to the U.S. involvement in the region and Israel's actions in the continuing conflict with the Palestinians. The most severe crisis is the current severing diplomatic relations which began from May 2017 when the channel's Jordanian, Kuwait and Egyptian bureaus were all briefly shuttered for various perceived insults to the ruling cliques.

Through vertical comparison between the Al-Jazeera during the Arab drastic revolution period and before it, it is shown that the reason for the decline of Al-Jazeera does not rest simply on the inaccurate news reports, but on that the seeds of today's decline was already buried at the beginning of its creation. That is, although it was claimed to be independent, Al-Jazeera has always been a diplomatic tool of the Qatari government; it pursued the adoration for the West while ignored the reality of the Arabic society; its own journalistic concept has not kept pace with the times, and it has always wanted to increase the audience rating by creating sensational effects. Consequently, it was counterproductive⁵².

At any rate, Al-Jazeera has emphasized the principle of providing diverse opinions and counter-opinions and

⁴⁹ Mhjoob Zweiri. *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012. xix.

⁵⁰ 龙翔:《半岛电视台的影响力探析》, 硕士学位论文, 北京外国语大学, 2014年5月。

⁵¹ Al-Jazeera, insurgent TV station that divides the Arab world, faces closure. *The Guardian* (1 June 2017) Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/jul/01/demand-al-jazeera-closure-shows-how-much-enemies-fear-it>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018)

⁵² 龙翔:《半岛电视台的影响力探析》, 硕士毕业论文, 北京外国语大学, 2014年5月。

created a new public space for open discussion that was previously missing in the region⁵³. Arguably, the station has been praised as a harbinger of democratic values in the region and criticized as a mouthpiece for violent extremists in the West⁵⁴. It has been a standard-bearer for Arab perspectives on global news issues while its journalists have been banned in just about every Arab capital at one time or another. Bringing a new level of professionalism, both in format and in journalistic conduct, to the Arab media, Al-Jazeera has been condemned by the same for its subordination to a hybridized form of Westernization. However, no one could deny that Al-Jazeera has exerted a tremendous impact on public consciousness and the political dialogue in the Arab world, as well as on the possibilities that arise from challenges to both local political structures and globally hegemonic discourses⁵⁵.

Al-Jazeera's popularity still spreads. Some surveys conducted in Arabia have affirmed with reiteration that Al-Jazeera has effectively branded itself as an independent and credible media source⁵⁶. And in the midst of the Qatar-Saudi conflict, revealed that Al-Jazeera topped the ranks in brand recognition in the Arab world, including among Saudi viewers, with close to 82% of households watching the programmes of Al-Jazeera, more than the regional Saudi-funded satellite channel Al-Arabiya (with a viewership of 75%). In terms of credibility, 69% of the Saudis ranked Al-Jazeera as "trustworthy" or "very trustworthy" (vs. 70% for Al-Arabiya), whereas fewer than 3% of the Saudis considered Al-Jazeera as "not trustworthy"⁵⁷.

1.3 The hybrid model and coverage style of Al-Jazeera

As a tool of public diplomacy, the implement of international broadcasting dates back to World War I when the early mass media were mainly manipulated by states. However, the credibility and objectivity of the state owned media are deemed unreliable. With the termination of the Cold War, numbers of privately owned global news networks emerged, including CNN, MSNBC and Sky News, regarded as more reliable and objective than government-sponsored stations coming forth since World War I, and became the main hub for audiences during international crises and the main media diplomacy platform⁵⁸ with the independence from the direction of the government and national interests.

Under this trend, Al-Jazeera was operated as a hybrid state-sponsored/private network⁵⁹, performing as an

⁵³ Marc Lynch. "Taking Arabs Seriously". *Foreign Affairs* 82(2003). Retrieved from: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=10580765&site=ehost-live>. (Last access on 23th May, 2018).

⁵⁴ Mhjoob Zweiri. *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012. xvi.

⁵⁵ Mhjoob Zweiri. *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012. xvi.

⁵⁶ Arab Advisors Group. *Al Jazeera viewers base in Saudi Arabia is 5 times larger than United States Sponsored Al Hurra's audience; Al Hurra's credibility scores are quite bad in contrast with those of Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya*. Retrieved from: <http://www.arabadvisors.com/Pressers/presser-050904.htm>. (Last access on 18th May 2018)

⁵⁷ Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1298.

⁵⁸ El-Nawawy, M. US public diplomacy in the Arab world: The news credibility of Radio Sawa and Television Alhurra in five countries. *Global Media and Communication*, 2(2), 2006, p.185.

⁵⁹ Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013),

utterly powerful public diplomacy tool through its credibility perceived. It enables the government to govern the messages transmitted to global audiences. Considering the higher credibility, Al-Jazeera shows exceptional features from other state-sponsored stations. It is neither the government-sponsored model nor the privately owned one, but a new form combining the strength of the both. As far as Tal Samuel-Azran is concerned, Qatar invented a new model of public diplomacy by operating Al-Jazeera as a hybrid state-sponsored/private network. This hybrid model is a third form of media diplomacy, which allows the state to regain control over the messages transmitted to global audiences⁶⁰. Although it is sponsored by the government, Al-Jazeera alleges to operate independently in routine affairs. In this way, it enjoys the credibility of a privately owned station, and only in the period of crises entangling Qatar it reverts to state-sponsored-style airing. The credibility gained during peacetime enable Qatar to influence public opinion and then accordingly mobilize pressure on the elite in other nations to revise the target policies to Qatar's advantages⁶¹.

In light of this hybrid model, Qatar reinvented the traditional state-sponsored broadcasting model, and spontaneously adapted it to the increasingly modern communication atmosphere. By virtue of appearing liberal narratives transmitted to the globe with high impact, Al-Jazeera has established itself as a major media player. And it is extensively recognized as the foremost representative of independent media in the Arab region⁶². However, the network has consistently lost money since its launch, which is unsurprising, as no Arab channel makes a profit⁶³.

Looking at the main programmes on Al-Jazeera, they reflect its unique approach to news coverage in the region. Notably, two of the channel's mottos are "*opinion and counter-opinion*" and "*a platform for those without a platform*"⁶⁴. The live programme-*the Opposite Direction*-is one of the most popular, with a vast array of issues being discussed by opposing parties⁶⁵. The programme features that the participants frequently criticize Arab governments except for the GOQ, creating diplomatic problems for Qatar at times⁶⁶. Other live programmes include *More than an Opinion*, *Without Limits*, *Open Dialogue*, *Religion and Life*, *Beyond the News*, *al-Jazeera Platform*, *The American Presidential Race*, and *From Washington*. All the programme names imply the unconventional nature of Al-Jazeera. Programmes such as *Religion and Life*, hosted by the

p.1293.

⁶⁰ Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1295.

⁶¹ Serra, The killing of Brazilian street children and the rise of the international public sphere. In J. Curran (Ed.). *Media organisations in society*. London: Arnold. 2000, p.157.

⁶² Al Jenaibi. New age of press democracy in the Middle East. Arabic news channels: Al-Jazeera. *International Journal of Academic Research* 2 (4) (2010), p.385.

⁶³ Hugh Miles, Al Jazeera(Thinking again), Foreign Policy,July, 2006.

⁶⁴ Ahmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. pp.1-18. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press,2012. p.4.

⁶⁵ Al-Jazeera Arabic (2007). Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/BE212265-7D56-420A-B99D-82D8624E6D41.htm>. In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press,2012. p.4..

⁶⁶ Louay Y. Bahry. "The New Arab Media Phenomenon: Qatar's al-Jazeera". *Middle East Policy* 8(2)June,2001. p.89.

famous Egyptian cleric Yousef al-Qaradawi, are conducted in an interactive mode by allowing the viewers to call in and voice their opinions or ask sensitive questions. The recorded programmes as well address the critical and controversial issues regarding history, politics, culture, economy and health. Among them is the programme *With Heikal*, in which Muhammed Hassanein Heikal, a leading Arab nationalist and scholar of Middle Eastern politics, discusses modern Arab and international politics. In the political coverage Al-Jazeera does not always maintain neutral. On the issue of Arab-Israeli conflict, Al-Jazeera's sympathetic attitude towards the Palestinian is obvious, while it conducts interviews with the proponents of both sides⁶⁷. Al-Jazeera reflects popular opinions by portraying moderate Arab governments as politically bankrupt. Furthermore, it depicted the policies of Israel, the United States and the European Union, as well as European governments individually, as immoral. The attitude of the channel was reflected in the fact that it referred to victims of the Israeli assault in Gaza as 'martyrs', while Al-Arabiya referred to them as 'killed'⁶⁸. Aiming to project a positive image of the Arab world and to counter 'misperceptions' propagated in the West, Persian satellite channels have followed Al-Jazeera's lead in improving the quality of programming, particularly of news coverage, and in pushing editorial boundaries on social and political affairs. However, all Qatar's partners in the GCC have had occasion to forbid Al-Jazeera from reporting in their countries on account of the channel's failure to draw sufficient advertising from local companies to become financially independent from its al-Thani sponsor. The degree to which the channel's coverage of Qatar is self-censored to avoid losing the financial support is consequently a highly problematic issue⁶⁹.

The launching of Al-Jazeera International in 2006, addressing the English-speaking audience around the world, may be a response to the increasing challenge from the channels in Arab, including Al-Arabia, Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC), as well as a competition with the rivals in the international arena, namely the BBC and CNN. And the new English-language channel has recruited various renowned journalists such as Riz Khan and David Frost who worked for the BBC and CNN. The most popular programmes on the channel are *People and Power*, which claims to investigate the "use and abuse of power"⁷⁰; *The Riz Khan Show*, which allows an audience to ask questions of news-makers directly⁷¹; *Witness*, which focuses on human stories and provocative debates; *Frost Over The World*, hosted by David Frost; and *101 East*, which focuses on Asian affairs, all of which are highly interactive and have a more general and international focus

⁶⁷ Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012. p.5.

⁶⁸ Ahmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. pp.1-18. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012. p.14.

⁶⁹ Ahmed Abdelkareem Saif. "Deconstructing Before Building: Perspectives on Democracy in Qatar". In *Reform in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*. edited by Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Steven Wright. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2011, p.199.

⁷⁰ Al-Jazeera English. "Programmes". Retrieved from: <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/3D7AB564-6F62-4899-B982-63B520D409F1.htm> (Last access on 23th May, 2018).

⁷¹ Al-Jazeera English. "Programmes". Retrieved from: <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/3D7AB564-6F62-4899-B982-63B520D409F1.htm> (Last access on 23th May, 2018).

than those on Al-Jazeera's Arabic outlet⁷². A study by Miladi suggested that the Arab-speaking diaspora in Britain finds Al-Jazeera more reliable and trustworthy than the BBC and CNN post 9/11⁷³. According to Arab Public Opinion Research in 2011, 53% of Arabs are concerned about Al-Jazeera's international news coverage, which is far more than its main competitor Al-Arabiya's 14% and MBC's 12%⁷⁴. And Many Israelis regard Al-Jazeera as an important new force for change in the Arab world⁷⁵. Among over 700 satellite TV stations in the Middle East, Al-Jazeera stands out.

As for Al-Jazeera's coverage style and its general modus operandi, competitive war coverage was just part of a movement toward diversity. Al-Jazeera targets particular demographics, namely Arab men over the age of 25, the influential and the easily affected. It presents itself as a beacon of free speech and editorial independence in the region. However, what is indisputable is that Al-Jazeera is deemed to have different standards of taste from Western networks when it comes to showing casualties. It makes great efforts to try to pitch itself to audience by luring them with dramatic trailers and lead-in segments. Some montages of violence it employs are deliberately inflammatory. Although many Westerners think Al-Jazeera has a pro-Arab bias, many Arabs believe exactly the opposite. It is widely held in the Arab world that Al-Jazeera is financed and run by Mossad, MI5, or the CIA, so as to undermine Arab unity⁷⁶. It sounds a little absurd, yet deserves attention to its framing and content.

Framing is a concept that analyses the process of claim-making on various issues in society and politics. Robert Entman defined the concept as "making some aspects of reality more salient in a text in order to promote a particular 'problem definition', casual interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described"⁷⁷. Media framing provides "patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual"⁷⁸. This framing plays a significant role in defining controversial issues, by covering the events in a certain way, by magnifying certain of their aspects and emphasizing others, and by providing legitimacy to various actors. The way the mass media frame issue is affected by various factors, while the media's selection and presentation of an event or an issue can have significant consequences in public debates⁷⁹.

⁷² Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". in Mhjoob Zweiri ed. *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012, p.6.

⁷³ Miladi, N. (2006). Satellite TV News and the Arab Diaspora in Britain: Comparing Al-Jazeera, the BBC and CNN. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Vol. 32. No. 6, p 949.

⁷⁴ Shibley Telhami. The 2011 Arab Public Opinion Poll. *Brookings Report*. November 21, 2011, Retrieved from: <http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2011/11/21-arab-public-opinion-telhami>. (Last access on 16th May, 2018)

⁷⁵ Hugh Miles. Al Jazeera(Thinking again), *Foreign Policy*, July, 2006.

⁷⁶ Hugh Miles. Al Jazeera(Thinking again), *Foreign Policy*, July, 2006.

⁷⁷ Entman. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm". *Journal of Communication* 43(1993), p.52.

⁷⁸ Thomas E, Nelson, Rosalee A. Clawson. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance". *The American Political Science Review* 9(2008). p.7.

⁷⁹ Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". in Mhjoob Zweiri ed. *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012. p.6.

In the content of programs, Al-Jazeera boldly touches sensitive topics and breaks the long-standing Arab taboos. The "loyalty to the truth" and the "balanced and unbiased stance"⁸⁰ are even more popular and favored by ordinary people. Prior to the "9·11" incident, Al-Jazeera television station had become famous resulting from repeatedly playing videos of bin Laden and al-Qaeda. After the "Arab Spring" breaking out, Al-Jazeera took the lead in broadcasting demonstrations, calling on the people to fight for freedom, democracy and dignity. A series of agitation for subversion have repeatedly exasperated other neighboring authorities in the regional range. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak once reprimanded, "All noise comes from this small matchbox"⁸¹. Khalid Horobu commented, "Although the Arab Spring was indeed a popular revolution against decades of authoritarian regimes, its stunned speed of transmission was to a large extent due to the influence of Al-Jazeera's communications"⁸².

However, there is a profound consideration that Al-Jazeera has two faces: Al-Jazeera Arabic and Al-Jazeera English. It is the Arabic face that creates all the problems in Qatar's neighbourhood⁸³. While Al-Jazeera English, channel or website, as another face, enjoys growing popularity among westerners, with high quality news and sophisticated documentaries concentrated on the developing world.

1.4 Al-Jazeera Arabic vs. Al-Jazeera English

Beyond being a 24-hour news channel likewise, Al-Jazeera Arabic (AJA) is a very different beast in terms of language, content and frame of reference from Al-Jazeera English. This is hardly surprising given that they are aimed at entirely different audiences.

The Al-Jazeera Arabic news website was launched on January 1, 2001, which aimed to satisfy Arab-speaking countries' demand for online news from the Al-Jazeera brand. While the Al-Jazeera English website was launched on the eve of the war in Iraq on February 16, 2003 in order to serve English speakers with war-related news from a non-Western perspective⁸⁴.

What makes Qatar's neighbours uncomfortable about AJA is the channel's success in forging a new political awareness among Arabs and racial issues, such as social justice and human rights. What they find particularly distasteful is the widely propagated view, shared by the Qatari leadership, that sooner or later Islamist groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, will come to power across the whole region, propelled either by revolution or democratic elections.

⁸⁰ Khaled Hroub. "Qatar's Source of Arab Springs". *Project Syndicate*. October 18, 2011.

⁸¹ Khaled Hroub. "Qatar's Source of Arab Springs". *Project Syndicate*. October 18, 2011.

⁸² Khaled Hroub. "Qatar's Source of Arab Springs". *Project Syndicate*. October 18, 2011.

⁸³ Al-Jazeera, insurgent TV station that divides the Arab world, faces closure. *The Guardian*(1 June 2017) Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/jul/01/demand-al-jazeera-closure-shows-how-much-enemies-fear-it>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018)

⁸⁴ Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1299.

Compared with alternative English-language international news channels, such as BBC World, CNN International, France 24, and Russia Today, most observers agree Al-Jazeera English scores highly. In the UK, where we are comparatively spoilt for quality media, AJE is widely regarded as one of the leading broadcasters, a worthwhile alternative to the BBC, Sky or Channel 4⁸⁵. The biggest failure of Al-Jazeera's English language operation so far has been its inability to crack the US market, nevertheless even the BBC struggles there and this is probably more a reflection on the level of sophistication of the average US viewer, rather than Al-Jazeera's output.

According to Fahmy's survey, the majority of the English-language website's consumers, amounting to 81.4%, are from the United States and other Western states, whereas the great majority of consumers of the Arabic-language website, up to 98%, originate from the Arab world⁸⁶. In addition, the outputs and broadcasting norms of the two websites are distinctive dramatically. Halevi discovered that Al-Jazeera Arabic is much more aggressive in its reporting of U.S. affairs than the sanitized English version⁸⁷. Youssef discovered that the Al-Jazeera Arabic website disseminated propagandist messages regarding Iraqi civilian casualties during the war in Iraq, whereas Al-Jazeera English presented a more balanced version of the same events⁸⁸.

To illustrate the coverage of Al-Jazeera, Abmet Uysal analyzed Al-Jazeera's news coverage on its television channels and websites, each of which consists of both an English-and Arabic-language version. Comparing and contrasting Al-Jazeera's different formats, i.e., its Arabic and English versions along with the television and web-based formats, he focused on three themes: news topics, level of coverage and area of coverage⁸⁹. First of all, there is a significant difference between Al-Jazeera's television and website news coverage. To ascertain the nature of the news topics covered on Al-Jazeera's television channels and websites, Abmet Abmet Uysal analyzed 258 news items collected over a four-day period for Al-Jazeera's television channels and a five-day period for web coverage during the second half of May 2007. The web news was collected from the front page of the Arabic- and English-language websites⁹⁰. Accordingly, the outcomes pertaining to the three themes are reflected by Table 1-1, Table 1-2 and Table 13.

⁸⁵ Al-Jazeera, insurgent TV station that divides the Arab world, faces closure. *The Guardian*(1 June 2017) Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/jul/01/demand-al-jazeera-closure-shows-how-much-enemies-fear-it>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018)

⁸⁶ Fahmy, Al-Emad. Al-Jazeera vs Al-Jazeera: A comparison of the network's English and Arabic online coverage of the US/Al Qaeda conflict. *International Communication Gazette* 73(3)(2011). p.227.

⁸⁷ HaLevi. *Arabic news service sanitizes English translations*.(2007) Retrieved from: www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/121712 (Last access on 18th May, 2018)

⁸⁸ Youssef. Their word against ours: News discourse of the 2003 Gulf War civilian casualties in CNN and Al-Jazeera. *Global Media Journal: Mediterranean Edition* 4(2)(2009). p.16.

⁸⁹ Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012. p.6.

⁹⁰ Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012. p.7.

Table 1-1 News topics on Al-Jazeera

Topics	TV		Web		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Political	40	41.2	65	40.4	105	40.7
Military	32	33.0	34	21.1	66	25.6
Economic	7	7.2	24	14.9	31	12.0
Civil Strife	12	12.4	14	8.7	26	10.1
Cultural	3	3.1	16	9.9	19	7.4
Disasters	3	3.1	3	1.9	6	2.3
Others	0	0	5	3.1	5	1.9
Total	97	100.0	161	100.0	258	100.0

Source: Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012, p.7.

As is shown in Table 1-1, the political news constitutes the major portion, amounting to 40.7 per cent. The military news about conflicts and wars in the Middle East takes the second place with a quarter. 12% of the news stories target on regional and international economic affairs, and 10% on domestic or civil strife within different regions. Overall, there was little reporting of other types of news on the television. According to the comparison between the coverage of television and website news, the political and military news seem to dominate the television news, with 41.2 and 33 per cent of stories respectively. A more proportionate distribution appears on the web news, while the weight of political news remains about the same on each type of format. Contrary to the economic news, which amounts twice as much on the websites than on the television, the military news and civil strife gain more space on the television than on the websites.

By looking at whether the news focused on a local issue that concerned a single country or on a wider area, Abmet Uysal further classified the news covered on Al-Jazeera as local, pan-Arab or international. The result shows as the following Table 1-2.

Table 1-2 Levels of news coverage

Levels	TV		Web		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Local	36	37.1	69	42.9	105	40.7
Pan-Arab	44	45.4	41	25.5	85	32.9
International	17	17.5	51	31.7	68	26.4
Total	97	100.0	161	100.0	258	100.0

According to Table 1-2, while the pan-Arab news constitutes a little less than half the news (45.4 per cent) on the television, it contributes just a quarter of the news (25.5 per cent) on the website where local news constitutes the majority. In other words, the television coverage has a more Arab emphasis than the web coverage.

The study also coded the news according to the geographical region of the globe that was being discussed.

Table 1-3 Area of coverage

Levels	TV		Web		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Middle East	63	64.9	70	43.5	133	51.6
Asia	11	11.3	39	24.2	50	19.4
Europe	12	12.4	16	9.9	28	10.9
North America	2	2.1	14	8.7	16	6.2
Africa	6	6.2	13	8.1	19	7.4
Other	3	3.1	9	5.6	12	4.7
Total	97	100.0	161	100.0	258	100.0

Source: Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012, p.9.

As is shown in Table 1-3, about a half of the stories concerned the events and issues in the Middle East (51.6%). Again there is a significant difference between coverage on television and on the website. While news of the Middle East constitutes about two-thirds (64.9%) of the television news, it declines to less than half the coverage on the website (43.5%). A quarter of Al-Jazeera's web news focuses on Asia, indicating the close attention to the region and the fact that Al-Jazeera has a major branch in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia⁹¹.

Al-Jazeera's Arabic and English versions reflect a significant divergence in terms of content and approach. Surveying the news on Al-Jazeera outlets, remarkable differences display in the three themes covered during the period covered. The corresponding results are as the following Table 1-4, Table 1-5 and Table 1-6.

⁹¹ Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012, p.9.

Table 1-4 News topics by broadcasting/publishing language

Topics	Arabic		English		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Political	36	43.9	69	39.2	105	40.7
Military	29	35.4	37	21.0	66	25.6
Economic	6	7.3	25	14.2	31	12.0
Civil Strife	9	11.0	17	9.7	26	10.1
Cultural	0	0.0	19	10.8	19	7.4
Disasters	2	2.4	4	2.3	6	2.3
Others	0	0.0	5	2.8	5	1.9
Total	82	100.0	176	100.0	258	100.0

Source: Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012, p.10.

As is shown in Table 1-4, the political topics on both outlets approximate similar, that is, the Arabic outlet covers 43.9% of the news stories and the English one takes 39.2%. The military issues appear more frequently in the Arab-language news (35.4%) than in the English counterparts (21.0%). Considering the outcome in Table 1-1, the Al-Jazeera Arabic, both the channel and website, concentrates on the various conflicts within the Middle East. In stark contrast, the economic news, covering 14.2%, enjoys twice as much space in Al-Jazeera English than in the Arabic which covers 7.3%. Surprisingly, the Arabic prime-time television news and website front pages cover no cultural issues, while 10.8% of the English outlet gives access to the cultural items⁹².

Table 1-5 Level of coverage in Arabic and English language

Levels	Arabic		English		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Local	21	25.6	84	47.7	105	40.7
Pan-Arab	42	51.2	43	24.4	85	32.9
International	19	23.2	49	27.8	68	26.4
Total	82	100.0	176	100.0	258	100.0

Source: Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012, p.11.

⁹² Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012, p.10.

As is mentioned in the last section **1.3**, the news on the Al-Jazeera Arabic, including Arabic-language television channel and website, mainly aims to inform a specifically Arab audience, whereas its English counterpart targets on the international community. In terms of the level of coverage of local, Arab and international news, Table 1-5 shows that 51.2% of the Arabic-language broadcasting and publication concentrate on the Arab issues, namely the Arab-Israeli conflicts, the wars in Iraq, or the incidents in Lebanon. A quarter of the news covered local events on Al-Jazeera Arabic versus 47.7% of the English-language news concerned localized events around the world⁹³.

As for the area of coverage on the two outlets, Table 1-6 indicates that the news involving the Middle East covers 78% on Al-Jazeera Arabic, double as much as the English counterpart which takes 39.2%. The issues concerned other areas, namely Asia, Europe, North America, Africa and so on, account for less than 7% respectively on Al-Jazeera Arabic. While there is much space on the English outlet to cover issues concerned various areas, and a special interest likewise is paid to Asia (25.6%).

Table 1-6 Area of coverage

Levels	Arabic		English		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Middle East	64	78.0	69	39.2	133	51.6
Asia	5	6.1	45	25.6	50	19.4
Europe	3	3.7	25	14.2	28	10.9
North America	4	4.9	15	8.5	16	7.4
Africa	3	3.7	13	7.4	19	6.2
Other	3	3.7	9	5.1	12	4.7
Total	82	100.0	176	100.0	258	100.0

Source: Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012, p.11.

Generally speaking, there is an inclination of opposition to the West on Al-Jazeera Arabic by virtue of picking out items to cover and the expressions to employ. Obviously, when it comes to Hamas suicide bombers, the Arabic outlets mark it as 'martyrs' instead of 'suicide bombers' as the English counterpart does⁹⁴. In other words, the Arabic broadcasting tends to display a more Third World and pan-Arab orientation, while

⁹³ Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012, p.10.

⁹⁴ Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. pp.1-18. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012, p.11.

its English counterpart tends to display a more international approach. This implies that, despite the sharing ownership, the editorial preferences and audience expectations play out in shaping the choice and portrayal of the news in the global and regional scales, although comparing Al-Jazeera's news coverage on its websites to that on its television channels, the format of news coverage in written and visual forms can influence the content and form of the coverage as well. The clear distinctions demonstrate more obviously the political intention and diplomatic strategy of the Qatari government. It is said that Al-Jazeera has been caught 'sanitizing' Arabic hate terminology in its English translations, which has been regarded as relatively free and open in its coverage of the region. Qatar is observed to capitalize on the Al-Jazeera Arabic as a bargaining chip in foreign policy negotiations in light of adapting its coverage to suit other foreign leaders and offering to cease critical transmissions in exchange for major concessions⁹⁵. The reporting controlled over by the Qatari government is often held to be of favourable effect between Qatar and other countries.

1.5 Case study: The coverage of Turkish presidential election on Al-Jazeera Arabic and English

Al-Jazeera Arabic and Al-Jazeera International display significant differences in their approach and content. To display these differences, Mahjoob Zweiri and Emma C. Murphy conducted a content analysis on the prime-time news for a whole week on Al-Jazeera Arabic and English (the same dates on television and websites), which illustrates the nature and framing of the news reporting. They targeted their research subject on the coverage of the crisis of the Turkish presidential elections in April 2007, which stirred huge concern on the part of secular elites and factions in Turkey since the promising president might be a representative of the moderate Islamic AK Party⁹⁶. It is a process that drew much attention from Al-Jazeera as well.

This controversial process entailed a number of critical issues, such as the relationship between religion and politics, the meaning of democracy, and civil-military relations in Turkey. By conducting a content analysis of the news on the presidential crisis, Mahjoob Zweiri deciphered the nature of Al-Jazeera's framing of this controversial issue on its Arabic- and English-language websites. The Arabic-language website provided a more comprehensive coverage of the process than the English website, the text of the Arabic coverage reaching 30,658 words as opposed to 12,246 in English version. The coverage in both languages generally appeared to be balanced and neutral with the exception of two news accounts in English that seemed to favour the secular opposition to the AK Party and five news accounts in Arabic that seemed to favour the AK Party. Nonetheless, significant differences in coverage did emerge⁹⁷.

⁹⁵ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 18th May, 2018)

⁹⁶ Ahmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mahjoob Zweiri. pp.1-18. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012. p.11.

⁹⁷ Ahmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In

1.5.1 The English-language coverage of the Turkish presidential election

The labels that Al-Jazeera International used to portray Prime Minister Erdogan and his AK Party were interestingly diverse. They emphasized the party's Islamic roots and orientation in order to explain the causes of the crisis. In that regard, the terms 'Islamic-led'⁹⁸, 'Islamic-rooted'⁹⁹, 'Islamic-oriented'¹⁰⁰ and 'ex-Islamist'¹⁰¹ were used to define the AK government, nevertheless it was likewise mentioned that the AK Party itself rejected such an Islamist label and agenda¹⁰².

In covering the electoral process, the secular 'republican' protests received comprehensive coverage. At the beginning of the process, secular protests in Ankara were covered in detail and were viewed as a sign of "widening divisions between Turkey's secular and Islamic camps"¹⁰³. Arguably, an anti-AK Party attitude was demonstrated by Al-Jazeera when secularist 'republican' protests in Ankara were covered solely through the discourse of the protesters¹⁰⁴. And the announcement of Abdullah Gul's candidacy was framed as a positive development¹⁰⁵. This was uncharacteristic of Al-Jazeera, which generally allows all the opposing sides of disputes to voice their views.

The English-language channel associated the secular opposition and protests with the military¹⁰⁶. It noted the demand of the army's chief of staff, Yasar Buyukanit, for a president loyal to the republic in essence, not words. On another occasion, Al-Jazeera International claimed that after the secularist protests in Ankara the military took "a more concessionist stance"¹⁰⁷. At other times, the military was framed as being at the centre of the conflict and the opposition parties were labelled as secularist and pro-army¹⁰⁸. In a similar vein, the military statement was framed as a 'secularist ultimatum' against the Islamic-oriented AK government, while the AK Party's rejection of the military ultimatum was described as an "unprecedented defiance against

The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. pp.1-18. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press,2012. p.12.

⁹⁸ Al-Jazeera English. "Turkey PM to Address Nation". Retrieved from:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/FCEF7DF6-B180-4AFB-B3D5-553900A87C30.htm> (Last access on 23th May, 2018).

⁹⁹ Al-Jazeera English. "Erdogan Wants Polls to End Standoff" (2 May 2007). Retrieved from:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/BA5619F6-633E-4987-99D8-8868A1CA0AC1>. (Last access on 23th May, 2018).

¹⁰⁰ A-Jazeera English. "Turkey Secularism Row Escalates"(29 April 2007). Retrieved from:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/975A9A02-802F-4CF4-AA91-6E128CD3A0B6.htm>. (Last access on 23th May, 2018).

¹⁰¹ Al-Jazeera English. "Turkey Rally to Support Secularism". Retrieved from:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/9E015120-D8FF-4CEC-A6FA-A444B8309080.htm>. (Last access on 23th May, 2018).

¹⁰² Al-Jazeera English. "Turkey March for Secularism". Retrieved from: <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/archive7a42.html>. (Last access on 23th May, 2018).

¹⁰³ Al-Jazeera English. "Second Pro-secular Demo in Turkey". Retrieved from:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/9E800CFC-AE37-4B67-BF03-B46EFDE1E0C0.htm>. (Last access on 23th May, 2018).

¹⁰⁴ Al-Jazeera English. "Turkey March for Secularism". Retrieved from: <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/archive7a42.html>. (Last access on 23th May, 2018).

¹⁰⁵ Al-Jazeera English. "Turkey Parties Urge Snap Election". Retrieved from:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/de89169c-80ac-4cc3-b6f3-85d01a03d6d0.htm>.(Last access on 24th May, 2018).

¹⁰⁶ Al-Jazeera English. "Turks Rally in Izmir Despite Blast". Retrieved from:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/476B952C-8237-4629-9369-77DF4E1A7BC0.htm> (Last access on 24th May, 2018).

¹⁰⁷ Al-Jazeera English. "Turkey's Presidential Elections". Retrieved from:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/FBBDA4D7-DD4A-4C02-8904-756F184D1546.htm> (Last access on 24th May, 2018).

¹⁰⁸ Al-Jazeera English. "Turkey Faces New Election Timetable". Retrieved from:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/D5E8DB5D-3528-4BC8-B749-F501A994B99D.htm> (Last access on 24th May, 2018).

Turkish's military generals"¹⁰⁹. In explaining the role of the military in Turkish politics, and to provide a background for the crisis, the earlier military coups were mentioned and the threat for a military coup was revived as a possibility.

Al-Jazeera's English-language website noted that the secular establishment was trying to prevent an ex-Islamist from becoming the president of Turkey¹¹⁰. The blocking of the AK Party's candidate by the Constitutional Court on the basis of technicalities was attributed to the pressure exerted by the military¹¹¹. The Court's decision that a two-thirds attendance was required was also characterized as a 'shocking defeat' for the AK Party¹¹². The AK government's decision to go for early elections was framed as an attempt "to resolve a stand-off with the country's military"¹¹³. To explain the cause of this crisis it was stated that "a growing class of prosperous and more religious-minded Turks want a relaxation of curbs on religious symbols and expression"¹¹⁴.

1.5.2 The Arabic-language coverage of the Turkish presidential election

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the Arabic-language coverage of this case was a lot more extensive than the English coverage, both in terms of the number of accounts and their content. Unlike its English counterpart, some Arabic news accounts clearly displayed a pro-AK Party attitude, while most of the reports were neutral in the coverage of the Turkish election process¹¹⁵.

The Arabic sites' interest in the election started earlier than the English website's which covered the republican protests more extensively. Even before the crisis, Al-Jazeera Arabic reminded its readers that the possibility of Abdullah Gul becoming the next president faced challenges from two main obstacles: the opposition Republican People's Party (RPP) and the military¹¹⁶. Buyukanit's statement that the new president must be loyal to secularism in essence was noted several times in that context¹¹⁷.

When explaining the political struggle and civil-military relations in Turkey, Al-Jazeera Arabic frequently reminded its readers about the earlier military coups that had granted the military a dominant role in the

¹⁰⁹ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/841B9B54-0E54-4461-8726-D2C9E19E339F.htm>.

¹¹⁰ Al-Jazeera English. "Turkey Rally to Support Secularism". Retrieved from: <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/9E015120-D8FF-4CEC-A6FA-A444B8309080.htm>. (Last access on 23th May, 2018).

¹¹¹ Al-Jazeera English. "Court Rules Turkish Poll Invalid". Retrieved from: <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/E663047E-87CE-4FB6-8D97-DE31E6A6DD00.htm> (Last access on 24th May, 2018).

¹¹² Al-Jazeera English. "Erdogan Wants Polls to End Standoff".

¹¹³ Al-Jazeera English. "Turkey to Call General Election". Retrieved from: <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/D2C78883-90A2-4068-B155-D8FE00DE5716.htm> (Last access on 24th May, 2018).

¹¹⁴ Al-Jazeera English. "Erdogan Wants Polls to End Standoff".

¹¹⁵ Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012, p.14.

¹¹⁶ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/FE94E606-E3AF-4EFC-A92F-265BDF25D025.htm>.

¹¹⁷ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/2F409178-4DE5-4A7E-8047-45BB974CE8.htm>.

political system and suggested that the possibility of another military coup was on the table¹¹⁸. The EU and American disapproval of the military's intervention were portrayed as their taking one side in the dispute and were quoted for comparing Turkey and Algeria, where the secular military was likewise trying to curb the Islamist' power¹¹⁹.

The nature of the problem in Turkey was seen in a slightly different way in the Arabic coverage. In one account the presidential crisis was framed as a struggle between the AK government and the military¹²⁰. When describing the AK Party and its leaders, emphasis was given to their Islamic orientation¹²¹. Another account labelled the AK Party as "renovationist Islamists"¹²². In yet another account, an Egyptian writer defined the Turkish situation as a "struggle of identity" and labelled the crisis as the "destruction of the future" in Turkey¹²³. Elsewhere, the crisis was framed as a struggle between Islam and secularism¹²⁴. As for the causes of the crisis, the Al-Jazeera Arabic website argued that the secular protests aimed to thwart what was called "the Islamic tide"¹²⁵ and to prevent the headscarf from entering the presidential palace¹²⁶. However, the protests were depicted as representing the minority rather than the majority and the headscarf was projected as the symbol of an identity struggle in Turkey¹²⁷.

As a sign of Al-Jazeera's close interest in Turkey, the Arabic website published several detailed analytical articles by Egyptian, Jordanian and Lebanese writers about the political process in Turkey¹²⁸. In his article, the Lebanese writer noted that Turkey was ignoring the fact that it is a Muslim state and trying to convince Europe of its secularism and Europeanism¹²⁹.

Nevertheless, there were some sharing descriptions. Proclaiming the unconstitutional nature of the proceedings, the Republican People's Party (RPP) applied to the Supreme Court for the cancellation of the election's first round; the Court cancelled the ballot on the basis that the participation of 367 MPs was required to start the voting. Both the Arabic and English websites associated the Court's decision with military pressure and the secularist 'republican' protests¹³⁰. Prime Minister Erdogan's criticism of the Supreme Court's decision as a bullet to the heart of democracy was cited several times by both the English and Arabic versions¹³¹.

¹¹⁸ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/1137081B-6F8B-4B4E-BB45-DAB1953DB2EF.htm>.

¹¹⁹ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/3B383EA3-07D7-4618-BEE9-40393589738C.htm>.

¹²⁰ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/2A95FCB2-EF8D-4717-9F3E-F1EC03F6B91.htm>.

¹²¹ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/40529F66-2C2B-447A-AE0B-496C5A9D0475.htm>.

¹²² Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/1C4B0833-6819-4E1B-BE2D-13E63F189156.htm>.

¹²³ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/B6F03AE8-8B47-5DE-A507-48A3C804E010.htm>.

¹²⁴ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/B6F03AE8-8B47-5DE-A507-48A3C804E010.htm>.

¹²⁵ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/F3E86FC9-B836-4965-9C2E-B1BFBD3BEE0A.htm>.

¹²⁶ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/1C4B0833-6819-4E1B-BE2D-13E63F189156.htm>.

¹²⁷ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/B6F03AE8-8B47-5DE-A507-48A3C804E010.htm>.

¹²⁸ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/B6F03AE8-8B47-5DE-A507-48A3C804E010.htm>.

¹²⁹ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/242AD656-21C6-450F-9F87-9CCB4717DEE.htm>.

¹³⁰ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/1C4B0833-6819-4E1B-BE2D-13E63F189156.htm>.

¹³¹ Al-Jazeera Arabic. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/78CF75EB-94F7-4CD2-8904-A142168E38C4.htm>.

In general, the differences on media framing between the Arabic and English Al-Jazeera outlets can be attributed to editorial differences, in cultural backgrounds of international and Arab journalists, as well as to the nature of the audience. However, Mahjoob Zweiri's study concludes that distinctions exist in the content of the news coverage between the Al-Jazeera television channels and the websites which can be attributed to the nature of each format. The website format allows more freedom and space than television does to cover a variety of issues, major news events almost exclusively dominating each day's television agenda.¹³² In this case study, the significant difference in the coverage between Al-Jazeera Arabic and the English twin can be attributed to editorial preference and audience characteristics, reflecting the tendency of globalizing processes to 'produce' messages rather than simply relay them. As Al-Jazeera continues to advance its global rather than solely regional status, it will be interesting to see how its message frames adapt accordingly¹³³. It is the same condition of Qatar's objective

¹³² Abmet Uysal. "The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of al-Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English". In *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*, edited by Mhjoob Zweiri. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012, p.15.

¹³³ Mhjoob Zweiri. *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception*. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2012. xx.

Chapter Two: Qatar and its foreign policy

Transforming from a tribal community, Qatar is a relatively new country with no more than decades' history. It is an extremely small actor. However, profiting from the nation-sponsored/private-operated Al-Jazeera, Qatar indeed acts as a key player in the information age. Correspondingly, Qatar foreign policy deserves further attention in light of the reflection in and the entangling roots with Al-Jazeera's coverage.

2.1 An overview of Qatar

As a policy context, the national condition of Qatar is entailed to touch on firstly. Qatar is a country with both opportunities and barriers. Although it seems glamorous, Qatar does bear a complex kernel. It goes with a traditional sheik system and is moving toward modernization. It seeks a constant separation from the past, nevertheless it finds difficult to completely cut it off. The tiny emirate of Qatar is as easily seduced by glory and status as other countries, in particular under the circumstance of vulnerability perceived in a stratified international society. Considering the disadvantageous position in the international hierarchy, Qatar tends to overcome its shortcomings and to pursue a superior status, which may prove to be a significant stimulation for its foreign policy.

2.1.1 The origin of Qatar

Qatar was known as a backwater and attracted little attention until the al-Thani family took control of the peninsula over which the Bahraini had claimed by 1871, when Qatar struggled under the loose protection of the Ottoman Empire. With Britain achieving a series of Exclusive Agreements, the Anglo-Ottoman Convention of 1913 gave an end to the Ottoman claims to the Qatar Peninsula, which excluded the Bahraini intervention in Qatar's internal affairs. Subsequently, an Exclusive Agreement was signed in 1916 and ratified in 1918, defining Qatar's status under the protection of Britain for the following half century. Eventually, the British expected the small nations in the Gulf to form a Federation of Arab States and withdrew from the Gulf in 1971, with the consideration of ensuring the long-term security of Bahrain¹³⁴. In this way, Qatar gained independence from Britain on 3 September 1971, terminating its status as a British Protectorate. It subsequently became a member of the United Nations and the Arab League.

The ruling family al-Thani, prominent in Qatar since 1880s, upheld Sheikh Kalifa bin Hamad al-Thani to

¹³⁴ Sir Graham Boyce. "Qatar's Foreign Policy". *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

take control of power in 1972. Then Sheikh Kalifa bin Hamad arranged the government as a monarchy and was granted to full legislative and executive powers according to a provisional constitution. With his son Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani taking power through a bloodless palace coup in 1995, this structure was gradually changed by the new Emir's progressive reforms geared towards democracy and efforts to harmonize its policies and image with the American ones. The reason why the Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani moved against his father then was his frustration at the slow pace of change, including developing Qatar's huge gas reserves. The coup was an important foray into the wider political world as well, and Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa ran the risk of other GCC states, particularly Saudi Arabia who intervened to try to reinstate his father Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad. Therefore in a classic piece of preventative diplomacy, the Foreign Minister at the time, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani, travelled to Washington and London to get their agreement on Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa's behalf. The regime consequently got confidence.

Given the vast latitude that the rulers of the Gulf states have in making foreign policy, it is not surprising that the history of the GCC has been characterized by tensions among its members, all of which have a checkered history with Saudi Arabia. At one time or another during the first half of the twentieth century, Saudi Arabia pressured each of them to, in essence, become part of the expanding Saudi state. Only British protection kept the smaller states out of Riyadh's control, as London made them protectorates to guard the approaches to India and safeguard regional oil interests. British colonial policy bequeathed them their borders and their independence¹³⁵.

Situated in the Arabian Gulf, Qatar goes with the territory of only 11,437 square kilometers and a population of mere 250,000, similar in size to the U.S. state of Connecticut¹³⁶. However, with the highest GDP of any country in the world, Qatar is one of the most influential players in the global liquefied natural gas (LNG) market due to its remarkable oil and natural gas reserves, as well as strategic location, which enables it to be conferred a unique status and significance regionally and internationally¹³⁷. The Qatari per capita income enjoys the highest rate among the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council. As one of the Arab world's mightiest countries and the wealthiest country in the world, Qatari desirable economy is expected to continue prosperous and diversified. And the Qatari leadership has led the nation towards modernity, democracy and knowledge¹³⁸. In light of the rise of Qatar, Khatib suggests it is expected that "whatever the conflict facing the region, the tiny emirate will find a role for itself within it"¹³⁹.

¹³⁵ Gregory Gause, III, "Understanding the Gulf States", *Democracy Journal*, Issue 36, Spring 2015, pp. 31-32. Retrieve from: <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/36/understanding-the-gulf-states/> (Last access on 2 June, 2018)

¹³⁶ Brewer et al. "Overview of Qatar and the Policy Context". *Post-Secondary Education in Qatar*, edited by Cathleen Stasz et al., California: RAND corporation, 2007, p.7.

¹³⁷ Al-Jazeera and news agencies. *Qatar-Gulf crisis: All latest updates*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/qatar-diplomatic-crisis-latest-updates-170605105550769.html> (Last access on 13th May, 2018)

¹³⁸ Brewer et al. "Overview of Qatar and the Policy Context". *Post-Secondary Education in Qatar*, edited by Cathleen Stasz et al., California: RAND corporation, 2007, p.7.

¹³⁹ Khatib. Qatar's Foreign Policy: the limits of pragmatism. *International Affairs* Vol.89.No.2(2013), p.417.

2.1.2 Geopolitics of Qatar

Qatar is regarded as a typical representative of the small yet wealthy countries. It is easy for the surrounding big powers and foreign forces to target and erode Qatar. Geopolitically, Qatar is at the strategic point of access to Europe, Asia, and Africa, located in the "crisis arc" of the Middle East in the Persian Gulf. For a long time, the fighting in this area has been frequent, with endless disputes.

The institutional, social, political and ideological conditions of Qatar may contribute to understanding its endeavour. Qatar is a homogeneous tribally-based society where most inhabitants are descended from central Arabia. Most Qataris are Arabs who are also Muslim, of whom the majority follow Wahhabi Islam which is the same as that of Saudi Arabia, a traditional version of Sunni Islam as well as the state's official religion. In those early years after full independence Qatar did not deviate from consensus Arab politics on matters far from home. Abutting Saudi Arabia, Qatar maintained stable relations with Saudi Arabia through most of the second half of the 20th century and, in many respects, followed Saudi Arabia's lead on foreign policy. The border dispute with Saudi Arabia was curious. After Qatar and Saudi Arabia signed a border accord in 1965, which formally defined the borders between the both sides, Qatar followed Saudi Arabia's policy during the remainder of the Cold War. On several occasions, Saudi Arabia even acted as a mediator in territorial disputes between Qatar and Bahrain. That is possibly why Qatar seeks to levy mediation diplomacy as well. In 1981, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established, a political and economic council of the Arab states bordering on the Persian Gulf, including Qatar and Saudi Arabia as the initial members. In 1982, Qatar and Saudi Arabia further strengthened their relations by signing a bilateral defense agreement¹⁴⁰. To everyone's surprise, the Saudis eventually conceded most of the territory Qatar had demanded, perhaps under the consideration of complex tribal reasons¹⁴¹.

The small size of population in an area enhanced by oil wealth enabled the regime in Qatar to move swiftly towards liberalizing politics and adopt more universal values without incurring great resistance. Such advancement allows Qatar far from Western allegations that Wahhabism breeds violence via its rigid interpretation of Islamic tenets, and allows the Qatari regime to seek to escape the influence of Saudi hegemony. After witnessing two coup attempts instigated by Saudi Arabia in 1996 and 2005, it is beneficial to the Emir of Qatar to rejuvenate his legitimacy through institutionalizing the system of government and establishing a new base of support through democratic institutions that surmount the old Saudi-style base of legitimacy enjoyed by his predecessor¹⁴².

¹⁴⁰ Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1299.

¹⁴¹ Sir Graham Boyce. "Qatar's Foreign Policy". *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

¹⁴² Ahmed Abdelkareem Saif. "Deconstructing Before Building: Perspectives on Democracy in Qatar". In *Reform in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*. edited by Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Steven Wright. pp.105-106. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press,2011.

2.1.3 Reforms towards democracy

Since the Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani got authority, the regime in Qatar has taken numerous steps to promote economic and political liberalization, which may be modest in comparison with what is needed, yet undoubtedly remarkable and even progressive, as well as occasionally controversial and unexpected compared to what exists in other Arabian countries.

Economy reform: The first step the government made, as the foundation of the country's wealth, was to implement agreements with international oil companies on a different model from that practiced by most national oil companies. So there were no hang-ups about resource nationalism¹⁴³. Oil money was flowing in, yet not a rate that compared with Kuwait or Abu Dhabi.

Qatar's fast-paced economic development has facilitated its emergence as an important diplomatic power broker. Amid a precarious regional context, Qatar has pushed forward with an activist international agenda defined by high-profile mediation initiatives and aggressive state branding in the quest for achieving a position of international significance¹⁴⁴.

Education reform: In May 2001, the GOC launched a comprehensive initiative to reform the educational system under the title "education for a new phase", with the objective to cope with successive developments in this field at the international level. The new system aims to found new commissions to assume the mission of development and reform under the supervision of the Higher Council for Education, which is chaired by Qatar's Crown Prince of the time, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad al-Thani who became the new Emir in 2013. Considering education crucial to progress, this initiative is regarded the cornerstone of efforts towards reform in Qatar that has likewise fostered its educational partnership with Western counterparts by establishing the Qatar Foundation in 1995¹⁴⁵. The Qatar Foundation did bring world-class universities to Qatar's Education City, providing further educational opportunities for Qataris. The literacy rates increased over time, reaching 98.2 percent among 15-19 year olds in 2004¹⁴⁶. The disparity of education between men and women was either reversed through the new schooling reform, thereby the educational attainment of Qatari women has steadily advanced.

Having an edge in education was a careful planned strategy that built Qatar's profile of investment in human resource development instead of competing with neighboring oil-producing states¹⁴⁷. However, education standards are still low and Qatar lists the bottom of the global league table of applicants for US universities.

¹⁴³ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

¹⁴⁴ Babak Mohammadzadeh. "Status and Foreign Policy Change in Small States: Qatar's Emergence in Perspective". *The International Spectator* Vol.52, No.2(2017), p.19.

¹⁴⁵ Ahmed Abdelkareem Saif. "Deconstructing Before Building: Perspectives on Democracy in Qatar". In *Reform in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*. edited by Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Steven Wright. pp.108-109. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press,2011.

¹⁴⁶ Brewer et al. "Overview of Qatar and the Policy Context". *Post-Secondary Education in Qatar*, edited by Cathleen Stasz et al., California: RAND corporation, 2007, p.12.

¹⁴⁷ Miles. *Al-Jazeera: The inside story of the Arab news channel that is challenging the West*. New York, NY: Grove Press, 2005, p.49.

Furthermore, there is an understanding in Qatar that any form of government needs legitimacy. If you educate the people, they will want a growing say in how the country is governed. They will also want freedom of speech, equality before the law and equality of opportunity. The road is not an easy one.

Information reform: An unprecedented step was taken by the Emir in 1996 when he abolished the Ministry of Information, thereby indicating the abolition of government censorship of the press and reflecting his serious intentions towards reform. Freedom of the media represents one of the most striking examples of the new era of freedom in Qatar and is most obviously represented in Al-Jazeera, which is now the most famous and controversial satellite TV channel in the region. Beginning its programmes in 1996 as an independent TV channel, the station tests the limits of media openness to an extent never seen or heard before in any Arab country. It has introduced daring and provocative programmes and news bulletins unknown before in the Arab world, including direct broadcasting from 'hot spots' around the world and criticism of Arab rulers and governments on their internal and external policies. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt and Jordan consequently responded in some cases by verbal or media attacks on Qatar and by closing the station's offices in their countries. Al-Jazeera enjoys the unlimited protection of the Qatari government in that it accepts the de facto limitation on its freedom: it does not criticize the Qatari government in any way. In addition, providing an open and accessible platform for the Muslim Brotherhood, to which many of its staff affiliate, Al-Jazeera has also been involved in a mysterious undeclared alliance in its scope and aims with the Muslim Brotherhood¹⁴⁸. This is controversial and contradictory to Al-Jazeera's liberal orientation and thus poses many questions. The obvious impact on the regional media is that it forces media in other Arab countries to open up and to relax applied restrictions and censorship in order to cope with the new standards laid down by Al-Jazeera¹⁴⁹.

Democracy forum: Qatar is trying to set the standard for other neighbours to follow with regard to democracy, reform in Islam, education, economics and the rights of women. The political leadership in Qatar is emerging as a progressive force in the Arab world that can serve as such a model. Qatar has worked keenly to organize the annual Doha Forum on Democracy and Free Trade born in 2000, which has emphasized the values of peace, tolerance, security and freedom while prohibiting all kinds of violence. Since 2003 Qatar hosted a series of conferences on the topic of reform in the Middle East. Through this annual forum, Qatar aspires to be a crossroads for intellectual contributions to the progress of the region¹⁵⁰. Nevertheless, democracy is not a ready-made product that can be imported and implemented straightaway. In spite of the remarkable democratic steps taken by the GOQ, it is hard to claim that they are conducive to an

¹⁴⁸ Al Jazeera provides an open and accessible platform for the Muslim Brotherhood. Many of its key staff, including the director, affiliate to the Muslim brotherhood. This is controversial and contradictory to Al Jazeera's liberal orientation and thus poses many questions.

¹⁴⁹ Ahmed Abdelkareem Saif. "Deconstructing Before Building: Perspectives on Democracy in Qatar". In *Reform in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*. edited by Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Steven Wright. pp.106-107. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press,2011.

¹⁵⁰ Ahmed Abdelkareem Saif. "Deconstructing Before Building: Perspectives on Democracy in Qatar". In *Reform in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*. edited by Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Steven Wright. p.110. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press,2011.

authentic democracy. Over the past two decades, the Middle East has witnessed a 'transition' away from-and then back towards-authoritarianism¹⁵¹. It is now clear that liberalized autocracy has proven far more durable than one imagined¹⁵². Brumberg argues that Middle East regimes are becoming less, rather than more, autocratic in response to what they see as the social, economic, political, and geostrategic challenges facing their regimes¹⁵³. Such political eclecticism has the benefit of making the Arab rulers more durable, and Qatar, therefore, may persist as a liberalized autocracy rather than a full democratic polity¹⁵⁴.

2.1.4 The straits concurring in Qatar

Akin to the rest of the GCC members, Qatar finds itself in two contradictory situations. On the one hand, it is highly dependent on the external world, which makes it vulnerable and susceptible to outsiders; simultaneously, it is privileged with absolute domestic independence. Mohamed Ghubash explains that the financial revenues of Qatar in the Gulf are absolutely independent from the cycle of national economy since they depend heavily on oil that is explored, produced, refined and marketed by foreign companies; accordingly, the citizens have no bargaining power vis-à-vis the state, as thoroughly discussed by the well-known theory of 'rent-seeking'¹⁵⁵. The state has likewise an absolute independence from the workforce by depending to a large extent on expatriates. Consequently, citizens have no power to organize themselves in syndicates and unions or to exert enough pressure on the government through strikes¹⁵⁶. On the hand, Qatar enjoys an absolute independence from its citizens at the level of defence and security by depending on external powers for protection. Consequently, the state appears extremely powerful against its citizens and weak against the external world¹⁵⁷. In such a context, it is unlikely that the powerful, omnipresent state would recede and promote democracy either in the absence or presence of powerless civil and political institutions¹⁵⁸.

Although the promulgated constitution represented a milestone in Qatar's political life, the distribution of

¹⁵¹ Adam Przeworski. "The Games of Transition". in Scott Mainwaring et al.(eds.), *Issue in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective* (Notr Dame: Notre Dame University Press,1992), p.109.

¹⁵² Carothers. "The End of the Transition Paradigm". *Journal of Democracy*. Vol.13(January 2002), p.9.

¹⁵³ Daniel Brumberg. "Democratization in the Arab World? The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy". *Journal of Democracy*. Vol.13, No.4 (October 2002), p.59.

¹⁵⁴ Thomas Carothers defines the "gray zone" as one in which regimes are "neither dictatorial nor clearly headed toward democracy", see Carothers. "The End of the Transition Paradigm". *Journal of Democracy*. Vol.13(January 2002), p.9.

¹⁵⁵ Ghubash. "The Gulf State: An Authority More than Absolute and Society Less than Crippled". in Ali Al-Kuwari et al., *Towards a Radical Reform in the GCC Countries*. Unpublished Manuscript, Development Forum, 25th Meeting, Doha, 2004, p.18.

¹⁵⁶ Ghubash. "The Gulf State: An Authority More than Absolute and Society Less than Crippled". in Ali Al-Kuwari et al., *Towards a Radical Reform in the GCC Countries*. Unpublished Manuscript, Development Forum, 25th Meeting, Doha, 2004, p.15.

¹⁵⁷ Ghubash. "The Gulf State: An Authority More than Absolute and Society Less than Crippled". in Ali Al-Kuwari et al., *Towards a Radical Reform in the GCC Countries*. Unpublished Manuscript, Development Forum, 25th Meeting, Doha, 2004, p.27.

¹⁵⁸ Ahmed Abdelkareem Saif. "Deconstructing Before Building: Perspectives on Democracy in Qatar". In *Reform in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*. edited by Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Steven Wright. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press,2011, p.113.

power still favours the palace in a way that places the peace and direction of reform in the hands of the Emir. The constitution states that the rule is hereditary in the al-Thani family, and the Emir holds political and military powers in addition to legislative and judiciary prerogatives. The executive has leverage over other authorities and the Emir and his office are unaccountable before any other authority. The distribution of power is immensely unbalanced and, because of that, reforms will remain gifts granted by the ruler who logically is unlikely to foster an authentic democracy¹⁵⁹. There are unsolved questions about how a democratic system can most effectively function in a tribal society. There may not even be a clear vision of where Qatar wants to end up. Democracy is not a fixed goal.¹⁶⁰

As noted by Marina Ottaway 'significant' reform does not mean perfect reform. The challenge is to distinguish between partial steps that are significant, because they start altering the distribution of power and the character of the political system, and those that are merely window dressings¹⁶¹. Transition from an authoritarian to a democratic system requires a political paradigm shift, an abandoning by those controlling the government, yet often by their opponents as well, of old assumptions about the fundamental organization of the polity, the relation between the government and the citizens, and thus the source, distribution and exercise of political power.¹⁶² The concern here regarding democracy in Qatar is that, without having real and active political and civil bodies, there cannot be any shift and it is more likely that the regime is transforming into a semi-authoritarian one¹⁶³.

All in all, a tiny state like Qatar has its foreign policy determined first of all by its need to survive as an independent entity in a volatile region that is a particular challenge. The character of the foreign policy is then defined by the internal politics of the country and by the character of those driving the policy¹⁶⁴. Qatar has little choice other than to strike a balance between its oversized foreign policy role and the imperatives of regional and international realities. The above may be the background against which Qatar has developed a highly distinctive foreign policy.

2.2 Qatari foreign policy

The foreign policy options for a very small state in a dangerous neighbourhood are extremely limited. Qatar, known for unknown in regional and international politics until 1995, has in recent years pursued a

¹⁵⁹ Ahmed Abdelkareem Saif. "Deconstructing Before Building: Perspectives on Democracy in Qatar". In *Reform in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*. edited by Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Steven Wright. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2011, p.114.

¹⁶⁰ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

¹⁶¹ Ottaway. "Evaluating Middle East Reform: How Do We Know When It Is Significant?". Carnegie Papers. *Middle East Series* (No. 56, February 2005), pp.3-5.

¹⁶² Ottaway. "Evaluating Middle East Reform: How Do We Know When It Is Significant?". Carnegie Papers. *Middle East Series* (No. 56, February 2005), p.3.

¹⁶³ Ahmed Abdelkareem Saif. "Deconstructing Before Building: Perspectives on Democracy in Qatar". In *Reform in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*. edited by Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Steven Wright. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2011, p.114.

¹⁶⁴ Sir Graham Boyce. "Qatar's Foreign Policy". *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

high-profile foreign policy in the areas of dispute mediations, maintaining balanced relations with allies and adversaries alike, adept at using of soft power tools, and even military interventions in fellow Arab states, Libya in particular, to aid the Arab pro-democracy forces. Being a small country, Qatar still exercises grand diplomacy and devotes itself to contributing to the peace and stability of the region through conflict mediation, aiming at strengthening Qatar's national security in the Gulf neighbourhood as well as playing a more proactive role in the Arab world¹⁶⁵.

Emerging as a relatively major player in the Gulf, Qatar sets the foreign policy to some extent at the expense of Saudi Arabia. Much of Qatar's policy can be understood as an attempt to remove or decrease the perceived overbearing Saudi dominance. Contradictory to the Saudi perception that prefers a covert obedience to the US while at the same time maintaining a traditional Islamic public discourse that is resistant to the West, Qatar cements close relations with the U.S. by establishing limited relations with Israel and implementing calculated political liberalization, including the founding of the controversial Al-Jazeera satellite channel¹⁶⁶, challenging Saudi hegemony. Moreover, it is possible that Qatar seeks the balance of power within the GCC countries shifting gradually away from Saudi Arabia. The demise of Saddam Hussein means that Qatar no longer needs to look for Saudi protection or has to carefully consider oversensitive Saudi domestic politics, let alone wrestle with the uncertain destiny of the Saudi monarchy¹⁶⁷.

2.2.1 The phases of Qatari foreign policy

There is not a long history of Qatari major foreign policy decisions to trace.

As a former British diplomat, Sir Graham Boyce served as Ambassador to Qatar, Kuwait and Egypt. When it comes to Qatar's Foreign policy, Sir Graham Boyce mentioned that everyone he had spoken to said that they did not understand Qatar's foreign policy¹⁶⁸. Even consulting more extensively, it is still difficult to figure out what in fact Qatari foreign policy is. What is certain is that there exists a great gap between what the Qataris think of their policy and what others think they are engaged in. Consequently, it makes sense to analyze what has contributed to driving Qatari foreign policy and the direction in which the Emir has been trying to take the country. It is much a personal vision, which Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani articulated when he was Crown Prince and which he has been pushing forward since he overthrew his father in 1995¹⁶⁹. The leadership transition is to some extent a reflection of the importance of the personal in Gulf

¹⁶⁵ Mohammed Nuruzzaman. Qatar and the Arab Spring: down the foreign policy slope. *Contemporary Arab Affairs* Vol.8, No.2(2015), p.226.

¹⁶⁶ Grey E. Burkhardt and Susan Older. *The Information Revolution in the Middle East and North Africa*, National Defense Research Institute and RAND, 2003, p.18.

¹⁶⁷ Ahmed Abdelkareem Saif. "Deconstructing Before Building: Perspectives on Democracy in Qatar". In *Reform in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*. edited by Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Steven Wright. pp.104-105. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press,2011.

¹⁶⁸ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003

¹⁶⁹ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

politics¹⁷⁰. And the changes at the top of a Gulf monarchy can produce dramatic changes in foreign policy. Gregory Gause divided the process of Qatar diplomacy into three periods¹⁷¹, perhaps under the consideration of the personal characteristic of Qatari foreign policy. However, the second period can be specifically reviewed within further two phases.

In the first period, from the independence in the 1970s to the mid-1990s, Qatar relied completely on the Saudi without a clear foreign policy, and almost was the most loyal ally of Saudi Arabia within the GCC. Keeping a very low profile, the first Emir Sheikh Kalifa Bin Hamad al-Thani had no particular ambitions beyond the borders until he was deposed by his son Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani in 1995 when Qatari policy shifted dramatically.

In the second period, from the second Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani reigning the government until his abdication in 2013, Qatar vigorously expanded its foreign relations. Specifically, in the Hamad era, Qatar's foreign policy can be separated into two phases: from 1995 to the Arab Spring in 2011 as the first one, and from 2011 to 2013 as the other, which had undergone a historical process of evolution from 'neutral mediation' to 'active intervention'. Before the great upheaval of 2011 in the Middle East, Qatar's flexible and pragmatic diplomatic actions left a neutral 'mediator' image for the international community¹⁷². The Arab Spring changed the dynamic of Qatar's foreign policy. Guided by his cousin, former Foreign and Prime Minister Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani, Sheikh Hamad's foreign policy, which tended to be opportunistic, pragmatic and personal¹⁷³, came to be marked by a series of high-profile achievements¹⁷⁴.

Committed to the shaping of the national image and the construction of soft power, Qatar strives to display a neutral, friendly, modern and enlightened image on the world arena, which has been a crucially strategic measure for Qatar to break through the country's vulnerability. Since the mid-1990s, Qatar has been determined to find new ways to create a brand new national image as a breakthrough in order to forge a national brand with media, style, finance, and tourism as the main connotations¹⁷⁵. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani implemented a comprehensive foreign policy and established diplomatic relations with more than 110 countries, making Qatar a member of the UN, the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States, and the Gulf Cooperation Council. Qatar actively participated in regional and international affairs and frequently organized various large international conferences to expand its influence. Qatar becomes a staunch ally of the United States and the only Gulf Arab country that maintains normal economic and trade relations with Israel. Meanwhile, it enjoys good relationships with Syria and Iran. The Emir Sheikh Hamad

¹⁷⁰ Gregory Gause, III, " Understanding the Gulf States", *Democracy Journal*, Issue 36, Spring 2015, pp. 31-32. Retrieve from: <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/36/understanding-the-gulf-states/> (Last access on 2 June, 2018).

¹⁷¹ Gregory Gause, III, " Understanding the Gulf States", *Democracy Journal*, Issue 36, Spring 2015, pp. 31-32.

¹⁷² 吴彦, 陈世乔: 《哈马德时代卡塔尔外交政策的演进-以卡塔尔应对利比亚内战的政策为视角》, 载《国际论坛》, 2015年9月, 第17卷第5期。

¹⁷³ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

¹⁷⁴ Mohammed Nuruzzaman. Qatar and the Arab Spring: down the foreign policy slope. *Contemporary Arab Affairs* Vol.8, No.2(2015), p.226.

¹⁷⁵ 胡雨: 《阿拉伯剧变后的卡塔尔外交政策》, 《阿拉伯世界研究》, 2015年9月, 第5期。

implemented reforms in various fields concerning internal affairs and diplomacy, committed to building a new Qatar¹⁷⁶.

In 1996, the Qatari government created the first round-the-clock satellite television network in the Middle East---Al-Jazeera on which Qatar capitalizes to promote its own values and policies, making it an important channel for national branding and external communication. Without the full support of the Qatari royal family, there can be no "success story" for Al-Jazeera¹⁷⁷. In 1997, Qatar established the Assistance to the Sudan Commission, marking Qatar's initiation of a proactive foreign policy and participation in the mediation of regional conflicts¹⁷⁸. After the war in Iraq ended, along with the break of the balance of power in the Middle East which entered a new period of frequent conflicts, Qatar's diplomatic mediation as well entered an active period. Cases in which Qatari diplomatic mediation played a significant role include the Lebanon crisis, the Darfur issue in Sudan, the Gaza war, etc. Instead of adjusting to shifting political alignments and keeping out of perilous diplomatic entanglements, Qatar regularly involved in initiating and shaping political change. Qatar's changing foreign policy presents a critical test for the role of ideas in small states, even when small states are located in relatively less mature international societies¹⁷⁹.

During Libya's civil war in 2011, Qatar provided strong support to the Libyan opposition in many ways, accelerating Qaddafi's downfall and the establishment of an opposition regime. Qatar selectively assisted the Libyan Islamist opposition and profoundly affected the political reconstruction of Libya in post-Qadhafi era. The long-term confrontation between the secularist camp and the Islamist camp dragged Libya to the depths of the second civil war. The evolution of Qatar's foreign policy in the era of Hamad was rooted in the enormous increase in Qatari's national strength and was closely related to external forces such as the United States and the Muslim Brotherhood. With the increasing complexity of the situation in the Middle East, Qatar's foreign policy of excessive intervention is facing severe challenges¹⁸⁰.

Qatar under Sheikh Hamad's leading was all about the global brand, from Al-Jazeera to the successful World Cup bid to the establishment in Doha of 'Education City', home to branch campuses of a number of American universities. And Qatar went from being Saudi Arabia's closest Gulf ally to a thorn in the Saudi side, asserting its independence from Riyadh on a series of issues, the most important of which was Sheikh Hamad's support for populist, Islamist groups throughout the Arab world, most notably the Muslim Brotherhood. Sheikh Hamad saw the rise of populist Islam as the wave of the Arab future, and hitched Qatar's regional ambitions to close ties with the Muslim Brotherhood. He gave Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an

¹⁷⁶ 穆罕默德·巴扎兹:《变化世界中的卡塔尔外交政策新趋势(阿文版)》[J],载《阿拉伯历史》44(2008).

¹⁷⁷ Khaled Hroub. "Qatar's Source of Arab Springs". *Project Syndicate*. October 18, 2011.

¹⁷⁸ 穆罕默德·哈菲兹·阿卜杜·马吉德:《卡塔尔现象与阿拉伯政治格局(阿文版)》[J],载《国际政治》176(2009).

¹⁷⁹ Babak Mohammadzadeh. "Status and Foreign Policy Change in Small States: Qatar's Emergence in Perspective". *The International Spectator* Vol.52, No.2(2017), p.27.

¹⁸⁰ 吴彦,陈世乔:《哈马德时代卡塔尔外交政策的演进-以卡塔尔应对利比亚内战的政策为视角》,载《国际论坛》,2015年9月,第17卷第5期。

intellectual leader of the Egyptian branch of the Brotherhood, Qatari citizenship and his own show on Al-Jazeera. In addition, Qatar maintained close relations with the Hamas government in Gaza, with Hamad paying the equivalent of a state visit to Gaza in 2012. Through extensive aid to Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood government, Qatar became a strong supporter of Islamist opposition groups in the Syrian civil war.

However, it is difficult to say whether Qatar's national interest was better served by Sheikh Hamad's ambitious global branding and support for Islamists, or by his father's low profile and pro-Saudi stance. What is absolutely clear is that the man at the top in Qatar has enormous leeway to determine the state's foreign policy. That is why so much attention was focused on the new ruler, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

In the third period, since the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's succession in 2013, Qatar has recurred to smooth and pragmatic adjustments.

The military operations in distant or nearby Arab countries by the al-Thani government has promoted a growing unease of Qatari citizens. A survey in 2012 found that more than 70% of the respondents identified interventions in Libya and Syria as the main political problem in Qatar. They disliked the way the Qatari government was solving other countries' problems¹⁸¹. If public opinion is any indicator of popular discontent, then the al-Thani rulers have good reason to reconsider and reshuffle the decks accordingly. This requires a shift from interventionist to peaceful foreign policy pursuits. At the same time, a slow decline in Qatar's richness is likely to force the new Qatari emir to tone down Doha's high-profile foreign policy to avoid unpopular expenses for intervention in foreign countries and the creation of new regional adversaries¹⁸².

Little is known of the Emir Sheikh Tamim's own policy views. He rules in the shadow of his father, who voluntarily abdicated, in all likelihood to secure a stable transition after three consecutive leadership changes by palace coup. His Gulf neighbors, tired of Sheikh Hamad's independent line, put heavy pressure on Sheikh Tamim to return to the Saudi-led fold, culminating in the 2014 'reconciliation'¹⁸³. On November 16, 2014, Arab news outlets flashed a picture of the young ruler of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, kissing the forehead of the then-aged monarch of Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah. That kiss, a common gesture in the Arabian Peninsula of respect by the young for their elders, supposedly sealed a reconciliation between Qatar and the other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the club of monarchical energy producers in the Persian Gulf that, in addition to Saudi Arabia and Qatar, includes Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Oman. Qatar had fallen out with the GCC members over its maverick policy of supporting Islamist groups, encouraging a freer press through its sponsorship of the Al-Jazeera satellite television network, and generally putting itself forward as an independent voice in regional foreign-policy

¹⁸¹ Gengler. "The Political Costs of Qatar's Western Orientation". *Middle East Policy* XIX(4)(201),pp.70-71.

¹⁸² Mohammed Nuruzzaman. Qatar and the Arab Spring: down the foreign policy slope. *Contemporary Arab Affairs* Vol.8, No.2(2015), p.235.

¹⁸³ Gregory Gause, III, " Understanding the Gulf States", *Democracy Journal*, Issue 36, Spring 2015, pp. 31-32. Retrieve from: <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/36/understanding-the-gulf-states/> (Last access on 2 June, 2018)

This Saudi-Qatari reconciliation allowed the GCC to hold its annual summit in Doha, Qatar's capital, the following month. The summit produced modest results, including cooperation agreements on naval and police issues. Qatar agreed to a summit declaration that seemed like a retreat on a number of fronts, backing Sisi's regime in Egypt and the Libyan government in Tobruk. Meanwhile, over the course of 2014, Qatar had been keeping a lower profile in Syria, leaving the Saudis as the major Gulf player there. And at the end of December 2014, Al-Jazeera closed its channel devoted to Egyptian news, which had been critical of the Sisi government and supportive of its Muslim Brotherhood foes.

Nevertheless while some of the Muslim Brotherhood leaders who had found a home in exile in Qatar left the country amid the Saudi-Qatari reconciliation, other prominent figures remain there. A senior Qatari official told *The New York Times* after the Gulf summit that its declaration was simply a 'press release' of little significance. Given the opacity of policy-making in the Gulf states, it is difficult to tell how far Qatar has backed away from its previous policies and reconciled with its Gulf neighbors¹⁸⁵. The bottom line is that no one really knows what Qatar's foreign policy is going to be in the future

2.2.2 Mediation and niche diplomacy

Given that the economic development cannot rely entirely on petrochemical energy, Qatar strives to seek strategic transformation in order to achieve omnibearing with intellectualisation, internationalization and diversification. As a successful paradigm, Qatar demonstrates how a small country can take advantage of soft power to influence perceptions and preferences of the outside world. If the continuous promotion of the national brand is an internal cultivation of Qatar's national prestige and influence, then mediation diplomacy constitutes an outward force that demonstrates its national strength¹⁸⁶.

Based on the realistic portrayal of its own small country with a small number of people, Qatar has long been unremarkable in the Arab world, let alone accomplishment in regional and global affairs. To break through this structural obstacle, making their voices in the international arena and establishing a national image, bold and progressive diplomatic innovation is required to carry out. This is why Qatar tried to use the 'niche diplomacy' to seek a breakthrough. The so-called 'niche diplomacy' refers to "acting as a catalyst for a specific international issue or establishing an international alliance for a particular business"¹⁸⁷. It is characterized by the use of niche and setting the corners of the issue, centralizing resources, optimizing

¹⁸⁴ Gregory Gause, III, "Understanding the Gulf States", *Democracy Journal*, Issue 36, Spring 2015, pp. 31-32. Retrieve from: <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/36/understanding-the-gulf-states/> (Last access on 2 June, 2018)

¹⁸⁵ Gregory Gause, III, "Understanding the Gulf States", *Democracy Journal*, Issue 36, Spring 2015, pp. 31-32. Retrieve from: <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/36/understanding-the-gulf-states/> (Last access on 2 June, 2018).

¹⁸⁶ 胡雨:《阿拉伯剧变后的卡塔尔外交政策》,《阿拉伯世界研究》,2015年9月,第5期。

¹⁸⁷ Justin Robertson. "Introduction: The Research Direction and a Typology of Approaches". In *Diplomacy and Developing Nations: Post-Cold War Policy Making Structures and Processes*, edited by Justin Robertson and Maurice A. East. London: Routledge, 2005, p.4.

combinations in specific areas, resulting in desirable returns rather than trying to cover all fields¹⁸⁸. This is a unique diplomatic tactic used to avoid weaknesses while see problems, as well as to avoid the domination of big powers. Without doubt, to achieve desirable returns depends on the careful selection of the policy producing line, which is due to the precise interpretation of the political market conditions. Niche diplomacy makes sense only if a policy point with attraction is taken into consideration. And international reputation will be gained with less effort if only 'justice' business is supported, 'good' behavior is displayed, 'wonderful' discourse is adopted, and 'beautiful' image is highlighted¹⁸⁹.

The mediation of active participation in regional conflicts is the main entry point for Qatar's 'niche diplomacy'. Mehran Kamwal observes, "The main motivation for Qatar's commitment to mediation is the combination of small countries' survival strategies and the pursuit of international prestige"¹⁹⁰. To certain extent, Qatar's foreign policy is very personal. It derives its character first of all from the Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani, who set the tone and the direction. He has from his early days as Crown Prince been intensely realistic about the inability of Arab states to work together and their tendency to blame others for their ills¹⁹¹.

The Gulf Emirate of Qatar is well known for its foreign policy adventurisms in the Middle East region and beyond, with critics pointing out that it is "punching above its weight"¹⁹². Such characterizations refer to Qatar's role in mediating regional conflicts and its strong efforts to play a bigger diplomatic and military role in major international issues¹⁹³. Historians note that throughout its history, Qatar has come under the sway of a variety of great powers, including the Portuguese, the Ottomans and the British, and the Qataris have sought to find ways to navigate diplomatically to protect themselves from encroachment. Fred Wehrey, a Persian Gulf specialist at the RAND Corporation, said that Qatar's goal was "to try to engage great powers outside the region to play them off one another so they can actually have a foreign policy and carve out a space for sovereignty"¹⁹⁴.

Qatar does pursue deft diplomacy by 'playing all sides'¹⁹⁵ – a policy of simultaneously maintaining relations with the allies as well as with the enemies of the allies. Doha hosts the US CENTCOM and an enormous US air facility-Al-Udeid Air Base, maintains good relations with America's nemesis, Iran, enjoyed good ties with

¹⁸⁸ Gareth Evans and Bruce Gran. *Australia's Foreign Relations in the World of the 1990s*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1991, p.323.

¹⁸⁹ Alan K. Henrikson. "Niche Diplomacy in the World Public Arena: the Global 'Corners' of Canada and Norway". In *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, edited by Jan Melissen. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp.67-68.

¹⁹⁰ Mehran Kamrava. "Mediation and Qatari Foreign Policy". *The Middle East Journal* (Vol.65, No.4, Autumn 2011), p.540.

¹⁹¹ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

¹⁹² Roberts. "Punching Above its Weight: Could tiny Qatar Send Ground Forces to Libya?" *Foreign Policy* (12 April 2011). Retrieved from: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/12/punching_above_its_weight (Last access on 21th May, 2018).

¹⁹³ Mohammed Nuruzzaman. Qatar and the Arab Spring: down the foreign policy slope. *Contemporary Arab Affairs* Vol.8, No.2(2015). p.226.

¹⁹⁴ Krauss. "For Qatar, Libyan Intervention may be a Turning Point". *The New York Times* (3 April 2011). Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/04/world/middleeast/04qatar.html?_r=0 (Last access on 22th May, 2018).

¹⁹⁵ Worth. "Qatar, Playing all Sides, is a Non-Stop Mediator". *The New York Times* (9 July 2008). Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/09/word/middleeast/09qatar.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 (Last access on 21the May, 2018).

Israel until the winter 2008–2009 Israeli war on Gaza, and then financially and diplomatically supported the anti-Israel group Hamas. Doha has sought to play all sides in order to keep Qatar safe from both allies and regional rivals¹⁹⁶, and has successfully exploited soft power tools, particularly the satellite news channel Al-Jazeera and the Qatar Investment Authority to its benefits¹⁹⁷. Armed with this wide collection of contacts Qatar was able to use its network to attempt to mediate in a number of conflicts in the region. When they have done so they have worked hard and patiently, and with some success.

The most notable success was in 2008 when Qatar mediation ended the dangerous political paralysis in Lebanon by bringing two plane loads of politicians to Doha for five days of intensive bargaining and persuading the rival Sunni-led government and opposition Shiite Hezbollah group to sign the May 2008 Doha Agreement. The pressure applied there solved all the immediate problems – except the major one of Hezbollah's weapons. In Sudan, although the work took rather longer, a ceasefire and peace framework agreement between the Sudanese government and the most prominent rebel group, the Justice and Equality Movement in Darfur, was signed in Doha in March 2010, and another new Darfur Peace Agreement in July 2011 was signed by the Sudanese government and the Liberation and Justice Movement group¹⁹⁸. Unfortunately, no major progress has been achieved since then. Absolutely, it is no secret that part of Qatar's negotiating armoury is the offer of financial support to the parties should there be a successful outcome¹⁹⁹, notwithstanding not all negotiations succeed.

Although not all mediations ended with success, Qatar's three diplomatic actions on the issues of Yemen, Lebanon and Sudan demonstrated its positive attitude and ability to mediate regional affairs and won international acclaims. The former Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani was indeed called 'a diplomatic rock star'²⁰⁰ by the western media. Sami Nader, a professor of political science at St. Joseph University in Beirut, said that Qatar's mediation in Lebanon was "a real breakthrough" and "a small victory for Arab diplomacy", and Qatar was at an equal distance from all the powers in that it had close ties with Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia²⁰¹.

Qatar probably has the best soft power projection of any small state – apart from the Vatican, which has been in this game rather longer. It is based on regional public recognition first of all through Al-Jazeera, and

¹⁹⁶ Hamid. "From the Arab Spring Comes a More Unified GCC". *The National* (15 April 2011). Retrieved from: <http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/comment/from-the-arab-spring-comes-a-more-unified-gcc> (Last access on 21th May, 2018).

¹⁹⁷ Shalaq. "Qatar's European Strategy". *Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East* (27 December 2012). Retrieved from: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/12/qatari-investments-in-greece-highlight-soft-power-strategy.html> (Last access on 21th May, 2018).

¹⁹⁸ Barakat. *The Qatari Spring: Qatar's Emerging Role in Peacemaking*. LSE Kuwait Program on Development, Governance and Globalization in the Gulf States (2012). p.24.

¹⁹⁹ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

²⁰⁰ Daragahi. "Lebanon: Qatar emerges as diplomatic powerhouse". Retrieved from: <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2008/05/lebanon-qatar-e.html> (Last access on 2 May, 2018).

²⁰¹ Daragahi. "Lebanon: Qatar emerges as diplomatic powerhouse". Retrieved from: <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2008/05/lebanon-qatar-e.html> (Last access on 2 May, 2018).

global public recognition through sport – every follower of football in the world knows that Qatar, as an oasis of stability and a global mediator²⁰², will host the 2022 World Cup; the Qatar Foundation logo is on the shirts of Barcelona, one of the most followed clubs in the world; PSG, the top French club, is owned by Qatar. Furthermore, Qatar has donated hundreds of millions of dollars to victims of Hurricane Katrina, flooding in Pakistan and civil strife in Darfur. All this activity by Qatar has to be seen in the context of Qatar working to achieve a level of global recognition that will help protect them better than any hard power far into the future. Making the world sit up and notice Qatar is a way of ensuring its independent existence. However, the mediation diplomacy was discarded by the new Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani who ascended to the throne on 25 June 2013. As Qatar had turned from helping to mediate in regional dispute to becoming a player in the political changes taking place in the region – turning from facilitator to manipulator – it has got out of its depth. It was accused of political meddling, commercial greed, or of pushing a pan-Arab Islamist agenda. The Qataris are well aware of the criticisms they face. When Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad takes on responsibility for foreign policy, a more conventional approach emerges, nevertheless Qatar remains important as a regional game changer²⁰³. The role of small states in regional and international politics forces foreign policy analysts to rethink²⁰⁴.

2.3 Qatar-Gulf crisis: Diplomatic rupture

The *Financial Times* revealed that Qatar handed in 1 billion U.S. dollars as ransom for the release of 26 Qatari hostages in April 2017. This move was seen by observers as Qatar's direct assistance to extremists and became the trigger for the Middle East's break with Qatar, albeit according to sources, some of the 26 abducted are from Qatari royal family.

The GCC rift followed US President Donald Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia in May 2017, where he met leaders of the Arab world. Interestingly, it was likewise in May 2017 that Qatar signed an agreement establishing the Anti-Terrorist Financing Center in Riyadh, together with the United States and GCC states. The night before Trump's visit, the former US defence secretary, Roert Gates, offered a scathing assault on Qatar, criticising its support for "Islamists". The speech was delivered at a high-profile Washington conference, where Gates said, "Tell Qatar to choose sides or we will change the nature of the relationship, to include downscaling the base"²⁰⁵. In June 2017, Saudi Arabia-along with two other Persian Gulf states and Egypt-picked a fight with Qatar, on the ground that the country is funding Islamic terrorism. It was almost

²⁰² Krauss. "For Qatar, Libyan Intervention may be a Turning Point". *The New York Times* (3 April 2011). Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/04/world/middleeast/04qatar.html?_r=0 (Last access on 22th May, 2018).

²⁰³ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

²⁰⁴ Kamrava. *Qatar: Small State, Big Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013.

²⁰⁵ Al-Jazeera and news agencies. *Qatar-Gulf crisis: All latest updates*. Retrieved from: (Last access on 13th May, 2018) <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/qatar-gulf-crisis-questions-answered-170606103033599.html#blockading-countries>

satirical, reacted Al-Jazeera, given that Saudi Arabia itself has long funded the spread of fundamentalist Salafi Islam, which is often associated with extremism²⁰⁶. On top of it, in June 2017 Jordan downgraded diplomatic relations with Qatar and closed Al-Jazeera's office in Amman. In July 2017, an air, sea and land blockade was imposed on Qatar by four Arab countries (namely Bahrain, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt) which severed ties with Qatar. And Saudi Arabia had also called on 'brotherly countries' to cut their diplomatic relations with Qatar. Five countries followed suit: Yemen, Eastern government of Libya, Maldives, Mauritania and Comoros. Senegal had also cut relations with Qatar, and later returned its ambassador to Qatar. The following four countries did not cut diplomatic relations with Qatar yet have downgraded them: Jordan, Djibouti, Chad and Niger²⁰⁷. Despite the 13 countries which have cut or severed relations with Qatar, there are over 89 diplomatic missions still open and operating in Qatar, and 34 countries that maintain their diplomatic relations via a regional accredited embassy²⁰⁸.

Subsequently, in July 2017 Bahrain and the other blockading countries issued a 13-point list of demands to lift the blockade on Qatar, including the shutdown of the Al-Jazeera's Network. To end a major Gulf crisis, they insisted that Qatar shut down the Al-Jazeera network and close a Turkish military base. The countries as well demand that Qatar sever all alleged ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and with other groups, including Hezbollah, al-Qaeda and ISIL (also known as ISIS). Those countries gave Qatar 10 days to comply with all of the demands, which likewise include paying an unspecified sum in compensation for what they claimed to be loss of life and other financial losses caused by Qatar's policies, as well as "ending interference in sovereign countries' internal affairs". According to the list, Qatar must refuse to naturalise citizens from the four countries and "revoke Qatari citizenship for existing nationals where such citizenship violates those countries' laws"²⁰⁹. In addition, the provisions required Qatar shut down diplomatic posts in Iran, expel any members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, and only conduct trade and commerce with Iran that complies with US sanctions. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson regarded this list of demands as reasonable and actionable. On April 22 of 2018, Bahrain's Foreign Minister, Khalid bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa tweeted his "14th demand", calling for the prosecution of Al-Jazeera for "spreading lies and rumours that cause confusion in our countries"²¹⁰.

After the dispute, the White House stated that Trump wanted to help sort out the diplomatic rift. The parties to this dispute have been called for to begin a process of negotiations in order to end the stalemate. The US

²⁰⁶ Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The Plot Behind Saudi Arabia's Fight With Qatar. *The New York Times* (Dec.4, 2017). Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/04/opinion/saudi-arabia-qatar-reform.html> (Last access on 14th May, 2018)

²⁰⁷ Al-Jazeera and news agencies. *Qatar-Gulf crisis: All latest updates*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/qatar-diplomatic-crisis-latest-updates-170605105550769.html> (Last access on 13th May, 2018)

²⁰⁸ Al-Jazeera and news agencies. *Qatar-Gulf crisis: All latest updates*. Retrieved from: (Last access on 13th May, 2018) <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/qatar-gulf-crisis-questions-answered-170606103033599.html#blockading-countries>

²⁰⁹ Al-Jazeera networks. *Arab states issue 13 demands to end Qatar-Gulf Crisis*. Retrieved from: (Last access on 14th May, 2018) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/arab-states-issue-list-demands-qatar-crisis-170623022133024.html>

²¹⁰ Al-Jazeera and news agencies. *Qatar-Gulf crisis: All latest updates*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/qatar-diplomatic-crisis-latest-updates-170605105550769.html> (Last access on 13th May, 2018)

planned to host a summit to resolve the Gulf dispute. Diplomatic efforts have abounded, including by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and French President Emmanuel Macron, who has appointed a special envoy to address the crisis²¹¹. On April 3 of 2018, US officials cited by Reuters said that the summit planned between Gulf Arab leaders and the US is being postponed to September. While Bahrain's foreign minister accused Qatar of prolonging the crisis by taking its case to Western allies, instead of dealing with it inside the Gulf Arab bloc. Qatari Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, denied access to extremists during a CNN visit. Qatar stressed that the accusation is irrational and the allegation that Qatar funds extremists is in reality of no basis. On May 10 of 2018, Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Combating Terrorism and Mediation in Conflict Resolution Mutlaq bin Majed al-Qahtani, stressed that Qatar is making "strong efforts in the fighting against terrorism"²¹². The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, Muhammad, reiterated that the list of demands clearly violated the international law. Some contents of the statement were ambiguous, inconsistent and contradictory, and there was no clear-cut attitude. Saudi leaders could be using the conflict, which has resulted in a blockade of Qatar, as a strategic smoke screen to deflect attention from the simmering tension inside their own insular borders²¹³.

Although this is not the first time that Qatar has been boycotted by neighboring countries, it has been the worst hit by its diplomacy. In fact, the neighbouring countries continued their tough policies and illegal acts against Qatar. An escalation of the conflict could be detrimental to the future of the GCC.

2.3.1 The linkage between Al-Jazeera and the crisis

As a geopolitical risk, this diplomatic rupture is due to allegations that Qatar funds terrorism, which was denied by Qatar. The demands regarding Al-Jazeera state that Qatar must also shut down all affiliates and other news outlets that Qatar funds, including Arabia21, Rassd, Al Araby Al Jadeed and Middle East Eye²¹⁴. If Qatar agrees to comply, the list asserts that it will be audited once a month for the first year, and then once per quarter in the second year after it takes effect. For the following 10 years, Qatar would be monitored annually for compliance. The document does not specify what the countries will do if Qatar refuses to comply.

It is the linkage between Al-Jazeera news coverage and the foreign policy of the Qatari elite that the current

²¹¹ Al-Jazeera and news agencies. *Qatar-Gulf crisis: All latest updates*. Retrieved from: (Last access on 13th May, 2018) <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/qatar-gulf-crisis-questions-answered-170606103033599.html#blockading-countries>

²¹² Al-Jazeera and news agencies. *Qatar-Gulf crisis: All latest updates*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/qatar-diplomatic-crisis-latest-updates-170605105550769.html> (Last access on 13th May, 2018)

²¹³ Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The Plot Behind Saudi Arabia's Fight With Qatar. *The New York Times* (Dec.4, 2017). Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/04/opinion/saudi-arabia-qatar-reform.html> (Last access on 14th May, 2018)

²¹⁴ Al-Jazeera and news agencies. *Arab states issue 13 demands to end Qatar-Gulf crisis*. Retrieved from: (Last access on 14th May, 2018) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/arab-states-issue-list-demands-qatar-crisis-170623022133024.html>

key regional conflicts concern²¹⁵. Considering Qatar's initiatives to promote interests of the Sunni Islamist forces and exercise influence across the Middle East and North Africa regions by developing some kind of Sunni platform²¹⁶, the criticism said "although overt and official censorship is not present, self and discreet official censorship continue to render Qatari domestic media tame and ineffective"²¹⁷. As a response to this assessment, a spokesman for the station said, "it is very far from the truth. Despite all the pressure Al-Jazeera has been subjected to by regional and international governments, it has never changed its bold editorial policies which remain guided by the principles of a free press"²¹⁸.

Al-Jazeera's Hashem Ahelbarra said the list of demands is "definitely going to be rejected by Qatar". "Qatar has said it will only look into the demands once the sanctions are lifted," he said, adding that Qatar had already said that closing Al-Jazeera was off the table. "It is a matter of national sovereignty. Anything that is presented to the Qataris which it considers to be interference in its internal affairs is going to be dismissed"²¹⁹. Meanwhile, Qatar has hired a law firm founded by Ashcroft, the former U.S. Attorney General, to review Qatar's work in combating terrorism in order to clear Saudi Arabia's and other countries' accusations of Qatari's financing of terrorism.

There will be further escalation, mounting tension because of these demands. The Qatar-Gulf crisis is undermining the region's security and economic outlook. "It has been a futile crisis, manufactured by our neighbours," Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani said. "Those aggressive actors wish to use smaller states as pawns within their power games and sectarian conflicts. It is vital to the interests of the people of the Middle East to guarantee the sovereignty of states like Qatar," he added²²⁰. Fortunately, on 8 May 2018, Qatar and Chad signed a Memorandum of Understanding resuming diplomatic relations between the two countries.

2.3.2 Alleviating rift with Iran and the religious factors

The key to Qatar's power and political strategies, as well as its vulnerability, lies in its abundance of natural gas. It has almost 14 percent of total world gas reserves, most of which comes from a field that it shares with Iran. Regional experts say that Qatar's principal security concern is that Iran may one day try to exert full

²¹⁵ Kolmer and Semetko. "Framing the Iraq War: Perspectives from American, U.K., Czech, German, South African, and Al-Jazeera News". *American Behavioral Scientist* 52:5(2009), p-638.

²¹⁶ Mohammed Nuruzzaman. Qatar and the Arab Spring: down the foreign policy slope. *Contemporary Arab Affairs* Vol.8, No.2(2015), p.232.

²¹⁷ Roberts. "The Arab world's Unlikely Leader: Embracing Qatar's Expanding Role in the Region". *POMED website* (13 March 2012) Retrieved from: http://pomed.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/POMED-Policy-Brief_Roberts.pdf (Last access on 22th May, 2018).

²¹⁸ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018).

²¹⁹ Al-Jazeera and news agencies. *Arab states issue 13 demands to end Qatar-Gulf crisis*. Retrieved from: (Last access on 14th May, 2018) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/arab-states-issue-list-demands-qatar-crisis-170623022133024.html>

²²⁰ Al-Jazeera and news agencies. *Arab states issue 13 demands to end Qatar-Gulf crisis*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/arab-states-issue-list-demands-qatar-crisis-170623022133024.html> (Last access on 14th May, 2018)

control over the field²²¹. Qatar could not rely on such lucky breaks for its survival.

Located between Saudi Arabia and Iran, Qatar is deeply influenced by Saudi Arabia in terms of religion and tradition. In addition to the border issues, Saudi Arabia has been dissatisfied with Qatar's religious authority as the 'Guardians of the Two Holy Lands' and the Wahhabi leader with strong influence on the surrounding small countries. The main reason why Qatar pursues actively relations with Iran and Iraq is to contain Saudi Arabia to a large extent²²². In light of the tensions built with the Saudis, hedging with Iran can be seen as balancing against Saudi Arabia, and Sheikh Hamad desired the Iranian backing to insure the peaceful development of the Qatari natural-gas fields adjacent to Iranian territorial waters, and to break free from Saudi influence²²³. As a sort of insurance policy, Qatar has not been a target for Iranian subversion and has maintained close relations with Iran over the years.

Iran, for its part, has viewed its relations with Qatar as a sort of bridge to the other Gulf states---to help improve its relations in the Gulf and push back the American sphere of influence while projecting Iranian resolve as a way to try and drive a wedge between the smaller Gulf states and Saudi Arabia.

Qatar keeps one goal in mind: to remove itself as a potential target of Iran²²⁴. It thereby extended an invitation to the Iranian president in 2007 to attend the annual GCC summit meeting, held in Doha for the first time since the organization's founding. While the members of the GCC argued that the Qataris are playing with the Americans and helping Iran in a very dangerous game, Qatar continues to play all sides vying for supremacy in the Gulf²²⁵. Doha has avoided criticizing Iran publicly and has even worked to improve relations, including by means of a security cooperation agreement and reciprocal visits. Qatar maintains a working relationship with Iran with the lack of Al-Jazeera coverage of the civil unrest in Iran after the disputed presidential election in the summer of 2009. It is observed that "Al-Jazeera's coverage of the Iranian election and its aftermath has been scanty by comparison to other hot topics in the region, such as Gaza"²²⁶. Furthermore, the two countries, for example, signed a comprehensive memorandum of understanding in 2010 that includes an expansion of cooperation in the War on Terror, and they have held limited joint naval exercises in the Gulf²²⁷.

The divergent positions of the Gulf nations on the Muslim Brotherhood appear close liaisons with the

²²¹ Krauss. "For Qatar, Libyan Intervention may be a Turning Point". *The New York Times* (3 April 2011). Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/04/world/middleeast/04qatar.html?_r=0 (Last access on 22th May, 2018).

²²² Okruhlik and Conge. "The Politics of Border Disputes: On the Arabian Peninsula". *International Journal*. Vol.54, No.2(1999), p.233.

²²³ Yoel Guzansky. "The Foreign Policy Tools of Small Powers Strategic Hedging in the Persian Gulf". *Middle East Policy* Vol.XXII, No.1(2015), p.117.

²²⁴ Allen Fromberz. *Qatar: A Modern History*. Georgetown University Press, 2012, p.98.

²²⁵ Fars News. "Iran, Qatar Discuss Implementation of Security Pact". April 15, 2014. Retrieved from: <http://english.faesnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=1393-126000748> (Last access on 5 June, 2018)

²²⁶ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018).

²²⁷ Yoel Guzansky. *The Arab Gulf States and Reform in the Middle East: Between Iran and the "Arab Spring"*. Palgrave-Macmillan, 2015. p.69.

personal preferences of the leaders. The states themselves are very similar in all sorts of respects—governing systems, social makeup and geopolitical position. However, the leaders view the region differently, seeing different opportunities and different threats. In the Gulf, the personal is the political, particularly in foreign policy, which means that, in the absence of institutionalized foreign-policy procedures and domestic constraints, agreements and reconciliations are only as reliable as the leaders who make them. Since 1973, the Saudi government and its semipublic 'charitable' foundations have spent billions of dollars spreading fanatical Wahhabi ideology abroad, and further bolstering da'wah (the spreading of Wahhabi Islam) would be bad news for the international community's anti-radicalization efforts²²⁸. The Wahhabis share a worldview with much of the complex network of Islamist and Jihadist organizations around the world. Qatar and Turkey, supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Taliban, will most likely use their connections to a belligerent Saudi clergy to frustrate the agenda of the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, known as M.B.S. and tarnish his image abroad. In response, the Saudi leadership could seek a bigger external distraction by escalating its conflict with Qatar, just as it did with the invasion of Yemen in 2015²²⁹. It is out of doubt that the religion is per se significant interest for them.

While this erstwhile monarchical spat had important personal and local elements behind it of little concern to the wider world, there were significant policy implications to the Gulf rift. During a time of enormous regional upheaval, the richest players in the Middle East political game were, in many cases, working at cross purposes. Qatar was the major source of aid for the Muslim Brotherhood government that ruled Egypt in 2012-2013. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Kuwait were and remain the chief funders of the other side—the military regime of General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who overthrew the elected Brotherhood president, Mohamed Morsi, in July 2013 and had himself elected president in May 2014. Qatar's foes have accused it of supplying the Islamist forces that form the Libyan government that sits in Tripoli, while the UAE air force has flown missions to support the rival Libyan government in Tobruk, as the two sides fight for control of Benghazi and the country's oil wealth. While the Qataris and the Saudis would both like to see Bashar al-Assad out of power in Syria, they have backed rival groups in the opposition, encouraging divisions that have bolstered the so-called Islamic State. American officials have publicly charged Qatar with allowing private citizens and residents of the country to raise money to support the Islamic State²³⁰. For Muslims, a deep eager to build a global Muslim identity and construct an imagined transnational Muslim community²³¹ may give no cause for much criticism. While the situation will be opposite if the Muslim bloc is associated

²²⁸ Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The Plot Behind Saudi Arabia's Fight With Qatar. *The New York Times* (Dec.4, 2017). Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/04/opinion/saudi-arabia-qatar-reform.html> (Last access on 14th May, 2018).

²²⁹ Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The Plot Behind Saudi Arabia's Fight With Qatar. *The New York Times* (Dec.4, 2017). Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/04/opinion/saudi-arabia-qatar-reform.html> (Last access on 14th May, 2018).

²³⁰ Gregory Gause, III, " Understanding the Gulf States", *Democracy Journal*, Issue 36, Spring 2015, pp. 31-32. Retrieve from: <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/36/understanding-the-gulf-states/> (Last access on 2 June, 2018).

²³¹ Sam Cherribi, From Baghdad to Paris: Al-Jazeera and the Veil. *Press/Politics* 11(2) Spring 2006, p.121.

with terrorism.

2.3.3 The U.S. effect in Qatar foreign policy

The behavior of the US administration in the Middle East is often regarded as a calibration of events, and the nations in the region then act accordingly. The biggest challenge that the US administration faces is distrust and lack of credibility in the region. Therefore, the US, a big rival of Iran, needs to build a partnership for change, trust and respect with political and civil elements²³².

As an external barrier to democratization in Qatar, the US policy in the region to a great extent plays a significant role. It is said that Qatari society lacks a martial tradition, and the U.S. military's presence in Qatar is larger and far more capable than Qatar's force of approximately 8,000 men at arms²³³. The US.-Qatari bilateral relationship is expected to grow the US-Qatari military relationship. The cooperation between the U.S. and Qatar concentrates mainly in military and economy. On 11 April 2018, the U.S. approved a \$300m sale of guided missiles to Qatar, after Qatar's Emir met with the US secretary of defence at the Pentagon on April 9, when Qatar's Emir as well participated in the Qatar-US Economic Forum and said that the country is planning "double" the \$125bn partnership in coming years. On 19 April 2018, Governor Jim Justice announced a new military partnership between Qatar and West Virginia to expand upon military. The Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) allocated \$45bn of investments for the period between 2015 and 2020 of which \$10bn were allocated for the infrastructure sector, Qatar's economy minister said. And Qatar hosts American, British and French forces at the Al Udeid airbase²³⁴, which is the largest U.S. air base in the region, supporting the missions against the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq and against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Differences among the GCC states have consequences beyond the region, and can affect the ability of the United States to conduct policy there. For better or worse, the Gulf monarchies are now America's closest allies in the Arab world. The U.S. military infrastructure in the region is centered on bases in these states. Any U.S. military pressure on Iran, if the current talks with Tehran were to fail, would rely on the cooperation of the Gulf states²³⁵.

In addition, while Al-Jazeera has been seen by many as relatively free and open in its coverage of the region, the government control over its reporting appears to US diplomats to be so direct that they said the channel's

²³² Ahmed Abdelkareem Saif. "Deconstructing Before Building: Perspectives on Democracy in Qatar". In *Reform in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*. edited by Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Steven Wright. UK Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2011, p.122.

²³³ Lebron. "US embassy cables: Qatar using Al-Jazeera as bargaining tool, claims us". *The Guardian*. November 19, 2009. Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/235574> (Last access on April 19th, 2018).

²³⁴ Al-Jazeera and news agencies. *Qatar-Gulf crisis: All latest updates*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/qatar-diplomatic-crisis-latest-updates-170605105550769.html> (Last access on 13th May, 2018)

²³⁵ Gregory Gause, III, " Understanding the Gulf States", *Democracy Journal*, Issue 36, Spring 2015, pp. 31-32. Retrieve from: <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/36/understanding-the-gulf-states/> (Last access on 2 June, 2018).

output had become "part of our bilateral discussions – as it has been to favourable effect between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and other countries"²³⁶. In 2001 the Emir Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani refused a US request to stop Al-Jazeera giving so much airtime to Osama bin Laden and other anti-American figures. The station was consequently deemed "as a bargaining tool to repair relations with other countries, particularly those sourced by Al-Jazeera's broadcasts, including the United States"²³⁷ over the following years. Al-Jazeera released a statement in response to the U.S. ambassador's allegation. "This is the US embassy's assessment, which is very far from the truth"²³⁸, argued Al-Jazeera. "Parliamentary life requires you to have a free and credible media, and that is what we are trying to do"²³⁹. On the other hand, Qatar has to seek to harmonize the relationship with the U.S. considering its national security and economic interests.

²³⁶ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018)

²³⁷ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018)

²³⁸ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018)

²³⁹ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018).

Chapter Three: Case study and demonstration of the correlativity

In advocating for a new Arab world, Al-Jazeera presents itself and its state sponsor as beacons for freedom and democracy, deemed serving to strengthen Qatar's global and regional political cachet.²⁴⁰

Qatar's boldness in foreign policy has been denounced to be linked to Al-Jazeera, especially since its emergence as a mediator in regional conflicts, from Libya to Sudan to Lebanon to Afghanistan²⁴¹, with endeavors to get close to conflicting parties such as Hamas, Hezbollah, the Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Nousra, the Syrian rebels, the Taliban, al-Qaeda and similar groups. This policy finds its reflection in Al-Jazeera coverage of these conflicts, particularly obvious in Al-Jazeera Arabic. As Boyce observes, Qatar made contact with conflicting parties prepared to accept mediation²⁴². After the Arab Spring, Qatar, more proactive, actually took its own initiatives, which can be seen coming into play with the case of Libya and the upsurge against Gadhafi. Qatar provided finance and military equipment for the Libyan rebels, even after the killing of Gadhafi²⁴³. Here, Qatar acted on behalf of both its own interests and those of other Arab states, pushing for international intervention and using the Al-Jazeera network as an instrument of its diplomacy.

The Syrian and Egyptian cases, likewise, are interesting in terms of the connection between Al-Jazeera and Qatari foreign policy as the Qatari regime changed its political position in both instances and the changes were followed by changes in Al-Jazeera's coverage of both rebellions²⁴⁴. Considering the Qatari elite's feelings of vulnerability within the Persian Gulf area, unlike Kuwait, whose negligible role made it an easy target for the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq, Qatar seeks security, particularly in face of its two large neighbors – Iran and Saudi Arabia – by making itself as visible as possible²⁴⁵, and the network is a crucial means for achieving this. What is more, it has been suggested, Al-Jazeera was launched as a means for balancing against the Saudi domination of the Arab media and to keep Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt "on the defensive"²⁴⁶. An American foreign policy analyst indeed suggests the network has raised the profile of Qatar and that, "although functionally independent, could be said to indirectly serve the foreign policy goals of Qatar"²⁴⁷.

²⁴⁰ Assem Nasr, Al-Jazeera and the Arab Uprisings: The language of images and a medium's stancetaking, *Communication, Culture & Critique* ISSN 1753-9129, 2014, p.406.

²⁴¹ Khatib. "Qatar's Foreign Policy: the limits of pragmatism". *International Affairs* Vol.89. No.2(2013), p.418.

²⁴² Boyce. "Qatar's Foreign Policy". *Asian Affairs* Vol.44. No.3(2013), p.367.

²⁴³ Khatib. "Qatar's Foreign Policy: the limits of pragmatism". *International Affairs* Vol.89. No.2(2013), p.421.

²⁴⁴ Khatib. "Qatar's Foreign Policy: the limits of pragmatism". *International Affairs* Vol.89. No.2(2013), p.422.

²⁴⁵ Boyce. "Qatar's Foreign Policy". *Asian Affairs* Vol.44. No.3(2013), p.372.

²⁴⁶ Fandy. *(Un)Civil War of Words*. Westport: Praeger Security International (2007). p.46.

²⁴⁷ Sharp. The Al-Jazeera News Network: Opportunity or Challenge for US Foreign Policy in the Middle East? *Congressional Research Service* (2003) .p.4.

Spontaneously, "Al-Jazeera is biased"²⁴⁸. Notwithstanding it employs the same stringent editorial processes as the Western media does, it presents a notable tone with certain tendency. Concerning its report about the war in Iraq, Al-Jazeera undisguisedly showed sympathy for the Iraqis, as well as hostility toward the Americans. The similar situation happened pursuant to the war of Afghanistan during which the Taliban was often regarded as the noble underdog and America as the vengeful, colonial aggressor.²⁴⁹ With employees from various religious, the network of Al-Jazeera is dominantly sympathetic toward the Palestinians. However, Al-Jazeera is so fastidious in presenting all sides of a story that the bias hardly invalidates the network's news, which renders Al-Jazeera a model of professionalism and objectivity. It is undeniable that other major international news network, such as CNN, NBC, FOX and Japan's NHK, frequently apply Al-Jazeera's footage and reports.

In order to explore the subtle correlation between Al-Jazeera and Qatar foreign policy, the following two case studies are desired to serve some indications.

3.1 Case study: The inclined coverage of the Arab Spring

The Arab upheaval, known as the 'Arab Spring', refers to the protests occurring in several countries across the Middle East in 2011. If the previous reports on al-Qaeda, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan have enabled Al-Jazeera to gain widespread attention, the reports of the Arab Spring have allowed Al-Jazeera to begin to earn respect²⁵⁰ internationally. As a matter of fact, Al-Jazeera allocated huge coverage to Syria, as well as to Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, even occasionally fabricated news, while it seldom provided news of the uprising in Bahrain²⁵¹.

3.1.1 Background of the case

Triggered by the self-immolation of a Tunisian man, the so-called Arab Spring protests happened on the streets of Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, as well as many other nations in the Middle East, albeit each protest had its own political and cultural context. In Tunisia, the protest subsequently escalated into large-scale public demonstrations that ended the almost 30-year rule of Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali²⁵². Quickly extending to other Arabic nations, the protests toppled governments and resulted in social upheaval.

Amplified by the mainstream media all over the world, the crises were aggravated dramatically, especially under the circumstance of interactions between media and protesters. The interaction here refers the

²⁴⁸ Hugh Miles, Al Jazeera(Thinking again), Foreign Policy, July, 2006.

²⁴⁹ Hugh Miles, Al Jazeera(Thinking again), Foreign Policy, July, 2006

²⁵⁰ 张潇潇: 《“文明火山”的预警者: 半岛电视台与风险社会》, 《广播电视研究》(国际新闻界), 2014.11.

²⁵¹ Khatib, L.(2013). Qatar's Foreign Policy: the limits of pragmatism. International Affairs. Vol. 89. No. 2, p.428.

²⁵² Diana Bosio. How Al Jazeera reported the Arab Spring: A preliminary comparative analysis. *Media Asia* ISSN:0129-6612 (03 April 2016), p.333.

moments where the two modes of practice, the mainstream news channels and other modes of journalistic practice, informed or modified each other's reportage, including sharing of information, collaborative reportage and discussion of each other's practice in reportage. As journalistic practices, how interactions function in the discourse of reportage and why Al-Jazeera English performed more successful at presenting the Arab Spring protests are so indispensable as to deserve investigation.

Diana Bosio contributed a comparative analysis of reportage of the pro-democracy demonstrations during the Arab Spring on CNN, BBC and Al-Jazeera English (AJE), focusing on six days' protests in Egypt and Libya in 2011²⁵³. By comparing the amount of interaction the mainstream news channels had with other modes of journalistic practice, including blogging, uploading audio and video content, photography and other micro-blogging like Facebook and Twitter, the different information gathering and dissemination processes that occurred in the protests can be better encapsulated. As the English language component of the Arab news service delivered globally by Al-Jazeera²⁵⁴, AJE provided an alternative to CNN and BBC coverage of the Arab Spring, which differentiates its public profile from other global broadcasters by emphasizing reportage of the global south²⁵⁵.

The availability of Al-Jazeera via satellite has meant that many somewhat controversial viewpoints have been aired, putting the station and their journalists at odds with many Middle Eastern governments and gaining the station international notoriety²⁵⁶. Despite criticism about the influence of Qatar's Emir on the channel and claims of anti-Semitism, sensationalism and lack of professional objectivity²⁵⁷, Al-Jazeera's broad casts has been increasingly used by Western media outlets. As early as in 2003, the BBC announced an agreement with Al-Jazeera to share resources, including news footage²⁵⁸. During the Arab Spring, it was Al-Jazeera's coverage that was the source of much acclaim, winning several awards, including from the Foreign Press Association, for their coverage of the Egyptian protests²⁵⁹.

While the organization certainly capitalized on its physical proximity to the protests, the number of Arabic-speaking journalists with contacts in Egypt and the political and cultural knowledge of the region, the interactions with protesters, activists and ordinary Egyptians has been a much discussed aspect of AJE's Arab Spring reportage²⁶⁰. The theoretical framework of Al-Jazeera features the collaborative nature of journalism,

²⁵³ Diana Bosio. How Al Jazeera reported the Arab Spring: A preliminary comparative analysis. *Media Asia* ISSN:0129-6612 (03 April 2016).p.334.

²⁵⁴ Diana Bosio. How Al Jazeera reported the Arab Spring: A preliminary comparative analysis. *Media Asia* ISSN:0129-6612 (03 April 2016).p.335.

²⁵⁵ Seib. *Al Jazeera English: Changing news in a global world*. USA: Palgrave McMillan, 2012.

²⁵⁶ Youmans. Can Al Jazeera English leverage its 'Egypt moment' into an American Audience? *Arab Media & Society* (12 Spring, 2011). Retrieved from: <http://www.arabmediasociety.com/?article=768> on 26 January 2013 (Last access on 21th May,2018)

²⁵⁷ Seib. *Al Jazeera English: Changing news in a global world*. USA: Palgrave McMillan, 2012.

²⁵⁸ BBC in news deal with Arabic TV (30 October 2012). *BBC*. Retrieved from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/2668007> (Last access on 21th May, 2018).

²⁵⁹ Al Jazeera Corporate Profile. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.com/aboutus/> on 26 January 2013 (Last access on 21th May, 2018)

²⁶⁰ Diana Bosio. How Al Jazeera reported the Arab Spring: A preliminary comparative analysis. *Media Asia* ISSN:0129-6612 (03 April

with professionals and amateurs working together to get the real story. And it recognized the complex relationships that would make news, focusing in the process more than the product²⁶¹. According to Hermida, "in a networked media environment, the journalist emerges as a central node trusted to authenticate, interpret and contextualize information flows on social awareness streams, drawing on a distributed and networked newsroom where knowledge and expertise are fluid, dynamic and hybrid."²⁶² For journalists working at AJE, 'covering' the Egyptian Arab Spring meant working with a community of media-savvy protesters, especially when governments affected by the protests were attempting to silence the broadcaster, often using violent means. Journalists from many mainstream media organizations reported that their practice had been compromised by threats of violence by pro-government groups²⁶³. During the initial days of protest, Egypt's information ministry revoked AJE's license and withdrew accreditation of the network's journalists. Egyptian authorities shut down AJE's Cairo bureau, and shut off satellite access to the channel²⁶⁴.

In Libya, the situation was more complex owing to the precarious environment for reporters. The reportage varied so much in light of logistical and communications constraints that it was difficult to draw together a coherent range of discursive references. CNN was not allowed media access to Libya at the beginning of the protests until 21 February, 2011. AJE was likewise singled out by the government as a dissident Arab channel and was not permitted entry into Libya, which explained the very small number of reports and the reliance on eyewitness reports in initial coverage of the protests. As AJE stated, "verifying news from Libya has been difficult since the protests began, on account of restrictions on journalists entering the country, as well as internet and mobile phone blackouts imposed by the government"²⁶⁵. In addition, there was the problem that such sourced material could not be verified, which made it difficult for mainstream journalists to confirm most of the news.

3.1.2 The amplification by Al-Jazeera owing to the interaction

AJE was particularly targeted as a 'dissident' channel in Egypt and Libya. However, AJE refused to stop broadcasting and found another satellite service, by virtue of social media to put together the news. In order to find out the way AJE was positioned in the protests as being the 'social media innovator' and how they positioned their interactions with activists, protesters and citizen journalists, Diana Bosio conducted a further

2016).p.336.

²⁶¹ Deuze. Professional identify in a participatory media culture. In *Journalismus online-Partizipation oder Professuin?* edited by Quandt & Schweiger(2008)[e-Book] pp.251-261. Retrieved from: http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-531-91094-9_17 (Last access on 21th May,2018)

²⁶² Hermida. From TV to Twitter: How ambient news became ambient journalism. *M/C Journal* 13(2)(2010). Retrieved from: <http://journal.mediaculture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/viewArticle/220> (Last access on 21th May,2018).

²⁶³ Diana Bosio. How Al Jazeera reported the Arab Spring: A preliminary comparative analysis. *Media Asia* ISSN:0129-6612 (03 April 2016).p.338.

²⁶⁴ Egypt unrest: Day Nine as it happened (3 February, 2011). *BBC*. Retrieved from: www.bbc.co.uk (Last access on 21th May,2018).

²⁶⁵ Uprising flares in Libyan city (11 February 2011). *AJE*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/02/201122014259976293.html> (Last access on 21th May, 2018).

preliminary analysis of the way AJE's reporting practices were positioned during the initial protests in Libya and Egypt²⁶⁶.

According to Diana Bosio, AJE utilized interactions with alternate modes of journalistic practice in several ways. In the first place, social media was likewise a vital tool in allowing news organizations to interview protesters from remote locations. In the second place, AJE as well allowed alternative modes of journalistic practice to go directly into mainstream news reports. In particular, some news stories were actually broken by activists calling mainstream news organizations to report facts, clear up misinformation, and call for international help as well. For example, AJE allowed Alaa al- Aswany, author of a best-selling book in Egypt, to report on the protests in his own words²⁶⁷. Another 'eye-witness' is given prominence in a video about the planned Friday of Rage protests²⁶⁸. In the third place, social media provided an alternative technique of news-gathering when it was too dangerous or technically difficult for correspondents to remain on location. The AJE live blog covering the Libyan revolution went as far as crediting Libya 17 voices as a main source of news reportage during the early days of the conflict. They also established a permanent link on their site to a 'livestream' set up by a protester in Benghazi. Last but not least, reporters from AJE also said they were relying on Egyptian protesters to update them on news from the protests²⁶⁹. The use of social media was a major aspect of their reportage of the protests especially Twitter feeds and YouTube footage. As El-Hamalawy notes, who 'tweeted' from the protests in Egypt and kept demonstrations until 11 pm every day, "A lot of my tweets had been broadcasted on AJE, or they would call me and confirm if something was actually happening"²⁷⁰. The Arab Media Forum defined it as a process of co-operation: When internet coverage was blocked, twenty-four-hour news channel Al-Jazeera curated and collected the raw, immediate content citizens were sharing from each and every country, and made all that content available to television viewers as fast as possible²⁷¹. Al-Jazeera's extensive coverage of the Arab Revolution and willingness to broadcast both original citizen journalism and diverse views allowed Arab citizens without computers to see the digital content being shared by their neighbours and countrymen²⁷².

Mainstream media did use social media such as Twitter and Facebook posts from activists as sources in reportage, albeit from other contributors, including official media representatives, 'citizen journalists' and NGOs. These contributions were often subsequently aggregated into a format that enabled listeners or

²⁶⁶ Diana Bosio. How Al Jazeera reported the Arab Spring: A preliminary comparative analysis. *Media Asia* ISSN:0129-6612 (03 April 2016).p.342.

²⁶⁷ Fresh anti-govt protests in Egypt (10 June 2011). *AJE*. Retrieved from: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news> (Last access on 21th May, 2018).

²⁶⁸ Cairo protests: Eyewitness account (10 June 2011). *BBC*. Retrieved from: www.bbc.co.uk (Last access on 21th May 2018).

²⁶⁹ MacArhhur. Arab media forum 2011 Day two. *Arabian bytes: Digital and tech trends in the Middle East*. Retrieved from: <http://arabianbytes.com/tag/news-2/> (Last access on 21th May, 2018).

²⁷⁰ Rabie. The cyber revolution. *Egypt Today* (1 March 2011). Retrieved from: [http://www.egypttoday.com/news/display/article/artId:198/The Cyber Revolution/secId:46](http://www.egypttoday.com/news/display/article/artId:198/The%20Cyber%20Revolution/secId:46) (Last access on 21th May, 2018).

²⁷¹ Hunter. The Arab revolution and social media. *Flip the media: At the crossroads of media, culture and technology* (10 June 2011). Retrieved from: <http://fliptemedia.com/2011/02/the-arab-revolution-and-social-media/> (Last access on 21th May, 2018).

²⁷² Diana Bosio. How Al Jazeera reported the Arab Spring: A preliminary comparative analysis. *Media Asia* ISSN:0129-6612 (03 April 2016).pp.339-340.

viewers to access a broad overview of the developing situation²⁷³.

In contrast with the BBC and CNN, AJE's coverage of the protests was represented not as reportage or information but rather as the support and rallying of protesters via social media. One reporter suggested, "After having their Cairo bureau closed and press credentials revoked by Egyptian authorities, AJE journalists continued to tweet and call in anonymously to report on the protests to the news organizations Live Stream. AJE and other news organizations like *Russia Today* utilized *YouTube* to post updated video reports on the demonstrations"²⁷⁴. This interaction and support of protesters seemingly became part of reportage of the protests. As the *New York Times* argued, "The protests rocking the Arab world this week have one thread uniting them: AJE's aggressive coverage has helped propel insurgent emotions from one capital to the next"²⁷⁵.

In collaborating closely with mainstream news organizations, one of the aims of the alternative modes of journalistic practice was to influence the discourses used by Western media organizations. In Egypt especially, activists such as Gigi Ibrahim, Wael Ghonim and others were quoted directly in the mainstream media, and their representations of events on the ground were then 'recycled' through other news channels. This is evidenced in some accounts where activists corrected Western journalists who referred to 'pro-Mubarak demonstrators'. Instead, alternative modes of journalistic practice use the term 'thugs', implying they are not sincere supporters of the regime but hired henchmen. This representation became widely quoted in the mainstream media, especially in AJE, which stopped referring to 'protesters' in favour of the description 'pro-democracy protesters'. This was in opposition to BBC and CNN, which began their reportage referring to the more negative sounding 'anti-government protesters', but later changed them to be in line with AJE²⁷⁶.

The increased use of social media content such as Twitter suggests that "professional journalists now share jurisdiction over the news in the sense that citizens are participating in the observation, selection, filtering, distribution and interpretation of events"²⁷⁷. During the Arab Spring, it was social media content and alternative modes of journalistic practice that dominated aspects of the news coverage of the Arab Spring²⁷⁸. Alternative media practitioners amplified the protest in the public sphere using social media, while

²⁷³ Bossio, Bebawi. Reaping and sowing the news from an Arab Spring: Then politicised interaction between traditional and alternative journalistic practitioners. *Global Media Journal* 6(2). Retrieved from: http://www.commart.uws.edu.au/gmjau/2012_6_2_toc.html (Last access on 21th May,2018)

²⁷⁴ Lavrusik. How journalists are using social media to report on the Egyptian demonstrations. *Mashable*. Retrieved from: <http://mashable.com/2011/01/31/journalists-social-media-egypt2011/> (Last access on 21th May,2018)

²⁷⁵ Worth, Kirkpatrick. Seizing a moment, AJE galvanises Egyptian frustration (27 January 2011). *New York Times*. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/28/world/middleeast/28jazeera.html?_r=o (Last access on 21th May, 2018).

²⁷⁶ Diana Bosio. How Al Jazeera reported the Arab Spring: A preliminary comparative analysis. *Media Asia* ISSN:0129-6612 (03 April 2016).p.340.

²⁷⁷ Hermida. From TV to Twitter: How ambient news became ambient journalism. *M/C Journal* 13(2)(2010). Retrieved from: <http://journal.mediaculture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/viewArticle/220> (Last access on 21th May,2018).

²⁷⁸ Bruno. Tweet first, verify later? How real-time information is changing the coverage of worldwide crisis events. *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism* (2012) Retrieved from: (Last access on 21th May, 2018) http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/documents/Publications/fellows_papers/2010-2011/TWEET_FIRST_VERIFY_LATER.pdf.

mainstream media coverage transformed this process into a 'spectacular' with 24/7 rolling coverage²⁷⁹. The vast amount of attention to social media content about the Arab Spring came from outside the Middle East regions, showing social media as a useful tool for amplification of news events, rather than for the protests themselves. Research about Al-Jazeera's reportage more specifically has been largely anecdotal, although Idle and Nunns suggest that "reporting was influenced by information and footage coming from citizen journalists on the ground"²⁸⁰.

AJE's Head of Online Riyaad Minty said hundreds of videos would pour into AJE offices each day and Egyptian reporters would help to verify them before being posted or broadcast. Reporters would likewise monitor social media, following specific bloggers, Facebook groups and even Twitter identifications or 'hashtags'. According to Minty, "This was one of the most amazing things that happened---the power of hashtag. Never before would I have thought that in such a short space of time that people doing something like this could have an impact that could overthrow a government"²⁸¹.

3.1.3 Reflection of Qatar foreign policy

While interaction between mainstream and alternative modes of journalistic practice during the Arab Spring protests in Libya and Egypt were mostly cooperative and productive in terms of the investigation and dissemination of news, AJE's reportage integrated more user-generated content and interaction with citizens as part of their reportage²⁸².

Much of the criticism centres on the Qatari-backed broadcasters' reportage of Bahrain and seemingly biased reportage of the region²⁸³. The most vocal recent criticism of AJE represents the broadcaster as biased towards Qatari interests, and suggests, with the Muslim Brotherhood coming to power in Egypt, Al-Jazeera has done all in its power to portray the group in a favourable light. It reported protests against the Brotherhood as being led by violent thugs with no political grievances, while gave positive coverage to Mohammed Morsi's poorly constructed and shallow speeches²⁸⁴.

There are those who argue that the course of Qatari policy over the last few years has been driven by a pro-Moslem Brotherhood Islamist agenda. It is true that Qatar had enjoyed close ties with the Brotherhood,

²⁷⁹ Nanabhay, Farmanfarmaian. From spectacle to spectacular: How physical space, social media and mainstream broadcast amplified the public sphere in Egypt's 'revolution'. *The Journal of North African Studies*, 16(4)(2011), pp.573-603.

²⁸⁰ Diana Bosio. How Al Jazeera reported the Arab Spring: A preliminary comparative analysis. *Media Asia* ISSN:0129-6612 (03 April 2016).p.336.

²⁸¹ Wang. AJE social media head on new media and the Arab Spring. *East-West Center* (22 June 2012). (Last access on 21th May, 2018) Retrieved from: <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/news-center/east-west-wire/al-jazeera-social-media-head-new-media-and-the-arab-spring>

²⁸² Diana Bosio. How Al Jazeera reported the Arab Spring: A preliminary comparative analysis. *Media Asia* ISSN:0129-6612 (03 April 2016).p.341.

²⁸³ Diana Bosio. How Al Jazeera reported the Arab Spring: A preliminary comparative analysis. *Media Asia* ISSN:0129-6612 (03 April 2016).p.341.

²⁸⁴ Hussain. The collapse of Al-Jazeera's credibility. *The Commentator* (18 February 2013). Retrieved from: http://www.thecommentator.com/article/2741/the_collapse_of_al_jazeera_s_credibility (Last access on 21th May, 2018).

whereas not to the extent of allowing them to organize politically in Qatar. Chronologically, Qatar, and definitely Al-Jazeera, gave support to the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria, long before Islamist movements, which were caught out by the speed at which events moved, had appeared on the scene. It is a puzzle why Qatar jumped in.

The big shift in policy came with the uprising against Qaddafi in Libya. The normal Arab League response would have been hand wringing and the search for an impossible consensus. Yet Qatar pushed hard, first in the GCC and then in the Arab League and UN for positive intervention by the West. Without that lead from the Arab world, it would have been politically very difficult, if not impossible, for outside intervention to have happened. Qatar did not give Qaddafi any authority to speak, but rather aggressively helped the Libyan oppositions to subvert the regime. Even for the Libyan oppositions, Qatar did not treat them equally. Instead, it employed various methods to send as much resources as possible to Islamists²⁸⁵. After the drastic upheavals in the Middle East, Qatar's diplomatic activities experienced major changes. Qatari image of a neutral 'mediator' familiar to the international community has been replaced by the active 'intervenor' image in the civil war of Libya.

In contrast, Qatar was notably quiet about the uprising in Bahrain. Perhaps, having won GCC support over Libya, it seemed prudent not to challenge the strong line taken by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Qatar has a very small Shiah minority, which poses no threat, and it prefers too to avoid too strident a tone in public about Iran, so a low profile must have seemed a sensible course, even if they saw little to commend in the way the Bahrainis were handling their problem. Al-Jazeera was heavily criticized for not giving the Bahrain uprising the same coverage as it gave to other protest movements, and it is hard not to see this soft pedalling as other than the result of a firm political steer²⁸⁶.

In all the first three Arab uprisings, it was clear that there was huge dissatisfaction with these dictatorships, which were threatening to turn into hereditary dictatorships. Change had not happened before since it was thought that the people were just too apathetic to raise themselves against their rulers. The Qataris were smart enough to realize that when the uprising triggered in Tunisia, real change was on the way, and that they could be on the side of that change. When the Muslim Brotherhood came out on top in Egypt they were supported both as the democratically elected government and as what was seen then as the political future, rather than specifically in light of their Islamist credentials. There may even be an element, never far away in Qatari policy, of doing the opposite to the Saudis, at least as far as giving budgetary support to Egypt. Qatar's promise of \$8 billion of support without any conditions attached as well undermines the efforts of the IMF to get structural economic reform in Egypt; and it makes the US government's pledge of a few hundred million

²⁸⁵ 吴彦, 陈世乔:《哈马德时代卡塔尔外交政策的演进-以卡塔尔应对利比亚内战的政策为视角》, 载《国际论坛》, 2015年9月, 第17卷第5期。

²⁸⁶ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

dollars look embarrassingly small. It is worth noting that the Qatari loans there are on far less generous terms than any loan from the IMF would be, so there is a certain commercial realism in these ventures as well²⁸⁷.

It is difficult to determine why Qatar volunteered to take on these mediations involving some of the most complex and enduring problems of the wider region. Personally, the Emir did have a genuine interest in the issues. And Qatar has the money and the time, thereby a moral obligation, to take advantage of its resources, regardless of the outcome. This altruism is as well seen in Qatar's good track record on humanitarian assistance, where Qatar is often first with the help owing to its fast decision-taking process. Commercially, Qatar is always looking for good investment opportunities. Qatar has been accused of naked commercial opportunism in both Libya and Egypt – where there are stories of Qatar trying to buy the Suez Canal and/or the Pyramids. Qatar may look greedy in wanting to find profitable investment opportunities, whereas it should be remembered that the recipient countries are often even more eager for inward investment. Internationally, mediation fits well into the overall strategy of promoting international recognition of Qatar as a necessary player on the diplomatic stage²⁸⁸.

Some media even pointed to the "exodus of prominent staff members, including reporters and anchors in cities like Paris, London, Moscow, Beirut and Cairo"²⁸⁹ as proof that the network is offending media principles by "following a clear political agenda, and not adhering to the principles of journalistic independence"²⁹⁰. What this suggests is probably that the representation of Al-Jazeera's reportage has shifted over time, as well as over the diplomatic orientation.

In a clear example of the regional news channel being exploited for political ends, the Doha embassy claimed Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim (HBJ) told the US senator John Kerry that he had proposed a bargain with the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, which involved stopping broadcasts in Egypt in exchange for a change in Cairo's position on Israel-Palestinian negotiations. HBJ had told Mubarak Qatar would stop Al-Jazeera for a year if he agreed in that span of time to deliver a lasting settlement for the Palestinians, according to a confidential cable from the US embassy in Doha in February. However, Mubarak said nothing in response²⁹¹.

3.2 Case study: Al-Jazeera's tactics in coverage of the conflicts between Qatar and Saudi Arabia

As a member of the GCC, Qatari foreign policy tends to Saudi Arabia and GCC. Obviously, even if Qatar is

²⁸⁷ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

²⁸⁸ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

²⁸⁹ Kuhn. After the Arab Spring: Al Jazeera losing battle for independence. *Spiegel*. Retrieved from: (Last access on 21th May, 2018) <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/al-jazeera-criticized-for-lack-of-independence-after-spring-a-883343.html>

²⁹⁰ Diana Bosio. How Al Jazeera reported the Arab Spring: A preliminary comparative analysis. *Media Asia* ISSN:0129-6612 (03 April 2016), p.341.

²⁹¹ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy> (Last access on 17th May, 2018)

not always in complete accordance with other members of GCC, it does not intend to support rebellions against them and is exceedingly "circumspect in relation to Saudi Arabia"²⁹². Doha's relations with Riyadh are fraught with difficulties. The primary issue that has bedevilled their relations in the last two decades or so is the Qatari quest for independence in foreign and security policies²⁹³.

The palace coup of 1995 caused a rift between Doha and Riyadh and encouraged the former Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani to provoke the Saudis on border-dispute issues and by supporting anti-Saudi propaganda via the Doha-based Al-Jazeera network. The tone about the Saudi on Al-Jazeera indeed changed when the Saudis turned more favorable to Qatari interests.

3.2.1 Background of the case

Qatar, perhaps more than any other GCC state, perceived the collective security arrangements attempted by the Arab Gulf states as hollow. Its rollercoaster relationship with Saudi Arabia has resulted in its minimal participation in the security frameworks that were under Saudi influence. Most of its attention was given to balancing the power of its neighbors by strengthening its U.S. backing, particularly in the field of security. Arguably, the U.S. military presence in Qatar makes it easier for Doha to adopt an active foreign policy because it is confident that its national security will be maintained. Qatar is seeking to strengthen its standing in the region through engagement in diplomatic and other forms of activism²⁹⁴. Its independent policy stems from Qatar's desire to increase its regional importance and protect its natural resources.

For decades of years, Qatar maintained stable relations with Saudi Arabia and, in many respects, followed Saudi Arabia's lead on foreign policy. After Qatar and Saudi Arabia signed a border accord in 1965, which formally defined the borders between the two countries, Qatar followed Saudi Arabia's policy during the remainder of the Cold War. In 1981, Qatar and Saudi Arabia became part of the newly formed Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a political and economic council of the Arab states bordering on the Persian Gulf. In 1982, Qatar and Saudi Arabia further strengthened their relations by signing a bilateral defense agreement²⁹⁵. The relations became strained in September 1992, when Saudi troops allegedly killed three Qatari soldiers in an exchange of fire on the Qatari side of a border post. In protest, Qatar suspended the 1965 border agreement in October 1992. In early 2001, the relations between the Qatar and Saudi Arabia temporarily improved after Saudi Arabia and Qatar settled their border dispute at the International Court in Hague.

²⁹² Karim Pourhamzavi, Philip Pherguson, Al Jazeera and Qatari Foreign Policy: A critical Approach, Journal of Media Critiques [JMC].-Vol.1 No. 2 December 2015, P.13.

²⁹³ Mohammed Nuruzzaman. Qatar and the Arab Spring: down the foreign policy slope. *Contemporary Arab Affairs* Vol.8, No.2(2015), p.234.

²⁹⁴ Lina Khatib. "Qatar's Foreign Policy: The Limits of Pragmatism". *International Affairs* 89, No.2(2013), p.418.

²⁹⁵ Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1299.

However, tensions heightened again in 2002²⁹⁶. For the Saudis, the last straw in what they saw as a series of Qatari provocations was criticism of Saudi Arabia by Saudi dissidents on a popular Al-Jazeera talk show in June 2002. Deeply offended, Saudi Arabia decided to recall its ambassador to Qatar on September 29, 2002 and ban Al-Jazeera correspondents from covering the pilgrimage to Mecca. Subsequently, the Saudi government boycotted regional meetings in Qatar and refused visas for the Al-Jazeera crew because of its critical stand²⁹⁷. The feud grew worse in anticipation of the war in Iraq, when Saudi Arabia became angered over the relocation of U.S. forces from Prince Sultan airbase near Riyadh to Al Udaid airbase in Qatar. Al-Jazeera's lengthy broadcasts of videotapes by Osama bin Laden, whose cherished goal for years has been to overthrow the Saudi monarchy, provoked the Saudis likewise. Al-Jazeera has often been accused of helping make Mr. bin Laden into a celebrity, and indirectly helping him to recruit more people across the Arab and Islamic world to his cause. An added frustration was the way Qatar benefited from Al-Jazeera's anti-Americanism, even as American military support and money poured into the tiny country²⁹⁸.

In 2003, Al-Arabiya was founded, largely as a Saudi answer to Al-Jazeera. It has sometimes countered Al-Jazeera's criticisms of Saudi Arabia with attacks on Qatari policy, as have other Saudi-owned media outlets. The rift between the Qatar and the Saudi Kingdom ended only 5 years later, on September 22, 2007, following a visit of the Qatari emir to Riyadh. Since then, the relationship between the two countries has improved dramatically: Not only did the Saudi Arabian ambassador return to Qatar in December 2007, but also Qatar and Saudi Arabia signed a permanent resolution of the border dispute in 2009 and strengthened their financial and diplomatic ties²⁹⁹.

Saudi Arabia and Qatar may be the world's only two Wahhabi states, whereas they have numerous historical and ideological differences as well. Evidenced by the list of 13 demands as the **Chapter 2 Section 2.4** shows, Al-Jazeera is on the list since it is such a powerful symbol of Qatar and the most visible manifestation of Qatari policymaking. The tone and content covered the 2002 to 2007 conflicts on Al-Jazeera varied in accordance with the relation between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, thereby under the guidance of the GOQ.

3.2.2 How the Qatari-Saudi affair are mirrored on AJA rather than AJE

In order to explore the oriented reportage of the Qatari-Saudi affairs, Tal Samuel analyzed the coverage on

²⁹⁶ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018)

²⁹⁷ Naomi Sakr. "Maverick or Model? Al-Jazeera's Impact on Arab Satellite Television". in Chalaby (ed.). *Transnational Television Worldwide*. p.77.

²⁹⁸ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018)

²⁹⁹ Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1299.

ALA and ALE before, throughout and after the conflict period from 2002 to 2007. To address the interplay between Saudi-Qatari relations and Al-Jazeera's reports over the course of the conflict, Tal Samuel used longitudinal content analysis³⁰⁰, which could serve as a powerful tool for analyzing trends in Al-Jazeera's reporting of Saudi affairs during periods of ebb and flow in the Saudi-Qatari relationship. Considering the time of the launch of the Al-Jazeera English website on February 16, 2003, only 5 months after the conflict erupted, Tal Samuel based his study on the Al-Jazeera websites instead of the television station broadcasts which was established in November, 2006.

In Tal Samuel's study, the tone towards Saudi affairs before, during, and after the Saudi-Qatari conflict was targeted, and the content sampling sourced from Al-Jazeera Arabic websites and the English counterparts. For Al-Jazeera Arabic, the sampling derived from three period: Preconflict, from January 1, 2001, the day Al-Jazeera Arabic.net was launched, to September 29, 2002, the day the Saudis evicted the Qatari envoy; Conflict, from September 30, 2002, to September 21, 2007, the date of the historic meeting between Qatari and Saudi leaders to resolve the conflict; Postconflict, from September 22, 2007, to December 31, 2008, the end of the year after the resolution. For Al-Jazeera English, the analysis began on February 16, 2003, the day the website was launched; subsequent dates are identical to those used for its Arabic counterpart. Collecting the term 'Saudi Arabia' on <http://english.aljazeera.net> and <http://www.aljazeera.net>, 505 news items were sampled: 220 from the English website and 285 from the Arabic counterpart³⁰¹.

The news items collected were coded for the following variables to understand the interplay between Al-Jazeera's output relative to the Qatari-Saudi conflict, in terms of topic(including diplomacy, economy, security, terrorism, war on terror, internal, human rights, sport, religion), tone(including positive, neutral, negative), timing (including preconflict, conflict, postconflict).

Table 3-1 Tone of Al-Jazeera Articles Covering Saudi Affairs by Period

	Al-Jazeera Arabic (n=285)							Al-Jazeera English (n=220)						
	Positive		Neutral		Negative		Total	Positive		Neutral		Negative		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Preconflict	12	31	22	56	5	13	39	-		-		-		-
Conflict	24	11	124	58	66	31	214	32	21	77	52	41	27	150
Postconflict	7	22	24	75	1	3	32	19	27	41	59	10	14	70

Source: "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy" by Tal Samuel-Azran.

The procedure was achieved on a Scott's pi intercoder reliability test scale. To understand changes in Al-Jazeera's coverage of Saudi affairs relative to the conflict period, a chi-square test was conducted, with

³⁰⁰ Wolfsfeld. *Media and the path to peace*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

³⁰¹ Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1302.

timing as the independent variable and tone toward Saudi affairs (negative, positive, and neutral) as the dependent variable.

As is showed in Table 3-1, the analysis revealed a moderately strong relationship between timing and tone in the case of Al-Jazeera Arabic, $\chi^2(4) = 22.13$, Cramer's $V = .28$, $p < .001$, indicating that tone was consistent with Qatari interests in all the periods examined. Indeed, we see a dramatic increase in the rate of articles critical of Saudi affairs, from 13% ($n = 5$) in the preconflict period to 31% ($n = 66$) during the conflict, followed by a dramatic decline to a mere 3% ($n = 1$), which amounts to only one article casting Saudi Arabia in a negative light in the postconflict period. In a similar manner, the rate of items casting Saudi Arabia in a positive light declined dramatically from 31% ($n = 12$) in the preconflict period to 11% ($n = 24$) during the conflict, and then rose again to 22% ($n = 7$) in the postconflict period.

The analysis did not reveal any correlation between tone and timing for the conflict and postconflict periods, $\chi^2(2) = 4.67$, on Al-Jazeera English, indicating that that there were no dramatic differences in its tone of coverage of Saudi affairs across the periods of the analysis. Indeed, in contrast to its Arabic counterpart, Al-Jazeera English maintained a balance, with a rate of 21% ($n = 32$) positive items posted during the conflict and 27% ($n = 19$) in the postconflict period. The rate of neutral articles increased slightly from 52% ($n = 77$) during the conflict to 59% ($n = 41$) in the postconflict period.

Table 3-2 Tone of Al-Jazeera Articles Covering Saudi Affairs by Year

	Al-Jazeera Arabic (n=285)							Al-Jazeera English (n=220)						
	Positive		Neutral		Negative		Total	Positive		Neutral		Negative		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
2001	9	43	10	47	2	10	21	-		-		-		-
2002	3	11	14	50	11	39	28	-		-		-		-
2003	3	12	8	30	15	58	26	3	9	21	64	9	27	33
2004	5	19	3	11	19	70	27	7	27	12	46	7	27	26
2005	5	6	69	77	15	17	89	8	24	14	41	12	35	34
2006	7	20	18	54	9	26	34	10	27	16	43	11	30	37
2007	3	7	35	91	1	2	39	12	20	38	66	8	14	58
2008	8	40	12	60	-		20	11	34	17	54	4	12	32

Source: "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy" by Tal Samuel-Azran.

Examining the tone of Al-Jazeera Arabic and Al-Jazeera English reportage of Saudi affairs by year, the result is showed in Table 3-2, which highlights the dramatic changes in the tone of coverage of Saudi affairs over time. In Al-Jazeera Arabic, there is a strong relationship between year and tone, $\chi^2(14) = 101.57$, Cramer's V

= .42, $p < .001$. When only the negative articles were analyzed in the conflict and post-conflict periods (when both websites were in operation), the relationship between the Al-Jazeera version and year remained significantly strong, $\chi^2(5) = 16.5$, Cramer's $V = .39$, $p < .01$.

During the conflict, Al-Jazeera emphasized frequent human rights violations by Saudi Arabia, including the intimidation of Saudi intellectuals (e.g., "Saudi arrests five Saudi intellectuals," Al-Jazeera Arabic, October 10, 2004; "Saudi arrests 5 intellectuals who call for reforms," Al-Jazeera Arabic, March 16, 2004; "Saudi authorities in Riyadh and Jeddah prepare for an anti-government demonstration," Al-Jazeera Arabic, December 17, 2004) as well as human rights organizations' reports slamming Saudi Arabia for its human rights violations (e.g., "Saudi Arabia tries to overcome the claims of an American Human Rights report," Al-Jazeera Arabic, October 3, 2004; "Arab human rights organization reports on hundreds of political detainees in Saudi Arabia," Al-Jazeera Arabic, May 10, 2004). Furthermore, throughout the conflict Al-Jazeera Arabic paid special attention to the U.S. government's criticism of Saudi Arabia's human rights record ("Washington will rebuke Saudi Arabia for its human rights breaches," June 3, 2005; "US Congress passes a resolution for financial aid to Egypt but denies it from Saudi Arabia," October 4, 2004).

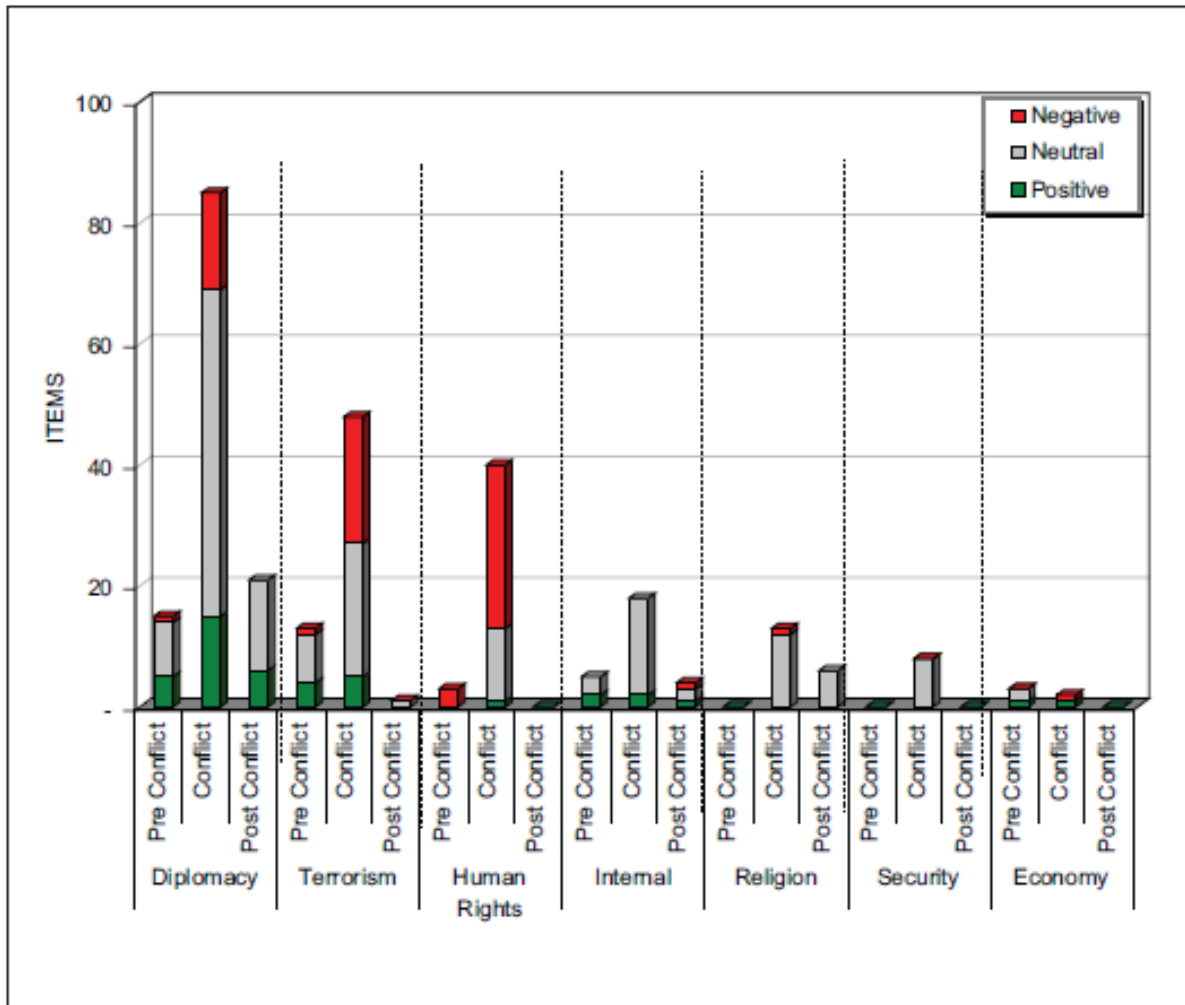
In contrast to Al-Jazeera Arabic, where neutrality was the second dominant category in 2003 and third (last) in 2004, on Al-Jazeera English, neutrality was the most dominant category in all the years examined. That is, in 2003-2004 there are no signs of Al-Jazeera English having followed the Arabic version's trend to criticize Saudi policy.

In general, Tal Samuel found no significant relationship between year and tone on Al-Jazeera English, $\chi^2(10) = 16.26$, ns³⁰².

On both networks, diplomacy, terrorism, and human rights constituted the three central themes reported regarding Saudi affairs during the conflict, although the networks differed in the proportions and tone regarding each topic. As far as Figure 3-1 and 3-2 are concerned, Tal Samuel's analysis reveals a moderately strong relationship between the Al-Jazeera versions and topic coverage across the different conflict periods, $\chi^2(7) = 39.62$, Cramer's $V = .28$, $p < .001$.

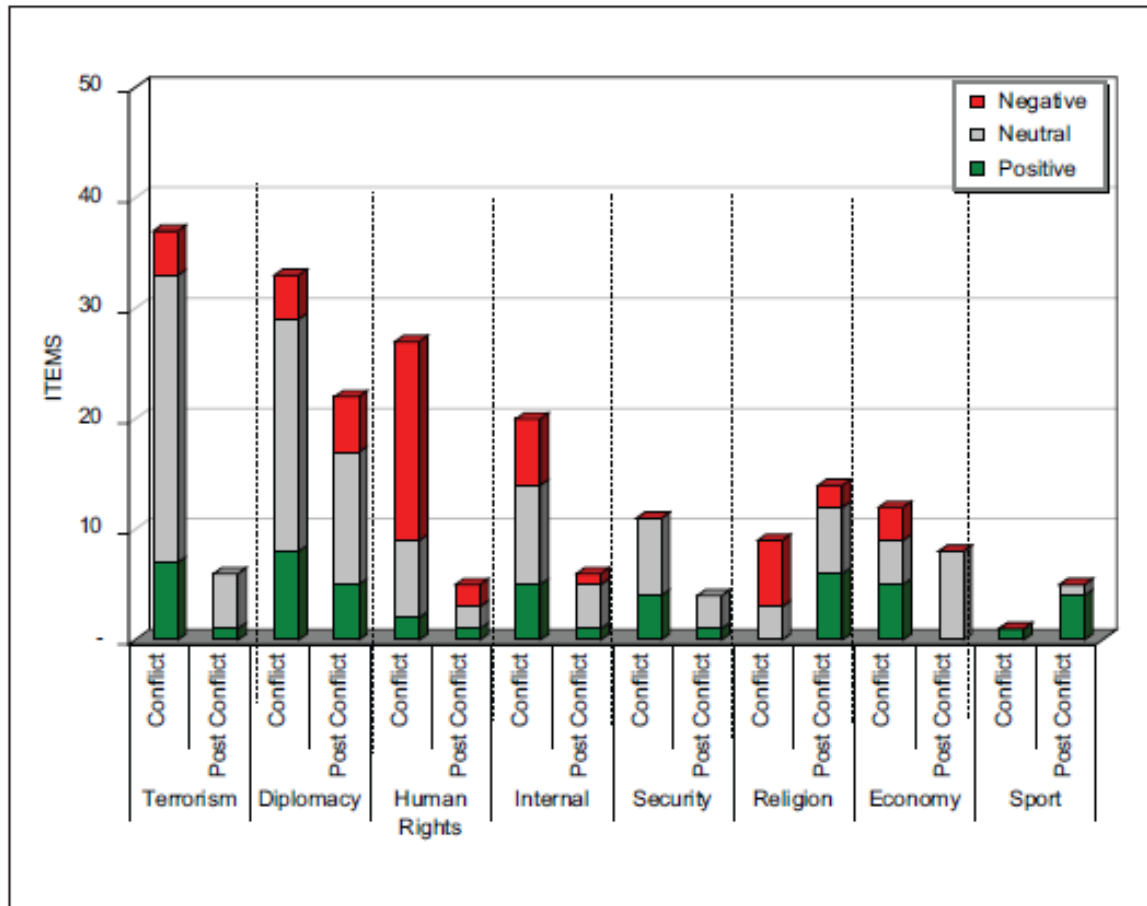
³⁰² Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1303.

Figure 3-1 Topics and tone of items concerning Saudi affairs on Al-Jazeera English (n=220)



Source: "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy" by Tal Samuel-Azran.

Figure 3-2 Topics and tone of items concerning Saudi affairs on Al-Jazeera Arabic (n=285)



Source: "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy" by Tal Samuel-Azran.

In terms of topic coverage, a remarkable finding is the complete disappearance of articles concerning human rights and terrorism—the two topics that featured most prominently in items criticizing Saudi affairs—from the Al-Jazeera Arabic website in the postconflict period. In the same period, Al-Jazeera English published four Saudi-related articles on human rights affairs and six articles on terrorism.

Regarding the tone, upon analyzing the relationship between articles of negative tone across topics and Al-Jazeera versions, Tal Samuel found a strong relationship, $\chi^2(5) = 21.86$, Cramer's $V = .45$, $p < .001$. On Al-Jazeera Arabic, the tone toward terrorism and human rights was highly critical during the conflict: 27 of 40 Al-Jazeera Arabic articles on human rights were critical and 21 of the 48 articles on Saudi terror policy were critical. Whereas during the preconflict period Al-Jazeera Arabic mostly focused on Saudi denunciations of "9 • 11", with only one Al-Jazeera article critical of Saudi terror policies, coverage shifted to a negative tone during the conflict and focused on allegations that Saudi Arabia helped sponsor terror organizations such as al-Qaeda ("Washington blames Riyadh for hindering support for al-Qaeda," Al-Jazeera Arabic, May 2, 2006) and Hamas ("Hamas delegation in Saudi Arabia," Al-Jazeera Arabic, February 23,

2006)³⁰³.

In stark contrast, although Al-Jazeera English typically noted the complete list of countries, including Qatar, criticized for human rights violations in the Human Rights Watch reports, Al-Jazeera Arabic tended to highlight Saudi Arabia and often omitted Qatar from these lists.

3.2.3 The linkage between Al-Jazeera and Qatar Foreign policy

Sourced by an employee of Al-Jazeera, the New York Times showed that the correspondents of Al-Jazeera were offered negative articles about Saudi Arabia during the conflict between Qatar and Saudi Arabia. On top of this, the correspondents were coerced to follow an explicit order. In the course of the conflicts, there was a prohibition of reporting any issue pertaining to Saudi Arabia without the directive commanded by the higher authority in light of the resolution with Saudi Arabia in 2007³⁰⁴. In light of a broader reconciliation resulting from Al-Jazeera, the Saudi foreign minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal, announced that Saudi Arabia would send an ambassador back to Qatar for the first time since 2002. In December 2007, the Saudis attended the Gulf Cooperation Council meeting in Doha, Qatar's capital, which they had refused to do previously. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia indicated that they might permit Al-Jazeera's bureau in Riyadh³⁰⁵. That is why the former U.S. ambassador to Qatar, Joseph Lebron, reported to Washington how the relationship between Qatar and Saudi Arabia generally improved after Qatar toned down the criticism of the Saudi royal family on Al-Jazeera as part of their 2007 agreement which closed the five-year conflict, and Al-Jazeera consequently has proved itself a useful tool for its political masters³⁰⁶.

In addition, the transformation was seen in the newsroom as an even more naked assertion of political will. The coverage of Saudi Arabia was always politically motivated at Al-Jazeera: in the past, top management used to sometimes force-feed the reluctant news staff negative material about Saudi Arabia, apparently to placate the Qatari leadership; with the end of conflicts, "Orders were given not to tackle any Saudi issue without referring to the higher management," one Al-Jazeera newsroom employee wrote in an e-mail message. "All dissident voices disappeared from our screens"."To improve their relations with Qatar, the Saudis wanted to silence Al-Jazeera", and "They got what they wanted"³⁰⁷. Meanwhile, the *New York Times*

³⁰³ Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1304.

³⁰⁴ Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1295.

³⁰⁵ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018).

³⁰⁶ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018).

³⁰⁷ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May,

reported that Sheik Hamad bin Thamer al-Thani, the chairman of Al-Jazeera's Board of Directors, attended the historic meeting between the leaders of the two states which resulted in ending the confrontation³⁰⁸. Notwithstanding Al-Jazeera's coverage gradually evolved and grew more moderate partly due to internal reasons and partly in response to the American pressure, as well as to Iran's nuclear ambitions³⁰⁹, it all the same makes sense to relate the Qatari-Saudi political deal with Al-Jazeera's involvement.

However, the strong correlation between the tone toward Saudi affairs and Qatari interests was only revealed on Al-Jazeera Arabic. There is no similar correlativity on Al-Jazeera English. That is, while Qatar boosts its interests in the region by virtue of Al-Jazeera Arabic, it attempts to retain credibility in the eyes of Westerners by means of Al-Jazeera English³¹⁰. Al-Jazeera Arabic.net dramatically increased the volume of articles portraying Saudi Arabia in negative light when the conflict erupted and ceased criticism of Saudi affairs altogether in the year following the resolution of the conflict³¹¹. Considering the competing position in Persian Gulf, Al-Jazeera was designed in large part as a forum for critics of the Saudi Kingdom. With the situation and orientation transforming, the Qatari elite seemed to sense they could not continue to alienate Saudi Arabia which is at least a fellow Sunni nation as well. After all, at that time Iran imposed a higher threat to the region which was daunted by the specter of Iranian nuclear ambitions, including tiny Qatar. Thereby Al-Jazeera's coverage appeared cautious tone, even silent, when a Saudi Sharia court case provoked public indignation and headlines around the world. That was a severe incident of human rights violations, in which a young woman accused seven men of raping her. Nevertheless, in November 2007 Saudi Sharia court decided to harshen the punishment of the woman who had been gang-raped, from 90 to 200 lashes and 6 months in jail due to the fact that she had been seen in public with a man against Sharia law. As a station long eager to broadcast ruthless criticisms of the Saudi elite, Al-Jazeera turned to maintain a wall of silence. Al-Jazeera was used as a public diplomacy tool throughout the conflict, yet it was reticent about this emotional issue of human rights which Al-Jazeera was always wild about. Although ultimately the Saudi king pardoned the woman owing to the international public pressure, the notion that Al-Jazeera Arabic.net was used as a bargaining tool to serve Qatar's public diplomacy goals in and after the Qatari-Saudi conflict is strengthened.

In light of the severe restrictions on the station's freedom to operate, the director of the Doha Centre for Media Freedom resigned in June 2009. In his resignation statement, Robert Menard, who became

2018).

³⁰⁸ Worth. Al Jazeera no longer nips at Saudis. *The New York Times Online*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/04/world/middleeast/04jazeera.html?pagewanted=all>. (Last access on 12th May, 2018).

³⁰⁹ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018).

³¹⁰ Youssef. Their word against ours: News discourse of the 2003 Gulf War civilian casualties in CNN and Al-Jazeera. *Global Media Journal: Mediterranean Edition* 4(2)(2009). p.19.

³¹¹ Worth. Al Jazeera no longer nips at Saudis. *The New York Times Online*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/04world/middleeast/04jazeera.html?pagewanted=all> (Last access on 19th May, 2018).

director-general on 1 April 2008, as well as the founder of Reporters Without Borders, asserted that they were proud since for several months they had made an independent voice heard, one that had exposed violence with concern for nothing but the truth. And they helped more than 250 endangered journalists and media all over the world. It was the first time that an international organization for the defence of media freedom had been set up in a country outside the West. However the centre now has been so suffocated that they no longer have either freedom or the resources to do the work in that some Qatari officials never wanted an independent Centre, free to speak out without concern for politics or diplomacy, free to criticize even Qatar. It is a pity that media freedom is particularly threatened. He revealed that more than 30 journalists are imprisoned in the Middle East and North Africa, and several journalists have indeed been killed in Iraq, Iran and the Palestinian Territories. Interestingly, he praised the Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani's wife Sheikha Mozah, who was deemed made Al-Jazeera a completed project and an independent new agency, providing bulletproof jackets in Somalia, Iraq and Pakistan, opening a press centre in Gaza, supplying newsprint to newspapers in Guinea-Bissau. Menard spoke about the obstacles encountered by the Centre and blamed Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer al-Thani, the President of the Board of Al-Jazeera. He accused Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer of denying the idea of independence and freedom of speech, and Thamer's administration released that giving shelter to journalists from countries such as Iran might go against Qatar's diplomatic interests. Menard is not alone. The heads of the assistance, research and communications departments likewise left the Centre. The Qatari government officially championed media freedom elsewhere, while generally does not tolerate it at home³¹².

On the other hand, many Sunni Arabs, liberals and Islamists alike, find Al-Jazeera's democratic, Islamist discourse and optimistic vision of the future much more inspiring than the visions their widely hated and feared governments are peddling³¹³. As far as some Arab journalists are concerned, Al-Jazeera's seeming willingness to toe the Saudi line was proof that there still were no truly independent media outlets in the region.

³¹² Joseph Lebron. "US embassy cables: Qatar claims to support free press 'undermined by manipulation of al-Jazeera' ". *The Guardian*. June 24, 2009. Retrieved from:<https://www.theguardian.com/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/213692> (Last access on 11th May 2018).

³¹³ Al-Jazeera, insurgent TV station that divides the Arab world, faces closure. *The Guardian*(1 June 2017) Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/jul/01/demand-al-jazeera-closure-shows-how-much-enemies-fear-it>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018).

Conclusion

Soft power is not merely influence, but also the ability to entice and attract. In behavioral terms, soft power is attractive power. In terms of resources, soft power resources are the assets that produce such attraction. Whether that attraction in turn produces desired policy outcomes has to be judged in each particular case. Whether a particular asset is an attractive soft power resource is comprehensively complicated³¹⁴. Sophisticated relationships do exist among media content, public opinion and foreign policy. Without doubt, the media play a vital role in determining public opinions on foreign affairs³¹⁵, as well as in establishing the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the reported country³¹⁶. Throughout the analysis of Qatar foreign policy and its powerful tool Al-Jazeera, a series of enlightenments deserving deliberation can be concluded.

4.1 Rethink and readjustment for Qatari diplomatic prominence

Qatar's rise to diplomatic prominence is no doubt a spectacular development, particularly in such a dangerous neighborhood as the Gulf or the Middle East region. On top of this, Qatar has accomplished it only in a short span of time of the last two decades plus, commanding enormous economic heft and clearly pulls ahead of its many large neighbors. With Qatari economic boom has come a corresponding high-profile foreign policy consciously crafted to fill a niche in regional and international diplomacy.

Pressed between two regional hegemonies, Iran in the northwest and Saudi Arabia to the southeast, Qatar has exploited its image of being small and harmless by successfully playing in a series of diplomatic adventures without assimilation in either power's orbit---not being caught in either the Iran-Syria-Hezbollah alliance or the Saudi Arabia-Egypt-US bloc. In the process, it has attempted to mediate multiple regional conflicts, and used its soft power tools to reap both political and diplomatic benefits in light of pursuing an open-door policy to woo friends and foes simultaneously. Careful maintenance of its international alignments has allowed Qatar to enjoy cordial relations with staunchly revisionist actors in the region, including Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah, whilst providing the United States with a military base for operations in the Persian Gulf, from which the US could theoretically strike at exactly those revisionist actors. To this extent, Qatar's contradictory international relations cannot be understood merely in terms of a perennial quest for security and independence.

³¹⁴ Joseph S. Nye. "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power". *The Annals of the American Academy* (March 2008), p.102.

³¹⁵ Entman, Theorizing mediated public diplomacy: The U.S. case. *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 2008(13), p.88.

³¹⁶ Bar-Tal. *Shared beliefs in a society: Social psychological analysis*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 2000, p.79.

The Arab Spring has presented Qatar with new opportunities to flex its diplomatic muscle further, and consequently face new risks it did not possibly anticipate. Based on immunities to external threats provided by the US military presence and massive oil and gas wealth at its disposal, Qatar jumped into the fray to accelerate the march towards Arab democracy and thus politically transform the Arab world, which soon caused a great deal of tensions in Doha-Tehran and Doha-Riyadh relations. Overall, the internal and external constraints created by Qatar's interventionist roles in Libya and Syria and its courting of Sunni Islamist forces clearly reveal that Doha faces some serious pressures to rethink and revise its high-profile foreign policy.

When Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani came to power in 1995, he calculated that hosting a popular television network would help Qatar shore up Western support in the event that Iran, Iraq, or Saudi Arabia should decide to invade. The gamble paid off, both for Al-Jazeera and for the Emir³¹⁷. Al-Jazeera has become one of the most watched channels in the Middle East, and is beamed via satellite to over 220 million television sets worldwide³¹⁸. Al-Jazeera regularly criticizes Arab regimes³¹⁹, and what Al-Jazeera covers and criticizes abroad is likewise selective. After all, Al-Jazeera remains heavily dependent on the Qatari Emir who has proved to be an unflinching sponsor. The accusation voices, Al-Jazeera, with a widespread approach, criticizes the actions of states abroad while ignoring issues that happen at home in Qatar³²⁰, which is described as "anywhere but here"³²¹. As a major mediator and benefactor in regional crises and conflict, Qatar's local news is almost nonexistent on its own Al-Jazeera which airs challenging discourses³²².

Considering the diplomacy pursued by Qatar since the mid 1990s, many observers comment that Qatar consistently punches above its weight³²³. The new Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has already made it clear to develop good relations with Saudi Arabia and the US, and to close the antagonistic relations with Iran. He was observed to obtain a consensus within the royal family to reduce Qatar's high profile diplomacy and focus on national and regional issues³²⁴. New priorities are set to replace old foreign policy ambitions to accommodate new realities. The dismissal of Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani, the long-time Prime and Foreign Minister of Qatar, is a certain step of Sheikh Tamim to reorient Qatari foreign policy. As time passes, changes in Qatari foreign policy will increasingly become more imperative, more evident³²⁵.

³¹⁷ Hugh Miles, Al Jazeera(Thinking again), Foreign Policy,July, 2006

³¹⁸ Al Jazeera Corporate Profile. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.com/aboutus/>on 26 January 2013 (Last access on 21the May, 2018)

³¹⁹ Hugh Miles, Al Jazeera(Thinking again), Foreign Policy,July, 2006

³²⁰ Karim Pourhamzavi, Philip Pherguson, Al Jazeera and Qatari Foreign Policy: A critical Approach, Journal of Media Critiques [JMC].-Vol.1 No. 2 December 2015, P.13.

³²¹ Fandy, M. (2007). (Un) Civil War of Words. Westport: Praeger Security International. P.9

³²² Ayish, M.I. Political communication on Arab world television: Evolving patterns. *Political Communication* (18)(2002).p.19

³²³ Cooper and Momani. "Qatar and Small State Diplomacy". *The International Spectator* 46.No.3(2011), pp.113-128.

³²⁴ WorldTribune.com. "*Qatar was 'Making too Many Enemies': New Emir, New Foreign Policy*". (17 July 2013). Retrieved from: <http://www.worldtribune.com/2013/07/17/qatar-was-making-too-many-enemies-new-emir-new-foreign-policy/>. (Last access on 22th May, 2018).

³²⁵ Mohammed Nuruzzaman. Qatar and the Arab Spring: down the foreign policy slope. *Contemporary Arab Affairs* Vol.8, No.2(2015), p.236.

However, the latest diplomatic crises between Qatar and the Gulf nations pose dramatic sanction and isolation on Qatar to a great extent due to the agitating coverage of Al-Jazeera which is the Arab world's first 24-hour news channel. Despite of everything, the regional Al-Jazeera Arabic news channel will continue to be an instrument of Qatari influence, and continue to be an expression, however uncoordinated, of the nation's foreign policy³²⁶, albeit currently Qatar is caught between the devil and the deep blue sea by virtue of Al-Jazeera³²⁷ as an asset that can be a real barrier for its diplomacy.

4.2 Al-Jazeera circulates as an asset basically

As a "hybrid model of international broadcasting"³²⁸, Al-Jazeera is the offspring of the fundamentally distinct state-sponsored and private models. Qatar's miniature size offers another advantage in strengthening Al-Jazeera's credibility while functioning as an instrument of Qatar's public diplomacy goals, particularly in asymmetrical conflicts. Several analysts contend that due to Qatar's territorial and military inferiority, Al-Jazeera's Arab viewers appreciate Al-Jazeera Arabic's intense criticism of major countries, including its mighty neighbor Saudi Arabia, in the name of fair journalism, which they see as a mark of Al-Jazeera's credibility³²⁹. The independent Visit Qatar website states, "What makes Al-Jazeera such a unique channel in the Middle East is its editorial independence"³³⁰. Accordingly, this has been seen by many as evidence that Qatar is one of the region's more liberal and democratic countries, and one which provides freedom of press and speech.

Whereas Al-Jazeera operates as a private network on most affairs, even to the extent of implicating Qatar in minor incidents with several Arab countries in the past, as the Qatari prime minister argued, Qatar manages to leverage the network's credibility for public diplomacy purposes in times of crisis. Its independence is limited by the boundaries of Qatar's crucial interests. Therefore, Al-Jazeera's ability to influence public opinion throughout the region is a substantial source of leverage for Qatar, which is unlikely to relinquish it. Moreover, the network can be used as a chip to improve relations likewise³³¹. Typically, the stick and carrot style reporting functioned as a means by which pressure was put to bear on Saudi officials to resolve the

³²⁶ Lebron. "US embassy cables: Qatar using Al-Jazeera as bargaining tool, claims us". *The Guardian*. November 19, 2009. Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/235574> (Last access on April 19th, 2018).

³²⁷ Mawafak Tawfik. "Al Jazeera: la libertà di informazione e il mondo arabo-islamico"(23 Maggio 2003). in Maurizio Torrealta ed., *Guerra e informazione*. Milano: Opere dell'ingegno, 2005, p.156.

³²⁸ Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1307..

³²⁹ El Oifi. Influence without power: Al-Jazeera and the Arab public sphere. In *The Al Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical perspectives oon new Arab media*, edited by Zayani (London, UK: Pluto, 2005), p69.

³³⁰ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018)

³³¹ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018)

conflict with Qatar. After all, with Al-Jazeera's more favorable coverage of Saudi Arabia's royal family, Qatari-Saudi reconciliation in 2007 was achieved³³².

With regard to the domestication of Al-Jazeera, opinions vary. Almost from the outset, Al-Jazeera was reviled as a terrorist propaganda outlet³³³. It is unclear when Qatar started to employ Al-Jazeera as a tool to praise friends and attack enemies. As far as Da Lage is concerned, Al-Jazeera is a political instrument designed to increase Qatar's international influence, and the Emir employs it as part of Qatar's "double game" of preserving economic and diplomatic nexus with the U.S. and Israel, while simultaneously criticizing these nations on Al-Jazeera. While Zayani debates, the real reason why Qatar launched Al-Jazeera is more to achieve greater leverage against rival Gulf nations, particularly Saudi Arabia³³⁴. Realizing the significance of unification of "contents" and "channels", as well as that of "journalism" and "communication", Al-Jazeera has achieved the goal of "affecting influential people"³³⁵.

At any rate, Qatar does profit from Al-Jazeera which is definitely a gorgeous asset to the patron behind. The network plays a key role in the attempt by the tiny state to play a significant regional and even international role³³⁶. Today's Al-Jazeera has become a leader in regionally ideological trends and a promoter of Arab reforms in terms of its viewership, credibility and trustworthiness. By virtue of the discourse power and influence of Al-Jazeera, Qatar has greatly enhanced its legitimacy and soft power³³⁷. "Despite the GOQ protestations to the contrary, Al-Jazeera remains one of Qatar's most valuable political and diplomatic tools"³³⁸. The station's coverage of the Middle East is still relatively free and open, and Al-Jazeera successfully serves as both a channel and a platform for Arabic news and voices, in giving the Arab world greater 'clout' in the global public sphere; in contributing to democratizing pressures in the Middle East; in weakening the ability of governments to control information and debate; and in allowing Arabic audiences to see themselves and their views represented³³⁹.

³³² Joseph Lebron. "US embassy cables: Al-Jazeera 'proves useful tool for Qatari political masters'. *The Guardian*. July 1, 2009. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/214776> (Last access on May 10th, 2018).

³³³ Worth. Al Jazeera no longer nips at Saudis. *The New York Times Online*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/04/world/middleeast/04jazeera.html?pagewanted=all>. (Last access on 12th May, 2018).

³³⁴ Zayani. Arab media, corporate communications, and public relations: The case of Al Jazeera. *Asian Journal of Communication* 18(3)(2008), p.212.

³³⁵ 史安斌, 黄子懿: 《“新闻”与“传播”的有机统一-半岛电视台全球传播战略转型的启示》, 载《国际媒介》, 2014年11月, 第83页。

³³⁶ Karim Pourhamzavi and Philip Pherguson. "Al-Jazeera And Qatari Foreign Policy: A critical Approach". *Journal of Media Critiques* Vol.1, No.2(2015) P-ISSN:2056-9785. pp.11-23

³³⁷ 胡雨: 《阿拉伯剧变后的卡塔尔外交政策》, 《阿拉伯世界研究》, 2015年9月, 第5期。

³³⁸ Robert Booth. WikiLeaks cables claim al-Jazeera changed coverage to suit Qatari foreign policy. *The Guardian* (6 December 2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy>. (Last access on 17th May, 2018).

³³⁹ Philip Seib. "The Al-Jazeera Effect: How the New Global Media Are Reshaping World Politics". *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* Vol.85, No. 3(2009), p.631.

4.3 Liability to a small extent comes out of Al-Jazeera

Definitely, advancing favorable narratives to global audiences, especially the audience in targeted nations, is a really tough test of governments' capabilities considering the complex market atmosphere. In order to communicate a coherent public diplomacy agenda to viewership through the media, governments are compelled to manage tremendous challenges in the current media public diplomacy environment. The Qatari society was predominantly Wahhabist and very conservative. In such a conservative society, making progressive changes has been a huge challenge. By virtue of massive resources deployed and many structures modernized, the breakneck pace of changes resulted in inevitable effects of diluting the religious weighting and criticism in Qatar³⁴⁰. It has been argued that Al-Jazeera's broadcasting often made it the focal centre of criticism, not only from the Americans who complained about the channel's coverage of the war on Afghanistan, but also from the Arab regimes.

Considering the headaches Al-Jazeera has caused for the Government of Qatar, from tensions with Saudi Arabia to contributing to the rift with Egypt, even the ongoing diplomatic crises since 2017, Al-Jazeera's role in Qatari foreign policy shows liability in a synchronized way.

Qatar's adoption of an ambitious international policy has alarmed both traditional adversaries and current allies. Albeit supporting problematic players such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Syria, it likewise strengthens its relationship with the United States and its GCC neighbors. While Qatar pays lip service to the Gulf consensus, its policy on various issues, particularly concerning Iran, differs from that of the other GCC states. The role of political Islam and Doha's attitude toward the Muslim Brotherhood has remained stumbling blocks in relations among the GCC states³⁴¹. Al-Jazeera is usually censured for a terrorist-affiliated network. And Qatar's diplomatic relations with Arab neighbors are deteriorated on account of Al-Jazeera's maverick reporting style and stern criticism of the policies of its neighboring countries, of which the governments believes that they are aimed at by Al-Jazeera. As a result, the problematic justice of Al-Jazeera creates unfavorable national image to Qatar which has not been as critical as the neighboring countries.

On the whole, Al-Jazeera brings more reputation and benefits than destruction to Qatar. The success of Al-Jazeera has obtained an unprecedented improvement for Qatar's national image and popularity. It has achieved significant contributions to Qatar's active participation in regional and international affairs, albeit it has imposed somewhat undesirable liability. Objectively, the asset is more than liability on the balance sheet of Al-Jazeera, after all, "Al-Jazeera is the only channel more famous than its country of origin"³⁴².

³⁴⁰ Sir Graham Boyce. "Qatar's Foreign Policy". *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

³⁴¹ Al Arabiya. "Saudi, UAE and Bahraini Envoys to Return to Qatar". November 16, 2014. Retrieved from: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/11/16/Gulf-leaders-meet-in-Riyadh-for-surprise-GCC-meeting-html> (Last access on 5 June, 2018).

³⁴² Samuel-Azran. *Al-Jazeera and US war coverage*. New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2010, p.31.

4.4 Points that merit attention

Regrettably, the main weakness of this thesis is the citation of case studies available from the accomplishments of other scholars, which would reduce the precise magnitude of this analysis. To examine the applicability of Al-Jazeera to Qatari foreign affairs, further research will be needed to carry out. Yet future studies would benefit from linking the interplay among public opinion, media content, and policies to public opinion surveys³⁴³.

There is still intensive debate about the extent to which Al-Jazeera is a direct instrument of foreign policy. Qatar set out to become an indispensable partner to a number of key countries in the political, energy and financial spheres. It needs the world to sit up and take notice of Qatar³⁴⁴. The impact of Al-Jazeera was partly an accident. Al-Jazeera's success lay in a combination of several critical advantages such as 'secure funds, live uncensored programming, free-to-air, analogue and digital twenty-four-hour transmission'³⁴⁵. The editorial freedom Al-Jazeera enjoys is unique in the region, allowing it to cover issues formerly considered taboo³⁴⁶. The question facing the Emir was how to ensure Qatar's long-term survival and prosperity. With sensible working relations with all the political actors in the region³⁴⁷, the elite of Qatar likewise find impotence on occasions when Al-Jazeera has gone too far³⁴⁸.

The maverick streak in Qatar's approach to foreign policy is clearly riddled with risk and opportunity³⁴⁹. Within a conflict-prone region where excessive posturing of wealth and status can easily lead to foreign intrigue or invasion, why are the elites in a small state strongly attuned toward improving their place in the international hierarchy through the pursuit of international visibility? With negligible military capabilities of its own, Qatar's defence is almost wholly dependent on the United States' security umbrella and may appear to make the pursuit of status little more than a marginal incentive. It is difficult to understand the consistent tendency among small states to pursue an impactful and visible foreign policy, at times even to the neglect of their security concerns.

The basic idea of Qatar's diplomatic strategy is to establish alliances with the United States, the most powerful country in the world, and to expand "all-round balanced actions", capitalizing on the force of various parties to counterbalance each other, thereby seeking greater room for maneuver and secure diversify. Definitely, seeking security diversification is not only confined to the framework of regional security. Qatar

³⁴³ Tal Samuel-Azran. "Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy". *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(9) (2013), p.1309.

³⁴⁴ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

³⁴⁵ Naomi Sakr. "Maverick or Model? Al-Jazeera's Impact on Arab Satellite Television" in Chalaby (ed.). *Transnational Television Worldwide*. p.70.

³⁴⁶ Louay Y. Bahry. "The New Arab Media Phenomenon: Qatar's al-Jazeera". *Middle East Policy* 8(2), June 2001. pp.88-99.

³⁴⁷ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

³⁴⁸ Sir Graham Boyce. QATAR'S FOREIGN POLICY, *Asian Affairs*, 44:3(2013). pp.365-377, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2013.826003.

³⁴⁹ Ulrichsen. *Qatar and the Arab Spring*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

tries to make use of its unique soft power and national image to spare no effort to avoid weaknesses and explore new approaches to expand wider diplomatic space³⁵⁰. Being the biggest beneficiary of the rise of Al-Jazeera, Qatar's international popularity has increased dramatically, and the relatively objective and impartial image of Al-Jazeera has likewise been projected to Qatar. With this opportunity to carry out its full-scale diplomatic plans, Qatar seeks to expand its international influence and become a strong country within the region and even the world.

Thanks to wielding the influence of Al-Jazeera, Qatar's brand is promoted. In the Gulf context, where all countries stem from the same linguistic, cultural, religious, social, historical, economic, familial and political roots, there is pressure to differentiate a Qatari from an Emirati. By increasing its international profile, Qatar protects itself from the perils of small-state vulnerability³⁵¹. It has the resources and motivation to continue its investments in Al-Jazeera staff and various world bureaus.

Policy and diplomacy must match³⁵². Any actor cannot sell an unpopular product. Information is power, and today a much larger part of the world's population has access to that power. After making decisions, government officials in modern democracies need to devote a good deal of attention to what and how to tell the press. Policies that appear as narrowly self-serving or arrogantly presented are likely to prohibit rather than produce soft power. This is what is meant by an enabling or a disabling environment for policy. In this case, Qatar needs to reassess the fundamentals of its diplomatic approach.

And all the above are desired to provide somewhat possible reference for the small nations yet with grand diplomacy.

³⁵⁰ 胡雨：《阿拉伯剧变后的卡塔尔外交政策》，《阿拉伯世界研究》，2015年9月，第5期。

³⁵¹ Lina Khatib. "Qatar's Foreign Policy: The Limits of Pragmatism". *International Affairs* 89, No.2(2013), pp.418-419.

³⁵² Hagel. Senator Chuck. 'Challenges of world leadership'. *Speech to the National Press Club* 19 June(2003), Washington,DC.

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DEPARTMENT OF: POLITICAL SCIENCE

Chair: Diplomacy and Negotiation

Al-Jazeera and Qatar Foreign Policy: Asset or Liability?

Abstract

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Considering the personal character of Qatari foreign policy, it is hard to distinguish whether Al-Jazeera serves as a tool or reshape it to keep pace with the tone of the station as a motivation. Thereby whether Al-Jazeera is a great asset or an embarrassing liability to Qatar is further perplexes the deliberation.

Since its establishment in 1996, Al-Jazeera has dedicated to provide for distinctive perspectives with freedom which it is claimed that other major Western networks are short of. Known for the most famous satellite TV station in the Arab world, it makes the state influential internationally. However, it is far from immune from reflecting Qatari foreign policy perspectives. While Al-Jazeera has promoted Qatari perspectives on significant foreign policy issues, the advantaged condition created by this state-sponsored/private-operated station does remold Qatari orientation and application of foreign policy.

Research issues

The mass media can perform a significant function as a mechanism for propaganda of governments. As early as in 2009, the former U.S. ambassador to Qatar, Joseph Lebron, called Al-Jazeera an informal tool of Qatari foreign policy.

In that way, how does Al-Jazeera per se perform as a diplomatic tool of GOQ?

Then what about the modus operandi of Qatar's efforts to concentrate international prestige and national security strategy?

Was it from one day designed to comply with Qatar foreign policy, or alternatively did the latter adjust itself to accord with the former? And how does Qatar employ this tool to position itself as a successful and prolific microstate with grand diplomacy and high-profile mediation?

Regretably, the credibility and objectivity of Al-Jazeera has been regarded as suffering a disastrous decline and depravation since the Arab Spring in 2011. What is complicated is that there are differentiated conditions between Al-Jazeera Arabic (AJA) and Al-Jazeera English (AJE). According to some surveys, Al-Jazeera English, regardless of website or station, is more objective and reliable than Al-Jazeera Arabic which is of powerful influence in the Persian region. Definitely, the framing style of the coverage on Al-Jazeera English and Arabic is of great distinction.

Does the divergence between the two channels happen by chance or by intention?

In virtue of Al-Jazeera's public sympathy to Muslim Brotherhood, ISIS, al-Qaeda and Hamas, Doha has provoked intense hatred and universal condemnation in the Islamic world. The serious state of affairs is that in June 2017 Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE, Bahrain and Yemen announced to sever ties with Qatar. They held that Qatar funded militant extremist groups, which was denied by Qatar. And Al-Jazeera was requested to shut down according to these countries' list of demands to Qatar. In addition, Qatar was also deemed to make efforts to improve the relationship with Iran which enjoys a leading role of the Shiite.

Equally, is there any political interest for these countries that accused Qatar of connection with terrorists? Alternatively, is the religion itself likewise a real political interest?

Combining the achievement of national image-building with the accusation of notorious orientation-propagating and the current crisis of severing diplomatic relations, whether has Al-Jazeera become an asset or liability to Qatar? What will the balance sheet look like?

To solve these queries, the following chapters may explore tentative analyses.

Analytical outline

In order to sketch the aforementioned dynamics, the emergence of Al-Jazeera, along with a definition of public diplomacy, is conducted in the first place, followed by an analysis of the covering style and a demonstration of the evolving role of Al-Jazeera, implying to what extent the conformity with Qatar political strategy is expected. In light of the unique hybrid model and the influential reportage, a comparison between the coverage of Al-Jazeera Arabic and Al-Jazeera English is subsequently made, including a case study. In the second place, a systematic elaboration of Qatar foreign policy and its phased evolution are examined. Obviously, the policy changes have a subtle nexus with the process of Al-Jazeera. This indicates how Qatar employs this tool to position itself as a successful and prolific microstate with grand diplomacy and high-profile mediation. Furthermore, several significant components that are imperative to Qatar foreign policy are clarified respectively, including the U.S., Iran and Islamic religion. In the third place, a couple of case studies are illustrated to explore the interplay between Al-Jazeera's inciting coverage and Qatari diplomatic targets, thereby construing how Al-Jazeera performs as an asset, as well as a liability to Qatar foreign policy. Definitely, Al-Jazeera has performed as a diplomatic tool of GOQ and likewise has reshaped Qatari orientation and application of foreign policy correspondingly. Finally, based on the arguments above, several conclusions can be come to, which can afford deserving references to Qatar and other states akin to Qatar. The interplay between the both does exist. Although Al-Jazeera created embarrassing liability to Qatar, it remains a valuable asset to Qatar. According to the success and so-called failure of Al-Jazeera, the experience of national image-building and political objective-actualizing can be drawn.

In **Chapter one**, a blow-by-blow account of the advent of Al-Jazeera in context is taken.

As a tool of public diplomacy, the implement of international broadcasting can date back to World War I. The mass media have become ideational battlefields on which competing political, religious, economic and social narratives are fighting it out, shaping perceptions of the world beyond borders and articulating respective voices for projection into the wider realm. Mediated public diplomacy increasingly aims at organized attempts by a president and his foreign policy apparatus to exert as much control as possible over

the framing of the nation's policies in world news networks. Qatar has been making effort to employ soft power, which refers to the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment, combining its hard power resources to exert a smart power strategy. Political leaders have long understood the power that comes from setting the agenda and determining the framework of a debate. Al-Jazeera provides a global platform to contest the hegemonic worldview of American satellite television.

Based in Doha, Qatar, Al-Jazeera began broadcasting in November 1996. When took control of the government in 1995, the former Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani set out to carry out a series of reforms towards democracy and modernization. His decision to launch Al-Jazeera happened to coincide with the closure of the BBC Arabic channel, which left a number of highly qualified Arab journalists available. An editorial team of 20 BBC Arabic veterans were hired by Al-Jazeera that became the first Arabic-language channel to be directly critical of Arab regimes while being located on Arab soil. In 2006, Al-Jazeera initiated an English-language service and its Arabic service continues to be the most prominent news source in the Arab world.

It is not exaggerated that the sponsorship of the Qatari government gave birth to Al-Jazeera. Nevertheless the Emir persistently asserted that Al-Jazeera's staff members, who are Western-educated reporters with work experience in major international broadcasters, are trained to adhere to professional norms regardless of the station's sponsor. The Al-Jazeera management team likewise stresses that the station adheres to its promise to provide access to "the opinion and the other opinion", citing its decision to be the first Arab channel to interview Israeli officials.

The evolving process of Al-Jazeera can be divided into three time periods. **In the first stage**, before "9 • 11", Al-Jazeera was famous in the Arab world for its novel program forms and the coverage of major events in the Arabian region, which enabled it to begin to enter the eyes of Western media and audiences. **In the second stage**, after the "9 • 11" and before the Arab upheaval in 2011, Al-Jazeera was known by the world for its coverage of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, becoming an international media. Combining Western journalism with Arab specialty, Al-Jazeera succeeded to promote its international influence with various scoops. From an independent viewpoint, Al-Jazeera won a reputation for reporting on behalf of humanity. **In the third stage**, since the Arab upheaval in 2011 until now, Al-Jazeera was under suspicion because of its serious imbalance in reporting, with the accusation for being intervened by the government. Its influence was accordingly reduced. However, it still adjusts its tone to the Qatar foreign policy. During the recent years, a stream of never-ending diplomatic crises kicked off between Qatar and every other country in the region except Oman, as well as many non-Arab nations. The most severe crisis is the current severing diplomatic relations which began from May 2017 when the channel's Jordanian, Kuwait and Egyptian bureaus were all briefly shuttered for various perceived insults to the ruling cliques.

Through vertical comparison between the Al-Jazeera during the Arab drastic revolution period and before it, it is shown that the reason for the decline of Al-Jazeera does not rest simply on the inaccurate news reports, but on that the seeds of today's decline was already buried at the beginning of its creation. However, no one could deny that Al-Jazeera has exerted a tremendous impact on public consciousness and the political dialogue in the Arab world, as well as on the possibilities that arise from challenges to both local political structures and globally hegemonic discourses.

Al-Jazeera was operated as a hybrid state-sponsored/private network, performing as an utterly powerful public diplomacy tool through its credibility perceived. It is neither the government-sponsored model nor the privately owned one, but a new form combining the strength of the both. In this way, it enjoys the credibility of a privately owned station, and only in the period of crises entangling Qatar it reverts to state-sponsored-style airing. The credibility gained during peacetime enable Qatar to influence public opinion and then accordingly mobilize pressure on the elite in other nations to revise the target policies to Qatar's advantages.

However, there is a profound consideration that Al-Jazeera has two faces: Al-Jazeera Arabic and Al-Jazeera English. It is the Arabic face that creates all the problems in Qatar's neighbourhood. While Al-Jazeera English, as another face, enjoys growing popularity among westerners, with high quality news and sophisticated documentaries concentrated on the developing world.

In **Chapter two**, as a policy context, the national condition of Qatar is entailed to touch on firstly, followed by the analysis of Qatari foreign policy.

Transforming from a tribal community, Qatar is a relatively new country with no more than decades' history. Qatar was known as a backwater and attracted little attention until the al-Thani family took control of the peninsula. It gained independence on 3 September 1971, terminating its status as a British Protectorate, and subsequently became a member of the United Nations and the Arab League. The first Emir Sheikh Kalifa bin Hamad arranged the government as a monarchy and was granted to full legislative and executive powers according to a provisional constitution. With his son Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani taking power through a bloodless palace coup in 1995, this structure was gradually changed by the new Emir's progressive reforms geared towards democracy and efforts to harmonize its policies and image with the American ones. Nevertheless, democracy is not a ready-made product that can be imported and implemented straightaway.

Geopolitically, Qatar is at the strategic point of access to Europe, Asia, and Africa, located in the "crisis arc" of the Middle East in the Persian Gulf. Situated between Saudi Arabia and Iran, Qatar goes with the territory of only 11,437 square kilometers and a population of mere 250,000. However, with the highest GDP of any country in the world, Qatar is one of the most influential players in the global liquefied natural gas (LNG) market due to its remarkable oil and natural gas reserves, as well as strategic location, which enables it to be

conferred a unique status and significance regionally and internationally.

The institutional, social, political and ideological conditions of Qatar may contribute to understanding its endeavour. Enjoying advancement, the Qatari regime seeks to escape the influence of Saudi hegemony, especially after witnessing two coup attempts instigated by Saudi Arabia in 1996 and 2005. A tiny state like Qatar has its foreign policy determined first of all by its need to survive as an independent entity in a volatile region that is a particular challenge. The foreign policy options for a very small state in a dangerous neighbourhood are extremely limited. Emerging as a relatively major player in the Gulf, Qatar sets the foreign policy to some extent at the expense of Saudi Arabia. Much of Qatar's policy can be understood as an attempt to remove or decrease the perceived overbearing Saudi dominance.

There is not a long history of Qatari major foreign policy decisions to trace. However, when it comes to Qatar's Foreign policy, it is still difficult to figure out what exactly Qatari foreign policy is. It is much a personal vision. The changes at the top of a Gulf monarchy can produce dramatic changes in foreign policy. Generally, the process of Qatar diplomacy can be divided into three periods. **In the first period**, from the independence in the 1970s to the mid-1990s, Qatar relied completely on the Saudi without a clear foreign policy, and almost was the most loyal ally of Saudi Arabia within the GCC. Keeping a very low profile, the first Emir Sheikh Kalifa Bin Hamad al-Thani had no particular ambitions beyond the borders until he was deposed by his son. **In the second period**, from the second Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani reigning the government until his abdication in 2013, Qatar vigorously expanded its foreign relations. Specifically, this period can be further separated into two phases: from 1995 to the Arab Spring in 2011 as the first one, and from 2011 to 2013 as the other, which had undergone a historical process of evolution from 'neutral mediation' to 'active intervention'. Before the great upheaval of 2011 in the Middle East, Qatar's flexible and pragmatic diplomatic actions left a neutral 'mediator' image for the international community. The Arab Spring changed the dynamic of Qatar's foreign policy, which tended to be opportunistic, pragmatic and personal, came to be marked by a series of high-profile achievements. Significantly, the Qatari government created the first round-the-clock satellite television network in the Middle East---Al-Jazeera, on which Qatar capitalizes to promote its own values and policies, making it an important channel for national branding and external communication. Profiting from the nation-sponsored/private-operated Al-Jazeera, Qatar indeed acts as a key player in the information age. **In the third period**, since the third Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's succession in 2013, Qatar has recurred to smooth and pragmatic adjustments. The previous military operations in Arab countries by the al-Thani government promoted a growing unease of Qatari citizens. Public discontent offers a good reason to reconsider and reshuffle the decks accordingly. This requires a shift from interventionist to peaceful foreign policy pursuits. At the same time, a slow decline in Qatar's richness is likely to force the new Qatari emir to tone down Doha's high-profile foreign policy to avoid unpopular expenses for intervention in foreign countries and the creation of new regional adversaries.

Mediation and niche diplomacy

Based on the realistic portrayal of its own small country with a small number of people, Qatar has long been unremarkable in the Arab world, let alone accomplishment in regional and global affairs. To break through this structural obstacle, making their voices in the international arena and establishing a national image, bold and progressive diplomatic innovation is required to carry out. This is why Qatar tried to use the 'niche diplomacy' to seek a breakthrough. The so-called 'niche diplomacy' refers to "acting as a catalyst for a specific international issue or establishing an international alliance for a particular business". It is characterized by the use of niche and setting the corners of the issue, centralizing resources, optimizing combinations in specific areas, resulting in desirable returns rather than trying to cover all fields. This is a unique diplomatic tactic used to avoid weaknesses while see problems, as well as to avoid the domination of big powers.

The mediation of active participation in regional conflicts is the main entry point for Qatar's 'niche diplomacy'. The main motivation for Qatar's commitment to mediation is the combination of small countries' survival strategies and the pursuit of international prestige. The Gulf Emirate of Qatar is well known for its foreign policy adventurisms in the Middle East region and beyond, with critics pointing out that it is "punching above its weight". Such characterizations refer to Qatar's role in mediating regional conflicts and its strong efforts to play a bigger diplomatic and military role in major international issues. Cases in which Qatari diplomatic mediation played a significant role include the Lebanon crisis, the Darfur issue in Sudan, the Gaza war, etc. Although not all mediations ended with success, Qatar's three diplomatic actions on the issues of Yemen, Lebanon and Sudan demonstrated its positive attitude and ability to mediate regional affairs and won international acclaims. The former Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani was indeed called 'a diplomatic rock star' by the western media.

As Qatar had turned from helping to mediate in regional dispute to becoming a player in the political changes taking place in the region – turning from facilitator to manipulator – it has got out of its depth. It was accused of political meddling, commercial greed, or of pushing a pan-Arab Islamist agenda. The Qataris are well aware of the criticisms they face. The mediation diplomacy was discarded by the new Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, and a more conventional approach emerges, nevertheless Qatar remains important as a regional game changer.

With regard to Qatari funding Islamic terrorism, Saudi Arabia, along with two other Persian Gulf states and Egypt, picked a fight with Qatar in June 2017. 13 countries have cut or severed relations with Qatar. Subsequently, a 13-point list of demands to lift the blockade on Qatar was issued, including the shutdown of the Al-Jazeera's Network. The blockading countries as well demand that Qatar sever all alleged ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and other groups, as well as with Iran. Qatar does pursue deft diplomacy by 'playing all sides' – a policy of simultaneously maintaining relations with the allies as well as with the enemies of the

allies. It is out of doubt that the religion is per se significant interest for them. While this erstwhile monarchical spat had important personal and local elements behind it of little concern to the wider world, there were significant policy implications to the Gulf rift.

Although this is not the first time that Qatar has been boycotted by neighboring countries, it has been the worst hit by its diplomacy. The demands regarding Al-Jazeera state that Qatar must also shut down all affiliates and other news outlets that Qatar funds, including Arabia21, Rassd, Al Araby Al Jadeed and Middle East Eye. It is the linkage between Al-Jazeera news coverage and the foreign policy of the Qatari elite that the current key regional conflicts concern. According to Al-Jazeera's Hashem Ahelbarra, closing Al-Jazeera was off the table. There will be further escalation, mounting tension because of these demands. The Qatar-Gulf crisis is undermining the region's security and economic outlook.

In **Chapter three**, two case studies are desired to serve some indications in order to explore the subtle correlation between Al-Jazeera and Qatar foreign policy

Qatar's boldness in foreign policy has been denounced to be linked to Al-Jazeera, especially since its emergence as a mediator in regional conflicts, from Libya to Sudan to Lebanon to Afghanistan, with endeavors to get close to conflicting parties such as Hamas, Hezbollah, the Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Nousra, the Syrian rebels, the Taliban, al-Qaeda and similar groups. This policy finds its reflection in Al-Jazeera coverage of these conflicts, particularly obvious in Al-Jazeera Arabic. It has been suggested, Al-Jazeera was launched as a means for balancing against the Saudi domination of the Arab media and to keep Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt "on the defensive".

Case 1: The inclined coverage of the Arab Spring

Concerning the Arab upheaval occurring in several countries across the Middle East in 2011, Al-Jazeera allocated huge coverage to Syria, as well as to Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, even occasionally fabricated news, while it seldom provided news of the uprising in Bahrain.

In order to find out the way AJE was positioned in the protests as being the 'social media innovator' and how they positioned their interactions with activists, protesters and citizen journalists, Diana Bosio conducted an analysis of the way AJE's reporting practices were positioned during the initial protests in Libya and Egypt.

Amplified by the mainstream media all over the world, the crises were aggravated dramatically, especially under the circumstance of interactions between media and protesters. The use of social media was a major aspect of their reportage of the protests especially Twitter feeds and YouTube footage. AJE's coverage of the protests was represented not as reportage or information but rather as the support and rallying of protesters via social media. This interaction and support of protesters seemingly became part of reportage of the protests, showing social media as a useful tool for amplification of news events, rather than for the protests themselves.

While interaction between mainstream and alternative modes of journalistic practice during the Arab Spring protests in Libya and Egypt were mostly cooperative and productive in terms of the investigation and dissemination of news, AJE's reportage integrated more user-generated content and interaction with citizens as part of their reportage. However, Qatar was notably quiet about the uprising in Bahrain. With a very small Shia minority, which poses no threat, Qatar prefers too to avoid too strident a tone in public about Iran, so a low profile must have seemed a sensible course, even if they saw little to commend in the way the Bahrainis were handling their problem. Al-Jazeera was heavily criticized for not giving the Bahrain uprising the same coverage as it gave to other protest movements, and it is hard not to see this soft pedalling as other than the result of a firm political steer.

The big shift in policy came with the uprising against Qaddafi in Libya. The normal Arab League response would have been hand wringing and the search for an impossible consensus. Yet Qatar pushed hard, first in the GCC and then in the Arab League and UN for positive intervention by the West. Without that lead from the Arab world, it would have been politically very difficult, if not impossible, for outside intervention to have happened. Qatar did not give Qaddafi any authority to speak, but rather aggressively helped the Libyan oppositions to subvert the regime. Even for the Libyan oppositions, Qatar did not treat them equally. The most vocal criticism of AJE represents the broadcaster as biased towards Qatari interests, and suggests, with the Muslim Brotherhood coming to power in Egypt, Al-Jazeera has done all in its power to portray the group in a favourable light. There are those who argue that the course of Qatari policy over the last few years has been driven by a pro-Moslem Brotherhood Islamist agenda. After the drastic upheavals in the Middle East, Qatar's diplomatic activities experienced major changes. Qatari image of a neutral 'mediator' familiar to the international community has been replaced by the active 'intervenor' image in the civil war of Libya.

In all the first three Arab uprisings, it was clear that there was huge dissatisfaction with these dictatorships, which were threatening to turn into hereditary dictatorships. Change had not happened before since it was thought that the people were just too apathetic to raise themselves against their rulers. The Qataris were smart enough to realize that when the uprising triggered in Tunisia, real change was on the way, and that they could be on the side of that change. When the Muslim Brotherhood came out on top in Egypt they were supported both as the democratically elected government and as what was seen then as the political future, rather than specifically in light of their Islamist credentials. There may even be an element, never far away in Qatari policy, of doing the opposite to the Saudis, at least as far as giving budgetary support to Egypt.

It is difficult to determine why Qatar volunteered to take on these mediations involving some of the most complex and enduring problems of the wider region. Personally, the Emir did have a genuine interest in the issues. And Qatar has the money and the time, thereby a moral obligation, to take advantage of its resources, regardless of the outcome. Commercially, Qatar is always looking for good investment opportunities. Qatar has been accused of naked commercial opportunism in both Libya and Egypt – where there are stories of

Qatar trying to buy the Suez Canal and/or the Pyramids. Internationally, mediation fits well into the overall strategy of promoting international recognition of Qatar as a necessary player on the diplomatic stage. The representation of Al-Jazeera's reportage has shifted over time, as well as over the diplomatic orientation.

Case study 2: Al-Jazeera's tactics in coverage of the conflicts between Qatar and Saudi Arabia

Doha's relations with Riyadh are fraught with difficulties. The primary issue that has bedevilled their relations in the last two decades or so is the Qatari quest for independence in foreign and security policies. The palace coup of 1995 caused a rift between Doha and Riyadh and encouraged the former Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani to provoke the Saudis on border-dispute issues and by supporting anti-Saudi propaganda via the Doha-based Al-Jazeera network. The tone about the Saudi on Al-Jazeera indeed changed when the Saudis turned more favorable to Qatari interests.

For decades of years, Qatar maintained stable relations with Saudi Arabia and, in many respects, followed Saudi Arabia's lead on foreign policy. However, tensions heightened again in 2002. For the Saudis, the last straw in what they saw as a series of Qatari provocations was criticism of Saudi Arabia by Saudi dissidents on a popular Al-Jazeera talk show in June 2002. Deeply offended, Saudi Arabia decided to recall its ambassador to Qatar on September 29, 2002, then boycotted regional meetings in Qatar and refused visas for the Al-Jazeera crew because of its critical stand. In 2003, Al-Arabiya was founded, largely as a Saudi answer to Al-Jazeera. It has sometimes countered Al-Jazeera's criticisms of Saudi Arabia with attacks on Qatari policy, as have other Saudi-owned media outlets. The rift between the Qatar and the Saudi Kingdom ended only 5 years later, on September 22, 2007, following a visit of the Qatari emir to Riyadh. Since then, the relationship between the two countries has improved dramatically: Evidenced by the list of 13 demands as the **Chapter 2 Section 2.4** shows, Al-Jazeera is on the list since it is such a powerful symbol of Qatar and the most visible manifestation of Qatari policymaking. The tone and content covered the 2002 to 2007 conflicts on Al-Jazeera varied in accordance with the relation between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, thereby under the guidance of the GOQ.

In order to explore the oriented reportage of the Qatari-Saudi affairs, Tal Samuel analyzed the coverage on ALA website and ALE website before, throughout and after the conflict period from 2002 to 2007, and the tone towards Saudi affairs before, during, and after the Saudi-Qatari conflict was targeted.

Examining the tone of Al-Jazeera Arabic and Al-Jazeera English reportage of Saudi affairs by year, the result highlights the dramatic changes in the tone of coverage of Saudi affairs over time. In Al-Jazeera Arabic, there is a strong relationship between year and tone, while no significant relationship between year and tone is found on Al-Jazeera English, which maintained a balance in contrast to its Arabic counterpart. In 2003-2004, there are no signs of Al-Jazeera English having followed the Arabic version's trend to criticize Saudi policy.

In terms of topic coverage, Tal Samuel's analysis reveals a moderately strong relationship between the Al-Jazeera versions and topic coverage across the different conflict periods. A remarkable finding is the complete disappearance of articles concerning human rights and terrorism—the two topics that featured most prominently in items criticizing Saudi affairs—from the Al-Jazeera Arabic website in the postconflict period. In the same period, Al-Jazeera English published four Saudi-related articles on human rights affairs and six articles on terrorism.

Regarding the tone, upon analyzing the relationship between articles of negative tone across topics and Al-Jazeera versions, Tal Samuel found a strong relationship. Sourced by an employee of Al-Jazeera, the New York Times showed that the correspondents of Al-Jazeera were offered negative articles about Saudi Arabia during the conflict between Qatar and Saudi Arabia. On top of this, the correspondents were coerced to follow an explicit order. In the course of the conflicts, there was a prohibition of reporting any issue pertaining to Saudi Arabia without the directive commanded by the higher authority in light of the resolution with Saudi Arabia in 2007. Perhaps this is how the relationship between Qatar and Saudi Arabia generally improved after Qatar toned down the criticism of the Saudi royal family on Al-Jazeera as part of their 2007 agreement which closed the five-year conflict, and Al-Jazeera consequently has proved itself a useful tool for its political masters.

The strong correlation between the tone toward Saudi affairs and Qatari interests was only revealed on Al-Jazeera Arabic. There is no similar correlativity on Al-Jazeera English. That is, while Qatar boosts its interests in the region by virtue of Al-Jazeera Arabic, it attempts to retain credibility in the eyes of Westerners by means of Al-Jazeera English. With the situation and orientation transforming, the Qatari elite seemed to sense they could not continue to alienate Saudi Arabia which is at least a fellow Sunni nation as well. Thereby Al-Jazeera's coverage appeared cautious tone, even silent, when a Saudi Sharia court case provoked public indignation and headlines around the world. The notion that Al-Jazeera Arabic.net was used as a bargaining tool to serve Qatar's public diplomacy goals in and after the Qatari-Saudi conflict is strengthened.

As far as some Arab journalists are concerned, Al-Jazeera's seeming willingness to toe the Saudi line was proof that there still were no truly independent media outlets in the region.

In **conclusion**, throughout the analysis of Qatar foreign policy and its powerful tool Al-Jazeera, a series of enlightenments deserving deliberation can be concluded.

Regrettably, the main weakness of this thesis is the citation of case studies available from the accomplishments of other scholars, which would reduce the precise magnitude of this analysis. To examine the applicability of Al-Jazeera to Qatari foreign affairs, further research will be needed to carry out. Yet future studies would benefit from linking the interplay among public opinion, media content, and policies to

public opinion surveys.

With Qatari economic boom has come a corresponding high-profile foreign policy consciously crafted to fill a niche in regional and international diplomacy. Qatar's rise to diplomatic prominence is no doubt a spectacular development, particularly in such a dangerous neighborhood. Careful maintenance of its international alignments has allowed Qatar to enjoy cordial relations with staunchly revisionist actors in the region, including Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah, whilst providing the United States with a military base for operations in the Persian Gulf, from which the US could theoretically strike at exactly those revisionist actors. To this extent, Qatar's contradictory international relations cannot be understood merely in terms of a perennial quest for security and independence.

After the Arab Spring, the internal and external constraints created by Qatar's interventionist roles in Libya and Syria and its courting of Sunni Islamist forces clearly reveal that Doha faces some serious pressures to rethink and revise its high-profile foreign policy. Many observers comment that Qatar consistently punches above its weight.

Al-Jazeera is calculated by the Emir to help Qatar shore up Western support in the event that Iran, Iraq, or Saudi Arabia should decide to invade. It has become one of the most watched channels in the Middle East, with selective coverage and criticism of Arab regimes. Qatar manages to leverage the network's credibility for public diplomacy purposes in times of crisis. It does profit from Al-Jazeera which is definitely a gorgeous asset to the patron behind. Heavily dependent on the Qatari Emir who has proved to be an unflinching sponsor, Al-Jazeera, criticizes the actions of states abroad while ignoring issues that happen at home in Qatar. As a major mediator and benefactor in regional crises and conflict, Qatar's local news is almost nonexistent on its own Al-Jazeera which airs challenging discourses.

The latest diplomatic crises between Qatar and the Gulf nations pose dramatic sanction and isolation on Qatar to a great extent due to the agitating coverage of Al-Jazeera. Considering the headaches Al-Jazeera has caused for the GOQ, Al-Jazeera's role in Qatari foreign policy shows liability in a synchronized way.

On the whole, Al-Jazeera brings more reputation and benefits than destruction to Qatar. The success of Al-Jazeera has obtained an unprecedented improvement for Qatar's national image and popularity. It has achieved significant contributions to Qatar's active participation in regional and international affairs, albeit it has imposed somewhat undesirable liability. Objectively, the asset is more than liability on the balance sheet of Al-Jazeera, after all, Al-Jazeera is the only channel more famous than its country of origin.

There is still intensive debate about the extent to which Al-Jazeera is a direct instrument of foreign policy. The impact of Al-Jazeera was partly an accident. The question facing the Emir was how to ensure Qatar's long-term survival and prosperity. With sensible working relations with all the political actors in the region, the elite of Qatar likewise find impotence on occasions when Al-Jazeera has gone too far. After all, policy and diplomacy must match. Any actor cannot sell an unpopular product. In this case, Qatar needs to reassess

the fundamentals of its diplomatic approach.

And all the above are desired to provide somewhat possible reference for the small nations yet with grand diplomacy.