



## **ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY CONFLICTS IN “AL-JAZEERA” AND “AL-ARABIYA” REGION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The history of conflicts in human history is a diplomatic process with deep roots. By the 21st century, the nature of human conflicts has turned into an unconventional war. Among such conflicts, the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Qatar began on June 5, 2017, after Saudi Arabia and four other Arab countries severed diplomatic ties with Qatar. Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabia play an important role in this regional conflict. The article analyzes the role of media outlets Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabia in the information war between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. An attempt was made to shed light on socio-economic relations between the two countries, as well as diplomatic relations between the countries.*

**KEY WORDS:** *diplomatic conflict, media frames, media development, Al-Qaida, Al-Jazeera, Al Arabiya, Saudi Arabia, Qatar,*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The diplomatic history between Saudi Arabia and Qatar has been uneven, with many ups and downs. Qatar has had good relations with Saudi Arabia since the demarcation of the border between the two countries in 1965. During the Cold War, Qatar followed Saudi policy and became part of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Saudi Arabia also played the role of a mediator in the Qatar-Bahrain border conflict. Saudi Arabia and Qatar are using the power of the media in diplomatic disputes. Both channels have access to regional and global audiences. They are using modern diplomacy and using it. Al Jazeera has made Qatar a regional player and the world sees it as an economically prosperous country.

This channel has a large audience in the region and globally. Any critical reporting of Saudi politics shown by Al Jazeera will certainly have some effect on people. Neither country is inherently democratic, but Saudi Arabia has severe restrictions on local media and the public cannot openly discuss government policies. This is a plus point for Qatar as it has a more modern environment than Saudi Arabia. Al Jazeera has been critical of Saudi policies towards its people, and the audience knows very well that people in Saudi Arabia live in a conservative environment.

This is a direct threat to the Saudi regime, as Al Jazeera already played an important role in the Arab Spring, and Saudi Arabia cannot support any insurgency at home. On the other hand, the Al-Arabiya channel sponsored by Saudi Arabia is trying to prove that Qatar is a power-hungry country and that it supports some terrorist organizations to disrupt the peace of the region

### **LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODS**

In the process of covering this article, the logicity, historicity, consistency and objectivity methods were widely used. This article analyzes the media war between the Saudi-sponsored Al-Arabia channel and Qatar's Al-Jazeera channels. The popularity of channels, for better or for worse, is highlighted as a shaper of public opinion. Their news coverage often determines what happens and what doesn't happen, as well as what issues Arab audiences think about. Events highlighted in the news programs of Al-Arabia and Al-Jazeera channels and criticisms expressed by guests often had a significant impact on the development of events in the region. In the West Bank and Gaza, Al Jazeera is the primary news source for a staggering 53.4 percent of Palestinian viewers, according to recent polls. And Al-Arabiya is 23.8.[8] The result of Al Jazeera's market dominance is that it has positioned itself as a mover and shaker in Palestinian politics, attempting to shape public perceptions and influence debate. The article focuses on the scientific analysis of these processes.

### **DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

Today, mass media has become an important tool for the countries of the region, which are competing for leadership in the international arena to achieve their geopolitical and geoeconomic interests. It is known from the science of political science that politics is a struggle, a struggle of interests. In ancient times, interstate disputes led to war, and the solution of problems between them was directly related to the outcome of the war. However, over time, the "military solution" became S. Huntington's "cultural competition", and today this problem is being conducted within the framework of F. Fukuyama's "information war" wrapped in an



ideological-ideological shell. In the 2nd century BC, the Chinese general Sun Zi said: "Fighting a hundred times and winning a hundred times is not the excellence of victory, the excellence of victory is to destroy the enemy before entering into battle" is a topical issue of the times.

Information warfare is a product of the globalization process, and it is reasonable to say that it has become a very sharp weapon of ideological influence and serves the interests of various political forces and centers. Of course, this situation is not new for today. Powerful people who have left a deep mark on the history of mankind have effectively used the "weapon of information", which is far superior to military weapons. It should be noted that research in this direction began in the 60s of the 20th century in a number of intellectual centers of foreign countries. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's phrase: "Until the truth wears its slippers, a lie will have time to travel around the world" defines the meaning of the information war. It is known that "Information War" is very cheap compared to military actions, and it is more powerful than nuclear weapons.

That is, a person with information gets the opportunity to control any process and use it effectively for his own goals and interests. Man is both the object and the subject of this struggle. Concepts and doctrines promoted by some countries openly state that "it is necessary to lose the ideas of socialization in people".

According to the opinions of political scientists, the tasks of the information war are as follows: 1. Pure ideological influence; 2. Providing incorrect information to the country's population (instilling distrust in state and government leaders, creating feelings of dissatisfaction with some directions of state policy, losing trust in official propaganda and information sources and channels); 3. Trying to put psychological pressure on citizens (spreading rumours, creating unhealthy moods, creating hostile moods among different social groups - nationalism, racism, religious extremism and fanaticism) are considered issues. We can see this kind of information war in the case of Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya.

At the end of 1996, Al-Jazeera began broadcasting with the help of the Emir of Qatar. The BBC, based in Saudi Arabia, was forced to stop broadcasting in the region as the Saudi government tried to censor the channel. Many former employees of this channel joined the newly established Al-Jazeera TV channel. [1] Qatar has always been under the influence of Saudi Arabia since its inception. Qatar's foreign policy was usually decided by the Saudi government. Al Jazeera aired controversial news about Saudi Arabia's royal family. As a result, this channel is banned in Saudi Arabia. Qatar wanted to conduct its foreign policy without the influence of Saudi Arabia. In response to Al-Jazeera, the Saudi government created the Dubai-based Al-Arabiya channel, sparking a rivalry between Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia and several other Gulf states cut diplomatic ties with Qatar. The reason for this is that Qatar supports terrorist organizations. Qatar supports the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as Iran in the Middle East region. The clash between Saudi Arabia and Qatar can be seen on their media channels. And their channels showed how interested countries can win this diplomatic conflict.

The government of Saudi Arabia is totalitarian in nature; they must defend their regime from a democratic and liberal point of view. Saudi Arabia can protect its authoritarian system within the state through censorship or state control of the media. [2] But the Saudi government must maintain its hegemony in the Middle East region. In the modern world, conventional warfare is not an easy way to threaten or defeat an enemy state. The mass media is the best tool for spreading specific views and threats against rival groups. Qatar is one of the main founders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). It is also the third country among the GCC group to have signed and ratified both UN treaties. One was on political, social and cultural human rights (ICESC) and the other on political and civil human rights (ICCPR). (Qatar Accedes to Core Human Rights Treaties, 2018) Qatar has ratified an emphatic version of human rights, including media freedom, but its domestic legislation tells a different story. But under its domestic media and publication laws, media freedom is limited to whatever government officials want. The media and media professionals in Qatar face severe government restrictions. Al Jazeera, sponsored by Qatar, is allowed to broadcast any controversial material about countries and their leaders. [3]

Since World War I, the mass media have been used for propaganda and to change public opinion. But with the advent of global satellite news channels, government-sponsored channels have also played an important role in public diplomacy in the states. Al Jazeera is playing an important role in the diplomatic war with Saudi Arabia. Since Al Jazeera's inception, it has been covering Saudi affairs in a highly critical manner that is not accepted by the Saudi government. (Samuel Azran, 2013)

Both countries do not have free media in their states. Their laws are not in favor of media freedom. This means that a country can manipulate its media and use it against another country, especially in that region. The state of enmity between the two countries is not new, and over time it is turning into a media war. Al Jazeera English is completely free to discuss any global issue, including criticism of Saudi Arabia. Al Jazeera's news is focused on Saudi Arabia and related to the diplomatic conflict. Both media channels correct certain issues and try to show a negative image of each other's sponsoring countries. On the other hand, Al-Arabiya English constantly discusses such activities of Qatar and corrects that these actions are against peace in the Middle East and that Qatar is



actually supporting terrorism in the region. Most of the English stories on Al-Arabiya English are from US media, such as the New York Post and the Huffington Post. This means that this channel serves the interests of the United States and Saudi Arabia in the region. [7]

The conflict between two countries in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, is the reason for the strategic use of media freedom for their own interests. Content analysis to identify state-sponsored media diplomacy and media framing is an appropriate way to explain this inquiry. The content of both media channels regarding the conflict between the two countries shows how they use media frames to reinforce their point of view. Both countries are trying to undermine each other through media.

Both channels have access to regional and global audiences. They are using modern diplomacy. Al Jazeera has made Qatar a regional player and the world sees it as an economically prosperous country. This channel has a large audience in the region and globally. Any critical reporting on Saudi politics shown by Al Jazeera will certainly have some effect on people. Neither country is inherently democratic, but Saudi Arabia has severe restrictions on local media and the public cannot openly discuss government policies. This is a plus point for Qatar as it has a more modern environment than Saudi Arabia. Al Jazeera has been critical of Saudi policies towards its people, and the audience knows very well that people in Saudi Arabia live in a conservative environment. This is a direct threat to the Saudi regime, as Al Jazeera already played an important role in the Arab Spring, and Saudi Arabia cannot afford any insurgency within the country (Amini, 2016). [7] On the other hand, the Al-Arabiya channel sponsored by Saudi Arabia is trying to prove that Qatar is a power-hungry country and that it is supporting some terrorist organizations to disrupt the peace of the region. Qatar has long resented Saudi Arabia's attempts to exert control over its foreign and domestic policies and its pursuit of broader regional hegemony. The two countries were locked in a border conflict in the early 1990s and clashed again in the mid-1990s when Saudi Arabia backed multiple attempts to overthrow Qatar's then-emir, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani. In 2002, Saudi Arabia recalled its ambassador to Qatar after Al Jazeera decided to broadcast an interview with a Saudi dissident. The two nations also clashed over relations with Israel and Qatar's plans to build a gas pipeline to Kuwait, among other things.

The controversy escalated in 2011 when Qatar (and Al Jazeera) supported the Arab Spring protests. The Arab Spring, which served as the final trigger for the political conflict of 2017, helped further define and demarcate Gulf relations. In the Arab Spring, the UAE and Bahrain, as well as the "deep state" of Egypt, joined Saudi Arabia. Qatar, on the other hand, has been relatively isolated among the GCC and other Arab governments, many of which have opposed democratic protest movements. With Qatar's support for the Arab Spring, Turkey's Islamic Justice and Development Party, which also supported the Arab Spring, and the Muslim Brotherhood, which won post-Arab Spring elections in Egypt and Tunisia, there were accusations that he was charging. In 2012, disturbed by Al Jazeera's media coverage, Qatar's relationship with Turkey and the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Qatari government's broader support for the Arab Spring, the UAE formed the Camstoll Group, a multi-million dollar American consulting firm. The main goal of the new company was to spread negative news about Qatar in the American media. In 2014, the UAE, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia withdrew their ambassadors from Qatar because of the country's support for the Brotherhood.

Al-Jazeera was not the only mass media that took a central place in the Persian Gulf crisis. In June 2017, other media played an aggressive and passive role in the resurgence of tensions in the Persian Gulf. For example, a June 5, 2017 announcement by a Saudi-led group resulted in the UAE government's May 2017 hacking of the Qatar News Agency. UAE intelligence allegedly hacked a Qatari news website and falsely quoted Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. The quotes were used by mainstream UAE, Saudi and Egyptian media as a pretext to launch a media and political blitz against Qatar.

Al Jazeera was a more direct participant in the 2017 Gulf crisis. At the end of June 2017, a group led by Saudi Arabia announced a list of 13 demands to the Qatari government. One of the demands was that Qatar shut down Al Jazeera. Qatar rejected the list of 13 demands in its entirety, saying Al Jazeera was not ready for negotiations or discussions. [5]

Anecdotal evidence suggests that in the early weeks and months of the Saudi blockade against Qatar, both Al Jazeera and the Saudi-owned satellite news network Al Arabiya took strong positions in favor of their respective ownership groups. However, to date, no research has systematically examined network coverage.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it uses quantitative content analysis to analyze how Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya portrayed the early stages of the conflict and, more importantly, tries to explain what framing mechanisms were used. Al Arabiya sees itself as a rival to Al Jazeera and against extremism. It exhibits more professionalism than the typical government-owned, highly censored Arab news media, and is credited with securing high-profile exclusive interviews and breaking a number of major regional events.

However, researchers point to Al Jazeera's relatively high quality of news production, which forces other Arab television news networks to improve their production efforts in order to be competitive.



In the information war between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the media Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabia play an important role. Socio-economic relations between the two countries and diplomatic relations between the countries are especially important in this regard.

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