

KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES



REPRESENTATIONAL REVOLUTION, OR
CONTENTIOUS CAPITULATION?
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF AL JAZEERA ENGLISH'S
COVERAGE OF THE 'ARAB SPRING'

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“I, Semih Cihan Çelik, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own.
Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been
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ABSTRACT

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This study analyses the overall news discourse of Al Jazeera English, a relatively new English-language sibling of the controversial Al Jazeera Arabic, and in particular, its coverage of the popular uprisings – dubbed the “Arab Spring” – against the long-time rulers in regions commonly known as the Middle East and North Africa. While acknowledging the initial success of Al Jazeera English in constructing a new news discourse based on its “localness” against its Western-based rivals’ “otherizing” discourse around issues that concern these regions from the point of view, habits and sensitivities of its habitants, this study also points out the channel’s weaknesses, as well as shortcomings and contradictions, in preserving and further developing its self-proclaimed initial goals of “giving a voice to the untold stories,” and “reversing the North-to-South flow of information.” Proposing that Al Jazeera English’s news discourse metamorphosed toward a more Eurocentric media representation, the analytical framework of this dissertation also suggests that the channel has failed to position itself as the reference local source for the region’s and the world’s events. Presenting the two main reasons that led to this metamorphosis, this study underlines the hegemonic relationships, which placed editorial and financial burdens on the channel, as well as Al Jazeera English’s ambitions to become a more widely known international television station with a significant influence on both regional and global politics, as the main motivations for its recently altered discourse.

Keywords: Discourse, Al Jazeera English, Arab Spring, Eurocentrism

TEMSİLİYET DEVRİMİ Mİ, TARTIŞMALI TESLİMİYET Mİ?
AL JAZEERA İNGİLİZCE’NİN ARAP BAHARI YAYINI SIRASINDAKİ
HABER SÖYLEMİNİN ANALİZİ

Özet

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Bu çalışma, Al Jazeera Arapça kanalının, İngilizce yayın yapan ve nispeten genç kardeşi Al Jazeera İngilizce’nin genel haber söylemini ve özelde bu söylemin, Ortadoğu ve Kuzey Afrika diye anılagelen coğrafyada uzun süredir iktidarda olan liderlere karşı bugün “Arap Baharı” olarak adlandırılan ayaklanmalar sırasındaki yansımalarını inceliyor. Batı merkezli rakiplerinin “ötekileştiren” haber söylemi karşısında, bölgesel konulara ilişkin “yerele özgü” bir haber söylemi dillendiren Al Jazeera İngilizce’nin bu gayretleri sırasındaki ilk başarısının hakkını veren bu çalışma, aynı zamanda kanalın “sesi olmayanlara ses vermek” ve “ana akım Kuzey’den Güney’e bilgi akışını tersine çevirmek” iddialarındaki zayıflıkları, eksiklikleri ve çatışmaları da su yüzüne çıkarıyor. Al Jazeera İngilizce haber söyleminin, Avrupamerkeziyetçi medya temsiliyetleri yönünde metamorfe olduğunu öneren bu çalışma, kanalın bölgesel meselelere referans olması iddiasında da başarısız olduğunu ifade ediyor. Son kertede, bu çalışma, Al Jazeera İngilizce’nin söz konusu metamorfozuna sebep olarak, kanalın sırtına editöryal ve finansal yük getiren hegemonik güç ilişkilerini ve ek olarak kanalın hem bölgesel hem de uluslar üstü politik ilişkilerde daha fazla nüfuz sahibi olacak yaygınca bilinen uluslar arası bir kanal olma arzusunu işaret ediyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Söylem, Al Jazeera İngilizce, Arap Baharı, Avrupamerkeziyetçilik

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To my life-long source of inspiration,
my late, beloved sister, Sinem Çelik

They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented (1852).

Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth*

Brumaire of Louis Napoleon

Quid rides? Mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur (35-33 BCE).

(Laughing, are you? Why? Change but the name, of you the tale is told.)

Horace, *Satires*

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Inventing a new discourse for ‘others’ and ‘otherness’ before yielding to ‘otherizing’ current

1.1: A channel that rocked the ‘mainstream’ by turning the other side of the coin

It’s late January, 2009. Just a couple of days later, a tiny Mediterranean territory saw another round of a brief but grave war stemming from decades-long hostility in a ravaged land that lost peace long ago. It was one of my rare off days from the newspaper, but the urges inside me meant I could not escape the news loop. Soon, I gave up resisting them. Despite my initial plans to have an “anti-news day” without a single *W5*, I was now sitting on the couch in front of the TV, flicking through several news networks’ “live” broadcasts about the disastrous aftermath in the Gaza Strip following a three-week-long battle between the Israeli army and Palestinian militants.

It was the same old scenario. The violence flared up after the Israeli military had launched an all-out-war on the Gaza Strip in response to what it said was an increase in home-made rocket attacks on Israel. The battle continued with both sides firing on each other and ended with unilateral cease-fires by both sides after the

asymmetric death tolls and losses that were unsurprisingly higher on the Palestinian side. The dust settled this time, but only until the next sequence in the vicious circle of outbursts; meanwhile, the channels that had extensively covered the conflict were now starting to cease their *Gaza War Coverage* since they thought the story was losing its enchantment, excitement and exigency among viewers.

Not only inflected by but also shaped through the hierarchy of hegemonic relationships, the Eurocentric mode of newsmaking established a dominant delivery network for its journalistic products, thus creating a self-subsidized mechanism that made it the monopolistic “mainstream” on one hand, while also presenting it as legitimate due to the nature of the “mainstream” on the other. The idea of the mainstream, which left no air for others to breathe, created its own ostensibly different rivals, such as the Cable News Network (CNN), or the British Broadcasting Channel (BBC) World News, among many others. The sensitivity around stereotypes and distortions, as Ella Shohat and Robert Stam put it, largely arises, then, from the powerlessness of historically marginalized groups to control their own representation (1994: 184). According to the two authors, a full understanding of media representation therefore requires a comprehensive analysis of the institutions that generate and distribute mass-mediated texts as well as of the audiences that receive them.

During the days of the 2009 war on Gaza and its aftermath, the coverage of horrific events by the mainstreamed channels were in line with their conventional reconstruction as the CNN was blunter with a discourse obviously siding with Israel; the BBC, in turn, adopted a moderately cautious and prefixed – yet still similar – way of telling the story about the conflict. The density of the stories both in quantitative and qualitative terms seemingly diminished, particularly in the coverage about the disastrous aftermath since even the driest broadcasting would convey the deep tragedy there and would create an outcome at odds with their initial and original editorial stance.

The heterogeneity in the Western-based news channels' Eurocentrism brought nothing diverse in terms of storytelling when it came to reconstructing the stories in a region that was alien to them, and vice versa, as their differences in narration, rhetoric, nuance and overall discourse faded away into the same melting pot, which eventually voiced the mainstream discourse. The Eurocentric mainstream was accompanied by others rooted nearby the region's long-prevailing conflict – and were therefore designed on the sensitivities of localness to lure locals with their sentiments – but at a point where the mainstream allowed it to survive. Hence, the locals' discourse either fell victim to the Eurocentric trap or their localness-motivated attempts to tell the story of the local not only to its inhabitants but also to the world against the mainstream were labeled as marginal and subsequently fizzled out despite the chance to become an alternative to the monopolistic traditional news flow from the North to the South.

It was naturally not only me that was left seeking reporting that “gives voice to the voiceless,” the Palestinians in this case, after years of mainstream Eurocentric journalism, which was forged upon a Western-dominated, capitalist and socioeconomic model and designed to serve the hegemonic political structure. As Shohat and Stam stated, Eurocentrism is a form of vestigial thinking which permeates and structures *contemporary* practices and representations even after the formal end of colonialism (1994: 2):

Although colonialist discourse and Eurocentric discourse are intimately intertwined, the terms have a distinct emphasis. While the former explicitly justifies colonialist practices, the later embeds, takes for granted and “normalizes” the hierarchical power relations generated by colonialism and imperialism, without necessarily even thematizing those issues directly. (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 2-3)

Taking the definition a step forward, it would not be wrong to say that the Eurocentric discourse was constructed to legitimize the hegemonic relationship

through the hierarchical method employed, exerted and eventually declared to have been accepted by the conflicting sides of the imperialist system, while refusing to admit any other discourse. Therefore, Shohat and Stam further stated that Eurocentrism sanitizes Western history while patronizing and even demonizing the non-West; it thinks of itself in terms of its noblest achievements – science, progress, humanism – but of the non-West in terms of its deficiencies, real or imagined (1994: 3). Etymologically traced on a wider scale, the nature of hegemonic origins of Eurocentric journalism mainly lay in the West as it was first invented and developed in old Europe and was later imitated and adjusted in the “new world,” America, before it was institutionalized on the two sides of the Atlantic Ocean. That being said, it would be a flawed description of Eurocentric journalism if it were labeled as homogenous since every news organization, even those that geographically share the same roots, in one way or another has its own characteristic and discursive differences. The heterogeneity of Eurocentric journalism with its micro- and macro-levels and internal and outward boundaries was technically drawn by the limits and reach of the language that is in use and its discursive practices, while [...] self-representation arises in relation to language (Shohat and Stam, 1994). Declaring languages abstract entities does not exist in hierarchies of value, Shohat and Stam stated that languages operate within hierarchies of power (1994: 191), arguing:

Inscribed within the play of power, language becomes caught up in the cultural hierarchies typical of Eurocentrism. English, especially, has often served as the linguistic vehicle for the projection of Anglo-American power, technology and finance. (Shohat and Sham, 1994: 191)

On the macro-level, the English-language exercises in discourse differ through the historical-, cultural- and political-based motivations in the United States and Europe, mainly Britain, or in other countries, that don't natively speak English but

have attempted to create a news discourse in English-language journalism. On the micro-level, its variations can be variously tracked over a wide range with a variety of local news organizations that follow different kinds of discursive approaches while turning the world's historical realities into news stories. The varying discourses on the micro- and macro-levels in English-language journalism became relatively clearer with each transmitter of the historical events to their target audiences as news stories first position themselves vis-à-vis the realities, restructuring their self-proclaimed unique discourse over them while turning historical events into news and then setting their audience up to receive their reconstructed version of “newsworthy” incidents as news with the prearranged storytelling practices. Being a historical event worthy of being a news story was also a topic of debate since it also hinted at editorial attitudes via the preferred acts of omission carried out by news transmitters. However, despite their heterogeneousness toward each other, their approach on the Middle East was fundamentally similar and the difference in their tendencies was the decibels of their agenda that is designed to reflect hegemonic relationships.

But there was an exceptional one among all the broadcasters that appeared keen on keeping its vigilance about the conflict in Gaza and in hegemonic ties. I still remember the wreckage on the streets of Gaza City through the lens of the sole channel still capturing live shots from there, framing the images of catastrophe between its usual bright orange banners with a big white ticker reading “War on Gaza” accompanied with a spark-shaped golden Arabic logo. Seeing Arabic letters on captured pictures of humanitarian tragedy – which many other networks, mainly Western-based ones, avoided broadcasting due to their editorial principles tilting toward the other side of the conflict – with either a staff with British accents in the main studios or other reporters who obviously had non-native-English speaker accents on the field, was astonishing. The channel had first appeared as an alternative new source about three years before, but for me, it was still strange to be kept posted on one of the region's, perhaps the world's, hostility via a self-proclaimed agenda of “giving all sides of the story” despite

Eurocentric attempts and efforts to sideline one side for the sake of the other.

Sitting on the couch in my living room, just like millions of others, I was being delivered the latest in Gaza with an apparent critical stance toward the Israeli military's actions in the strip while the wisdom, as well as the legitimacy, of the Israeli arguments for the deadly attacks on the Palestinian territories, were clearly being questioned through the discourse of the stories. The human tragedy, both the grief shrouding the tiny but populous Gaza and the despair and anger among the victims of war, had been brought to my attention with a recently established, unprecedented discourse that rocked the world with its vocal and outstanding take on a conflict that had so far been reported with a discourse leaning toward the Israeli arguments, thus further legitimizing its actions and adopting a discursive posture that timidly tip-toed around the Palestinian side when not outright criminalizing them.

This discourse, aggressive toward both Eurocentric storytelling and its ensuing skeptical practices exerted over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict against the former's position in the whole milieu, might have been seen as easier and expected by a news channel that was born into a self-proclaimed pan-Arab legacy, but the channel had not only taken an opposing discourse on one of the Middle East's most long-standing conflicts. First, among many other groundbreaking journalistic reflexes, the channel also had a claim to understanding, showing motivation and prioritizing its main domain of both birthplace and interest with an editorial stance that aimed at storytelling not as an outsider to the region but as an insider. Second, while it kept itself distant from Eurocentric journalism, the network also appeared uneasy with the foreign interventions in the region in political, cultural and military terms. Third, it gave room to each aspect and party of an incident that it perceived worthy of coverage, thus bridging a huge gap created by its Eurocentric rivals' omission practices toward the side, which they felt required to turn a blind eye toward due to political reasons. The task of giving every aspect and argument of a story needed to be in place, and that was the channel's fourth paradigm-shifting

innovative editorial code, which also brought the further subsidiary step of giving the voiceless a voice. By allowing the world not only to be a topic for news stories but also an active agent that reports on itself, the channel let parties directly voice and relay their arguments back to the world (Figenschou, 2011).

Now, the fundamental foundations of Eurocentrism in journalism were being shaken by the tremors of a new discursive practice aimed at turning the other side of the coin to reverse the placement of those otherized by the mainstream. The epicenter was the English-language branch of a network, which was named after a metaphorical reference to its self-declared pan-Arab editorial stance, referring to the Arabian Peninsula: *Al Jazeera (The Island)*.

1.2: The rise of a new medium and counter-discourse to the mainstream

Amid the controversies and success of its Arabic-language channel, the Al Jazeera Media Network decided to increase its share of the international viewership by launching an English-language branch rooted in the Middle East. Since its foundation in 2006, Al Jazeera English has followed to some extent “a safer path” compared to its blunter Arabic sibling, while bringing historical events into living rooms as news stories. Their new target audiences – English-speaking viewers mostly in the United States and Europe, as well as elsewhere in the world – obviously have different eyes and ears for perceiving world events in the form of news stories. Institutionally, the Al Jazeera Media Network had to bear in mind the fact that it was no more courting the Arabic-speaking audiences, but going global with its English-language channel.

Engaging in a competition with more experienced international news networks for the world’s English-speaking audiences of 1 billion people (Miles, 2006), Al Jazeera English opened 70 news bureaus worldwide (more than the BBC or CNN)

and had 1,000 staff by August 2011 (Meltzer, 2012). The channel opened over 20 supporting bureaus in Africa, Latin America and Asia, parts of the world that have often been marginalized or altogether neglected by the mainstream Western media (Powers and el-Nawawy, 2009). Currently, Al Jazeera English is available in over 130 countries, reaching over 250 million households (Al Jazeera, 2012).

While entering unknown waters, the Al Jazeera Media Network on paper modeled the editorial principles of Al Jazeera English largely on the ones already employed by Al Jazeera Arabic despite the accusations and harsh criticism the former faced. Soon after the establishment of the English-language channel, however, the policy proved to be unfeasible. Al Jazeera Arabic has largely maintained its discursive rhetoric, for instance calling the Palestinian militants killed by Israeli strikes “martyrs,” something that has never occurred on Al Jazeera English.

In the meantime, Al Jazeera English has chosen a discursive language designed to more carefully cater to the English-speaking viewership particularly in the North, which sought an alternate news source to the distorted positioning of the South, as well as in the South, which wanted to see itself represented fairly to the North. Still, with a discourse that is quite different from its Western-based rivals, such as CNN or BBC, in terms of the structuring of its news, Al Jazeera English moved beyond the legacy which it initially inherited from its Arabic sibling by using a relatively less aggressive discursive approach, in an early sign that appeared to be tilted toward its Western-based rivals’ Eurocentric discourses.

Al Jazeera English’s discursive approach and unusual journalistic reflexes wooed English-speaking viewers from regions that are mainly parties to the news stories (such as in the Middle East, North Africa, Gulf countries, South and East Asia or, more generally, the Muslim world) as widespread discontent rose in those regions about Western infiltration in their lives. The interference has not been just physical, in terms of military means, but it has also long been cultural, with mass media introducing different levels of Eurocentric discourse. Besides, the channel’s

news style, discourse and other editorial practices as well as its understanding of journalism, were also attractive to Western-based audiences (such as those from Europe or North America). Like the previously mentioned viewership, they have also been seeking different editorial approaches to the storytelling of historical realities, and thus Al Jazeera English managed to serve the motivation for its formation by appealing to their demands, too. Distanced itself from sectarian-fuelled coverage, which had been used by some as a provocative tool – sometimes even by Al Jazeera Arabic – had become another asset in its competition against its local rivals. Al Jazeera English also tried to change the Western-based audiences' perception created through its Arabic-language sibling by bringing well-known Western figures on air.¹

After the initial channel launch period, the top management of Al Jazeera English set out to refocus and tighten its vision while establishing practical systems and routines to ensure that the vision was communicated in channel branding, practices and operational decisions, as well as in the news and programming (Figenschou, 2011). In the first phase of Al Jazeera English's renewal project, according to Tine Ustad Figenschou, the top management proposed the following six core values – *journalism of depth; every angle, every side; voice of the voiceless; being where others aren't; the southern perspective; letting the world report on itself* – as a starting point for the editorial vision (2011: 06).

Underlining Al Jazeera English's difference from its Western-based rivals, Al Jazeera Media Network's deputy director, Ibrahim Helal noted:

The Al Jazeera English way of journalism is a bit different from the West because we tend to go faster to the story and to go deeper into communities to understand the stories, rather than getting the [news] services to give us the information ... We try to do our best to set the agenda by searching for stories others cannot reach or don't think of. (El-Nawawy and Powers, 2008)

1.3: Zigzagging between the North and South for more global recognition, fame and influence

If a news discourse is defined as the site of historical reality's enactment, every discursive approach employed by parties, which in this study is Al Jazeera English, can possess the ability to develop a unique scene from the same whole picture, and thus may create their own voice. While reporting the historical incidents and unexpected changes in the region, Al Jazeera English tried to upend the upside-down representational choices of Eurocentric journalism. The channel created its own distinctive voice through a new discourse in storytelling, still using the model akin to other English-language journalism principles for deconstructing and reconstructing the historical realities as news stories with a hybrid method that blended internationally accepted journalism standards and its self-declared editorial stance.

The channel's approach to the news shunned the discourse and further representational choices of its Western competitors about the happenings in the region and their parties as well as their arguments, thus avoided falling into the trap of providing voices that would have negative connotations for both the related local parties of the news and the region. Unlike the mainstreamized patterns, the new discourse of Al Jazeera English reached English-speaking audiences with a picture of the region that they had not been given a chance to perceive by the mainstream media. In the space created by Al Jazeera English, the otherized "voiceless" did not only find their voice being sounded throughout the world, but also witnessed new representational preferences that created the region's own "us," against the "us" of those that created the divide.

However, Al Jazeera English's endeavor to depict the region through a discourse rising from the region for the region has started to stumble mainly due to two reasons: Regional politics and its influence have placed editorial and financial

burdens on the channel, as well as the channel's ambition to become a widely known news channel. From its early days until now, the Al Jazeera Media Network's relationship with Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, who lent a \$150 million loan to be paid five years after the formation of the network that still relies on state funding (Ayish and Zayani, 2006), has always been in the eye of the storm. Although the Al Jazeera Media Network's repeated claim of editorial independence from the Qatari government and Doha's pledge of non-interference has proved true to a large extent, it is hard to dissociate the one from the other (Zayani, 2008).

Leaked cables written in November 2009 by the U.S. Embassy in Doha to the State Department alleged that Al Jazeera was being used by the Qatari rulers as "a bargaining chip in foreign policy negotiations by adapting its coverage to suit other foreign leaders and offering to cease critical transmissions in exchange for major concessions" (*The Guardian*, Dec. 6, 2011).² In July 2009, *The Guardian* cited another leaked cable in which the U.S. Embassy said the channel "has proved itself a useful tool for the station's political masters."³ Although Al Jazeera English was not specifically named in the leaked cables, it would not be entirely wrong for one to think the English-channel might have also taken a role similar to the one of the Arabic-language channel since the both are parts of a network consisting of over twenty channels (Al Jazeera, 2012).⁴

In addition to accusations of "being a bargaining tool" for Qatari foreign policy, a top resignation from the network hinted at the Qatari dynasty's influence and ambitions over the group, as well as the positioning of Al Jazeera channels in the international arena. The network's long-time manager, Wadar Khanfa, quit his post after a leaked document from the U.S. State Department alleged a self-censorship agreement between Al Jazeera and senior U.S. officials.⁵ After Khanfa's resignation from the network, the Qatari ruling family saw no problem at getting directly involved in the upper echelons of the network's management, as Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer al-Thani, a distant cousin of the emir, took the helm

of the channel. Appointing a dynasty member to the top post of the network was explained with the argument of further Qatarizing the management, while the new director-general moved to cement ties between Arabic- and English-language channel by creating the new position of Executive Director of News Channels to oversee the two branches.⁶

While the Qatari monarch's rising influence on the network was now publicized with the new management, the English-language channel was seeking to gain more public attention, popularity, recognition and influence to make inroads elsewhere, particularly among English-speaking audiences in the North. Beginning to contradict its self-proclaimed journalistic codes, the channel inched toward the adoption of new editorial practices that risked negating the channel's core differences in its discourse and representational choices with its rivals. What Al Jazeera English crafted in the antagonism of being alternative or being mainstream was highly antagonistic, as the channel began zigzagging in the North-South flow of information as it sought an initial foothold in the Western-media sphere before eventually being exposed to the Eurocentric practices and discourses of Western-styled journalism.

With these changes, Al Jazeera English signaled that it was not entirely immune to the prevailing choices on discourses imposed and filtered through Eurocentric power relations with its now day-by-day diminishing efforts to tackle the dominant mainstream while telling the world's realities back to the world in a reconstructed new story form. Still, it would be unfair if Al Jazeera English were to be tarred with the very same brush that also paints its English-language rivals since its approach to transforming knowing into telling has led to a new discourse that forced even its old-school competitors to make mild changes in their stance regarding their storytelling. Al Jazeera English was characterized by its own discourse that it deliberately constructed and reconstructed, justifying Hayden White's differentiation of a historical discourse that narrates, on the one hand, and

a discourse that narrativizes, on the other, between a discourse that openly adopts a perspective that looks out on the world and reports it, and a discourse that feigns to make the world speak itself and speak itself as a story (White, 1980).

1.4: Wind of ‘change’ catches the region, as well as Al Jazeera English

When the region was engulfed by a popular unrest and an unprecedented wave of demonstrations and revolts against the decades-old regimes in the Middle East and North Africa, the still-vague mainstreamification of the channel became more noticeable. Caught unprepared for the unexpected anti-regime rallies during the early days of havoc when it was limited to a sole North African country, Al Jazeera offered its viewership nothing different than its Eurocentric rivals and initially appeared to fail in its quest to be a news source prioritizing, understanding and telling the region from the very heart of it. The journalistic attention, which was effectively similar to its Western rivals, and the subsequent mainstreamized through news wires’ stories were not really essential characteristic of the channel in its early days of its contrarian stance on the Gaza War.

As the rallies spread to other countries, especially to a regional heavyweight, Al Jazeera finally boosted its vigilance toward the grassroots fury on the streets of many regional countries, developing a relatively clearer discourse on the incidents. But by then other challenges rose on the horizon regarding the coverage of the “Arab Spring” rallies. With the practices and discourse it adopted toward the different layers of the Arab Spring in different countries, Al Jazeera English appeared more moderate toward regimes it favored and more critical on others it saw less favorable.

While paying significant attention to the 2011 uprising in the region’s leading nation, Egypt, with round-the-clock live coverage, similar anti-government protests and rallies in Bahrain were either given little time or

omitted altogether. Also, Al Jazeera English appeared to use more affirmative discourses with what it called “pro-democracy” activists or armed “freedom fighters” in some specific countries, such as Yemen or Syria, while structuring the representation of other opponent forces, in mainly neighboring Gulf countries and particularly regional “big brother” Saudi Arabia, with a drier news language.

Complicating matters even more, the channel’s discourse started to position the channel in a place from which it turned into an agent of news stories with an undeclared, but not unnoticed, aim of exerting its influence by using its media reach in the power relations of its region. With the network’s channel extending exclusive coverage to the Egyptian unrest, Al Jazeera English was also clearly pointing to its desire to have the long-time Egyptian leader ousted – not for the sake of the protesting masses, but echoing its patron Doha’s foreign policy interests of seeing as weakened Cairo amid its quest for growing influence in the region. The network’s new branch for only Egypt and the English-language channel’s nearly round-the-clock coverage that shunned anything else was stunning since the early locale of the Arab Spring, Tunisia, was accorded only routine coverage with a discourse that was not involved or intertwined in the uprising as much as it was in Egypt. Later, when the intense coverage of Egypt started to cease, protests in Tunisia and some other countries also started to appear on the channel, but not at equal levels.

However, the most drastic change in Al Jazeera English’s editorial stance was its adaptation of an interventionist posture in some cases, such as the Libyan and Syrian crises, expressed via timid support for the Western-led military or political incursions, or even for long-term occupations. In the past, Al Jazeera English was a beacon of the media world, speaking widely against the Western-led armed interventions and occupations in the region, for instance the invasions in Afghanistan and Iraq. With a critical discursive language, style and nuance in the coverage of the Western-led military operations, the channel acknowledged the suffering of Afghans

or Iraqis under a dictatorial regime or a long-time ruler, as well as under the U.S.-led occupations. But now its discourse was not that skeptical – and even quite the opposite – and their calling for military interventions for specific nations witnessing the “Arab Spring” protests represented a major change in discourse and practices in Al Jazeera English’s editorial positioning.⁷

The shift in Al Jazeera English’s discourse and other news-making practices as well as editorial stance has been also publicized with its corporate profile on its official website, a revised version of the previous one that used to echo its former approach before it metamorphosed into a mainstream actor. Recalling the fact that it was the world’s first global English language news channel to be headquartered in the Middle East, Al Jazeera English in those days emphasized and valued its roots in the region, calling it a “unique position.” This corporate profile changed in 2012 – a year coinciding with its move toward the mainstream – used to say:

Al Jazeera English is destined to be the English-language channel of reference for Middle Eastern events, balancing the current typical information flow by reporting from the developing world back to the West and from the southern to the northern hemisphere. (Al Jazeera, 2010)

During the early days, Al Jazeera English was still seeking the claim to be the leading and referenced news source of the region by creating a flow of information from the South to the North in order to counter the stream by the mainstream. Aiming to give voice to untold stories, promote debate and challenge established perceptions, the channel used to describe its main motivations as setting the news agenda, bridging cultures and providing a unique grassroots perspective from under-reported regions around the world to a potential global audience of over one billion English speakers (Al Jazeera, 2010). However, in 2012, the profile was almost entirely changed to a milder tone, declaring the new shifted position of the channel. The sole code remaining in the new profile was a timid reference to the “underreported regions” since the channel had now at least appropriated this claim to differentiate

itself from its rivals. But that was a fizzling attempt to make up for the bruises of mainstreamification of its spot in the journalism spectrum.

1.5: Guideline for easy reading

In its initial years, Al Jazeera English made a successful start overlapping with its claim to simply “turn to the other side of coin” of historical realities, and thus provided a new kind of journalism in the background of the well-worn Eurocentric characteristics of its international journalistic rivals. Its editorial stance and practices received both praise and criticism, but it was the channel’s own deeds, not the effects of conflicting reactions to its editorial policy, which brought a significant shift in the reconstruction of narration, discourse, language, style, framing and other editorial practices.⁸

The metamorphosis of Al Jazeera English’s discourse through the effects of political burdens and institutional ambitions seeking more recognition and influence will be analyzed by this study in two phases and on two levels. The already shifting discourse of the channel to the mainstream and growing Eurocentric tendencies added to the efforts to keep its initial principal codes at odds with the long-standing, current typical journalism and their further ramifications that led to a confused discourse will be the subject of the first phase. In the second phase, Al Jazeera English’s near-complete transformation to the mainstream via its new discourse and its backpedalling from the self-declared goal of countering the typical flow of information with its reversed stream.

In Chapter 2, the study will sketch the general theoretical and scholarly view of Al Jazeera English through pro- and anti-arguments over the channel’s initial fledgling days and then now solidified and established discourse on the basis of its aforementioned core editorial principals in its more mature days. In this chapter,

previous studies and some other sources will be introduced to the readers to make them familiar with the mainstream environment against which the very main idea of Al Jazeera was born. While relaying the literature about Al Jazeera English, I will not only convey as well as critique what has been previously said about their editorial practices, portray the shortcomings that need to be readdressed. Here, I also offer a new analytical blueprint to examine and scrutinize the shift in Al Jazeera's discourse.

The two levels will appear in Chapter 3 as I structure the micro- and macro-levels of the method for the new analytical blueprint respectively focused on Al Jazeera English's discourse and its news hierarchy in the course of the broadcasting flow which aimed at reversing the existing stream. In this chapter's micro-level, the discussions about the methods, requirements and deficiencies of the *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)* will be glimpsed and while this study's own analytical framework on the discourse will be explained with reference to the origins of these debates. On the macro-level, readers will also find a similar theoretical development and analytical structuring in the micro-level, with the topic becoming the flow of news during Al Jazeera English's broadcasting which hierarchized the news.

Chapter 4 will feature an amalgamation of the two previous sections and I will both study the discourse of Al Jazeera English through the adaptation of *Critical Discourse Analysis* method and examine the flow of the news hierarchy. I will use samples from Al Jazeera English's broadcasting picked randomly from the early and later days of the Arab Spring in 2011 for an analysis and chart flows on the same days to scrutinize the coverage stream. In this chapter, the aforementioned first phase will unfold as the reader will witness through my analytical configuration the initial signs of mainstreamification and the later shift that led to a confused discourse. The following chapter will unveil the next phase which will put forward the conclusion of the metamorphosis of Al Jazeera English toward a Eurocentric positioning. Without categorically excluding Al Jazeera English's groundbreaking journalism activities that sent tremors into the heart of the mainstream media, I will conclude by arguing

that the channel has fallen into a Eurocentric-minded journalistic trap that it initially stood clear. This is due to a metamorphosed discourse amid its standing counter-argument of still reconstructing its discourse on and through “underreported regions.”

NOTES

- ¹ In addition to David Frost, a respected journalist and the anchor of the channel's *Frost over the World* program, the channel added the former U.S. marine and journalist, Josh Rushing, to its editorial team. As a former U.S. marine that featured in the documentary *Control Room*, and the author of an autobiographical account, *Mission Al Jazeera*, that detailed his transition from U.S. military communicator to Al Jazeera English presenter of the program *Fault Lines*, Rushing was positioned to act as liaison between the channel and American audiences (Meltzer, 2012).
- ² "US embassy cables: Qatar using al-Jazeera as bargaining tool, claims US." 2010. *guardian.co.uk*. Access Date: February, 2013. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/235574>
- ³ "US embassy cables: Al-Jazeera 'proves useful tool for Qatari political masters'." 2010. *guardian.co.uk*. Access Date: February 2013. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/214776>
- ⁴ A discussion of the controversial ties between Al Jazeera and the Qatari royal family could necessitate a separate chapter since the shadowy relations went deeper with the WikiLeaks' 2011-12 publishing of more than 30 cables tagged "aljazeera" and dated between 2005 and 2008 by the U.S. State Department. *cablegatesearch.net*. Access Date: February, 2013. (<http://www.cablegatesearch.net/search.php?q=aljazeera+&qo=17920&qc=0&qto=2010-02-28>)
- ⁵ In a cable written by the U.S. Embassy in Doha, signed by then-Ambassador Chase Untermeyer and published by WikiLeaks, Khanfa discussed with the U.S. officials to delete "disturbing Al Jazeera website content," with a cautious reservation: "Not immediately, because that would be talked about, but over two or three days." "Pao Meeting With Al Jazeera Managing Director." 2010. *wikileaks.org*. Access Date: February, 2013. <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2005/10/05DOHA1765.html>. Furthermore, Khanfa made no mention of his meeting with the U.S. officials in his resignation note to Al Jazeera staff. "Wadah Khanfar resigns from Al Jazeera." 2011. *foreignpolicy.com*. Access Date: February, 2013. (http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/09/20/wadah_khanfar_resigns_from_al_jazeera) In a report on the resignation, Al Jazeera English also announced his departure by staying mum on the "down-toned" agreement. "Al Jazeera director general steps down." 2011. *aljazeera.com*. Access Date: February, 2013. (<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/09/201192012481969884.html>)
- ⁶ "Al Jazeera Network announces corporate restructuring." 2012. *dohanews.co*. Access Date: February, 2013. <http://dohanews.co/post/15121535277/al-jazeera-network-announces-corporate-restructuring>
- ⁷ Al Jazeera's interventionist approach was also confirmed by one of the network's resigned staff members, who said the channel stealthily tried to legitimize outside armed intervention in Syria by hosting only guests who were critical of the regime while deploying a contrasting discourse in Bahrain by giving space to those who backed the country's regime against the opposition. The differing editorial approach and practices toward the different layers of the Arab Spring in varying countries by the Al Jazeera Media Network cost the network several key staff members, including the Arabic channel's entire Beirut office, on accusations of "bias in covering the Arab Spring, especially in Syria and Bahrain." ("Al Jazeera loses staff" 2012. *rt.com*. Access Date: February, 2013. <http://rt.com/news/al-jazeera-loses-staff-335/print/>) Furthermore, they were not the only Al Jazeera staff members to express their frustration over its coverage. Staff members in Al Jazeera's offices in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Bahrain also voiced similar opinions, according to an insider talking to the Lebanese daily, Al Akhbar. ("Al Jazeera reporter resigns over 'biased' Syria coverage." 2012. *english.al-akhbar.com*. Access Date: February, 2013. <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/4941>)
- ⁸ See Appendix A for a visual narration of hypothesis and argument of this dissertation backed with the brief history of Al Jazeera English.

CHAPTER 2

The transformation from an active self-representation intervention to passive representation

2.1: Depicting the backdrop of Al Jazeera English's early days

In recent years, scholarly papers and other additional pieces have extensively addressed and readdressed the role of the Al Jazeera Media Network in today's international television news landscape and its news coverage, editorial stance, and public image; its contribution to broadening press freedoms in its region; as well as creating a new public and new public discourses. However, Al Jazeera English's recently altered discourse and its further editorial placement within the framework of international journalism in contrast to the current mainstream brought a burning need for a new rigorous analytical reassessment of its stance – a task that is doubly important given the lack of research focusing solely on its discursive restructuring amid the changing balances of power in its region. Scholarly studies focusing either on Al Jazeera English's discourse in news or on other issues related to the channel have failed to notice – perhaps due to improper timing – the channel's discursive tilt toward more mainstream and Eurocentric means and mediums.

For that reason, this study attempts to bridge the gap in scholarly literature dealing

with journalism and media representations about Al Jazeera English and its recently adjusted position with its newly altered discourse. Before delving into its arguments, this study will give its readers an overview of some scholars who have analyzed Al Jazeera English's editorial stance, journalistic codes and ethics, as well as approaches to the news.

2.2: Region speaking for itself through self-structured discourse

Textual analyses have shown that the initial discourse of Al Jazeera English over hegemonic relationships and interventions in the Middle East has often been skeptical and even critical compared to other global English-channel rivals. The tone over the U.S.-led occupations of the last decade as seen in Eurocentric media representations has reached a point, in which many global and influential news organizations appeared to approve and even bless the interventionist acts. That was because their positioning as part of the physiological warfare aimed at making local publics favor the interventionist decisions due to their unique characteristics but similar outcomes were produced in the end regardless of the seeming heterogeneity of their discourses. The off-the-battlefield warfare also sought to reach public opinion in countries – as well as their neighbors – that had suffered heavy losses after the occupations in order to win “hearts and minds.” That was a desperate and impossible attempt, which soon collapsed amid the wreckage of war.

Focusing on the media's effect on audience opinion through phenomena such as agenda-setting, second-level agenda-setting, and bias in news and framing, Dianne M. Garyantes (2006) questioned Al Jazeera English's “standards of journalism objectivity” by comparing the channel with one of the best-respected American papers, *The New York Times*. Deploying a textual analysis of both Al Jazeera English and the *Times* in examining their coverage of the Iraqi national elections in 2005, two years after the U.S. occupation began, Garyantes came to the conclusion that the *Times*' coverage drew a more positive picture of the United States and the Iraqi

elections, while the Al Jazeera English coverage was comparatively negative.

While Garyantes revealed some differences between Al Jazeera English and the *Times* in their attempts to shape viewers' perceptions over the war, she analyzed only the websites of a newspaper and a television channel – the two represent different types of media with differing organizational structures and targets. Besides the similar methods for news production and the scope of their broadcasting, television stations are usually easier to access in comparison to daily newspapers, and have a wider media influence over the general public opinion.

In his study titled “Unpacking the discursive and social links in BBC, CNN and Al-Jazeera’s Middle East reporting,” Leon Barkho (2007) tried to uncover whether online hard news stories from the BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera English could reveal what journalists and their institutions call “impartiality and even-handedness.” Agreeing with most other scholars who argued that despite their shared history, Al Jazeera Arabic and Al Jazeera English have chosen different terminologies in accordance with the sensitivities of their audiences and their cultural and language differences, Barkho also underlined that Al Jazeera English’s rivals did not change their terminologies when approaching Arab audiences with their Arabic-language services.

Aimed at expanding its scope among the global English-speaking audiences, Al Jazeera English’s initial discourse might have seen the use of such words, which are culturally, contextually and sub-textually alien to English-speaking audiences and have negative connotations for them, eventually resulting in it losing viewers. Quoting Mostefa Souag, Director of Al-Jazeera Centre for Studies, as saying that Al Jazeera English respects the collective conscience in Middle Eastern culture, Barkho argued that while the BBC and CNN legitimized hegemony, they also vilified victims. But Al Jazeera English, he said, struggled to rid itself of what it sees as a hegemonic “Anglo-Saxon” discourse.

Agreeing with Barkho’s argument that audiences wanted to see something that was no stranger to them on the TV screen, Shawn Powers and Mohammed el-Nawawy (2009) examined the role of the global media in fostering either the

further *balkanization* of the global news environment or moving toward a globally connected and engaged aggregation of publics. Interpreting the results of a survey conducted in six countries, the two scholars stated that broadcasters could contribute to the cultural reconciliation while also acknowledging one effect of the globalization of news media as the balkanization of global publics into discrete and insular communications networks. They stated that Al Jazeera English viewers became less dogmatic in their way of their thinking as they watched the channel more. Therefore, the duo argued that a positive relationship between the channel and its viewers, thus offered the ties as a positive and proactive force in the creation of a global civil society amid the combat against a counterproductive style of “war journalism.”

Despite their attempts and contributions for better understanding Al Jazeera English, both studies appear outdated. Today’s altered discourse of Al Jazeera English was a surrender to the hegemonic “Anglo-Saxon” discourse and has come to offer nothing different from its main rivals, thus leaving the audience seeking a different form of storytelling.

2.3: ‘South-dominated’ coverage ‘giving voice to voiceless’

Moving Barkho’s methodology one step forward, Tine Ustad Figenschou (2010) also studied Al Jazeera English’s editorial distinctiveness based on regional attention in order to see how the news network succeeded in giving life to its now failed motto, *news from the South to the North*. She also analyzed the news sources of Al Jazeera English to measure to what extent the “voice of the other,” or the “voice of the voiceless” can be heard in the channel’s broadcasting. Praising Al Jazeera English as “the first potentially viable and competitive contra-flow of news,” Figenschou suggested that the channel’s “South-dominated” coverage may shape its audiences’ relationship with the news, adding that Al Jazeera English’s

coverage was also dominated by regionalism given its main focus on regions, such as Europe, Asia and the Middle East, and its lack of attention to regions where it has no broadcasting centers. Figenschou's framework and by then argument proved Al Jazeera English somewhat managed to give a life to its attempts to balance the typical, Eurocentric flow of information that sought to legitimize the hegemonic hierarchy of power relations and news. But I still argue that it is hard to say the channel made smooth progress against the hegemonic tides of news discourse since it has been floating in the same North-to-South direction.

The reviewed chronicle of Al Jazeera aimed at giving a picture on the days when the English-language channel especially appeared in the international journalism spectrum and the evidence that Al Jazeera English really managed to open a debate for a better form of journalism and a different kind of storytelling through its stance against hegemonic power relationships and their further representations in the media. The channel was almost the only one to reconstruct daily history by narrating the stories of those who were both ignored, oppressed and otherized and earmarked to be lured and moved by – while also supporting – the hegemonic ties that brought the total victimization to them.

Not only telling the story of the otherized but also appearing among them, Al Jazeera English was also a venture to show non-Western intellectuality, wisdom and potential but also to create a new discourse against mainstreamized templates. Despite the Eurocentric positioning that required the non-West to be in a position of not even being capable of speaking for and to itself, Al Jazeera English was an endeavor from the region that no longer wanted to be represented by the hegemonic discourse but also wanted to represent itself.

However, the dream did not last long, and Al Jazeera English also failed to resist hegemonic infiltration. That being said, it was not the end for the region's people, since the debate the channel encouraged allowed for the creation of self-representations and resulted in a large variation in storytelling.

CHAPTER 3:

A ‘biased’ but critical take on discourse:

Scrutinizing how the same reality turned into a seemingly different news story through different discourses

3.1: ‘What really happened?’ a confused mind mulls over different storytelling

Although cracking the code of what has been said, written and conveyed under obvious circumstances is a relatively easy task, how that has been said, written and conveyed is more important since constructing nuance, style and discourse as a whole can create differences within the same content in a different context. Before analyzing the content of Al Jazeera English and its discourses in news, the question of global reality should be readdressed since different news organizations create and re-create their discourses in news by deconstructing, constructing and reconstructing historical events. Excluding the barriers set by linguistic differences, the possibility of a confused mind mulling, “What really happened?” over a single historical reality is quite high after watching Al Jazeera Arabic’s more controversial presentation of raw footage from the bloody aftermath of a suicide bombing in Iraq, the BBC’s more moderately edited and framed coverage of the same issue, Iran’s Press TV’s more politically motivated delivery or euronews’ quite dry treatment. Shaped by their

political motivations, editorial stances and financial ambitions, the different discourses set by all these news channels eventually reconstruct the reality on the ground and tell distinct stories about the same news event.

The discourses may have differing effects on the viewership since the public – more specifically the target audiences – makes its choice based on the differences in nuances of each organization and is affected by the storytelling of news sources about an incident that always occurs far away. The choice to watch Al Jazeera English is not coincidental in the end for the channel's audience. Disappointed by the Eurocentric journalism practices of mainstream news channels, or interested in maintaining distance from other blunter transmitters, which see no problem with openly declaring their ideological motivations, Al Jazeera English's audiences turn to the channel for satisfying storytelling. For some time, both parties seemed to be reaching their goals.

Based on Teun A. van Dijk's configuration of *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)* and Raymond Williams' experimental framework for exploring the televised flow of broadcasting, the analysis conducted on the samples randomly picked from Al Jazeera English's day-long news coverage on the "Arab Spring" in 2011 was divided into two levels: macro and micro. The analysis respectively aimed at understanding how Al Jazeera English's discourse was differently reshaped while it covered the stories about the "Arab Spring" protests and how the channel positioned each historical incident in different countries in its general news flow during the channel's main news program, *NewsHour*. In the last level of analysis, a merged comparative look has been placed to detect the different discursive approaches and editorial practices during the flow of news.

Stressing that *Critical Discourse Analysis* is not a "method" that can simply be applied in the study of social problems, van Dijk stated that discourse studies is a cross-discipline with many sub-disciplines and areas, each with its own theories, descriptive instruments or methods of inquiry (2001: 98). According to van Dijk, the analysis focuses on social problems, and especially on the role of discourse in

the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination. *Critical Discourse Analysis* research combines what perhaps somewhat pompously used to be called “solidarity with the oppressed” with an attitude of opposition and dissent against those who abuse text and talk in order to establish, confirm or legitimate their abuse of power, he stated. *Critical Discourse Analysis* does not deny but explicitly defines and defends its own sociopolitical position, he stressed and declared: “[...] CDA is biased – and proud of it” (2001: 96).

After all, through the reality of the world, what happened on a larger scale, for instance on a battlefield, or, for a smaller scale, a robbery in a country house, is unbound to the ideological, cultural or geographical differences of those which report on it. However, the differences in the discourses of each are created when a reporting process – technically speaking, a news-making process – begins with an assignment to an event that may be considered “newsworthy” in accordance with the news organization’s editorial stance. The organization may omit it if it decides there is no news or, in some cases, if it wants to turn a blind eye to it as an editorial choice, which also shapes the discourse in the news at the macro-level.

3.2: Crafting discourse through the layers of news-making process

According to van Dijk, the order of words or phrases in a sentence is not arbitrary, and the formal structure of sentences in discourse is not independent of the rest of the discourse or context. The order of words creates a need for semantic and syntactic analyses, which, according to van Dijk, need to be integrated with a study of other levels and dimensions of discourse. But for van Dijk, meaning – as it is analyzed in semantics – is a very fuzzy concept, and the abstract meaning of discourse must be regarded as semantic representations (1997:8).

Summarizing the story-writing strategies, which will be formulated as *news-*

making layers in this dissertation, as selection, reproduction, summary and stylistic and rhetorical (re-)formulation, van Dijk argued that the source selection criteria are traditionally tilted toward official sources, and the selection after reading and evaluation presupposes opinions about content characteristics of the source text (1988: 115-116). As an assigned reporter arrives at the scene of an incident and attempts to create a news story, together with the editing and reconstruction of a partially raw or semi-structured story, the second reconstruction of each story, the flow of the news stories and, finally, its cognition by the target audience form the main four layers of news-making.¹ The analyses of four layers of news-making and their subsequent phases in each layer provide an opportunity to differentiate the discursive approaches to the construction and further reconstructions of stories by different news organizations.

The first layer of news-making may be called the “pre-coverage phase,” in which a reporter assigned to an event that was considered as “newsworthy” by his/her superiors arrives at the scene and starts to collect evidences about the incident. The motivations behind his or her interactions with the parties to the event, such as questions during the interviews, visual framing, as well as additional quotes or comments from other parties, may construct the basic news story and may give hints as to reconstruction of the discourse in subsequent phases. The reporter ostensibly works under the guidance of the employer’s editorial terms, meaning he or she actually creates the story with discursive principles that were fixed previously by the news organization. Still, there is a possibility that the reporter may fall short on integrating the predetermined discourse into his or her story over a new historical reality and that the story may consequently see enduring reconstructions by the editorial board to be clearly set with the encoded discourse before being delivered to the audiences as the final product.

Reproduction may also be partial, for example, to meet size constraints, van Dijk stated, adding that selection and summarization were involved in reproduction.

As a partial expression of such a macrostructure, a summary indicated what according to the reporter is most relevant or important in one or more source texts, he also noted while adding that summarization is necessarily subjective since it presupposes personal and professional decisions about what information is most relevant or important, and which overall categories need not be expressed in source texts themselves (1988: 116).

In the news-making process' second layer, which is at the core of this dissertation together with the third layer as the micro- and macro-level critical analyses of discourse in news, the discourse of a partially raw or semi-structured story by a reporter is restructured in both visual and audio senses. The story is further expanded with additional materials if necessary and semiotic changes to the news language are made in more tandem with the strict pre-fixed discourse principles of the news source. That being said, many transformations of the source text are also stylistic or rhetorical, not just mainly semantic, according to van Dijk, who argued that style changes offer the most effective means to inject personal or institutional opinions into the news text while writing about the same events (1988: 116).

But it was not the selection, reproduction, summary and stylistic and rhetorical (re-)formulation of a story that solely constructs the discourse. Discourses live a "life of their own" in relation to reality, although they impact and shape and even enable societal reality, and the reality is not simply reflected in discourses, Siegfried Jäger argued. He posited that if the discourse changes, the object not only changes its meaning, but it becomes a different object, losing its previous identity (2001: 43).

Backed with van Dijk's blueprint for writing strategies, Jäger's argument consolidates the main suggestion of this study, which places the emphasis on the deconstruction and/or reconstruction of the world's realities in a news story through the discursive looking glass of a media organization in accordance with its pre-determined editorial choice and stance. Once the discursive approach to a

“newsworthy” historical event changes, its meaning delivered to the audiences is also transformed, and thus a wide range of connotations, either positive or negative, may occur during the reporting of a historical incident with various news groups using different forms of discourse on the event. Therefore, during the construction of a world event, a news organization becomes the transmitter structuring an incident into a news story through its encoded tendencies while the audiences are positioned as the recipient of a news story through the discourse of its teller.

3.3: Clues for hierarchizing news: Prioritization, categorization and devotion

The next layer constitutes the “delivery phase” of news-making, in which another macro-level of critical analysis can be made through the flow of the broadcasting by examining how the second and final restructuring is made, how the prioritization of all news stories is determined, what length is given and, like in the first phase, which stories are omitted. The final layer of the news-making process can be called “post-coverage,” which involves feedback from the target audience’s perception of news organizations and their news source preference, as well as cognition of the discourse by the selected network.²

The news prioritization, categorization and time devotion during the televised flow help to clarify a news channel’s hierarchy of historical realities as stories. The news hierarchy during the flow may be an indicator of how the channel positioned itself before the incidents it deemed worthy of being the subject of a news story, as well as how it sought to make its audiences see the events they desired information about.

Defining the real flow, or the real “broadcasting” as composed by sequences transformed by the inclusion of another kind of sequence rather than a planned flow, in which the true series is not the published sequence of program, Williams offered analyzing the form of news on a broadcast bulletin under four headings: *sequence*,

priorities, presentation, and visualization (2004: 40). Williams argued that some examples of flow in television can be analyzed in three different orders of detail, but his study was most concerned with the one detail dealing with what he called “the really detailed flow,” the actual succession of words and images (2004:40).

3.4: Hints on how the analytical framework is conducted

Building on van Dijk’s approach to the discourse with the more theoretical backing of Jäger’s argument on discourse, the discourse analysis in this dissertation will be divided into two branches – syntactic and semantic – thus creating an analytical macro-outline for the semiological signs in the news discourse. Since the syntactic and semantic elements of a news text, sub-text and context will fall short in seeing the transformations, the style and rhetoric unique to Al Jazeera English’s discourse will also be analyzed.

The initial outcome will point to a three-level transformation phase of Al Jazeera English’s news discourse in the course of its positioning toward the different layers and timings of the “Arab Spring” rallies in the varying countries. On the first level, this study will introduce its readers to an unprepared discourse of Al Jazeera English with the channel using a confused, hybrid discourse based on its initial core principal codes, which were subsequently challenged by the emergence of a new popular drive against hegemonic relationships. The analytical framework’s syntactic and semantic glance at Al Jazeera English’s reconstruction of the popular fury will trace both the signs that created the confused, hybrid discourse while the stylistic and rhetorical undertakings will hint at the fact that the channel’s unprepared discourse needs a new reconstruction boost with the rise of a new conjuncture heralding a new era in the hegemonic power relations.

The direction of the re-forging of a discourse marks Al Jazeera’s positioning

toward the “Arab Spring” and this study suggests that Al Jazeera English’s discourse in the stories about the spreading unrest in the region – yielded their place to a deliberately fluctuation in the hierarchical placement of the channel in the ongoing transformation of hegemonic power balances following an initial unpreparedness and confusion over the discourse. The same syntactic and semantic analytical framework will offer a more pre-fixed structuring of the discourse, and the channel’s stylistic and rhetorical alterations in its reconstruction of the rallies will become either drier or louder according to its placement in regional politics. On the final level, the overall analytical framework will propose the rise of a new discourse that has been re-shaped after Al Jazeera’s now complete surrender to the Eurocentric representational choices, with even the channel appearing more mainstreamized compared to rivals that were born into the mainstream.

In the next level of analysis, the news-making layers in the stories crafted by Al Jazeera English’s discourse will be analyzed with particular emphasis on the first third layers, meaning the semi-reconstructed stories by a reporter and reconstructed stories after they are deconstructed in order to approach the pre-arranged discourse. During the coverage of the “Arab Spring” rallies, Al Jazeera English’s main *NewsHour* was often linked to live world news at the channel’s broadcasting centers in Doha, London, Kuala Lumpur and Washington, as well as to reporters on the ground. The discourse analysis will be carried out on both the stories prepared by the staff at the broadcasting centers and on the stories that were delivered to audiences in a straight format in order to identify the discursive differences among each other.

The stream during the *NewsHour* will also be subject to a flow analysis that will have a look at the news hierarchy, news positioning and the comparative time devotion. Centered on Williams’ flow analysis of an American channel compared with a British network, the initial traces in the flow analysis of Al Jazeera English hinted that the channel constructed its flow similarly to British-style journalism rather

than its counterpart from across the Atlantic.³ Like Williams' analysis of the BBC, Al Jazeera's flow also appeared more deliberately arranged than the American example, and there was less apparently spontaneous reporting and commentary (2004:113).

3.5: Micro- and macro-analyses merged for a comparative gaze within

Merging the micro-analysis of discourse and macro-analysis of flow on the last level, the analytical framework will have a comparative gaze at the stories differing both in discursive and stream sense in Al Jazeera English's coverage of rallies which have similar goals in different countries of the region. The comparative look will make the different semiotic web, stylistic and rhetorical texture clearer while also portraying how Al Jazeera English prioritizes its stories among each other during the flow.

The political concept of "hegemony" can be usefully employed in analyzing orders of discourse, Norman Fairclough said, adding that a particular social structuring of semiotic difference may become hegemonic and part of the legitimizing common sense which sustains relations of domination (2001:128). The last phase of analysis will also provide distinguishing material to better clarify Al Jazeera's editorial take on the events motivated by more political and influential self-spotting in the hegemonic regional equilibrium. It will, furthermore, give clues about how it wants to position the target audiences under its same motivations.

Despite the complexity on both the micro- and macro-levels, the analytical blueprint presented by this dissertation has a gap – among many minor others – which hardly make any difference in the end. The mechanic, dialectical pattern of the discourse analysis risks conveying unsteady outcomes, particularly in journalistic cases which happen very spontaneously, leaving no time to

reconstruct the discourse closely enough to the pre-arranged one that is currently in use. For instance, the discourse in a breaking story relayed by a reporter on the ground may perhaps not bear the traces of the institutional discourse of the channel. In most cases, however, the discourse will be later reconstructed in harmony with established discursive codes.

Acknowledging van Dijk's argument that a "full" analysis of a short passage might take months and fill hundreds of pages, meaning a complete discourse analysis of a large corpus of text or discussion is impossible, this dissertation will follow van Dijk's lead to select structures for closer analysis that are relevant for the study of a social issue. This requires at least, van Dijk argued, some informal ideas about text-context links that tell us which properties of discourse may vary as a function of which social structures (2001:99).

NOTES

- ¹ See Appendix B for the visual description of the four layers of news-making.
- ² This study merely deals with the theoretical cognitive approaches taken by viewers, since a practical study of their responses would necessitate quantitative research analyses on sample data collected on the tendencies of viewers.
- ³ Spotting the Eurocentric mark of British-style television journalism in Al Jazeera English's broadcasting was expected since the first core editorial board team, veteran BBC members, shaped their journalism skills with the codes of the British broadcaster. The BBC effect was more prominent in the earlier days of Al Jazeera English, but soon diminished until the Al Jazeera English discourse took shape.

CHAPTER 4:

Step-by-step metamorphosis with the cases of Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Libya: A work-in-process discourse creates a selective model to tell or not tell before assuming a complete interventionist stance

4.1: The case of Tunisia: Caught unprepared with a ‘work-in-process’ discourse

Al Jazeera English attempted at its inception to blend the editorial and discursive code of Al Jazeera Arabic with “international news standards,” set by and for Western journalistic customs, entertaining hopes for a similar success story but with a new discourse arranged for the needs of new audiences. After functioning like a sword of Damocles lingering over the thin-skinned regional regimes for a couple of years, Al Jazeera English had to confront the daunting task of remodeling its conception of news since the rapidly changing climate surrounding the channel posed new editorial and policy challenges to both its editorial stance and the very journalistic roots shaping its practices and discourse.

As regards the first spark that later turned into a popular blaze engulfing the region, Al Jazeera English appeared indecisive. The analytical blueprint conducted the randomly picked samples found the channel adopting differing and even contradictory

postures by magnifying the historical realities, on one hand, or belittling or entirely omitting them, on the other.¹ When the first protests against a long-time leader erupted in Tunisia, Al Jazeera English – like most other news organizations – also regarded the anti-regime demonstrations as no different than previous ones. Despite its retroactive importance in igniting the fury in the region, the stories about Tunisia initially saw a diminished interest in Al Jazeera English’s news flow.

In the macro-analyses of the first couple of samples taken from Al Jazeera English’s *NewsHour* flow between December 2011 and January 2012 when only Tunisia was experiencing widespread angry demonstrations, it was noted that Al Jazeera English initially gave fair, but not extraordinary, attention and space to the historical happenings in the North African country. During the news flow of *NewsHour*, which typically provides a news brief for the headlines to which the channel gives the most editorial attention, stories on the Tunisian unrest found differing places. The channel put the reports from Tunisia in and out of the headlines.

In a sample dated 23.12.2010, Al Jazeera English either entirely omitted the stories on Tunisia or provided little information on the angry events. The analysis on both the discourse and the flow of the initial poor attention of Al Jazeera English on Tunisia pointed out that the channel was caught unprepared for such a breakthrough development despite the fact that they had been occurring in its very main region for news and roots. The North African country was placed in the category of relatively “trivial” countries compared to “essential” others, which have traditionally seen more of the spotlight considering the significance they acquired by power balances shaped by hegemonic international politics.

Six days later, a sample dated 29.12.2010 demonstrated editorial practices which reflected a stance that was moderately more in tune with Al Jazeera English’s broadcasting principles. The channel focused more on the Tunisian unrest but the analysis reached the conclusion that it still lagged behind what should have been done in accordance with its ambitious challenge of reinventing

media representations. Starting with its news brief for the world headlines, the analysis of the flow found Al Jazeera English devoting more attention to the events in Tunisia, placing it among the other prime stories but still regarding the stories related to the country as no different than any other news item. In the flow of *NewsHour*, the other “essential” news stories were covered extensively while the Tunisian coverage saw “routine” coverage with compiled stories.

The other indication in the analysis that displayed Al Jazeera English was unprepared for Tunisia’s socially and politically groundbreaking events was the “work-in-process” discourse during its coverage. The micro-level analysis of the first samples hinted that the channel had no firmly established discursive language and rhetoric during the early days of the nationwide discontent. In its initial coverage, Al Jazeera English mainly prioritized the violence that the North African country witnessed while covering the popular public agitation against the suppressive regime, echoing a similar editorial posture espoused by its Western-based rivals. While the casualties predictably occurred mostly on the protesters’ side, their emphasis on violent actions in Tunisia put their audiences in a position of questioning the urgency of the protests or even their necessity. While the protesters were portrayed through a lens that focused on their violent acts, the crackdown by regime forces was cautiously described in some cases as “peacefully breaking up a demonstration,” or that they “allegedly used violence” even without stating the crushed agent, the protesters, of the event.

4.2: Egypt: Dominant identifier for a new discourse

Al Jazeera’s choices of representation in its initial discourse snubbed the severity and weight of protesters by labeling the large number of demonstrators as “civilians” who were not content with the regime since their pieces were mainly

compiled from the stories of Western wire services using “international standards” of journalism that are tailored by and for the Western mindset. That was a discourse which soon evolved soon later into a more fine-tuned form, such as “defiant protesters in their fight against government,” or “protesters defying a curfew not to show their feelings,” as the demonstrators demanded the total ouster of their leaders. That evolution had also a direct link with the unrest in Egypt, which later set a new discourse for Al Jazeera English as a dominant identifier.²

Later in the same day, 29.12.2010, the Tunisian unrest was again in Al Jazeera English’s headlines with typical back-and-forth categorization. The coverage from Tunis started with protesters chanting slogans on the streets. The reporter made no appearance on the screen during the entire story. She voiced her reconstructed reporting with the channel’s broadcast of protesters in the background. The flow of the Tunisian unrest story continued with the blame-game remarks of opposition and government officials via phone interviews.

Starting with the framing of visual content appearing during Al Jazeera English’s flow of the Tunisian events, the analytical outline of this study found that the channel established no unusual graphic set-up as the studio background consisting of the pictures of angry Tunisian protesters was modeled on the channel’s typical design concept, and the following main stories also had similar visual components. The introduction started with underscoring the “violent protests” and the president’s condemnation and warning of “harsh punishment.” This was about a country seeing many protesters being killed on the streets. Finally, we heard the president labeling protesters as “a minority of extremists and mercenaries.” Al Jazeera English’s designation of the president as a main agent of the story about the unrest and the narration with words such as “rioting” placed its audiences in a position near to a regime which was supposedly fighting for the sake of its nation and people. Though subsequent broadcasting also gave a voice to the protesters, it still relied on official statements while omitting protesters’ losses.

4.3: The case of Egypt: Unpreparedness melts within ‘trivial, essential’ conflict

Analyses on later samples dating from January 2011 found Al Jazeera English finally pulling away from its unpreparedness on the changing environment as a new social and political storm started brewing in a country that had historically played a leading role in the region. With the rise of Egyptian protests against the absolute power of a long-time leader, like everybody else, Al Jazeera English also realized the fact that public discontent against the typical, autocratic Arab leaders was not exclusively Tunisian. However, Tunisia started to move downward on the list of Al Jazeera’s journalism reflexes and broadcasting concerns of Al Jazeera English as Egypt climbed to the top.

A sample dated 27.01.2011, when Tunisia had already seen the departure of their long-time leader and had installed an interim government, showed that the Egyptian unrest had forced Al Jazeera English to restructure its editorial practices and discourse. Starting with an announcement of more deaths by a somber reporter from its main studios, *NewsHour* devoted a large amount of its flow to the historical happenings in Egypt. The characterization of violence during the anti-regime demonstrations had also seen a discursive reconstruction as the channel focused more on the casualties of protesters at the hands of regime forces.

While Egypt became the dominant news topic in Al Jazeera English’s flow, the mood in Tunisia was marked by a call for calm. During its coverage, it repeatedly drew attention to the transitional government’s “attempt to distance themselves from the ousted regime,” thus trying to give its audiences the message that protesting Tunisians had to surrender themselves to the rule of the interim government.

When the Egyptian unrest started to be felt at all layers of society and the state, the analysis of the flow emphasized that the broadcasting of Al Jazeera English had also become heavily focused on the country. In a unique editorial decision, the channel nearly turned a deaf ear to any other “newsworthy” events and devoted its

entire news flow to the happenings in Egypt with live, on-the-ground transmissions.³

A sample dated 28.01.2011 was one of day-long live coverage from the Egyptian capital with an Al Jazeera English team of a reporter and a cameraman taking live shots of protests on the streets of Cairo and delivering them to the main studio in Doha. While the reporter described what was happening on the ground, a newscaster in the studio interrupted from time to time and either asked questions for more details or gave additional information about the events in Egypt. The protests and clashes with security forces were repeatedly described as “historic,” “unprecedented” and “extraordinary.” The analytical blueprint found Al Jazeera English’s discourse placing its viewers in a more “protester-friendly” spot compared with its reluctant coverage during the course of angry street actions in Tunisia. Besides the day-long, nonstop, live Egypt coverage, the channel clearly pinned its hopes on protesters’ success by branding angry rallies and demonstrators with attributions such as “unprecedented,” or “extraordinary.” The violent confrontation between protesters and security forces was not vilified, or criminalized, as it had been in the case of Tunisia, but was reported as something “natural.” Although the coverage by Al Jazeera English on this particular issue was fair, the shift both in the discourse and other editorial practices was another indication of the channel’s prioritization of “essential” countries.

4.4: Selective model crafted under the influence of regional politics

When the uprising began to spread to other streets in the Middle East and North Africa, the journalistic and discursive burden of the Al Jazeera Media Network also started to become heavier and the analytical framework located a selective model of turning the dissident realities into news. With its new selective model, Al Jazeera English gave a deliberately different space to regionally-varying but, target-wise, similar realities in its broadcasting flow. The most striking traces of

Al Jazeera English's newly adopted selective editorial model appeared with its reporting on events in countries such as Libya, Syria and Bahrain. While the first two both were responsible for the re-forging of Al Jazeera English's news discourse, the unprecedented scenes of opposition in the latter were effectively omitted by the channel, which appeared to be overcoming its unpreparedness.

A sample dated 06.03.2011 was a notable example of the channel's busy and extended coverage of the anti-government protests in many different nations. That being said, the shortcomings lingered with the obvious example of the omission of the happenings in Bahrain during days when both opposition outrage and violent acts reached their peak. Highly prioritized in Al Jazeera English's *NewsHour* flow, Libya enjoyed the lion's share with daylong coverage while Egypt and a new protest scene, Yemen, also saw considerable attention. However, despite the rising clashes and protests, Bahrain could not make its way to *NewsHour*'s news hierarchy. It either found a limited amount of time during the following news flow or the happenings there were omitted altogether.

The discourse analysis during the Libyan coverage pointed to a new level of metamorphosis since the uproar there also showed a different kind of climax with opposition forces not only using slogans against the ruler but guns, as well. Thus the channel developed a discourse that openly sided with the armed rebel forces against the regime of the late leader, Col. Moammar Gadhafi. Al Jazeera English's discourse could have appeared "fair" in the fulfillment of their journalism responsibilities in a quick analytical glance on a sample dated 06.03.2011. However, following careful analysis, it was possible to spot the extinguished skepticism of the discourse with the channel presenting developments, which it would have labeled as "claims" in a different occasion as "facts," with no verification.

The Libyan coverage resumed with a reporter in Benghazi, a rebel stronghold in which a rally was being staged at the time. While continuing to rely only on rebel sources while restructuring the latest happenings in major flashpoints in the eastern

Libya as news, Al Jazeera English also extended blessings to – if not indulging in outright glorification – the opposition forces’ fight against the regime. This meant for the audience a victory for opposition forces and a loss for the regime in Al Jazeera’s discourse. The losses of rebel forces were dramatized, as well as elevated, with the emotional description of a funeral, with an aim of having the audiences sympathize with the “armed young men dying in a fight against Gadhafi.”

4.5: The case of Libya: Eurocentric infiltration detected

In a sample dated a day later, 07.03.2011, Al Jazeera’s headline news brief again began by allocating Libya a considerable share and again giving the unrest in Bahrain no special attention other than what it gave “routine” developments. By devoting 38 minutes of an hour-long *NewsHour* to Libya the channel made its reporting preferences crystal-clear. The analytical outline followed Al Jazeera while it was engaging in a newly reconstructed discourse, in which the channel abandoned merely relying on opposition-based information that had been reported as “facts” in the past, something that was not entirely consistent with its journalism codes. Amid pictures showing armed Libyans without mentioning whether they were opposition forces or regime loyalists firing in the air during a traffic jam in Tripoli, the hastily constructed Al Jazeera story started with a questioning of the cause of heavy gunfire early in the morning. The report started with a discourse that aspired to create the perception that it was adopting a fair approach with phrases such as, “Everything on this conflict depends on who you believe.” Giving the statements of the regime about gunfire with no casualties as “claims,” Al Jazeera’s discourse even ridiculed the authorities’ statements with parts like, “Libyan state TV said a lot of other things as well.”

The Libyan regime’s narration of the fighting was first disputed with reports by Western-based news agencies, with which the channel allowed Eurocentric reporting

to infiltrate its self-structured flow, and then with self-factualized accounts from the opposition ranks. The usage of reports by news agencies, such as *The Associated Press* or *Reuters*, was not a first for Al Jazeera English, but it was not something that would escape with little notice considering the network's main assertion to be creating a representation of realities in the region without Eurocentric narration. Appearing to be blocking a Eurocentric influence in its discourse so far, the channel now made Western-styled reporting one of the core bases of its coverage because the stories by foreign agencies served Al Jazeera's own reflection of the Libyan events.

4.6: The case of Bahrain: or the untold story of the untold

After long and in-depth coverage of Libya, the journalistic trajectory of Al Jazeera English finally took in Bahrain. But when compared with the amount of attention that was devoted to Libya and Egypt, the editorial practices were effectively reduced to zero in terms of the historical import of the Bahraini developments. Thus, the channel appeared far away from its claim of reaching “underreported” regions by effectively turning Bahrain's story into an untold one. Allotting just six minutes – nearly the same duration allotted to other “routine” stories – to the events in Bahrain, the channel seemingly lost its keenness for positioning the audience on the side of protesters against the ruling dynasty – a stark contrast to the reporting in Libya or Egypt.

Starting with diminished numbers of protesters despite the ongoing street rage against the ruling dynasty in Bahrain in the face of a bloody crackdown, Al Jazeera English wanted its audiences to think that the defiant demonstrators were a “marginalized” group of people who were desperate in their push against the regime. The identification of the sectarian roots of the protesters, Shiites, was made by the unnamed reporter in Manama but the omission of the fact that

they constitute a majority in a country ruled by a minority Sunni monarchy both constituted factual shortcomings in the story and aimed to serve Al Jazeera's representation of popular anger as a "marginal" movement.

The analytical framework found a skeptical discourse to the demands and unity of protesters and it was reminiscent of the channel's previously more prevalent journalistic standards, but it raised eyebrows since this line mostly disappeared in the coverage of other countries witnessing anti-government turmoil. Adopting a relatively dry discourse compared to the anti-regime protests in the aforementioned countries, Al Jazeera English's restructuring of the report on the natural political divisions of the Bahraini protesters was another sign of the channel's changing discursive editorial practice toward the happenings in the kingdom.

4.7: Anti-interventionist stance turning into a task of legitimizing war

In a later sample dated 15.03.2011, Al Jazeera English constructed its apparently somber coverage on the failure of U.N. Security Council to impose a no-fly zone over Libya.⁴ The coverage went on with the enthusiastic French foreign minister defending the no-fly zone and criticizing those opposed it. But the channel omitted the arguments of no-fly zone opponents. Demands by the opposition forces for U.N. action were elevated while their fear of being "wiped out" by Gadhafi was also underlined. That was another attempt by the channel to hint at the "urgency" of a Western-based international action, which would later be the first spark of a military intervention that would eventually oust the Libyan regime. The metamorphosed discourse was a sign of the disappearance of its traditional anti-interventionist and critical attitude to Western-led political or military interventions in the Libyan case.

In a brief glance, one might think that Al Jazeera fulfilled its journalistic responsibilities in accordance with its declared reporting standards on the issue of the

previously omitted opposition to the no-fly zone. However, instead of arguments of those opposing the idea, the channel now delivered to its audience the concerns of the United States, the leading actor in not only the military action on Libya, but in many other actions in the area in recent decades. That was the very peak of the reconstructed discourse of Al Jazeera since the channel took a position next to the United States, with whom it had always been at odds over the course of its journalistic venture. Al Jazeera's placing of itself with the United States through a new discourse loomed over its future Libyan coverage and tarnished its reputation of critical journalism.

After its long coverage of Libya and other stories, Al Jazeera's news flow finally returned to the developments in Bahrain again with a limited amount of time, only six minutes in an hour-long *NewsHour*; nearly 45 minutes of which were devoted to Libya and other topics. Al Jazeera English's editorial choice to extend limited coverage to Bahrain might strike its followers as astounding since its reporting appeared deliberately unconcerned despite the outside military intervention by the Gulf's heavyweight and the "big brother" of the local region, Saudi Arabia. Riyadh's fury over Al Jazeera's previous coverage and its pressure on the channel that resulted in an agreement to "tone down" its reporting were very well-known.⁵

Having showed no sympathy with outside military acts in another country until its recently reconstructed discourse, Al Jazeera avoided being directly critical or skeptical of the Saudi intervention in Bahrain, displaying instead a roundabout editorial choice by highlighting the ramifications in the aftermath of the Saudi aggression. By doing so, the channel moved its audiences beyond facts and, furthermore, diverted its viewership's attention to reactions to the Saudi offensive, instead of the military action itself. The labeling in Al Jazeera's discourse was also remarkable since the channel doctored expressions, such as "military intervention," "aggression," and "offensive," terms it had used in other stories featuring similar situations.

In a sampled dated 20.03.2011, a day in which the Western-led military assaults on Libya were intensifying, Al Jazeera English also stepped up its campaign against

the Libyan ruler via a rarely-before-seen discourse. While the channel appeared to be praising the bombardment of Libya by Western allies, it adopted a discourse and practices which obviously aimed at making the audience see the foreign armed intervention as legitimate. During the introduction to the story, the discourse of Al Jazeera English was reconstructed in an affirmative way toward the attacks on Libya, signifying the “success” against Gadhafi through the voice of a top military official of a country that the channel had traditionally been at loggerheads with. Whereas, the channel has initially founded its identity mainly out of the quarreling it often engaged with the United States and took journalistic actions which further cemented its character in the first place.

The ending of the story was in a way no longer new to Al Jazeera English as it shouldered the role of those – often the top figures of the U.S.-led Western allies – who argued that their actions, generally military ones, were “needed to protect civilians” in countries suffering under “demonic” leaders. The twist was also a clear indication of Al Jazeera English’s reconstructed discourse, which indeed gave up concerns of presenting a critical voice in addition to many other traits mentioned previously.

The Libyan coverage continued with an interview with a Qatari scholar speaking about the Arab League’s warning of excessive use of military power by foreign forces staging air attacks on Libya, as well as high casualties. While the newscaster appeared skeptical about the bloc’s warning, the interviewer disputed the statement, claiming civilian casualties should not be exaggerated. His statement was tacitly backed by Al Jazeera’s newscaster.

As has been mentioned in the Introduction, during the coverage of the historical incidents in Libya, Al Jazeera English often received guests who were critical of the regime, calling for an end to the government or even for more support for foreign intervention. By doing so, the channel indirectly threw its backing behind foreigners’ assaults on Libya not in its own voice but with the deliberately fixed voice of its guests.

4.8: The metamorphosis of Al Jazeera English discourse in a nutshell

The analytical structuring of this dissertation has witnessed the slow but smooth transition and metamorphosis of Al Jazeera English's discourse on three levels, while the channel, from its Southern-based location, aimed at countering the current typical flow of information toward its epicenter, the North. In Al Jazeera English's coverage, three main phases can be identified:

✓ Al Jazeera English's discourse was unprepared for the popular upheaval even though the events occurred in its home region for news. The discourse was still a "work in progress," and the channel had no firmly established discursive language and rhetoric.

✓ The channel's new selective model of turning the dissident realities into news made Al Jazeera English take sides with the Libyan rebels in their fight against the country's long-time ruler, but the model required Al Jazeera English to omit the rallies in Bahrain due to the regional political situation.

✓ The completely metamorphosed discourse of Al Jazeera clearly signaled the disappearance of its traditional anti-interventionist and critical attitude to any Western-led political or military interventions in any country. While appearing favorable toward Western-led intervention in Libya, the channel avoided being directly critical or skeptical of the Saudi intervention in Bahrain.

NOTES

- ¹ The textual narration of samples from Al Jazeera English’s broadcasting of the “Arab Spring” events can be found in Appendix C.
- ² Egypt’s role in being a dominant identifier over the course of the English language channel’s changing editorial practices and its discourses will be further evaluated in the next level of analysis.
- ³ The micro-analysis of Al Jazeera English’s broadcasting on Egypt showed that the channel engaged in never-before-seen editorial practices for which the channel was accused by the Egyptian authorities of meddling in the country’s domestic politics and power relations. In a statement released on February 10, 2011, by the then-Egyptian vice president, Omar Suleiman, the Cairo government blamed Al Jazeera for attempting to fuel sedition in the country. His statement was followed by a ban under which Al Jazeera’s broadcasting license was revoked. However, efforts by the Egyptian authorities to silence Al Jazeera backfired and further fueled the anti-government sentiment among protesters. Online activists provided other links to watch the television, while Al Jazeera itself vowed through its Twitter feed to switch to “clandestine” coverage of events. (“Regime attacked over al-Jazeera closure.” ft.com. January 30, 2011. Access date: February, 2013. - http://www.ft.com/cms/s/941240f4-2c66-11e0-83bd-00144feab49a.Authorised=false.html?_i_location=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ft.com%2Fcms%2Fs%2F0%2F941240f4-2c66-11e0-83bd-00144feab49a.html&_i_referer=#axzz2FIleg11X)
- ⁴ The international body later gave a nod for a Western-led military intervention in the North African country. (“As UN backs military action in Libya, US role is unclear.” nytimes.com. March 17, 2011. Access date: February, 2013. - <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/18/world/africa/18nations.html?pagewanted=all>)
- ⁵ See related previous sections for details in the Introduction.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

Prospects for better journalism amid a new discourse that advocates hegemony among many others from the mainstream

5.1: Motivations for studying Al Jazeera: Non-Eurocentric storytelling of the region and professional curiosity

The initial idea for this study was triggered by the combination of two pairs of motivations. At the same time, I have long focused on the idea of a non-Eurocentric attempt to tell the stories of those living in a fragile region with deep frictions due to historic divisions that were initially created artificially. There have long been attempts to tell the “Arabic-speaking world’s” stories to both the “Arabic-speaking world” and others using a self-promoted “Pan-Arab” motivation, but many have failed to bridge the gap between the region in question and the rest of the world.¹ The historical events in the region were reported either by Eurocentric news transmitters which were alien but had their eye on the region in terms of possible interests or local transmitters whose broadcasts were fairly influential in the region but lacked the ability to spread their stories further afield.

The rise of Al Jazeera as the local news transmitter of local news to

wider audiences was the first part of the first pair. The second part was more professionally motivated. At a time when many core principles of journalism have become subject to a fundamental debate, even on the very idea and soul of journalism itself, Al Jazeera's fresh start with a different kind of journalism has been seen by me, also a journalist, as an opportunity for the betterment of efforts to tell the world its known realities through self-constructed communicative mediums, or simply better journalism.

With the forging of the first pair with concerns for a locally rooted news transmitter to relate historical events through a discourse constructed with both the needs, culture and perception of its inhabitants, as well as for a desire to provide a better standard of international journalism, the scene was set for a dive into the deeper levels through the details. A deeper glance into Al Jazeera revealed the second pair, the first part of which was the realization that not every action of the network was immune to the rhetorical, connotational and discursive – and thus ideological – woes of journalism, while reconstructing the historical realities as news stories. The network's understanding of news-crafting – essentially a non-Eurocentric, fixed editorial stance – and journalism codes has begun to undergo a many-sided metamorphosis. The defiant strain of journalism failed to last long and the vivid ideals – such as its rocky relationship with hegemonic powers intent on interventionism or the critical posture over authority relations in terms of the state and the people – constituting its journalism horizons have begun to fade, especially in the wake of the creation of new power balances shaped by the Arab Spring.

The final part of the subsequent combination, namely the method of discourse analysis, was placed on Al Jazeera English since the meaning of a historical incident was produced by how it was constructed through the transmitting mediums. Any historical happening can be relayed to its audience with a wide range of discursive choices; and in this study, several analyses on the discourse have been made to shed light on the metamorphosis Al Jazeera English has undergone since its launch until

today. The examples below were saved for last in order to solidify the argument; its methodology displays a fixed timing difference since the sample was not selected randomly, unlike other samples from this study's analysis.²

5.2: The peak of new discourse: Advocating hegemony

In the 20.10.2011 sample, the cheerful mood was obvious in the voice of the newscaster, and the discourse during the coverage was delivered in a celebratory tone that mirrored that of the Libyan rebels who were overthrowing the government. The discourse sympathizing with the rebels gradually increased during the broadcast and the audiences were left in limbo where they might have had a difficult time differentiating between the voice of Al Jazeera English and the rebels. Instead of rephrasing rebel sources, the discourse of Al Jazeera English gave its voice to the rebels and created a joint discourse that restructured "they, the rebels," into "we, the Al Jazeera-rebels."

The insistent focus on the "crucial" role of the Western nations and their military alliance, NATO, in the rebels' victory over the Libyan regime, on one hand, signified the now-customary Al Jazeera discourse of not displaying skepticism, criticism and opposition to outside military interventions, and on the other, it sounded like a warning from Western nations to rebels delivered by Al Jazeera English's discourse. This was a preliminary signal that Al Jazeera English's discourse had started moving beyond the "interventionist" to even a version of "advocacy" for the interests of "blessed" Western countries.

Later, Al Jazeera English's reporter in Tripoli was asked about the mood on the streets of the capital city by the newscaster in London while the visual content showed the reporter in Tripoli on the right side of the screen and celebrating rebels in Sirte on the other. Tripoli was set to be in a cheerful mood just a couple of minutes later, although it was relatively calm at the time because the news of Sirte's fall had

not been yet delivered to the city.³ Overall, the channel did not take a single shot of celebrations even though this was what it was purportedly reporting on. Therefore, this study's argument of being part of the historical events by playing an active role in them while also reconstructing the incidents partially proved to be correct as Al Jazeera did not report on the celebrations, but became the medium calling for them.

While the reporter in Tripoli still voiced skepticism toward the report by "Al Jazeera sources" saying the Libyan leader had been killed, Al Jazeera was finally able to convey the pictures of the chaotic, festive streets of Tripoli to audiences, albeit now with a news ticker reading, "Al Jazeera Sources: Gadhafi Killed in Gun Battle," despite the caution of its reporter. Later on, the newscaster also disputed his doubtful reporting by again saying, "But as we have been reporting, [actually referring to the reporter, not the channel's main flow], Al Jazeera sources have confirmed Moammar Gadhafi has been killed in a gun battle in Sirte." Attempts to explain the self-conflicting discourse due to the hectic flow of developments was made futile by the channel itself when a profile of Gadhafi was delivered to the audiences during the *NewsHour* with an ending line saying: "Many will remember Gadhafi as the leader who sent Libya back many years." The sequence in the flow of Al Jazeera English was formed in an inverse way as the channel's discourse had already informed the audience about the death of Gadhafi in the profile before the final and official confirmation by the channel only a few seconds later.

Later, the flow of the Libyan broadcasting continued with a report from an Al Jazeera English reporter in Sirte, whom the channel claimed was "the first correspondent to talk live from Sirte." Standing in the middle of cheering Libyan rebels in the city, the report called the moment "tremendous" for the rebels and concluded his story with a line declaring: "The era of Moammar Gadhafi is finished." Now, the dust over the historical happenings in Libya as well as the discourse for Al Jazeera has settled, but the initial self-conflicting posture, then the reversed sequence during the flow of the profile and later a reporter mingling with rebels also served as

further evidence for accusations that the channel played a direct role in the historical incidents that were subjected to a reconstruction for a story.

5.3: Final say: Not a remedy but suggestions for better journalism

Creating a reciprocal relationship between the motivations that led to examining Al Jazeera English by now reading the channel by using those motivations as references, the channel has clearly assumed the leading position of being a “local” transmitter of “local” historical events to global audiences. Nevertheless, its claim to have at least remained the “localized” teller of “localness” has begun to be tarnished by the channel’s diminishing abilities to maintain immunity against the side effects of Eurocentrism while reconstructing the world events as news stories.

Turning historical incidents into news stories with a Eurocentric perception was the inborn practice of Western-based media outlets as they intervened in the events taking place in the Middle East. While Al Jazeera’s rivals from similar origins have mainly inherited the Western-tailored media practices over the historical events in their main domain, Al Jazeera English initially distanced itself from the Eurocentric-tainted way of journalism. However, amid the complexity of its local socio-political interactions and changing power and authority balances, Al Jazeera English’s stance of “staying local while approaching local events with local concerns in mind in the background of would-be ramifications in the global arena” has metamorphosed. The recent alteration has been highlighted as the channel has assumed an “interventionist” approach toward foreign military actions against a regional country.

Regarding the question of discourse, much has been said in this study; while it does not purport to provide an ultimate remedy to all shortcomings, it does provide suggestions for thought about a news organization that still has a big potential to lead the way toward a better journalism.

NOTES

- ¹ Throughout the entire study, the terms, such as “Arabic-speaking,” or “Pan-Arab,” have been avoided due to the fair objections to them, while others, like “the Middle East,” or “the Arab Spring,” were also reluctantly used with cautious phrases, for instance “commonly referred to,” or “the so-called” in first references, given their rhetorical problems. The aforementioned terms have rhetorical and conational problems as they omit not only other groups (mainly non-Arabs) in the region, but also the unique diversities of each Arab region (Levant, Mashriq, Maghreb and Arabian Peninsula), or even the diversity within each state. That being said, in order to be clearer in the conclusion part, the study had to be introduced to these terms, since an author’s main objective is inherently to be understood, even at the heavy cost of sacrificing the rhetoric to readability through the use of historically distorted, but common connotations.
- ² Samples were taken from Al Jazeera English’s broadcasting on Libya on the day Sirte, the last stronghold of the Libyan leader, fell, leading to his capture and killing.
- ³ With no celebrations in sight, what Al Jazeera English referred as the “sound of people, celebrating,” were cars moving on a highway in an “business as usual” way and what the channel called “cheering people” were armed rebels that were not even in a celebratory mood.

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APPENDIX A

AL JAZEERA HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL

1

PRE-AL JAZEERA PERIOD UNTIL LATE 1990S

The Middle East was being reported by outsiders, which were mainly Western-based mainstream news channels, with their Eurocentric journalism practices. First, the reporting on the region was mainly in English, meaning that it garnered little attention from Arabic-speaking locals.

Aimed at expanding its viewership size, Western-based channels set up Arabic operations, but the moves were limited as they were part of the networks' main operations instead of separate channels.

Set via the hegemonic ties and mainstreamized journalism mindset, Arabic operations failed to attract widespread attention since the change remained purely on the linguistic level as Arabic replaced English.

Due to the low attention from locals, Western-based channels' inadequate attempt to engage in Arabic reporting on the region ended in despair.

2

ADVENT OF THE AL JAZEERA MEDIA GROUP AND ITS ARABIC CHANNEL

The inception of non-West channels in the region started more than a decade ago, following years of outsiders' reporting that locals deemed "distorted" and "biased." Their appearances marked the start of a new era of self-definition and self-representation for locals, who had long complained about the Eurocentric news coverage of the region.

With the still controversial help of the Qatari dynasty, Al Jazeera Arabic took the stage to ease local complaints with its claim of giving the "the opinion and the opposing opinion."

The channel aimed at becoming a news organization with influence like the Cable News Network (CNN), or the BBC, albeit one that was focused on their omissions, particularly in the region.

Amid the rising anti-American sentiment due to its occupations, Al Jazeera Arabic boosted both its popularity and criticism by broadcasting raw war imagery and images from groups such as Al Qaeda.

The channel's reporting irked not only the US, but also the region's mainly autocratic rulers, faced formal complaints, bans on its broadcasting or arrests of its staff.

3

LOCAL ENDEAVOR AGAINST GLOBAL MAINSTREAM GOES GLOBAL

With its initial success and popularity with heavy criticism, the Al Jazeera Media Group decided to expand with an English channel to really achieve its aim of rivaling the mainstream.

The simple idea of launching an English channel based on the Arabic division's model soon became a tough task considering the habits of new audiences, as the English-speaking world was accustomed to the mainstream.

Still loyal to the basic codes of Al Jazeera, the English channel's change was not only linguistic, but also created a discourse based on "giving the voiceless a voice" motto with a regional motivation.

Exacerbated by its Arabic sibling's controversial legacy, Al Jazeera English's reporting also raised eyebrows with both plaudits and reactions that led to restrictions that the Arabic channel confronted.

Despite its reconstructed discourse still based on principal codes, disputed legacy and curbs, the English channel managed to send tremors through the system of mainstreamized storytelling in the region.

4

TWO REASONS FOR UPCOMING SHIFT: REGIONAL POLITICS, AMBITION TO BE WELL-KNOWN

Although the channel claimed to enjoy editorial independence, the political desires of its sole financial supporter, the Qatari dynasty, positioned – either purposely or accidentally, the channel in its foreign policy drive.

With its patron's projection, Al Jazeera English toyed with the idea of being more influential and started to sacrifice its basic foundations of journalism that differentiated it from its rivals.

While it netted the blessing of the Qatari rulers, it also moved closer to the goal of more recognition on account of its editorial stance that stemmed from the regional perspective.

Zigzagging in the North-South flow of information, the channel sought an initial foothold in the Western-media sphere before eventually being exposed to Eurocentric discourses.

Its newly restructured, confused discourse suggested it was not entirely immune to the prevailing choices on discourses imposed and filtered through Eurocentric power relations.

The shift in the discourse of Al Jazeera English was below the noticeable level, but only until the eruption of the popular uprisings – dubbed the Arab Spring – against long-time rulers in the region.

In the initial days of the rallies, the journalistic vigilance and reflexes of Al Jazeera English appeared weak in contradiction to its argument of being the reference source for the region.

Amid the spread of anti-regime protests, Al Jazeera English boosted its attention over them but with a previously confused discourse that appeared susceptible to Eurocentric infiltration in the coming days.

The news hierarchy of the channel differed toward the layers of the Arab Spring in varying countries while its discourse appeared to favor some and reject others.

The metamorphosis of Al Jazeera English's discourse was completed with the channel's confused discourse featuring both mainstream and alternative traces totally subordinated to the mainstream.

APPENDIX B

NEWS-MAKING PROCESS

FIRST LAYER	SECOND LAYER	THIRD LAYER	FOURTH LAYER
Pre-Coverage Phase:	Coverage Phase:		Post-Coverage Phase:
- The assignment of the reporter	- Restructuring the semi-structured story	- Delivery of the restructured story	- Cognition by the target audience
- Actions taken by reporter for a story	- Construction of discourse (Phase I):	- Construction of discourse (Phase II):	
- Submission of partially raw or semi-structured story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Syntax (micro) and semantic (macro) structures of the story * Representation choices through lexical and style approaches * Usage of visual and audio content. Framing, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Prioritizing the news * Order of the flow * Duration length and content depth of each story during the flow * Additional material: Interviews, expert comment, etc * Omissions 	

APPENDIX C

TRANSCRIPT OF SAMPLES USED DURING THE ANALYSIS

Sample dated 29.12.2010 mentioned on the 31st page:

Newscaster in Doha:

Tunisia's president is condemning violent protests against the nation's rising unemployment. He is also warning of harsh punishment if the rioting continues. He is blaming what he called a minority of extremists and mercenaries for the nationwide unrest. But, opposition activist calling themselves The Spark say they are behind demands for more jobs and better living conditions.

Reporter in Tunisia:

The chorus of voices in Tunisia is growing louder. Lawyers have joined students and youth on the streets of the capital to protest. These photos [blurry video images taken from Internet showing the protesters on the streets] were taken from Tunis, where the media is tightly restricted. Anti-government protests rarely happen here and when they do pictures are hard to obtain. But things are changing.

Sample dated 28.01.2011 mentioned on the 34th page:

Reporter in Suez:

Police forces with reinforcements are not effective at all against the tide of people. The people have been overwhelming both in numbers, desire and insistence to make their voices heard. People have gathered at a place outside a significant police station. In 1963, during the Israeli invasion, it was used as a command center in the area. So the locals here say they are almost fighting an identical battle against the regime forces.

Reporter in Alexandria:

Despite the crackdown, protesters managed to continue their protests in different parts of the city. In a particular protest, there was no intention of continuing confrontation [between protesters and security forces] in a [show of] incredible sympathy. Both sides [were] sympathizing with each other as opposed to intense clashes.

Sample dated 06.03.2011 mention on page on the 35th page:

Newscaster in Doha:

We begin with Libya, [which] has seen more unrest after Friday prayers. Forces loyal to Moammar Gadhafi fired tear gas on thousands of protesters marching in the capital, Tripoli. Protesters also gathered in the eastern city of Benghazi, demanding an end to Col. Gadhafi's rule. It comes after a series of strikes in the eastern towns. There is also a new attack on the nearest opposition-held city to Tripoli and witnesses describe scenes of battles with heavy machine guns and automatic weapons between armed residents and army units. The U.N. said waves of refugees fleeing Libya suddenly slowed after a crackdown by pro-Gadhafi forces. Many people are stranded [at] Libya's borders inside the country.

Reporter in Benghazi:

It was a day full of rage and defiance. About 10 minutes ago, these people you might be hearing have been called to be mobilized. According to people here, fresh fighting is happening in the oil-rich cities. An opposition leader has been calling especially on young people who have weapons and cars to just go to [the battle-hit cities] and join residents of that area fighting against Gadhafi forces. From what we have seen over the past few days, the call to go to [the battle-hit cities] has been heeded by many young people. We can safely say that hundreds have gone down there and are still down there. Actually, yesterday there was a funeral ceremony here for people who have gone there and come back dead. So, the fight is going [on] and the will to go there is there, and it is now much easier to face the Gadhafi forces in that area.

Sample dated 07.03.2011 on the 35th page:

Reporter in Tripoli:

Everything in this conflict depends on who you believe. In Tripoli, they really believe [the gunfire] was to celebrate. Before dawn, according to the authorities, the fireworks and the gunfire were spontaneous expressions of joy for their reclaiming of a town from the rebels, or "thugs" as they are described on Libyan state TV. Libyan state TV said a lot of other things as well. It showed all this hardware [showing tanks and other armed vehicles] and the aircraft, guns and all kinds of heavy weapons, which it said its forces captured to "cut the legs of greater resistance" in the town. Pictures [of armed men] from the town, where the fight is significant, are entirely conflicting. The Reuters agency showed pictures of celebrating rebels, while The Associated Press showed images that they say were taken from the Libyan authorities showing their view of the town while giving no further details. Libyan TV appears to be suggesting as much good news as possible on behalf of the authorities, including a string of opinions from the residents of the town who said everything is just fine.

Reporter in Tripoli:

These pictures [anti-government rallies] showed continuing opposition to the regime in a town in western Libya. [With pictures of celebrating rebels], whatever the truth or claims the Libyan government says at the moment, the foreign reporters say rebels are gaining ground, at least in pockets.

[A statement by a rebel chief speaking in Arabic translated into English by Al Jazeera]

In a statement to the Libyan people, the revolution forces confirm that they are still in control of areas that have been liberated and what has been broadcast on the [state] channel is incorrect and is not true on the ground. And you, journalists, have confirmed by yourselves that we are in full control of areas we have liberated.

Reporter in Manama:

The numbers [turnout for protests] today were not surprising [and] perhaps [was] lower than the past couple of days. Protests on Friday and Saturday involved tens of thousands of protesters, mainly Shiite Muslims, in the Bahraini capital and several thousands today rallying at the king's [palace] to host guest were dispersed. But in an about three hours, another rally is planned in an area in which several protesters were shot dead in February, which has led to [the construction of a] camp which pro-democracy protesters call 'Marchers' Roundabout.'

Newscaster in Doha:

What do they [protesters] want? More democratic reforms or the monarchy to be removed? Is there a cohesive voice at the moment?

Reporter in Manama:

There are two voices at the moment because you've got the street demands and people who want the regime to collapse. They have been actually referring to two countries, like Libya or Egypt; they have been chanting Egypt's "revolutionary" slogans and slogans showing solidarity with Libya. Of course, the pictures from the other side of the country, the protesters' political voice, the opposition parties, have accepted the calls for dialogue with the royal family, with the king and with the crown prince. So they are backing off from the calls for a complete change to the monarchical system. What they are saying is "We are prepared for the idea of a constitutional monarchy, like the one in the U.K. or in Europe, where the monarchy stayed in place and the parliament comes from the politicians, not from the top."

Sample dated 15.03.2011 mentioned on the 37th page:

Reporter in Benghazi:

There is certainly a disappointment here [in Benghazi] over a failure to introduce a no-fly zone as they [rebels] realized that it was not going to come into effect. So, basically they are on their own and they realize that they have to take matters into their own hands... Of course, a no-fly zone would make their lives much easier. With a no-fly zone, Gadhafi could not attack with heavy weapons.

Newscaster in Doha:

G-8 foreign ministers are meeting in Paris as the U.N. Security Council cannot agree on imposing a no-fly zone over Libya and rebels fear that they are going to be wiped

out by Moammar Gadhafi's warplanes unless a no-fly zone can be brought in quickly and enforced. The French foreign minister said that he was unable to convince his colleagues on the issue.

Reporter in Paris:

G-8 ministers are meeting in Paris amid no sign of a consensus about what to do on the particular question of a no-fly zone [over Libya]. The enthusiasts were the French host and the British minister and the skeptics were the Russians and also other countries, such as Canada and the United States, which still have many, many doubts. Hillary Clinton here has met with the leader of the Libyan opposition. Of course, one big American doubt was who this Libyan opposition is, what it wants and who it represents. It wants reassurance before they commit themselves to anything that looks like military action. The Americans are also still concerned about what exactly is the Arab position. The Americans also noticed another decision coming up from the Arab League calling for no foreign intervention. The Americans are also concerned about a contradiction there and are still looking for a lot of reassurance. So, in short, more talk in Paris but not close to any firm decision on Libya.

Newscaster in Doha on Manama protests:

Iran called the presence of foreign troops in the country [Bahrain] unacceptable. Around a thousand Saudi troops entered the kingdom on Monday, prompting the United States to warn Gulf nations to respect the rights of the Bahraini people after weeks of anti-government protests.

Reporter in Manama:

Reinforcements roll in. Saudi troops representing the regional bloc of six Gulf nations have entered Bahrain. The official line is [that] the foreign forces are here as part of a regional defense agreement to restore security in the country. Officials say violence committed in recent days by the minority [of protesters] among the largely peaceful demonstrations has to stop.

Sampled dated 20.03.2011 on the 38th page:

Newscaster in Doha on Libya:

Less than 24 hours after international forces launched coordinated attacks on Libya's air defense, the top U.S. military man says a no-fly zone is effectively in place. He says Gadhafi's offense on Benghazi is being halted. Here at AJE, we are receiving reports that pro-government forces have entered the center of the rebel-held town Misrata. Gadhafi is defiant and according to the Libyan state television has ordered [...] the arming of Libyan men and women.

Reporter in Benghazi:

The aftermath of an airstrike on pro-Gadhafi forces on the edge of Benghazi... Exploding ammunition is a danger to those who come to see. There are at least forty deaths in here. The intensity of the attack made identifying them [the dead] very difficult. This was a convoy heading to the rebel-held city. Fourteen tanks,

twenty armored troop cars, trucks with rocket launchers and supply loaders [have all been] destroyed. For the rebels, it was a victory by proxy. For Col. Gadhafi, a clear message from the international alliance. But in a national address, he condemned the attack.

[A brief part from an audio message by Gadhafi]

Throughout the address, this [enormous golden hand that had caught and destroyed a U.S. missile] was what we were shown on the Libyan TV. Col. Gadhafi never appeared in vision. His voice [was] broadcasted over a picture of a monument that refers to a previous U.S. attack.

[Another brief part from an audio message by Gadhafi]

Libyan TV has been showing the pictures of those it says have been injured in the air strikes near Tripoli. It claims 64 people have been killed. This report cannot be independently verified. These are warplanes among those constantly flying over Libya to enforce the U.N. no-fly zone. Attacks have been recently reported in Misrata. Speaking on American TV, Barack Obama's top military man insisted this was not about regime change.

[Brief part of an interview with the top U.S. military officer]

The international coalition says its intervention here is designed to protect the civilians. The rebels were hoping it will also alter the course of the conflict.

Newscaster in Doha speaking with a scholar:

In terms of the number of deaths, if it is as many as Gadhafi says, like about fifty, that is terrible if they are innocent civilians. But that is very small number of people when you are talking about air bombardment on crowded areas.

Sample dated 20.10.2011 mention on the 43rd page:

Newscaster in London:

While looking at these pictures from Sirte, I am, like so many people, excited about the next phase for the country. How smart, in one way of course, I am sure that there are other ways, but how smart do Libyans have to be, assuming Libyans who have the power here, to manage the country's vast resources? Because you can imagine seeing Western powers lining up at the gates of Tripoli, trying to get in now.

Reporter in Doha:

Vast resources. I definitely understand the interest of the international community and at the same time, the needs and concerns of the new nation that is about to emerge after four decades of an autocratic regime. We talked with many people who told me 'the international community, particularly the Americans, have to understand that we would like to be a friend, that we would like to cooperate, we would like to

work together. They also to forget that we will never work the way Gadhafi did in the past. He was weak, he was a dictator. And he had to buy loyalties and he had to give lucrative contracts to the West. Sometimes to just keep one's eyes closed when it came to the abuses. The new regime would be very open.'

Newscaster in London:

Balance this out with the obvious position of many in the West, of many who have been observing this and who might say they absolutely understand the need of Libyans to control their own country, but you won't get the scenes that we are seeing out of Sirte today without the help of NATO.

Reporter in Doha:

Absolutely, they are very grateful to them. They told the Americans that. Remember when the British prime minister and French president were in Benghazi and Tripoli. It was really a hero's welcome. It was impressive, [it was] something that I don't think they would get in their own countries because that people are very grateful to everybody who helped them, NATO and also to the international community. But at the same time, I have been talking to some people who say 'we would like to get the best from every country. The best discipline from the Americans, from the French, from the Europeans, from the Turkish. We would like to have a very strong Libya. At the same time, there are red lines to be observed and respected.'

Reporter in Tripoli:

It is gonna be a bit crowded on the streets. So, [...] can you [cameraman] show some shots of what is going on right now? We are certainly getting some pictures of what is going on at the moment. And you can grasp here the sound of people, celebrating. We've got people cheering on the streets below us. We've got cars sounding their horns. A mood of celebration here in the city as people get the news.

The announcement of Gadhafi's death:

[...] and you are watching Al Jazeera's extended coverage of the Libyan Revolution. Moammar Gadhafi has been killed, we are hearing that from Al Jazeera's sources and from state television in Libya.

Curriculum Vitae

Semih Cihan Çelik was born on 9 April 1983, in Adana. He received his B.S. degree in Economics in 2007 and M.A. degree in 2013 in Communication Studies both from Kadir University. Having worked as a journalist since 2005 with experiences in both news writing and management, he is known for his performance and expertise in the areas of political and diplomacy reporting, dealing with issues particularly regarding the Middle East politics. During the course of his journalism career, he was employed both at Turkish- and English-language national newspapers in Turkey and he has been the senior editorial member as the Newspaper Editor of a leading English-language daily paper since 2011.

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<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/Default.aspx?pageID=334&NewsCatID=470>