

Giving a voice to the voiceless:

A comparative study of Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic coverage of the Syrian refugee  
crisis

By

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## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates the extent to which the Al Jazeera media network has followed its commitment to provide “a voice for the voiceless” in the news coverage of the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany in 2015. It examines if the principles and values of giving a voice to the voiceless have been applied equally in the Al Jazeera English (ALJE) and Al Jazeera Arabic (ALJA) news reports by identifying similarities and differences of the English and Arabic coverage. It applies a comparative study of news sources and news frames in the stories about the refugees' arrival in Germany. This analysis is used to discuss the relationship between media, politics and society, and the role of journalism in facilitating public discussion about the global crisis.

The study argues that the elements of journalistic practices - journalistic form, sources of news and story-telling frame - determine media's capacity to tackle the crisis. Using a mixed method approach of quantitative content analysis and qualitative framing analysis of news text, photos, and videos, the study identifies main patterns of Al Jazeera's English and Arabic coverage of the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany.

The study is based on analysis of 70 news stories published by AJE and AJA online platforms from August 24 until September 31, 2015. The findings of this study reveal that Al Jazeera's English approach to the crisis followed more strongly the libertarian model of the role of the media in society. The analysis shows Al Jazeera English provided more space for giving voices to the voiceless. The findings indicate both channels depended on official channels as main sources of information, but Al Jazeera English had more female sources of information and more interviews with refugees.

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## **Attestation of Authorship**

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

Signed:

*Aliaa Dawood*

January 19, 2019

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I am thankful for your support and advice that directed me on this journey.

My Mum

You encouraged me to be a better person.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

“At the level of the society, journalism becomes enmeshed in all large public events, by way of contact with social, cultural and political elites and drawn by the interests of its own audiences. At this level, ideas about the rights and obligations of journalism tend to circulate in the form of pressures and demands from the society and proposals and counterproposals concerning accountability and control. At the heart of the matter is the assumption that journalism plays an important, possibly essential, part in the collective life of community or nation. In consequence, the press itself has to be governed, organized and conducted according to the same fundamental principles that are supposed to govern the rest of the society. In a democracy this refers to freedom of speech, equality of all citizens and the rule of law” (McQuail, 2013, p.5).

The Syrian refugee crisis, the largest humanitarian disaster since the Second World War (Al Rifai 2017) highlighted an important role news media play in contemporary society. Providing information citizens need, contributing to public dialogue, enhancing democracy are some of the descriptions often used to stress why journalism matters. For example, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said:

“A free press gives people access to the information they need to make critical decisions about their lives. It holds leaders accountable, exposes corruption, and promotes transparency in decision-making. It raises awareness and offers an outlet for different voices, especially those that would otherwise go unheard” (Ki-moon, 2012).

At the centre of these activities are journalists. Following recognizable principles of the profession they claim providing the true account of reality, but their approach and their success differs across countries. Not all journalists agree on universal principles that underpin their work (McQuail, 2013, p.5), and not all societies provide equal conditions for applying them. While it might be a duty in Western democracies, in some other places such as Arab countries where democracy has the lowest position (Foseide, 2008), providing information citizens need might take a different form. Sadiki (2004) says that “No single Arab country can yet be classified as a democracy” (p.13), although each country in the Arab world has a relatively developed media system with news organisations that provide regular flow of information about local, national and international events, people and issues.

The complexity of media in the Arab world is a starting point of this thesis. It uses a case study of Al Jazeera, one of the most prominent international television organisations based in Doha and its two language channels, Al Jazeera English (ALJE) and Al Jazeera Arabic (ALJA) to investigate the model of journalism it practises in reporting global crisis. More specifically, it explores Al Jazeera's commitment to provide a voice to the voiceless in reporting the 2015 Syrian refugee crisis. Syria witnessed a major crisis due to the civil war and violent attacks that had targeted unarmed civilians since 2011. Thousands of innocent people were killed, many were wounded and many lost families to war (Rodgers et al., 2016). Almost 12 million people were forced to leave their homes, seeking safety and stability elsewhere in neighbouring and European countries (Kasamani, 2017). Holmes and Castañeda (2016) state that in the summer of 2015, more than 487,000 refugees reached European shores. The refugees' situation was considered the "largest global humanitarian crisis" of the current time (Holmes and Castañeda, 2016, p.1) and a signifier of the magnitude of the Syrian civil war, the worst humanitarian disaster since the Second World War (Collins, 2017). The massive influx of refugees to the countries of the European Union (EU) forced political leaders to take quick actions over the crisis. It also divided the EU. Some countries such as Germany, Sweden and France showed solidarity. Other countries, such as Hungary and Austria, decided to tighten their refugees' policies (Erlanger & Smale, 2015). According to UNHCR (2016), Germany accepted the largest number of refugees and called EU countries to take responsibility for the crisis. The German government accepted more than 316,100 refugees and Hungary received 4,393 Syrian refugees (UNCHR(n.d.2), 2016, p. 58).

The media covered the crisis extensively. According to Abdul-Mageed and Herring (2008), news online channels, in particular, those associated with satellite television networks and global coverage played a significant role in bringing attention to the refugee crisis, therefore informing the public and raising awareness about the important issues of the day (Fourie 2007). The media provided audiences with an insight into the refugees' influx into Europe by telling stories of their plight. Media reports and government statements on the crisis contributed to shaping the news and influencing in many ways the public perspective of refugees arriving in Europe (Holmes and Castañeda, 2016), performing the roles that Berry et al. (2015) define as setting agendas and framing the debates (p.5). The Syrian refugee crisis attracted global media, and Al Jazeera network was no exception.

Al Jazeera is one of the biggest global news organizations in the world. Al Jazeera Arabic is the first independent media network that was established and broadcast from the Middle East. In a media research article published by Ipsos and Sigma, Al Jazeera Arabic registered as the top viewing channel across the Middle East and North Africa more than “all other Pan-Arab news channels combined” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)<sup>13</sup>, 2013) . Al Jazeera English is the first English-language channel to broadcast from the Middle East. It grew to broadcast to “more than 270 million households in more than 140 countries” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)<sup>34</sup>, 2017). Both online channels played a major role in promoting a free flow of news regarding the Syrian conflict and refugee crisis. Both channels have continuous coverage 24/7. They have also greatly improved the awareness towards refugees when they focused on the humanitarian side of the refugees’ stories in the past (Jurkowitz et al., 2013).

Al Jazeera Media Network (AJL) claimed to “be fearless in the pursuit of truth and to be the voice for the voiceless” (Al Jazeera (n.d.) 40, 2017 ). Al Jazeera aims to report forgotten stories from the perspective of the voiceless – the global South, “the underprivileged, the subaltern, the underdog, and the disenfranchised”. To find and cover the stories of the voiceless, the channel has a policy of hiring local correspondents, instead of sending in Western correspondents (Figenschou, 2010, p.86).

A promise of giving a voice to the voiceless is the central focus of this thesis. It investigates the role of the media (Al Jazeera English and Arabic) in giving a voice to the voiceless by looking at their coverage of Syrian refugees’ journey to Germany.

### **1.1 Research Background and Rationale**

In the past 20 years, Al Jazeera has developed its network to provide full coverage in both Arabic and English. However, what type of news each channel reports and broadcasts and how its online editions differ remains less explored. Despite the importance of Al Jazeera as a media network, its online channels “have been surprisingly under-researched” (Abdul-Mageed and Herring, 2008, p.1). Thus, Al Jazeera English (ALJE) and Al Jazeera Arabic (ALJA) online channels are used for a comparative investigation in this study.

Al Jazeera’s coverage of critical issues has been described as a provision of diverse opinions, often called as giving a voice to the voiceless (Kyle, 2016). The media network claimed

“We at Al Jazeera believe in our mission: People have a right to be informed. They have a right to get news that is not controlled by the narrative of authorities. They have a right to know what is going on in their world. Equally, people have a right to have a voice” (Al Jazeera English, 25(n.d.), 2017).

This study investigates whether Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic were committed to providing a voice to the voiceless during the coverage of the refugee crisis, in particular, their arrival in Germany. It examines the relationship between journalism, politics and society, and the role of journalism in facilitating public discussion about the global crisis. According to Rupar (2007), the journalistic field's relations with society, are shaped by “journalism's functions, settings, agents, logic and norms” but when it comes to the public and their perception of media performance the world of journalism is “easily reduced to the issue of whether journalists tell the truth when reporting reality” (p.2). This reduction of “the actions that have come to be associated with news work” (Zelizer, 2004, p. 22) in the case of Al Jazeera' coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis turns into the question of truthfulness of its accounts of reality. Several scholars (Fishman, 1980; Curran & Gurevitch, 2005; Tuchman G. , 1978) recommend examining the news in association with the elements that impact its shape: political aspect, cultural context and the social organisation of news work.

This study looks at the reports published in the online Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic to investigate two main issues: the media's commitment to a diversity of voices in the public domain and its contribution to the construction of meaning about reality. It examines the media coverage of one of the largest humanitarian disasters in our current time, the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany in 2015, aiming to identify the elements of journalism practice that categorize the network's work in two different languages and to discuss them in the light of Al Jazeera's mission statement.

## **1.2 Theoretical and methodological approach**

The study takes the field theory (Bourdieu, 2005) approach to discuss journalism practice. By merging empirical analysis with the field theory frame (Benson & Neveu, 2005), it investigates how the events related to the refugees' plight were presented in ALJE and ALJA to tell the story about refugees, attract the audience and create a platform for understanding the crisis.

The study conducts both quantitative and qualitative analysis. It uses a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative content analysis to identify the main patterns of the news coverage of the

refugees' arrival in Germany, and qualitative framing analysis to situate these results within the wider investigation of the relationship between media, politics and society. Comparing the news reports published by Al Jazeera's English and Arabic allows for a closer examination of the relationship between the network's commitment in relation to different audiences, global, regional and local.

The study focuses on two elements of journalism practice and their internal dynamics: the use of sources and the news frames established. By examining Al Jazeera's English and Arabic representation of the crisis, it aims to inspire future research on how refugees across the world are framed in the media. The frame used in reporting the crisis can help understand how the responsibility for the refugees is changed, and how the "fears of cultural, ethnic, and religious difference are mobilized" (Holmes & Castañeda, 2016, p. 2).

The analysis of the coverage of the Syrian refugees' arrival to Germany provides an opportunity to look at the formation of the news discourse. De Burgh (2003) argued that "wider society depends on the quality of its journalism for the efficacy of its institutions and for understanding in every sphere" (p.95) and Al Jazeera's reporting on the crisis, investigated by comparing its English and Arabic sites, has potential to provide further insights into the ways journalism positions itself in relation to society and its audience.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

This study discusses Al Jazeera's English and Arabic coverage by examining the following research questions:

RQ1: How does Al Jazeera's coverage of the refugee crisis reflect its mission of giving "a voice to the voiceless"?

RQ2: How does the credo of giving a voice to the voiceless apply to the Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic news coverage? and

RQ2.1: What are the similarities and differences in the coverage?

These two questions are investigated using a method of content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980) to identify the patterns of Al Jazeera's English and Arabic news coverage, their similarities and differences. The study examines sources of news in terms of their visual and verbal presence in

the reports. In other words, the investigation generates data on journalistic forms, the use of sources and journalism's contribution to the establishment of the crisis discourse.

RQ3: What frames are used in the coverage of the arrival of the Syrian refugees in Germany 2015 and how do these frames relate to the sources cited?

This question is addressed by examination of the dominant frames in the coverage.

#### **1.4 Thesis Structure**

The findings of the study are used for a wider discussion on the relationship between media, politics and society, the role of journalism in providing a diversity of voices in the public domain and facilitating public discussion about the global crisis. The thesis contains eight chapters, each chapter divided into sections.

Chapter 1 introduces the research problem, the research objective and questions asked. It briefly outlines the theoretical and methodological approach to the study.

Chapter 2 introduces the thesis topic and the main issues to be tackled. It presents the existing scholarship on the role of journalism in society by providing a theoretical platform for the examination of Al Jazeera's English and Arabic news sites and the journalism practice that stands behind them.

Chapter 3 provides background information for the selected news outlet. It outlines the history of Al Jazeera as a media network and its role in covering the events happening or related to the Middle East.

Chapter 4 presents the methodological framework for the investigation. It explains the rationale for the selection of the Syrian refugee arrival in Germany in 2015 as a case study. In light of the existing literature it discusses the appropriateness of content analysis and framing analysis as methods used for data collection, coding and analysis.

Chapter 5 provides a detailed analysis and discussion of the research results based on the examination of news reports: content, photos and videos published by Al Jazeera Arabic and English about the refugees' arrival in Germany.

Chapter 6 presents the research findings based on the framing analysis. It compares frames used by the ALJE and ALJA channels in covering the refugees' arrival in Germany. The comparison is discussed following three identified patterns of coverage: political, human-interest and mixed frame.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion of the research. It sums up the research results and conceptualizes findings in a comparative context. This chapter summarises the case study of Al Jazeera's English and Arabic news coverage of the refugees' arrival in Germany and outlines some directions for further study of journalism and the relationship between media and society.

## Chapter 2

### The Role of Journalism in Society: A Theoretical Framework

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with a brief overview of field theory as a platform for the discussion of the role of journalism in society. I outline theoretical approaches to the study of the relationship between media, politics and society, and then focus on the role of journalism in facilitating public discussion about the global crisis. These issues are an important starting point for the investigation and discussion of media representation of reality and Al Jazeera Network's approach to the refugee crisis.

#### 2.2 A field theory perspective on journalism

The field theory developed by Pierre Bourdieu, provides a framework for this study. The field is described as a "semiautonomous and increasingly specialized sphere of action" (Benson & Neveu, 2005, p.3). Bourdieu (2005) described the journalistic field as a "field of forces within which the agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these position-takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field" (Bourdieu, 2005, p.30). The concept of the field benefits journalism studies because it offers a framework for the investigation of journalism practice and the ways it interacts with other fields of social production, such as politics and economics. Journalists develop "distinctive forms of practice, conceptions of (their) social role, and standards" (Hallin, 2005, p.230) within the field and in relation to other fields of action. The interactions inside the field, between journalists and editors for example, are categorized by the requirement to "re-interpret and re-define the common standard in relation to the part of reality reported in the news" (Rupar, 2007, p.28). The field theory refers to the agents of the field – journalists in this case – as active members of the field, who react to the current relations of forces and established structures on a daily basis. According to Bourdieu (2005), agents are "being constrained by the forces inscribed in these fields and being determined by these forces with regards to their permanent dispositions, (they are) able to act upon these fields, in ways partially pre-constrained, but with a margin of freedom" (p.30). This point is of particular relevance to the research ahead. Al Jazeera's coverage of the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany in 2015 demonstrates how the journalists have interacted with sources of news to provide full coverage of the political and humanitarian aspects of the crisis (Chapter 6).

### 2.3 Media systems

The question of media's role in society has been examined by a number of scholars. Hallin and Mancini's (2004) book *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*, provides a comparison and systematization of media systems in 18 Western countries – including those in Europe, Canada and the United States. The book highlights different dimensions of the issue by looking at political parallelism, media markets, the role of the state, and journalistic professionalism. It identifies three main models of media systems: The “polarized pluralist model” characterised by limited journalistic professionalism and highly politicised media in European Mediterranean countries (p.89), the “democratic corporatist model” characterized by the “welfare state” traditions and public broadcasting media in North Europe (pp. 143 – 160), and the “liberal model” - present in Anglo-Saxon countries and characterized by journalistic professionalism, high levels of objectivism and low levels of state interference (p.11).

According to Herrero et al. (2017), these dimensions and models are utilized widely as standard theoretical frameworks in the comparative studies of the media systems (p. 4798). For example, Brüggemann et al. (2014) offered a comprehensive analytical tool for the measurement of media systems in Western countries that include collecting data about media from documents, reports, interviews and surveys. Their findings validate Hallin and Mancini's dimensions of media systems generating more refined categorization of four types of media systems in central, northern, western, and southern countries (Herrero et al., 2017). Splichal (1994) compared the Central and Eastern European (CEE) media systems with Italy where the public service broadcasting (PSB) established connections to the political parties and the media are widely commercialized (Vltmer, 2008). Hallin & Mancini (2012a) argued that the CEE media systems have similarities with media systems in Greece, Portugal and Spain, while they are different from Italy characterised by powerful democracy, social parties and consensual politics (p.19). Peruško et al. (2013) compared the CEE media systems with southern European countries based on the quality of public service broadcasting and newspaper circulation. Vltmer (2013a) assumed that the Western model of media systems can be applied to the Eastern countries. Herrero et al. (2017) stated that “media systems' development in CEE has gone hand in hand with a particular evolution of their cultural background and political systems and therefore cannot be classified as any of the three models conceptualized by Hallin and Mancini (2004). For example, in CEE, the media inherited certain structural elements of the former communist state media

that are resistant to change” (p.4799). Bajomi-Lázár (2014) indicated that the supervisory systems that support public media depend on the goals and interests of the powerful political parties that control media networks’ resources such as advertising and “airtime frequencies” (p.23). According to Zielonka (2015), “business parallelism” referred to the connections between media owners, business investors and political elites in countries such as the Czech Republic, Latvia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Slovenia (Örnebring, 2012).

These systematizations of media systems are based on the libertarian theory of mass communication that considers freedom to be the most relevant social value in defining the role of media in society.

### **2.3.1 The libertarian theory**

The origin of the term liberalism is Latin word “liber” meaning “free”. The idea of liberal democracy, raised in the 18th century by many scholars, including John Stuart Mill, offered the concept of liberty as a key element to be built upon in “social policy and government” (Foseide, 2008, p. 26). Mill’s liberty is considered to be a basic human right while “liberalism has taken many forms and competing visions, but a liberal is by definition someone who believes in liberty, and holds liberty as the highest political value” (Foseide, 2008, p. 26). Mill argued that the essential criteria of liberalism is freedom. Rawls (1971) agreed with Mill’s concept of liberty and further developed the “social contract theory” as a method of modifying the restrictions of equality and freedom (p.5). Foseide (2008) mentioned that the social contract theory “holds that a person’s political obligations are dependent upon a contract or agreement between them to form society. Human beings are rational and self-interested and will therefore choose to submit to a political authority in order to be able to promote their own interests” (Foseide, 2008, p.28).

The libertarian theory of the function of mass media in a democratic society has a long and arduous history (Siebert et al.1956). In their book *Four Theories of the Press* the authors specify:

“This history has paralleled the development of democratic principles in government and free enterprise in economics. The theory itself can trace a respected lineage among the philosophers of ancient times, but it received its greatest impetus from the developments in western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From Milton to Holmes it has stressed the superiority of the principle of individual freedom and judgement and the axiom that

truth when allowed free rein will emerge victorious from any encounter. Its slogans have been the “self-righting process” and the “free market place of ideas. It has been an integral part of the great march of democracy which has resulted in the stupendous advancement of the well-being of humanity. It has been the guiding principle of Western civilization for more than two hundred years” (Siebert et al.1956, p.70).

According to Nordentstrem (2013), these theories became the core method of describing media systems by connecting politics, mass communication and journalism. They also powered the concept of the “free marketplace” and the “mechanism of self-righting” which originally belonged to the concept of liberalism of Milton and Mill (p.52). Nordenstrem (2013) demonstrated the libertarian myths and the concept of freedom of the press by reviewing three main the documents. - the millennium declaration of democracy which stated that “To ensure the freedom of the media to perform their essential role and the right of the public to have access to information” (UN (n.d.1), 2000), Universal Declaration of Human Rights which stated that “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers” (UN (n.d.2), 1948) and the constitution of UNESCO which stated that “all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image” (UNESCO , 1990). These documents provide an overview of media freedom that is far from the “the ultra-libertarian version conventionally advocated, especially by Western media proprietors – namely, that freedom in this field means absence of state control, including legal regulation other than safeguards against censorship” (Nordenstrem, 2013, p.45). It was important to provide an overview of the legacy of libertarian theory and its relation to media systems to understand the ideological base of freedom and democracy in locating the place of journalists and media in society.

The study discusses the media systems in the Middle East and the fundamental role of freedom and independence of the press to deliver the voice of the people in Chapter 3.

## **2.4 The Interactions with Other Fields**

Journalists are agents in the field of journalism with some level of independence. They are not “explicitly ‘governed’” by their media organisation, cultural background, and the state, but they are influenced by all those elements (Rupar, 2007, p. 600). To examine the journalistic field as an open system of change

is to recognize its relations with the forces that form its content. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) identify five main domains of influence on media production that act simultaneously and interact with each other: individual, routine, organisational, ideological and institutional forces. Frequently, journalists may refuse to confess to being influenced by internal or external forces and claim that they are worked by custom factors to accomplish a high degree of autonomy. But how can we define this autonomy? Journalists' conceptions of autonomy are based on the idea that news judgments can be politically neutral (Rupar 2007, p.28). Hallin (1986) mentions that "far from being a mere lie or illusion, it is a deeply held system of consciousness that profoundly affects both the structure of the news organisation and the day-to-day practice of journalism" (p.23). The development of professional journalism offers journalists a base from which to demand their autonomy (Schudson, 1978) within the field, but researchers recognise that the way towards autonomy may face issues between the "journalists' and the corporation's authority", (Rupar, 2008, pp.28 – 29). The movement for extending journalistic autonomy is "an uncertain and changeable process, in which parts of the field of journalism ... have sometimes won relative autonomy in relation to other fields, often then losing it again, or sometimes winning it in one direction while they simultaneously lose it in another" (Hallin, 2005, p.229). The discussion about the autonomy of journalists is important because it underpins the place of journalism in society and its ability to create an opportunity for public debate.

## **2.5 The Role of Journalists in Public Debate**

News media play a major role in shaping public debate about political and social issues. Two main theoretical platforms used for the investigation of media and society, "the 'liberal pluralist' and the 'political economy'" approach recognises the news media as part of the "fourth estate" and the journalist as part of public life "with the crucial mission of ensuring that members of the public are able to draw upon a 'diverse market place of ideas' to both sustain and challenge their sense of the world around them" (Allan, 1999, p.49). In the liberal pluralist tradition, the news media are considered to occupy a central space in the provision of information relevant for public discussion and the formation of public opinion. The media play a watchdog role in relation to the government, report on the decision-making process, and are there to provide a plurality of opinions about the issues of the day. The political economy framework puts an emphasis on economic structures and the ways media ownership relates to news content. Herman and Chomsky (1988), for example, argue that profitable news media increase official biases that "defend[s] the economic, social and political agenda of privileged groups that

dominate domestic society and the state” (p.298). This process can be described as a system within which the news media claim performing a forum for public debate in the coverage of public affairs but the final discussion “falls inside the clear limits about (desirable) elite disagreement” (Rupar, 2007, p. 42). In other words, mainstream media tend to show mainstream opinions. They play a major role in forming public debate, but the boundaries of the debate are defined by the economic, cultural, political elite in society. Journalism takes a position of providing a forum for public debate - “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed” (Habermas, 1964, p.49). Habermas argues that the interaction between mass media and politics has contributed to the “refeudalization of the public sphere” as the representation of reality exceeds the logical debate (Habermas, 1989, p.162). One might ask if this extension of logical public debate happens in all forms of media representation of reality, in reporting on both events and issues, and what type of dynamic characterises coverage of global crises such as the Syrian refugee crisis.

## **2.6 Global Crises and Media**

It is relevant for this study to position the term crisis in the context of a distinction between reporting on events and issues in the public domain. While events are “distinct, fixed happenings that are limited geographically and temporally” (Rupar, 2007, p.43), issues are usually ongoing, complex and touching more than one element of social life. When it comes to crisis, a turning point of the series of events that constitute social issue, things get more complicated. Academic research relevant to this study, for example Holmes and Castañeda’s (2016) investigation of the media impact on the refugee crisis in Germany, defines crisis as a “moment in the war of position and war of manoeuvre when hegemony and the architecture of a social world are at stake, with future structural and symbolic realities unknown” (p.13). Cottle’s (2011) studies of the crisis and the media, outline a global crisis as a situation “whose origins and outcomes cannot for the most part be confined inside the borders of particular nation states; rather, they are endemic to, enmeshed within, and potentially encompassing of today’s late-modern, capitalistic” in interconnected and globalized world (p.78). The representation of global crises in the news might be seen as a tool spreading global panic, exaggerating fears and threats to serve specific interests (Cottle, 2011, p.78) and affects collective emotions by the “filmic acceleration” and “televsual crush” of crises and catastrophes, Virilio 2007(pp. 26-27), but the coverage of the crisis is not a linear process. The news coverage of global crises involves different stages of representation. For example, the news coverage of the global bird flu pandemic shows the following stages: The first stage is

characterised by the spreading of fearful news about the flu; the second stage presents mixed reassurance messages from authority sources; finally, the control stage when news media cancel the majority of fearful elements of the earlier news reports (Cottle, 2011; Ungar, 2008).

Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2007) investigate terror as a global crisis and argue that the media representation of global crises creates news amplification and contains symbols of threat. Chakravartty and Downing (2010) focus on the financial crisis through obtaining the temporal articulation of media relations in exposing crisis. For example, how the media present the global financial crisis by controlling the perception of homo economics and its effect on public culture. They also argue that digital communication systems play a key role in creating news pressure by presenting the political and social reflexivity of the crisis (Chakravartty & Downing, 2010). Cottle (2009) states that news media provide a positive role in humanitarian crises and act as a platform for embracing conversations and empowering voiceless people.

Scholars study the rise and fall of issues in the public arena, discussing the multiplicity of the issue attention cycle. In a study of the media coverage of environmental problems, Downs (1972) identifies different levels of public attention: The stage of "pre-problem", "alarmed discovery"; "euphoric enthusiasm", "solution cost acknowledgment", "decline of intense public interest", and "post-problem" stage (Downs, 1972, pp.39–40).

Other scholars investigated media cycles by highlighting social interaction (Hansen, 1991), and the media agenda-setting function (Trumbo, 1994; 1996). Looking at the US news coverage of climate change, Trumbo (1996) revealed that reports on climate change as a crisis cited scientists far more than politicians and other groups. In other words, environmental scientists were dominant sources of information in the US reporting of global warming. He referred this transformation in dominant sources to the problem-solving phase identified by Downs (1972). Rupa (2007) looked at the links between journalistic norms and cycles of media coverage and found that "media tend to repeat narrative strategies in a way that, once a cycle ends, the media are likely to use the narrative outcome of that cycle as a presumption upon which to find the next cycle" (p.44). The concept of issue cycles is useful for the investigation of media representation of crisis, but how reporting on crisis relates to the public understanding of crisis requires a wider set of conceptual tools. To examine the process of crisis representation, I turn to the concept of news as discourse.

## **2.7 News as Discourse**

Lippmann (1965) addresses the link between reality and the representation of reality by stating that “news is not a mirror of social conditions, but the report of an aspect that has obtruded itself” (p.216), Stephens (1988) mentions that news is a “new information about a subject of some public interest that is shared with some portion of the public” (p.9). Stovall (2005) says that “news is the major product of journalism; news is information that journalists believe is important or interesting to their audiences” (p.2). For example, Holmes and Castañeda (2016) state that reporting on the events related to the refugee crisis captured worldwide political attention, “producing diverse and contradictory discourses and responses” (p.13). The concept of news discourse, relevant to understanding the social construction of meaning, refers to the form of knowledge, production of knowledge and public acceptance of knowledge claims (Ekstrom, 2002). Van Dijk (1997) explains that “discourses do not only consist of (structures of) sound or graphics, and of abstract sentence form (syntax) or complex structures of local or global meaning and schematic forms”, but they can be “described in terms of the social actions accomplished by language users when they communicate with each other in social situations and within society and culture at large” (pp.13-14). He refers here to the idea of the intertextuality of news, a notion that has attracted significant scholarly attention currently.

## **2.8 The Intertextuality of News**

The intertextuality of news, defined as a “dependence on texts from other contexts” (Zelizer 2004, p.125), is associated with news as a product of a “chain of communicative events” (Fairclough 1995, p.37). For example, the news report can include an interview between a journalist and a source of information, an analysis of archival material, a reference to a documentary film as well as communicative events associated with the text reading. Fairclough’s (1995) question of “how one type of communicative event ‘recontextualizes’ others – what particular representations and transformations it produces, and how this differs from other recontextualizations of the same events” (p.41) resonates in any investigation of a news text. The chain of communicative events related to “recontextualization of the event” are relevant for understanding journalism practice. A space for investigation of journalism’s contribution to the production of meaning therefore should include all three layers of discourse formation: Text, practice and socio-cultural context (Fairclough 1995).

## **2.9 Journalism Practice**

The way journalists represent, interpret and construct reality is related to the way they manage fundamental journalistic activities: Selecting the topic, researching, writing and editing the news content (Hirst et al, 2012). Selecting the news topic is a significant skill for journalists that grows by the daily experience of the journalistic practice - or "a nose for news" as "an instinct of what makes a good story" (Browne, 1999) p.5). Elliot (1977) argues that news judgement should be examined as part of professional excellence "valued as much by executives and administrators as by the craft group" (p.150), Schudson (2005) states that "the possibility that the "news judgment" of a corps of media professionals who are beyond the influence of state and market is not necessarily a prize one should want for the best interest of a democratic society" (p.219).

The distinctive journalistic phenomenon of news value is a criterion used to explain how the event becomes the news. How did the crisis become news and why did Al Jazeera become interested in the Syrian refugee crisis? In presenting the case study on Al Jazeera's coverage of the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany, this section looks at the main factors of newsworthy impact on the Al Jazeera's English and Arabic coverage of the refugee crisis. Journalists claim to know by instinct and by intellect what makes the news. But when does this instinct originate and how does it develop? To answer these questions, it is important to differentiate between what makes an event "newsworthy", and why some information becomes news, and some doesn't.

Galtung & Ruge's (1965) study of the structure of foreign news has been considered a "landmark" research on news values and selection (Watson., 1998, p. 117). Their work "continues to be cited as 'prerequisites' of news selection in the 21st century" (Harcup& O'Neill, 2001, p. 1). Galtung & Ruge (1965) listed 12 news factors, these being frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to nations, reference to elite, reference to individual and reference to negative events (pp. 65-71). A wide range of studies has been done on news values since then. For example, Masterton (1998) surveyed journalists across the world and discovered that most apply the same type of measures to identify what part of reality will become news. Masterton (1998) hypothesised a three-part theory about what entails newsworthiness. First: interest, timeliness and clarity must exist in any information to become news. Second: newsworthiness is related to different factors of the event that is defined as a key criteria of news: conflict (disagreement), human interest (stories about people), proximity (nearness), consequence (importance and impact),

prominence and novelty (rare). Third: these key factors and principles are applied in the same way everywhere.

Zhang et al. (2013) defined newsworthiness as “a cognitive construct that reflects how the events relate to journalists’ social realities” (p. 454). Tiffen (1989) reminds scholars that journalists acknowledge the existence of news values (p.52-69). Hall (1978) says that the journalist’s “sense of news values” creates their professional ideology (p.53), while de Burgh (2000) stresses that news journalism has “a broadly agreed set of values, often referred to as 'newsworthiness'” (p.19). Shoemaker and Cohen (2006) propose the framework of newsworthiness which includes deviance and social significance (see more details on this in pages 101-104). In academic research, relevant to this study, Zhang et al. (2013) demonstrate the previous two constructed framework of newsworthiness “underlie traditional indicators of newsworthiness” such as conflict, human interest, consequence and prominence (p.451).

### **2.9.1 Sources**

The relation between journalists and news sources distinguishes the journalistic field from other fields of cultural production. A source in this study refers to the provider of information for the news report. Sigal (1973) states that “even when the journalist is in a position to observe an event directly, he remains reluctant to offer interpretations of his own, preferring instead to rely on his news sources” as for journalists “news is not what has happened, but what someone says has happened” (p.69). The key to answer the question of, who appears and talks in the news, is to recognise the journalistic norm related to the sources of information. The basic criteria involve “reliability, trustworthiness, authoritativeness and articulateness” (Brown et al., 1987, p.46) and daily journalistic practice presents the way to “find people who satisfy that criteria is to look for official sources in the institutions” (Rupar, 2007, p.64).

Sources may have a strong effect on news (Berkowitz & Beach, 1993). Most news originates from sources of information. Most sources are affiliated with governments, decision makers, politicians, higher level employees, and these voices are most often heard in the news. Journalists must work efficiently and effectively so they create strategies that bring out more sources. Hence, the “interaction between journalists and news sources is an important force shaping the news: “Depending on the

context of news, this interaction can be different from a situation to another (Berkowitz& Beach, 1993, p. 4).

### **2.9.2 Relations between Journalists and Sources**

This section aims to highlight the transformation of social dynamics between journalists and sources. Allgaier et al. (2013) study the initial stages of the relations between journalists and sources. The first theme investigates the negotiation between journalists and sources in Germany and the Netherlands. Specifically, how journalists can get access to the sources of information.

Journalists seek to “score” a source, and that “allows sources to negotiate interview conditions that are profitable to them” (Broersma et al., 2013, p.390). Media tends to take unwilling sources by surprise to encourage them to participate in the news production process. Allgaier et al. (2013) argue that these negotiations between journalists and sources are usually held behind the scenes, remaining invisible to the audience. For example, television interviews appear to the public like spontaneous conversations, but they are mainly “scripted and staged” (Broersma et al., 2013, p.391). Scholars looked at the practice of interviewing political figures (Den Herder, 2013; Heritage& Clayman, 2002). Den Herder (2013) studied interviews with political leaders in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and France and found that from the 1990s until 2010s political news have progressively increased in terms of political figures’ personality in order to draw attention to the political ideologies.

The investigation of interactions between journalists and sources in broadcast news highlighted the important dynamic between interviewer and interviewee. Broersma et al., (2013) presented two arguments: First, “interviews and quotes have almost disappeared from television news. If they are used, they function to support the journalist’s interpretation of news events” (p.392) and, secondly, “correspondents increasingly take the place of regular, or “real”, sources” (Broersma et al., 2013, p.392). The dynamics of the interaction between journalists and sources are shifting in more than one direction. Broersma et al. (2013) stated that “journalists are -still, at last or again- in control over news discourse”. Journalists decide what event will be covered, how it will be framed, and what voice will have access to the newsroom (p. 392).

Broersma et al. (2013) discussed the strands of research that can be classified in scholarship.

The purpose of presenting these strands is to provide a perspective of the development of the relationship between journalists and news providers (sources) that formed the news reports related to the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany.

The first strand relates to communications studies and political communication. It highlights the news text to decide which individuals and organisations appear in the news and which don't. At the core of these studies are issues of power, bias, influence and conflict of interest (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009). The following studies revealed that the dominant source of news is elite sources (Sigal, 1973; Brown et al., 1987). Gandy (1982) mentioned that media outlets depend on news subsidies. Albaek (2011) revealed that media outlets relied on a "growing appearance" of professionals who can describe and interpret the issues to the audience. Researchers found declining "air time" for news sources and "growing appearance" of journalists in news content (Hallin, 1992; Barnhurst, 2007; Broersma et al., 2013, p.389). In the 1970s, numerous ethnographic studies of newsrooms presented the importance of professional routines and organisational structures to creating news texts (Gans, 1979; Schlesinger, 1978; Tuchman, 1978; Golding and Elliot, 1979). Tuchman (1978) argued that news work "transforms occurrences into news events" (p.12) - she also stated that "professionalism serves organisational interests by reaffirming the institutional processes in which news work is embedded" (p. 12). Gans (1979) mentioned that journalists mostly are indifferent to public feedback because they find it is unrepresentative (pp. 230– 235). According to Schlesinger (1978), this resistance to the public's feedback is a rationale given to journalists' sense of autonomy (p.111). Franklin and Carlson (2011) stated that it "nevertheless clashes with a long-standing emphasis on participatory media formats as important to democratic responsibility, tied to notions of public service" (p.153). The requirement for "professional autonomy" has been reflected in the "journalistic self-understandings" of serving the public (Carey, 1987; Franklin & Carlson, 2011, p. 153).

According to Deuze (2008), the rise of "citizen journalism" created new methods and techniques that allow audiences to contribute to the news production process (p.107). Deuze et al., (2007) stated that the new journalism "must be seen as a praxis that is not exclusively tied to salaried work or professional institutions anymore" (p. 323). Scholars focused on bringing different perspectives on "user-generated content (UGC)". Many scholars have raised voices of optimism about citizens being able to participate in the process of news coverage. This shows more non - elite voices contributed in the "public arena".

Sourcing patterns appear to be rooted in the news practice, but the news based on UGC is structurally different and cannot merge with the processes of news production (Broersma et al., 2013, pp.389 – 390; Reich, 2008; Franklin & Carlson,2011).

Broersma et al. (2013) presented two main questions “How access to the news is structured and how the interaction between journalists and sources mirrors and strengthens the existing social order” (p.390). Manning (2001) presented the “sourcing pattern” from a political and economic perspective. Also, studied how the elite seek to disregard citizens' voices who have less access to the public. (Manning, 2001). Davis (2000) investigated how public relations was used by governments, institutions and businesses to control information flows and to discipline citizens. This control could be through preventing employees from speaking out to the media without previous approval which makes it difficult for journalists to reveal stories. Singer (2010) stated that journalists in the United Kingdom assume that UGC “can undermine journalistic norms and values unless carefully monitored - a gatekeeping task they fear cannot fit within newsroom routines threatened by resource constraints of increasing severity” (p.127). According to Franklin and Carlson (2011), the chances for audiences to participate in the news production process are mostly limited. The limited experiences with audience interaction in online news especially in the United Kingdom highlighted the important role of the gatekeeper for journalists (Franklin& Carlson, 2011).

The second strand relates to “socio-linguistics” (Broersma et al., 2013, p.390). It also highlights the main interaction between journalists and sources in the news content on live television such as press conferences (Broersma et al., 2013, p.390). Most of these researchers study the interaction and conversation between interviewers and interviewees by analysing the tone of language and type of question (Clayman& Heritage, 2002; Clayman et al., 2006). Other researchers investigate the communication between journalists and sources through conducting a visual analysis of the language of interviewees of the television programme (Eriksson, 2011; Ekström, 2012).

### **2.9.3 The Dynamics between Journalists and Sources in Crisis Reporting**

Journalists cover a crisis based on the information provided by news sources. Overall, the relations between journalists and sources appear as a two-way relationship that is reciprocal by nature. Journalists are also “driven by a strategic complementarity of interests” (Franklin B. , 2003, p. 47).

Boersma et al. (2013) stated that journalists and sources “need to feel they have something to gain and they both can take the initiative for a conversation”. Also, the dynamics between journalists and sources is “the social interaction that determines the trade of information - thus lies at the heart of journalism practice” (p.388). Journalism is, at its core, a struggle over the balance of the public sphere. For example, journalists struggle over what type of information should be released to the public and what should be remained private. They also struggle over which issues or topics should be debated and others concealed. “Journalists and sources have no fixed roles in this struggle and the balance of power between them is not a given. It is constantly (re-)negotiated both on the practical and the symbolic level” (Boersma et al., 2013, p.388). Sources provide the information, and journalists make the decision of what will be published in the news. The raising of “media logic” and expansion of expository journalism were important factors in empowering journalists. Sources must adjust to these changes to get their voices heard in the newsroom (Boersma et al., 2013, pp.388 – 389, Fishman, 1980; Tuchman, 1978). The rise of news management, public relations, the internet and social media have increasingly created economic changes in the media industry. They have also transformed the power balance in the interest of sources (Ruggiero, 2004). These trends reflect the outstanding dynamics between journalists and sources. News firms guarantee a constant flow of information by allocating professional reporters. These reporters establish a close relationship with sources to update themselves about the latest news. Sources originate the stories, journalists investigate the topic, choose the angle and prepare the content of the story.

## **2.10 Summary**

This chapter discussed the role of journalism in society by presenting an overview of the theoretical frameworks that highlight the concept of journalism as a field. It also presented various academic views on the way it interacts with other fields such as politics and business. This study looks at discourse studies and field theories to structure a theoretical framework to examine the fundamental factors of journalism practice that is involved in producing the news for public discussion about global crises. To understand how the media covered the refugee crisis, it was important to investigate the media’s role in reporting global crises. It also provides a summary of the historical approach of media systems, libertarian theory and their relationship to the freedom of the press, to discover the main patterns that may influence the news coverage of the refugees’ arrival in Germany.

The outline of the history of journalism offers the characteristics of news culture that should be considered when investigating the journalistic field and its relationships with other fields. This chapter focused on the journalistic field, the roles of agents (journalists), the norms they apply in everyday practice and the interaction between the agents' surrounding fields. The term "norm" in this study reflects the transformation of the journalistic field. Journalistic norms are discussed in relation to the effects of discourse practice. It was proposed to examine journalistic norms related to news sources, form of news and storytelling frame.

This chapter brings out the question of the universality of journalism practice. The majority of cited journalism studies have been conducted in the Western context, but how the libertarian model of news and journalism function in the Middle East region has been less explored. The next chapter will examine the issue by introducing the Al Jazeera network as an example of a media organisation founded on libertarian premises but located in the Middle East. The chapter will provide background information for the upcoming investigation of ALJ English and ALJ Arabic reporting on the refugee crisis.

## Chapter 3

### Al Jazeera Media Network

“The Arab world needs a modern version of the old transnational media so citizens can be informed about global events. More important, we need to provide a platform for Arab voices. We suffer from poverty, mismanagement and poor education. Through the creation of an independent international forum, isolated from the influence of nationalist governments spreading hate through propaganda, ordinary people in the Arab world would be able to address the structural problems their societies face”

Jamal Khashoggi (2018).

#### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a theoretical framework for investigating the role of journalism in society. It discussed scholarship related to liberalism and freedom of expression in Western countries. But how about the role of journalism in other parts of the world where democracy and freedom of expression are limited, what about the Middle East – the place where the Syrian conflict and the refugee crisis started – and the media’s promise to provide a voice to the voiceless?

Foseide (2008) stated that “ Sub-Saharan Africa, which is considered to be the least developed part of the world with the largest part of the population living in extreme poverty, has had a greater expansion of democracy with a larger percentage of free countries than the Middle East. This is also true compared to Latin America, where the only authoritarian country is communist-ruled Cuba and the rest are considered free or partly free electoral democracies” (Foseide, 2008, p.45). In the 1990s, the region has been witnessing the emergence and rise of the public sphere as an outcome of “liberalized autocracies” in several Arab counties (Hafez, 2010).

The process of globalization and the development of mass communication, especially the transnational television networks, have opened a new line of academic research that focuses on the relationship between media, politics and society, and the role of media in facilitating public discussion about the issues and crises in the region (Karim & Philip, 2016). The expansion of transitional television and the emergence of satellite cable in the Arab world have increased the flow of information within a region and across the world (Pavlik, 2015). It also led to rise of several media network stations such as Al Jazeera (AJL), the Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC) and Al Arabiya. Twenty years ago, the Al

Jazeera media network started broadcasting from Doha – Qatar. It became one of the largest news organisations across the world (Zayani, 2005). The network has been credited with broadcasting diverse opinion and often called a network that provides a “voice of voiceless” (Kyle, 2016). This chapter provides an overview of the development of the Al Jazeera media network since its establishment and discusses its development in the light of the existing scholarship on the relationship between media and politics in the region and its credo of providing a voice to the voiceless.

### **3.2 Liberty and Media Systems in the Middle East**

In the Arab world, citizens were filled with hope after the uprisings which spread across the region during the spring of 2011. The general population, journalists and academics had high expectations of free and democratic Arab societies. They believed to be free from the control of the ruling governments, and censorship of the media and press (Cottle, 2011). However, the lack of freedom of expression in the region remained, as the killing of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi confirms. He wrote in his last column:

“Arab governments have been given free rein to continue silencing the media at an increasing rate. There was a time when journalists believed the internet would liberate information from the censorship and control associated with print media. But these governments, whose very existence relies on the control of information, have aggressively blocked the internet”.  
(Khashoggi, 2018)

Khashoggi also stated that “expectations were quickly shattered; these societies either fell back to the old status quo or faced even harsher conditions than before”. In 2017, the International Federation of Journalists in the Arab world reported that “more journalists lost their lives in this region than in any other in the world, making it the most dangerous for professional journalists” (IFJ, 2017).

But how does all the above relate to media systems? According to Siebert et al.’s (1956) *Four Theories of the Press* (see chapter 2, p.20) authoritarian media systems prevent freedom of expression while the democratic systems are based on freedom of the press. Hafez (2010) stated that democratic systems enhanced the public sphere while authoritarian systems introduced censorship.

Democratic systems develop a communicative link between government and the people as a means of legitimizing power between elections while authoritarian systems exert arbitrary

power; they propagate rather than deliberate. They rule in the interest of elites insensitive to the thoughts of ordinary people. (Hafez, 2010, p.2).

According to Crouch's (2004) theory of "post-democracy", Western democratic systems are becoming close to authoritarian systems. For example, this applied during the 2003 war in Iraq when the administration of George W. Bush ignored the civil liberties movements against its foreign policy during the war.

In the past decades, several scholars have highlighted the news complexities of the media typologies in the Middle East. Rugh (2004) distinguished between the types of journalism in the Arab world by connecting the respective characteristics of media systems, such as the colonial and mobilization press in Syria, Libya and Sudan. This type of media system prevents criticism of national government policies: "The government's foreign policies are particularly unassailable, but the major lines of domestic policy, too, are never attacked" (Rugh, 2004, p.29). The loyalist press system is explained as "the regime does not have at its disposal the mechanisms for guiding and influencing that exist in the mobilization system and which derive from ownership of the press by political agents of the regime". The loyalist press appeared in countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. Lastly, the transitional media systems appeared in countries such as Jordan, Egypt and Algeria (Rugh, 2004, p.82).

Al-Obaidi (2007) says that the Arab media systems are no longer differentiated by being democratic or autocratic systems. Instead, they can be categorised as transitional, emerging or mixed media systems. Hafez (2010) considered this view closer to the reality and stated that "these categories are still what I would call container typologies, because whole national media systems are lumped under very vague terms. The challenge is to identify the exact features qualifying media systems as being "transitional" (p.3).

### **3.3 The rise of Al Jazeera**

In November 1996, the Al Jazeera media network was established as a government-funded TV station in the small Gulf state of Qatar. Al Jazeera initially broadcast six hours a day as an Arabic news TV channel (Whitaker, 2011). Since then, the media network has been expanding far beyond the Arab world to become one of the leading news networks among other global media outlets such as BBC,

CNN, and RT. Nowadays Al Jazeera has more than 70 offices across the world and is watched by nearly 35 million viewers (Brook, 2005; Whitaker, 2011). It also provides news coverage 24 hours a day, focusing on taboo topics in a region full of conflict (Whitaker, 2011).

The station has been expanding with more than 10 divisions and channels (Al Jazeera, 2017). Following the success of Al Jazeera Arabic news channel, now known as ALJA, a sister channel, Al Jazeera English (ALJE) was launched in 2006. The station aimed to hire professional television journalists from CNN, BBC and CNBC alongside many others (Wodak& Koller, 2008). AL Jazeera described the importance of its English language service as follows: “Our dream of bringing people and continents together is coming true. A new window of opportunity to see the world through is now opening. Aljazeera.net English goes behind the scenes to provide every visitor with “the news they don’t see”, daringly and boldly as Aljazeera always does” (Wodak& Koller, 2008, p. 45).

Al Jazeera English follows Al Jazeera’s Arabic principles and values “to deliver captivating content to the world which informs, inspires and entertains through giving a voice to the voiceless” (Al Jazeera, 2017). Today, Al Jazeera broadcasts to more than 310 million households in more than 100 countries. It has expanded to a large network with several media outlets and news channels which translate to various languages. Its media network has more than 3,000 staff from more than 70 nationalities, creating a diverse atmosphere inside the newsroom (Al Jazeera, 2017).

In 2006, Al Jazeera expanded with an accessible, web-based service of free online subscription across the world. According to Abdul-Mageed and Herring (2008), the English and Arabic online sites are editorially diverse with independent selection of news articles and comments.

In 2001, Al Jazeera started to attract international criticism when the network began to broadcast messages from Osama bin Laden. The channel denied providing a platform to terrorism and insisted that its reporting was objective and impartial (Miles, 2005). The network viewership increased during the Afghan war. It was the only channel that had an office in Kabul and was able to provide news directly from the war location. During that time, Al Jazeera became an indispensable source of news to viewers from all over the world (Miles, 2005). A survey published by Brandchannel.com. presented the most influential brand or “super brands. Robin Rusch, the editor stated that “Osama bin Laden uses it as his station of choice to get his message across and here in the US with a population that is not Arab

speaking we see regular mentions of Al-Jazeera reports” (Brook, 2005). Al Jazeera has denied this and reported that “We were accused of extremism when we interviewed members of the Taliban, but in fact we were asking the hard questions and ensuring we were challenging all sides of the story” (Al Jazeera, 2017). Despite all the criticism, the channel is considered to be one of the most successful news broadcasting organisations in and out of the Middle East. In 2006, the channel topped *Forbes* magazine’s Arabic edition’s list of best-known Arab brands (Al Jazeera, 2006).

The station was launched through the mandate of Sheikh Hamad ibn Khalifah Al Thani, the former Emir of Qatar. His goal was to encourage democracy and freedom of speech (Zayani, 2005). Whitaker (2011) considered Al Jazeera as a great investment by the Emir of Qatar, as he supported the news network in the first five years with a loan of \$US137 million (Miles, 2005). This investment helped to reposition Qatar on the international map both diplomatically and politically (Zayani, 2005).

### **3.3.1 Qatar Diplomatic Crisis and Al Jazeera**

In June 2017, Arab countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain, (known as the anti-Qatar quartet) decided to cut all diplomatic ties with Qatar, hurling allegations that the state supported terrorism. They listed 13 demands to be met by the Qatar government, including closing the Al Jazeera satellite channel (Cherkaoui, 2017). The Qatari government has rejected that demand, maintaining that it was the responsibility of governments to support freedom of speech and protect human rights. The Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, stated that “When you tell me to close a channel like Al Jazeera, history will write one day in 50, 60 or 70 years how it changed the whole idea of free speech in the region” (Al Jazeera , 2017). Saudi Arabia has closed Al Jazeera's offices and withdrawn its broadcast license, saying it promotes terrorist “plots”, supports terrorist militias such as Houthi in Yemen and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Cherkaoui, 2017). However, Al Jazeera says it is “not partisan to any ideology, group or government” (Ponniah, 2017).

To understand the reasons for the attack on Al Jazeera, it is necessary to go back more than 20 years. Before the establishment of Al Jazeera, state-controlled television was the main feature of news broadcasting in the Arab region (Cherkaoui, 2017). Their news coverage was intended to support local rulers’ actions and live television interviews were controlled by the regimes (Lynch, 2005, p. 40). Cherkaoui (2017) stated that “live interviews were not tolerated, as interviewees’ opinions had to be checked before being aired” (p.116). Al Jazeera became the most controversial Arabic news channel

and one of the largest news providers in the Middle East, as it has provided Arab viewers news other than the typical pro – government propaganda. The news channel has offered a new level of editorial freedom, protected by the Qatari government. This freedom attracted viewers from all around the Arab world (Whitaker, 2011).

Al Jazeera aimed to challenge the existing narratives and introduced an unprecedented independent voice in a region where government control of the media was widespread (Chalaby, 2005). Through its reporting style and controversial talk shows the channel introduced open debates, and interactive message systems “call-in formats” (Nisbet, E. C., & Myers, T. A., 2010, p. 351). Lynch (2006b) argued that this format participated in transforming the Arab audiences from passive into active audiences, contributing to the discussions with a strong level of engagement (Lynch, 2006b).

According to Zayani (2005), Al Jazeera’s news reporting, talk shows and political interviews have played a significant role in influencing public opinion. The political interviews opened up discussions about critical and taboo subjects such as political corruption, the human rights violations record of Arab regimes, persecution of political dissenters and Islamic law (Sharia). Arab rebels and dissidents are always welcome on the channel. Al Jazeera also has proven that there is no Arab regime immune from criticism. In many incidents, Al Jazeera has annoyed and angered several Arab governments (Zayani, 2005).

Al Jazeera has continuously focused its news and commentary on political reform within the Arab world, questioning the legitimacy and policies of Arab states, sometimes leading it to be temporarily banned by Arab governments (el-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2002; Rugh, 2004). Al Jazeera stated that it “gave a global audience an alternative voice—one that put the human being back at the centre of the news agenda” (Al Jazeera, 2017).

### **3.3.2 The ALJ Effect**

The station growth led to what is known as Al Jazeera effect (ALJ), “a term first used to describe its liberating influences on the media in the Arab world”, (Khogali and Krajnc 2009). The Al Jazeera effect referred to that media’s impact on global politics. It defined the channel’s influence on politics across the Arab world. The ALJ effect played an important role in changing the direction of the news-flow from the East to the West, transforming perspectives, and limiting censorship (Zingarelli, 2010, p. 39).

Seib (2008) stated that the ALJ effect “changes the way states and citizens interact with each other and it gives the individual a chance at a new kind of autonomy, at least on an intellectual level, because of the greater availability of information” (p. 175). He also mentioned that Al Jazeera has changed the relationship between those “who govern and those who are governed”. Seib (2008) argued that the impact of this change liberates audiences and encourages them to think the way they would like and participate in the discussion through citizen journalism. Goode (2009) defined citizen journalism as “a range of web-based practices whereby ‘ordinary’ users engage in journalistic practices”. These practices include photos, videos and eyewitness stories of events or crises (Goode, 2009, p. 1288). Al Jazeera caused a tremendous change in the way Arab media practise journalism, which contributed to the reshaping of the political platform in the region (Zayani, 2005).

The media network was also accused to being managed by the Qatari government. For example, a former journalist for Al Jazeera English, Dave Marash, told *The Telegraph* that the “editorial input from Washington had ‘gotten smaller and smaller’ and that the Qatar-based management was exerting control on the channel's overseas bureaux” (The Telegraph (n.d.), 2008).

According to Abdul-Mageed and Herring (2008), Al Jazeera Arabic focuses on addressing the Arab world, while Al Jazeera English addresses international audiences. Also, a former AE journalist, Mohamed Fahmy, who left the channel, told Egypttoday.com that the editorial line in ALJE was controlled by the Qatari authorities (Egypt Today (n.d.), 2017).

Samuel-Azran (2013) argued that Al Jazeera was a tool of Qatari government diplomacy, referring to it as “a hybrid state-sponsored/private network”. He also defined the hybrid model as: “The state-sponsored station operates independently in routine affairs, which gives it the credibility of a privately owned station, and reverts to state-sponsored-style broadcasting only during a crisis involving the state. [This way], the station's global and/or regional credibility gained during peacetime makes it a highly potent public diplomacy tool, which allows the state to influence public opinion and in turn impose pressure on elite groups in a foreign state to modify the target state's policies to the state's advantage” (Samuel-Azran, 2013, p. 1294).

However, Al Jazeera is considered a huge communication success in the region. Despite the controversy, the channel's coverage reflects a region full of conflicts in a critical transition period. Al

Jazeera has revolutionised the Arab media landscape through creating an environment to raise a new Arab voice (Zayani, 2005). Al Jazeera's acting director general, Mostefa Souag, refers to Al Jazeera as the "voice of the voiceless" (Al Jazeera, 2016) and Figenschou (2010) says that the Al Jazeera media network covers stories about "the underprivileged, the subaltern, the underdog, and the disenfranchised" (p.86). Al Jazeera's audiences are said to

emerge from the organization's mission to 'speak truth' to Arab people. Truth is spoken it is believed, in contrast to the untruths or the omissions made by Western and Arab news outlets, and to those who require it. Hence, an imagined audience develops from this positioning of the programme and one that bears little relevance to simple demographic considerations of those who potentially watch. (Matthews and Habsi, 2018, p.7)

Following the idea of imagined community (Anderson 1983) it could be said that Al Jazeera's audience symbolises citizens of the region. Matthews and Habsi (2018, p.7) quoted Al Jazeera Arabic journalist, Mohamed Krichen, who said "We realized in the channel that the Arab World is characterized by diversity and multiplicity, and that its paramount importance is not to be biased towards one culture, ethnicity or religious identity to the detriment of another" (Krichen,2006, p.753). The impact of Al Jazeera's work has been compared to the impact of the US-based global media network CNN.

### **3.3.3 The CNN Effect**

The "CNN effect" refers to the impact that news media have on a foreign policy during a political conflict or humanitarian disasters (Livingston, 1997). It has been defined as the "process by which the media influence foreign policy by evoking responses in their audiences through concentrated and emotionally based coverage, which in turn applies pressure on governments to act in response to a particular conflict" (Hawkins, 2011, p. 225). Robinson (1999) demonstrates how mass media influenced the US government to lead the humanitarian interventions in Somalia. For example, Hawkins (2011) sees the CNN effect as a reflection of the UK and US policy to protect Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq. This has been achieved through news articles, images and videos that are broadcast globally either after or during a conflict, that can create pressure on governments for an immediate action such as military intervention or can change the public's opinion (Livingston, 1997). Schlesinger (1992) argues that "In this age, image means television, and policies seem increasingly subjective, especially in democracies, to the images flickering across the television screen" (p.18). Another argument refers to the concept of

“manufacturing consent” which suggests that “manipulation of news content is used by policy-makers to legitimise predetermined foreign policy” (Simons, 2016). Robinson (2002) argues that political leaders force “news makers to read” global issues and events in a particular way rather than assuming that the media impacts or decides what governments do. Researchers agree with this assumption that the media is impacted by both “government and government policy” (Robinson, 2002; Sparrow, 1999). Herman and Chomsky (2002) define manufacturing consent as “effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out a system-supportive propaganda function, by reliance on market forces, internalized assumptions, and self-censorship, and without overt coercion” (p.286). The concept of manufacturing consent presents the role of mass media as generating certain messages to promote specific government agendas (Herman,& Chomsky, 2002). Hallin (1986) and Bennett (1990) argue that news content in the US media is only a reflection of an agenda that includes the discussions among leaders of the US government. This phenomenon is referred to as the “reverse CNN factor”.

### **3.4 Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of Al Jazeera’s development, its political and media environment in the Arab world by discussing the libertarian model of mass communication and media systems in the region. It explained ALJ’s controversial role in influencing the political arena in the Arab world by demonstrating the critical dynamics between the media represented by (Al Jazeera) and politics represented by (the Qatari government and the Arabic ruling governments). This chapter outlined the powerful role of the media in the societies of this part of the world.

The next chapter will move to the question of Al Jazeera’s coverage of the refugee crisis by presenting a methodological framework for its investigation.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Methodology**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This study investigates how Al Jazeera media network's commitment to providing a voice for the voiceless is applied by its English and Arabic channels in the coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015. The aim of a comparative study of Al Jazeera is to generate data for the discussion about the relationship between media, politics and society in the Arab region and the role of journalism in facilitating public discussion about the global crisis. The study uses a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980) and qualitative framing analysis (Reese et al., 2001) to identify the main patterns in the news coverage of the refugees' arrival in Germany and situates these results within the wider investigation of the relationship between media, politics and society.

The following sections outline the research design and strategy, and then introduce the research questions and methods used to investigate ALJE and ALJA news coverage of the 2015 Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany.

#### **4.2 Case study**

This research uses a "case study" (Baxter & Jack, 2008) approach to investigate the Al Jazeera coverage of the refugees' arrival in Germany. The case study is a suitable form for a comprehensive investigation in this research because it generates a set of data that allows situating research into a wider social context. In other words, the case study is a proper method for a specific investigation of journalism's role in society. Miles and Huberman (1994) define the case study as the investigation of "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (p.25). They consider the case as "in effect, your unit of analysis" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25). A case study is an important opportunity to gain further knowledge about a subject. It allows the researcher to collect and converge data from different sources to highlight the case (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 551). Baxter and Jack (2008) presented the following different types of case studies: The intrinsic study of a case - specific group, person, organisation, department, or occupation; the instrumental study that "provides insight into an issue or helps to refine a theory" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 548); and the collective study - which provides a better understanding of a massive collection of research (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 548).

Al Jazeera's English and Arabic news coverage of the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany in 2015 is used as an instrumental case study to identify how the crisis was covered by both online channels, aiming to identify similarities and differences in refugee crisis reporting. Following on Baxter and Jack's (2008) guideline for designing a case study, I implement the case study of the refugees' arrival in Germany in 2015.

The main reason for selecting Al Jazeera's English and Arabic online platforms - not broadcasted programme - is the rise of the online audience and the increasing number of people using digital a device as their main source of news. The annual "Media Use in the Middle East" survey reports that four in 10 people check online news with a massive growth of national internet users to 84 percent between 2014 and 2016 (Mideastmedia, 2016). "The share of internet users accessing news online daily ranges from 30 percent in Lebanon and the UAE to 52 percent in Tunisia. Nationals overall are twice as likely to read news online every day as read newspapers daily, 29 percent vs. 13 percent, (Mideastmedia, 2016). The *Guardian* (2014) also reports that in the UK "41 percent of people say they access news online". Even though television is still the main source of news by far (Greenslade, 2014). A report published by Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (2017) states that the Americans watch news also watch television news (67%) and two-thirds also visit mainstream websites or apps (66%) – a bit more than the general population" (Newman et al., 2017, p.11). With increasing access to the internet, the form of journalism has changed, leading scholars to consider online, digital journalism as the most widely spread form of journalism across the world (Bosch, 2010). Kawamoto (2003) defines digital journalism as "the use of digital technologies to research, produce and deliver (or make accessible) news and information to an increasingly computer-literate audience" (p.4). Humprecht and Esser (2018) mention that digital journalism or online journalism creates a revolution in news reporting through the use of innovative technological possibilities. These include such things as an increase in transparency with the provision of more background information and the presence of follow-up communication because of a platform's ability to create "interactive exchange" (p.500).

Cassidy (2007), suggests that online journalists are under pressure to "re-conceptualise" their ideas about gatekeeping in the online environment (p.492). Singer (2006) mentions that online journalists provide users with more chances to participate in information and ideas, and states that "toward a partnership between users and journalists to construct meaningful information" (p. 275). Boczkowski

(2004) claims that viewers have a stronger impact on news in the online environment. According to Cassidy (2007), online journalists strongly believe that “user-generated content is newsworthy” (p.492).

A case study of ALJE and ALJA online channels implies the need to investigate media texts produced in two separate newsrooms, operating in two different languages and two professional environments, and targeting two different audiences. These differences carry a potential to provide an insight into the journalism subcultures coexisting within the same news organisation (Hanitzsch T. , 2007).

### **4.3 Research questions**

This study is designed to address the following research questions:

RQ1: How does Al Jazeera’s coverage of the refugee crisis reflect its mission of giving “a voice to the voiceless”?

RQ2: How does the credo of giving a voice to the voiceless apply to the Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic news coverage?

RQ2.1: What are the similarities and differences in the coverage?

RQ3: What frames are used in the coverage of the arrival of the Syrian refugees in Germany 2015 and how do these frames relate to the sources cited?

### **4.4 Inductive approach**

A bottom up inductive approach (Braun&Clarke, 2006) is used in this study. According to Thomas (2006), inductive analysis refers to “approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher” (p. 238). The inductive approach allows research findings to arise from the common or dominant themes inherent in raw textual data, “without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies” (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). This definition is aligned with Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) description of the inductive approach: the researcher starts with “an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data” (p.12). The inductive approach explains the data reduction process through developing themes from the raw data. This procedure appeared in qualitative data analyses and some researchers defined it clearly as “inductive” (Backett and Davison,1995; Thomas, 2006, p.239), while other researchers have conducted this approach without giving it explicit definition such as (Jain and Ogden, 1999; Marshall, 1999). The inductive approach is important for this research because it addresses the key themes of the news text published on the refugee crisis through condensing raw

content into a summary format and by establishing a link between the research objective and the findings.

#### **4.5 Use of mixed methods**

The study applies both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. Comparing the English and the Arabic Al Jazeera channels allows the researcher to look at the journalistic tools used to cover the Syrian crisis and more broadly to explore the relationship between the media and politics in the context of two different audiences: an international audience in the case of ALJE and an Arabic audience in the case of ALJA.

It has been said that effective mixed research considers all the features of both quantitative and qualitative research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004): the significant principles of traditional quantitative research of “deduction, confirmation, theory/hypothesis testing, explanation, prediction, standardised data collection, and statistical analysis” (p.18) and the principles of traditional qualitative research such as “induction, discovery, exploration, theory/ hypothesis generation” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.18).

##### **4.5.1 Content Analysis**

To investigate Al Jazeera’s commitment to providing a voice to the voiceless, the study starts with the content analysis of reports published on both online channels. Content analysis aims to capture patterns of news reporting. It is most suitable to address the first research question of How Al Jazeera’s coverage of the refugees’ arrival in Germany relates to the editorial commitment of giving a voice to the voiceless. A quantitative content analysis is a method aimed at examining the relationships among different entities (Hsieh& Shannon, 2005). Berelson (1952) defined content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of manifest content of communications” (p.74). Holsti (1969) also defined content analysis as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (p. 14). Over the years, content analysis has been expanded and improved to involve interpretations of implicit content (Graneheim& Lundman, 2004). Content analysis defines the presence of specific words, themes, concepts, characters, sentences or phrases within texts. It is also used to quantify the text in an objective manner (Graneheim& Lundman, 2004). Graneheim and Lundman (2004) presented two approaches to content

analysis: First, a quantitative approach that is used in media research. Second, a qualitative approach that is used in education and nursing research (Graneheim& Lundman, 2004).

By categorising and measuring the content of Al Jazeera's English and Arabic news reports, the study provides insights into the media representation of the refugee crisis. The main goal is to prompt a discussion about the relationship between media, politics and society. To investigate the methods behind ALJE and ALJA representations the reality of the crisis, the study examines the intensity of news coverage in both online channels, the type of sources that appeared in the news reports and the proportion of several story-telling frames.

Once the patterns of the overall coverage of the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany have been identified, a qualitative content analysis is conducted to interpret the data in the light of any themes that might have emerged (Hsieh& Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Content analysis provides knowledge of a phenomenon under study (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992) and the content analysis results will be further examined by extending research to analysis of frames used in the coverage of the issue.

#### **4.5.2 Framing Analysis**

Frame has been defined by Verloo and Lombardo (2007) as "an interpretation scheme that structures the meaning of reality" (p.32). Framing analysis was first proposed by Goffman (1975). Over the last three decades, the concept of "frame" has been used as an idea that underpins a research method, applicable to several fields. It has been employed in communications, media studies (Nelson, et. al, 1997; Scheufele, 1999), discourse and linguistics analysis (Tannen, 1993), and policy studies (Gamson, 1992; Iyengar, 1991). Gamson (1992) considered frames as themes that categorised news content, and argued that themes were predominantly applied by an audience to build their knowledge of social issues (Gamson, 1992 ).

Entman (1993) defines frame as a process that involves "selecting some aspects of a perceived reality to enhance their salience in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (p.52). Hill (2014) also defined frame as "a systematic epistemological treatise about the workings of everyday knowledge" (p.3). Gitlin (1980) argued that "frames are a means of presentation whereby certain elements of the communicated text are emphasised or excluded by the communicator" (Scheufele et. al, 2016, p.11).

In crisis communication, framing analysis provides “crisis managers with useful insights into the appropriate crisis response strategies to minimise the damage to an organisation’s image” (An, S., & Gower, K. K., 2009, p. 107). Gower (2009) presents different types of crisis communication: human interest, conflict, morality, economic, attribution of responsibility frame and level of responsibility frame: individual vs. organisational (p.108).

Journalists use several framing tools that are effective in changing the perspective of the public on a certain topic (Robinson P. , 2002). Framing analysis will be conducted to address the research question about the relationship between news sources and frames in the coverage of the refugees’ arrival in Germany. This study classifies frames in two broad groups: political frames and human-interest frames, as well as taking note of the mixed frames used.

The political frame refers to the news reports that focused on a political dimension of the crisis. The second frame is the human-interest. I investigated the central organising idea of the text and whether it was a humanitarian aspect of the refugee crisis. Reports that bring “a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem” (Semetko& Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95) were identified as news texts with the human-interest frame.

The human-interest news report tends to frame the crisis from a humanitarian perspective, describing the refugees’ personal stories and struggles. According to Neuman et al. (1992), the human-interest frame describes “individuals and groups who are likely to be affected by an issue” (p. 69). This frame is usually related to crime journalism or the topic of refugees (Figenschou& Thorbjørnsrud, 2015, p. 786). This analysis highlights how ALJE and ALJA presented the humanitarian aspect of the refugee crisis.

#### **4.6 Data**

The data used for this study are news stories’ text, photos, and videos published on the online pages of ALJE and ALJA channels. The text included external hyperlinks, usually leading to news articles published in different European countries such as Hungary and Greece. To keep the research scope in focus hyperlinks are not included in the analysis. The news stories are collected from the following channels’ web pages:

- Al Jazeera English: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/>
- Al Jazeera Arabic: <http://www.aljazeera.net/portal>

The sample consisted of 35 English stories and 35 Arabic stories, a total of 70 news stories.

As the research aims to find out the similarities and differences of ALJE and ALJA news reporting, all stories published between August 24 and September 30, 2015 were included. This timeframe was selected for data collection and analysis because the news reports about the Syrian refugees wanting to reach Germany and reaching the German borders were published by ALJE and ALJA in that period. Previous academic research, related to this study, demonstrated the “European refugee crisis” in Germany was experienced as the crisis in the summer of 2015 (Holmes& Castañeda, 2016).

The news reports focused mostly on the refugees’ journey and the German response to the crisis until they arrived. Most of the news stories published by ALJE and ALJA before that dates focused on the Syrian situation and the refugees’ journey in other European countries and afterwards were mainly articles about the refugees’ life in Germany.

The news about more than one million refugees that crossed into the European states by sea and land was a hot topic in the global media (BBC, 2016). This sample reflects the development of news coverage of both channels regarding the refugee crisis. The case of the refugees’ arrival in Germany, and not the whole 2015 refugee movement, was selected for the following reasons:

- The German Government’s response to the crisis was a pivotal moment in the story about 2015 refugees. Germany received 964,574 applications and accepted the highest number of refugees in Europe (The Guardian, 2015). The Government’s decision to accept and welcome Syrian refugees made Germany the top European destination for refugees and asylum seekers fleeing conflict, especially from Africa and the Middle East (The *Guardian*, 2015; BBC, 2016).
- German citizens’ response to refugees significantly differs in the refugees’ experiences of arrival to other countries. The analysis of the German press coverage of the crisis by Holmes and Castañeda (2016) found that “solidarity” and “responsibility,” characterised German citizens’ response to the crisis (p.19).

This situation has therefore offered ALJ journalists an opportunity to stand by the network’s credo of giving a voice to the voiceless, to dig deeper into a political and social reality and to go beyond hard news reporting characterised by reliance on official sources of information.

#### **4.7 Unit of Analysis**

A unit of analysis is a single ALJ online story. The news reports were selected by using the following keywords: Syrian refugee crisis, 2015 Europe crisis, and refugees' arrival Germany in 2015. All news articles published on ALJE and ALJA websites were read through and analysed. All refugees' news stories are subsequently part of the bigger picture of the Syrian conflict that shaped and influenced people's opinions and perspectives regarding this humanitarian disaster.

#### **4.8 Data Coding and Categories**

Categories can be formed in several ways. According to Chelimsky (1989) the most used categories formats are "groupings, scales, and matrices" (p.12). Weber (1990) defined categories as "a group of words with similar meaning or connotations" (p. 37). Chelimsky (1989) mentioned that categories can be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Exclusive categories appeared "when no unit falls between two data points, and each unit is represented by only one data point" (Chelimsky, 1989, p. 3), while exhaustive categories appeared "when the data language represents all recording units without exception" (Chelimsky, 1989, p. 3). A structured category format improves coding effectiveness, particularly when a large number of categories exist (Chelimsky, 1989, p. 12). The following categories are used for text analysis:

##### *Journalistic Form*

Broersma (2005) considered journalistic form as a continuing visible structure, while Rugar (2007) defined journalistic forms as a "mode in which reported (published) information exists" (p.100).

Following the distinction between facts and views, and the informative and interpretative function of news media, all news texts were classified either as "news", "opinions" or "interviews".

- "News": this category includes articles written by journalists that inform audiences of any event and issue related to the refugee crisis. News stories that address the refugee crisis in terms of what, when, where, why it has happened, for example, a news story about the refugees' journey reaching the German borders.
- "Opinion": Includes all articles that express opinions such as commentaries, columns, opinion pieces and editorials
- Interviews: Includes stories that are presented as a dialogue between reporter and interviewee (questions and answers)

### Sources

The main reason for looking at the news sources is to provide “an understanding of the way in which both structures and dynamic social practices shape the flows of information generated by news source activity and the needs of news organisations” (Manning P. , 2001, p. 49). The source is defined as the provider of information, being an “individual, group or institution that originates a message” (Watson & Hill , 1993, p. 179). Sources have been identified by listing all institutions, groups, and individuals mentioned in a story. The category source is identified through the following codes:

- German Government (GG), Syrian Government (SG), Foreign Government (FG), Syrian Opposition (SO), and Germany Opposition (GO): All quotes and statements related to the specified government and its members such as prime minister, ministers, and government departments.
- Syrian Refugees (SR), and Germany Citizens (GC): All references and statements referred to individual and groups talking about the Syrian refugee crisis in the news.
- Non-profit Organisations (NGO) and International Humanitarian Organization: all references and statements quoted from these groups and institutions. For example, humanitarian activists, The International Organization for Migration (IOM), and The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).
- Media (M): all references and statements about other media coverage of the issue
- Others (O): any references not mentioned above, such as other European citizens

### Photographs

All photos published with the news articles about the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany were also examined in terms of the subjects featured. The following codes were used:

- One Person Photo (OPP): A photo features an individual. For example: a photo of a Syrian refugee or a German citizen
- Group Photo (GP): A photo features a group of people
- Landscape (L): A photo shows visible features of nature, sea and an area of land. For example, a photo presents an empty refugee camp
- No photo Existed (NPE): No photos published in the article

### Videos

All news stories were classified in terms of the video use as:

- Video Exist (VE)
- No Video (NV)

Stories that included video were coded in relation to sources (sources codes such as government, NGO etc)

### Sources: Gender

All sources were identified also in terms of gender as follows:

- Female exclusive content, Male exclusive content, Male and female content, Neither Male nor Female content (no source)

### Story-telling Frame

Neuman et al. (1992) define news frames as “conceptual tools which media and individuals rely on to convey, interpret and evaluate information” (p. 60). News frames are the “central organising idea or storyline that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events. The frames suggest what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue” (Gamson et al., 1994, p.376). Gitlin (1980) considers news frames as “persistent selection, emphasis, and exclusion” (p. 7). White (Entman, 1993) defines framing as selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them “more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p.52).

The storytelling frame is constructed based on news values and newsworthy elements in news reports (see Chapter 5). According to Goffman (1974), frames support audiences to locate, realise, and distinguish the flow of news around them (p.21). They also help audiences to “narrow the available political alternatives” (Tuchman, 1978, p. 156). Price et al. (1997) state that the framing effect is “one in which salient attributes of a message (its organisation, selection of content, or thematic structure) render particular thoughts applicable, resulting in their activation and use in evaluations” (p. 486). Framing effects also “changes in judgment engendered by subtle alterations in the definition of judgment or choice of problems” (Iyengar, 1987, p. 816). Frame can provide a better understanding of how the public makes sense of social, economic and political issues (Chong & Druckman, 2007; de Vreese et al., 2011). The study of political communication reveals that news frames also impact the

“individual’s issue preferences and decision-making”. This impact is possible as journalists choose facts that describe the issue and locate them within a social and cultural context.

Two elements of journalistic practice the study focuses on, sources and story-telling frame, are crucial for the process that Hall et al. (1978) describe as a production of “maps of meanings”: “Social identification, classification and contextualisation of news events in terms of these background frames of reference is the fundamental process by which the media make the world they report on intelligible to readers and viewers. This process of ‘making an event intelligible’ is a social process – constituted by a number of specific journalistic practices, which embody (often only implicitly) crucial assumptions about what society is and how it works” (Hall et al.1978, p.54).

Semetko and Valkenburg’s (2000) systematisation of the ways framing analysis has been applied proved useful in designing this study. The authors identified four dominant forms of frames: Attribution of responsibility (“a way of attributing responsibility for [a] cause or solution to either the government or to an individual or group”) (p.96), conflict (used to highlight and reflect conflict between individuals, groups or organisations), human interest (focuses on individuals and presents an emotional angle and human face to an issue, or a problem) , economic consequences ( presents a problem or an event in terms of the economic consequences they might have on an individual, groups, or organisations) and morality (this frame highlights the problem or event in the context of moral or religious precepts or social prescriptions).

This study focuses on the question of Al Jazeera’s commitment to providing a voice to the voiceless on ALJ English and Arabic channels. A pilot reading of the articles revealed ALJ journalists framed the issue either as a story with political implications, a human-interest story or a combination of these two.

The coding sheet therefore included three frames:

- Political frame: Presents political aspects of the crisis. The first reading of the articles highlighted the refugee crisis as a security and political issue. As the German government showed solidarity with refugees, other EU states showed an opposite response. All articles that made a reference to the debate between EU states on the crisis were coded as “political story-telling frame” articles.
- Human Interest: This frame highlights and presents a humanitarian aspect of the refugee crisis.

- Mixed frame: This frame focuses on the news reports published by the two online channels containing both political and human-interest frames.

#### **4.9 Data Control**

Lombard et al. (2002) defined intercoder reliability as “the extent to which independent coders evaluate a characteristic of a message or artefact and reach the same conclusion” (p. 589). Budd et al. (1967) also defined reliability as “repeatability with consistency of results” (p.66). The intercoder reliability presents that more than one coder can use the “coding scheme” and achieve the same results. Intercoder reliability is important for this study because it offers a validation of the coding process (Spence & Lachlan, 2005, p. 72). The creation of codes for the coding sheet was basically a process of creating a conceptual scheme to see if there was a connection between politics, media and society. The list of categories contained journalistic concepts that were directly related to the research questions. The coding process started when the categories were identified and accomplished manually through reading each article, defining the code position and identifying its relation to the categories.

The reliability check was achieved when the coding of 20 articles was completed. The main reason was to investigate if the results of using the same coding technique to the same news reports would be of same. In May 2018, a programme manager at Microsoft - holding a Master of Commerce from University of Auckland - was employed as a second coder. He was informed about the research, method used, and categories established. The inter-coding reliability was checked by applying Holsti's (1969) formula that identifies agreement when two coders examine the same content. The result is often “calculated not for a single variable but across a set of variables” (Lombard et al., 2002, p.591; Kolbe & Burnett, 1991; Neuendorf, 2002; Rupa, 2007). The review coded a sample of 10 articles from the Al Jazeera English website and 10 articles from the Al Jazeera Arabic website. The level of agreement was 98%. This result is considered reasonable for this study because of the number of categories related to the coding process.

#### **4.10 Summary**

This chapter presented the research questions and described the applied methodology. The investigation began with a comprehensive content analysis of the news articles. The method of categorising and measuring the content of the news reports in connection with the journalistic form, source and story-telling frame is implemented to recognising the patterns and characteristics in Al

Jazeera English and Arabic news reporting on the crisis. This methodology generates outcomes suitable for the discussion about the relationship between the media (by looking at 'journalistic form'), media and politics (examining 'sources of information') and the role of media in society (contextualisation of the news story through 'frame').

The following two chapters will present, analyse and discuss the results of the comparative analysis of the Al Jazeera English and Arabic coverage of the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany.

## Chapter 5

### The Representation of the Syrian Refugee Crisis

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the patterns of Al Jazeera's news coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis by discussing two key elements of journalistic practice: Sources of information and the forms of news text used in reporting on Syrian refugees' journey and arrival in Germany. It starts with a discussion of the newsworthiness of the event and in the light of Al Jazeera's commitment to provide "a voice for the voiceless". The comparative study offers the answers to the question whether the credo of giving a voice to the voiceless was equally applied in the news reports published by both channels, and if not, what were the similarities and differences in the coverage. This chapter explores the interaction between journalists and sources and discusses the impact of the dominant sources in shaping the news coverage of the refugees' arrival in Germany.

#### 5.2 The newsworthiness of the Syrian refugee's crisis

The three main factors of newsworthiness identified by Masterton (1998), conflict, consequence and human interest, are significantly related to the Syrian crisis. Conflict, seen as "any difference of opinion, including physiological (war, sports), legal (court cases, crime), intellectual or psychological (protest group or individuals expressing their contrary views on any subject)" (Masterton 1998, p.96) resonates strongly with the ways journalists covered the Syrian crisis. The Syrian civil war started in 2011, but it was not until 2015 that European countries faced the influx of a historical number of refugees. The Syrian crisis became one of the most controversial and complicated news stories (The Guardian, 2015).

The news value of consequence plays an important role in the coverage of the Syrian crisis too. Consequence as a news value is understood as "a measure of the importance of the information to those who receive it" (Masterton 1998, p.92). In other words, the consequence reflects how news affects society and people's daily life. The conflict in Syria has created a number of political and social challenges: more than 400,000 people killed, the massive influx of refugees, the rise of extremist groups, and significant economic and social damage (Davis K. L., 2015; The World Bank, 2017). Masterton (1998) stated that "Most major world stories are world stories because they have consequences" (p.93). Thus, the Syrian conflict stories were newsworthy and covered intensively by

mainstream media. Simons (2016) notes that “News has certainly been used extensively in the Syrian conflict to try and prime public opinion in the direction of permitting “humanitarian intervention” (p.13).

The factor of human interest is also strongly present in the media’s approach to the Syrian refugee crisis. Masterton (1998) says human interest is relevant because “people want to know about other people, even if they are not important people” (p.97). Since the war started in Syria, news stories of the humanitarian disaster were published by all mainstream media and Al Jazeera was no exception. The UNHCR reported that more than 1.25 million people were forced to flee their homes because of the war (UNCHR, 2016), the largest humanitarian disaster since the Second World War (Al Rifai, 2017).

The arrival of a massive number of refugees in European countries created an atmosphere of uncertainty about the social, economic and political implications (Greussing& Boomgaarden, 2017). This situation also shaped ample space for domestic and global media to cover and discuss the refugee crisis in terms of “who the refugees are and what their arrival means for the respective countries” (Greussing& Boomgaarden, 2017, pp.1749 – 1750). The influx of refugees challenged the European political and social arena. As some of the EU countries showed support and solidarity others tightened their refugee policies. In other words, the non-harmonised EU policy towards the crisis created a division between EU members. That presented another side of the crisis when the EU countries responded to the refugees in entirely different ways (Polychroniou, 2015) (see more details in the source section).

### **5.3 Al Jazeera’s News Coverage of The Refugee Crisis**

Al Jazeera English and Arabic published an equal number of articles, a total of 70 news stories about the Syrian refugees’ arrival in Germany in 2015 (ALJE 35 and ALJA 35). This number of news stories produced between August 24 and September 31, 2015 confirmed Al Jazeera’s commitment to deliver an ongoing flow of information about the events as they occurred and developed. Al Jazeera’s mission statement specifies its objective to give the national and international audience the right to get news without any control by governments (Al Jazeera English, 25(n.d.), 2017). Indeed, the two channels had a similar focus in covering the Arab world’s related news, including the news about the Syrian crisis.

### **5.4 People as sources of information**

As mentioned in Chapter 2, sources are providers of information, being people or documents. Journalists collect their information through eye witnessing, direct interviewing, using archival and policy material, press releases, or information from other media outlets. This study investigates the question of sources in light of Al Jazeera’s objective to bring a diversity of voices to the public domain, therefore it focuses on people as sources and subject of news.

*Table 1. Number of people cited and featured in Al Jazeera English (ALJE) and Al Jazeera Arabic (ALJA)*

<b>Sources</b>	<b>ALJE</b>	<b>ALJA</b>
People speaking in news reports	216	160
People featuring in photos	90	45
People talking in videos	35	17

The analysis demonstrates significant differences in the coverage of the refugees’ arrival in Germany in the English and Arabic versions of Al Jazeera. Reporters relied on people’s statements or (people speaking) in news reports as the main source of information. But who were these people, who were the dominant voices heard on Al Jazeera English and Arabic websites? Were they governmental officials, elites, or the people usually referred to as voiceless, namely Syrian refugees?

### **5.5 People as sources of information in the text**

The objective of the study is to investigate whether Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic journalists follow the same pattern of use of sources as other global networks, namely relying on official sources, to examine if there were differences between them and most importantly if both ALJ channels applied equally the commitment to provide “a voice for the voiceless”.

#### **5.5.1 The dominant source**

The examination of sources of news, based on the list of pre-determinate potential sources of information classified by their gender, demonstrated similarity in the ALJE and ALJA coverage. On both channels, foreign governments and the German government were the dominant sources of information.

*Table 2. The total number of sources of information used in the news reports published by Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic websites*

<b>ALJE</b>	<b>ALJA</b>

<b>Sources</b>	Total	Male	Female	Non-Specified	News reports Text	Male	Female	Non-Specified	All
Foreign Government	70	38	3	29	77	47	4	26	294
German Government	51	22	20	9	27	5	14	8	156
Other journalists /Media	22	13	2	7	37	20	1	16	118
International Humanitarian Organization UNHCR or IOM	28	11	4	13	6	5	0	1	68
Others	14	8	2	4	3	2	0	1	34
Syrian Refugees	13	5	5	3	2	2	0	0	30
Non-profit Organisations	6	3	2	1	8	4	3	1	28
German Citizens	12	8	2	2	0	0	0	0	24
<b>Total</b>	216	108	40	68	160	85	22	53	752

The above results show the similarities between the statements quoted from foreign governments and the German government (sources of information) by two channels reflects Al Jazeera's approach to the issue as an international crisis. As Berry et al (2015) explain in their analysis of the EU refugee crisis,

it was understood as a security issue rather than a humanitarian disaster (Berry et al., 2015). The foreign governments' and the German government's perceptions and views on the Syrian crisis dominated news reports, confirming a number of academic studies that show journalists constantly approach and promote elite sources over others (Fishman, 1980; Gandy, 1982).

The results of my study confirm the results from the UNHCR report (Berry et al., 2015): Firstly, both ALJE and ALJA focused on the European governments and how they responded and handled the refugees' plight. The headlines are pointing in that direction: "Hungary: A night of protest at the train station" (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)<sup>3</sup>, 2015); "Hungarian PM: We don't want more Muslims" (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)<sup>2</sup>, 2015); "France: Hungary refugee fence not even fit for animals" (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)<sup>6</sup>, 2015).

The massive influx of refugees forced European political leaders to take quick actions towards the refugees' situation. The crisis divided the European political arena as some countries showed solidarity and others decided to tighten their refugee policies (Erlanger & Smale, 2015). The coding results show that the German and Hungarian response to the crisis was reported most extensively on both channels' websites. The news stories published by ALJE and ALJA gave similar attention to how the German government welcomed the refugees, and how the Hungarian government refused to take them.

The most noticeable politician who appeared in the ALJ news stories was the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, and his anti-refugee and anti-Muslim statements. In the ALJ English article "We don't want more Muslims" (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)<sup>8</sup>, 2015) Viktor Orban's stated: "I think we have a right to decide that we do not want a large number of Muslim people in our country"; The focus of another report was also on Orban's speech: "We do not like the consequences" (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)<sup>8</sup>, 2015). Al Jazeera Arabic reported in a similar manner - "We must keep Europe Christian" (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.)<sup>1</sup>, 2015) - citing Orban's claim "the European identity is facing a major threat because of the influx of a massive number of refugees" (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.)<sup>1</sup>, 2015).

The German government was the second most quoted source: appearing in 24 percent of the ALJE published news stories and 17 percent of ALJA stories. Reporters highlighted how the German government tackled the Syrian refugees' plight, as demonstrated by the following examples (the text in the Arabic language has been translated into English): "We can't just say Syria is too far away, we don't

care about it, when the entire world is looking at us”; “If Europe fails on the question of refugees, this close connection with universal civil rights ... will be destroyed and it won't be the Europe we want” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 9, 2015). All stories cited Angela Merkel. The same quotes were used in AJ Arabic stories: “European countries should move and should share responsibilities towards refugees and asylum seekers”; “The refugee crisis will not be resolved soon” (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.) 2, 2015). This aligned with Berkowitz and Beach’s (1993) description of the controversial or conflict-related stories that news sources most often use mass media to promote their causes and express their opinion. The news reports published by both websites present EU governments’ concern about accepting such a huge number of refugees. The news reports published by ALJE and ALJA describe and discuss the refugees’ impact on EU society from different perspectives such as the political, social, cultural and economic. The news reports published by AJL English include statistical information about the refugees such as “nearly 340,000 people in these circumstances have crossed Europe's borders. A large number, for sure, but still only 0.045 percent of Europe's total population of 740 million” (cited in Barry, 2015). For example, ALJE news reports involved statements on how the arrival of a massive number of refugees changed the current status quo in Europe. Al Jazeera English reported that “Thousands of refugees are stranded outside Budapest's main international railway station a day after Hungarian authorities closed it to them” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)<sup>3</sup>, 2015). It also published an opinion piece “The immigration policies adopted by countries like Slovakia and Hungary clearly violate human rights and are driven by racist notions of national homogeneity”. Therefore, using the foreign governments’ leaders and representatives as dominant sources of information led to the dominance of their interpretation of the crisis, the main view being that the Syrian crisis impacted the EU countries bringing significant social change that had to be addressed. For example, Al Jazeera English was always precise when reporting the number of victims: “The bodies of 71 refugees were found in a truck abandoned on a motorway in Austria...Austrian police official Hans Peter Doskozil said the dead comprised 59 men, eight women and four children, including a young infant” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)<sup>1</sup>, 2015).

The news reports stressed the social significance of the crisis, by explaining to what extent it had affected the public and society. The news reports published by ALJE and ALJA describe the political division between EU countries regarding the refugees’ situation. For example, ALJE (2015) reports that

“EU President Donald Tusk, warned that divisions between Western member states and their newer Eastern partners were complicating efforts to solve the deepening refugee crisis” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 8, 2015). ALJE also reports that “In the absence of a coherent European migration policy, different policies are being pursued by different member” (Polychroniou, 2015). This type of news report reflects the political significance associated with the aspects of judicial and legislative systems of EU countries; second, the news reports in ALJE and ALJA discuss the economic circumstances of the refugees’ arrival in Europe. For example, Al Jazeera English reports, that the British foreign minister stated that “We give weight to those who want only to see economic migrants” (Barry, 2015). In a different news report, also published by ALJE, “EU immigration policy is a direct result of the failure of the European integration process to move beyond mainly economic and trade policies for the benefit of the business environment of Europe” (Polychroniou, 2015). “Europe struggles with an influx of refugees fleeing war in countries such as Syria and Iraq, German politicians are worried about the financial and social effects on their country” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)3, 2015). Therefore, the economic significance is associated with the refugee crisis. This part relates to the financial system of a country; Third, The arrival of refugees to several EU countries divided the public arena between solidarity and rejection. Several incidents involved clashes between citizens and governments, thus affecting public safety and security. Journalists reported on a dozen German citizens who attacked a refugee shelter in Heidenau-Germany. ALJE said that “Germany’s interior minister has vowed to crack down on right-wing activists and racists after two nights of clashes between protesters and police outside a refugee shelter in an eastern town near Dresden” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)3, 2015). Zhang et al. (2013) mentioned that the above dimensions of deviance and social significance of newsworthiness “interact to shape the social realities of our worlds” (pp. 451-452).

The news value of prominence played a role in reporting on the refugees’ arrival in Europe. The prominence criteria are defined by Masterton (1998) as “What a president/ a prime minister/ prominent public figure say or does makes news” (p.99). The news reports published by ALJE and ALJA presented EU political leaders’ views and comments on the refugees’ influx into Europe. The Hungarian government has been criticised for its response to the crisis. Hungary became the focus of attention when the government decided to build “a razor-wire fence” and prosecute illegal refugees. Several European governments criticised Hungary for building the fence, such as France, Germany and the UK and the criticism was reflected in the ALJ news. For example, ALJE reported that the French foreign

minister, Laurent Fabius, said that “Hungary is part of Europe, which has values, and we do not respect those values by putting up fences that we wouldn't even use for animals” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)6, 2015). In the same article, Angela Merkel stated that “Europe's values are based on the dignity of every individual, and that saying Muslims are not wanted “can't be right””. Hungary's foreign minister, Peter Szijjarto, replied that “the French embassy representative would be summoned over Fabius' remarks”. “A good European is one who keeps the rules of Europe” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)6, 2015).

Al Jazeera's correspondent Andrew Simmons reported that “hundreds of Syrian refugees were in the centre of Budapest with no place to go. “Hungary's government is ignoring all criticism of how it's handling this crisis.” Al Jazeera English claimed that “Hungary accused Berlin of creating confusion with leniency towards Syrians”. The journalistic focus on how EU countries responded and tackled the crisis, was reflected in news stories published by both Al Jazeera English and Arabic (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)6, 2015).

The analysis of the media coverage of the 2015 Syrian refugees shows no comments are published from the Syrian government in the news stories published by the English and Arabic websites.

The stories published by both websites highlight the EU political debates over the refugee issue, as the crisis became a European matter only. The news stories published by Al Jazeera English, refer to the Syrian refugee crisis as a European crisis such as “A solution to Europe's refugee crisis” or “the euro crisis” (Parameswaran & Gaedtke, 2015).

The coding results revealed other media and journalists were used as an important source of information in the reporting of the refugee crisis. Media are the third on the table of the most quoted sources overall. However, there was a difference between the Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic networks. While ALJE cited other media in 10 percent of the reports, in ALJA almost every fourth article (ALJA 23 percent) featured other journalists and media organisations.

This reliance on information provided by other media in reporting the refugees' arrival in Germany, more in ALJA reports than in ALJE can be explained by the English newsroom's inability to have a reporter on the spot.

AJ Arabic cites international media outlets such as Reuters and *The Guardian*, signalling it in the headline: “The Guardian: The refugee crisis can be managed in a better way” (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.)

3, 2015). This is a common practice in newsrooms across the world. In the UK context, Lewis et al. (2008) found that regional journalists mostly recycled material from elsewhere: “Almost everything is recycled from another source ... It wouldn’t be possible to write so many stories otherwise” (p. 31). According to Hansen (2011), the economic and organisational pressures conducted to journalism that is “increasingly desk-bound, which in turn has increased the scope for proactive news sources and news-providers to ‘subsidise’ the work of news organizations and their journalists with ready-packaged and advantageously framed ‘information” (p.12).

The fourth most cited sources are from the category International Humanitarian Organisations. The analysis of Al Jazeera English and Arabic revealed major differences in the reliance on sources coming from organisations such as the UN Refugee Agency and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). On the English website, 13 percent of the news texts quoted from the representatives of international humanitarian organisations compared with only 4 percent on the Arabic website. These representatives spoke about the Syrian refugees' plight in Europe. Human interest as a news value plays significant roles in the coverage of the crisis, and representatives of human rights organisations highlighted this aspect of the story. Reporters quoted international humanitarian organisations' representatives such as the UNHCR and IOM. For example, a news report published by ALJE reported “EU: Compulsory quotas needed to relocate refugees” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 22, 2015) by citing the head of the UN refugee agency, Antonio Guterres, who called for “an increase in the number of legal ways for refugees to come to Europe, citing an increase in the number of visas, relocation and reunification of people with their families”. The article also cited the UNHCR spokeswoman, Melissa Fleming, who said that Europe was a “wealthy” continent that could manage the numbers of people coming in (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 22, 2015).

### **5.5.2 The non- dominant sources**

Syrian refugees, non-profit organisations and German citizens are less cited in the news on both channels. The category Others contains statements from individuals such as European citizens and religious leaders. In ALJE news, 6 percent of the news quoted Other sources compared to 2 percent in the ALJA.

The analysis shows significant differences between the channels in terms of quoting the Syrian refugees (Table 3). The Syrian refugees are given a limited chance to speak about their plight and

suffering as they try to reach European borders. In ALJE news reports, 6 percent of statements came from Syrian refugees compared to only 1 percent in the news reports published by the ALJA website. According to Burrows (2017), one of the most important roles of the media is to provide an equal platform to all voices and perspectives in society. Koch-Baumgarten and Vollmer (2010) also state that journalists must discuss different perspectives and present diverse information for the public to understand the refugees' situation (p.217). Donsbach and Klett (1993) mention the journalistic norm of balancing sources is important to achieve objectivity in reporting and avoid media bias. Thus, journalists should not be biased towards one account over the other. The essential way to reach that is to “balance the conflicting views in the journalistic account and leave the judgment to the receiver” (Tuchman, 1972; McNair, 1998; Skovsgaard et al., 2013, p.25). Ryan (2001) mentions that balance demands journalists question the various accounts of reality that come from news sources on equal terms. Rupar (2007) says that balancing of sources is one of the important journalistic norms but “balancing two sides of the story does not automatically provide an impartial representation of reality”. The balancing perspectives from two sides of the story might become an “‘objectivity trap’ in media coverage of complex social issues” (Rupar, 2007, pp.18- 19).

The coding results reveal that Al Jazeera English and Arabic applied a norm of balance when citing different governmental approaches to the crisis but paid little attention to bringing refugees' voices into the public domain. The news stories published by both websites about the crisis highlighted the refugees' situation as a security issue overall without checking what people involved might have to say. The main attention of the news stories is given to the European governments' responses to the crisis. There is a connection in the news stories between the refugees' humanitarian situation and how European governments handle the crisis. Both ALJE and ALJA journalists failed to provide the audience with news that reflected the refugees' view of the crisis.

The voices of German citizens are hardly ever heard in the ALJ English and Arabic (6 percent in ALJE and none in ALJA). In a news story published by ALJE with a headline “German group builds an 'Airbnb for refugees' allowing landlords to offer space in their homes to those fleeing wars”, Jonas Kakoschke, Refugees Welcome co-founder, stated that the crisis was a chance for refugees to move out of mass housing: “Mass housing is usually placed far outside the main cities which makes it really hard for the refugees to participate in German society. They are excluded and isolated, usually somewhere in a

village or in small cities” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 7, 2015). This is a very good example how the inclusion of a wider range of voices, carries the possibility of widening public debate about an issue, opening a space for approaching the crisis beyond the dominant discourse.

The Syrian opposition and German opposition are also almost absent from the coverage by both the English and Arabic channels. However, the ALJE reported the German protestors’ attack on the refugees’ shelter in Germany: “Two nights of clashes between protesters and police outside a refugee shelter in an eastern town near Dresden...About 200 right-wing activists, many of whom were drunk, had thrown fireworks and bottles at police” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)<sup>3</sup>, 2015). Another example of such reports by the ALJE website was “The number of refugees wanting to come to Germany has also evoked hateful reaction” (Parameswaran& Gaedtke, 2015). The German protestors were mentioned in the English news stories but never quoted. In return, there was no news about the protestors in ALJA. The analysis of the news stories published by the Arabic website reveals that no German citizens had a voice in their coverage of the Syrian refugees’ journey. The above results present a low level of enthusiasm and attention to reporting the voice of refugees and making it accessible to the public.

### **5.5.3 Gender of sources in the ALJE and ALJA news**

The analysis showed that male politicians were used as the key sources of information in both ALJE and ALJA news reports, but to a different extent. Having male elite as a dominant source of information in the news reporting of the crisis follows the pattern of male dominance in political news generally (Manning P. , 2001). More than half of the Al Jazeera Arabic stories (55 percent) cited male foreign politicians, while only (35 percent) cited male sources in Al Jazeera English.

In the media, as a source of information, male journalists are more present than female with 20 (24 percent) on the ALJA website compared to 13 (12 percent) on ALJE. Males are also a dominant source of information in the news statements published by international humanitarian representatives such as the UNHCR and IMO, Other sources and German citizens. While with the NGOs representatives as a source of information, more female voices were present: two (5 percent) in ALJE reports and three (14 percent) in ALJA.

According to Sigel (1973), the media firms have to relinquish control of news reports by male government elites as its main sources of information to enhance the expectations of the media in a pluralistic democracy. The pluralistic perspective “assumes that opportunities exist for participation

(involvement of ordinary citizens, with a potential diversity of political views, in policy debate and policy formulation)" (Brown et al., 1987, p.53). The news reports published by both websites depend heavily on male government official sources that are mostly in executive positions. These results are aligned with Sigel (1973) and Brown et al. (1987) suggestions that "not much has changed in the use of news sources", except significant developments in the technological and organisational industry (p.53).

Al Jazeera English provides a platform for female refugees to open up and speak about their suffering. The results show only five (13 percent) of the ALJE news have a quote from female Syrian refugees, while none was found in ALJA news reports. Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) stated that female refugees' "voices were hardly ever heard. In some countries, they were never given the opportunity to speak (e.g. Hungary) while in other cases (e.g. Germany) they were only occasionally given this opportunity" (p.3). For example, in a news report published by ALJE on refugees' mothers' trail to Germany, under the headline "The refugee mothers who risk it all to take their babies to safety", ALJE reported: "Some women arrive in Europe pregnant or with infants, feeling they had no choice but to leave, despite the peril." The reporter explains: "Dania is seven months pregnant... [she] spent the past 15 days on the refugee trail to Germany along with thousands of other Syrians fleeing violence at home. She was the only pregnant woman in the group of 14 people she was traveling with, but two others had infants they carried in their arms all the way to Germany". When the reporter asked "Why then, are pregnant women and mothers of infants risking their lives on the arduous and dangerous routes to Germany from Syria", the refugee answered that "It's better to walk for 15 days than to be killed by a bomb". A female refugee, Esra, 21, tenderly rocked her three-month-old daughter, Nadia, to sleep and said: "I want her to have a good life. In Syria there's no life, only death" (Hardach, 2015).

## **5.6 Analysis of Photographs**

Although this study investigates the refugees' arrival in Germany, it is important to mention the powerful photo of a three-year-old boy, Aylan Kurdi, who was found washed ashore on the beach in Turkey laying head down on his stomach. He and his family were on a boat heading towards Europe. This photo was released by AJLE and AJLA (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 43, 2015; Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 43, 2015), at the same time as EU countries were dealing with the arrival of a massive number of refugees', turning Aylan into "The Child Who's Become a Symbol of Europe's Migrant Crisis" (Berenson, 2015). The mainstream media reported the effect of the Syrian conflict through the story of Aylan Kurdi

whose death and the published photograph transformed the media debate on Syrian refugees (Musarò, 2016). This photo draws more attention to the Syrian refugee crisis in Europe (Berenson, 2015). The news flow was able to reach the attention of millions from around the world in response to the boy's tragedy, and the refugee crisis in general (Berry et al., 2015). It also opened up a different conversation concerning the crisis, in particular, in the EU immigration policy (Musarò, 2016).

The photos published by the ALJE and ALJA follows the patterns identified in texts.

Table 3. People and places in Syrian refugee crisis photos<sup>1</sup>

People	ALJE					ALJA					
	Individual Photo	Group Photo	M	F	M/F	Individual Photo	Group Photo	M	F	M/F	All
Syrian Refugees	0	45	2	2	41	0	34	2	0	32	158
German Citizens	5	9	5	1	8	0	2	1	0	1	32
Others	4	4	3	2	3	0	1	0	0	1	18
German Government	0	2	0	0	2	1	2	0	1	2	10
Foreign Governments	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	4
German Opposition	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
NGO's	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	4
Media	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	10	62	12	4	56	3	42	6	2	37	234

The results show Syrian refugees are at the top of the people that were captured in the news photos published by ALJE and ALJA (45 and 34). They focused on the humanitarian aspect of the crisis, portraying the refugees' journey and arrival in Germany. However, as analysis shows, the refugees are visually present, but they are not speaking in the news. As Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) note, the refugees "were given limited opportunities to speak directly of their experiences and suffering. Most often they were spoken about and represented in images as silent actors and victims" (p.3).

Photographs are powerful media tools that have the capacity to trigger a significant emotional impact on the public. Additionally, photographs have higher attraction values than textual content as

<sup>1</sup> (M) refers to Male, (F) to female, (F/M) refers to both male and female

photographs give people the first impression of a story (Rogers & Thorson, 2000). It was important for this study to look at photographs featured in Al Jazeera Arabic and English news reports also in terms of their age focus (children photo, adults' photo, children and adults' photo).

*Table 4. Photos published by Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic on the Syrian refugees' arrival to Germany, assorted by age focus photos.*

Sources	ALJE			ALJA			
	Children Photo	Adults Photo	Children and Adults Photo	Children Photo	Adults Photo	Children and Adults Photo	All
Syrian Refugees	1	0	44	1	1	32	79
German Citizens	0	10	4	0	2	0	16
Others	0	6	2	0	1	0	9
German Government	0	2	0	0	3	0	5
Foreign Governments	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
German Opposition	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
NGO's	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Media	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	1	19	52	1	12	32	117

While the analysis of news reports showed that both channels gave preference to political and governmental elites treating the refugee crisis as a security issue, the analysis of photographs revealed a focus on the humanitarian aspect of the story through images of voiceless refugees. What can one learn from this difference? Abraham and Appiah (2006) point towards the role of the discursive and visual process in framing the news stories as an implicit visual propositioning. The use of photos juxtaposed with explicit verbal statements are used "to make a comment, proposition or suggest new meanings that go beyond the meanings simply produced through the written or verbal narrative" (Abraham & Appiah, 2006 p.185).

Visual propositioning considers the news message as a material object; it includes linguistic and visual elements that collectively assist to signify the news report content meaning. It also suggests that the Syrian refugees' photos implicitly extend the meaning of textual reports. Gibson and Zillman (2000) investigate the impact of implicit information as “(extra-text information, implied in visuals)” on the perceptions of issues in the news media. In a news story published by Al Jazeera Arabic, “Merkel calls for a European solution to the refugee file”, the news text provides detailed information on German solidarity with the crisis. It also presents several positive responses to the crisis from different EU states such as France, Sweden and Austria as well as Hungarian oppositional responses (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.)<sup>15</sup>, 2015). Along with the text, two photos are included: The first features a group of Syrian refugees arriving at the train station in Dortmund, Germany. The second photo shows the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, and the member of the Bundestag, Sigmar Gabriel, speaking in a press conference about the refugees' situation. This news report tackles the two main aspects of the refugee crisis: the news text describes the different political aspects of the crisis and the photo of families of smiling refugees arriving safely in Germany presents the humanitarian aspect of the crisis. The way that text and photos merge, influences the perception of the crisis addressed in the reports. Gibson and Zillman (2000) explain that “it can be expected that reactions to featured photographs shift the primarily text-based perceptions and evaluation of issues in the direction suggested by the photographs” (p.355). They stress that a combination of textual - image tends to merge across time. That refers to the translation phenomenon as “words are remembered as pictures, and vice versa” (Gibson& Zillmann, 2000, p. 356).

The omnipresence of photos in politics has fundamentally transformed how people interact with news across the world (Bleiker 2018). The visual global politics provide “a comprehensive overview of and engagement with the role of visibility in politics and international relations” (p.3). According to Bleiker et al. (2013), the visuals in politics “play a particularly crucial role in the symbolic representation of crises and the manner in which viewers respond” (p.406). The photos of the refugees' plight published by ALJE and ALJA present symbolically a wide range of emotions associated with the people who suffered from the conflict (Dauphinee, 2007). The audience may not comprehend the pain and fear experienced by the refugees, but “practices of visual representations make the emotional issues at stake a collective, societal issue” (Bleiker et al., 2013, p.406).

The human-interest factor plays an important role in the news photos published by ALJE and ALJA. Photos portray the refugees' struggle and suffering as they arrive in Europe. ALJE published a photo with the caption "A refugee girl moves under barbed wire as she crosses from Serbia to Hungary" (Polychroniou, 2015). Another photo shows "Syrian migrants cross under a fence as they enter Hungary at the border with Serbia" (Polychroniou, 2015). In a different news report, published also by ALJE, a photo features a group of Syrian refugees in a bus moving from Hungary to travel to another European country (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 15, 2015). A news report on the ALJA website contains a photo that shows a group of Syrian refugees sitting peacefully on the floor in the train station facing Hungarian police officers (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.)<sup>4</sup>, 2015) . All the photos published by both channels include men, women and children. Photos of devastated refugees make the crisis more emotional and personal (Thomas, 2006) signalling a need for social action and change.

Photos present refugees welcomed by German citizens (more details in German citizens photos analysis) - and clashes between police officers and refugees in Hungary. A news report published by ALJA shows a photo of Syrian refugees protesting about their treatment by the Hungarians (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.)<sup>5</sup>, 2015). This photo includes adult males, adult females and children. Overall, the results show no individual photos of adults or children published by both websites. Both websites published photos of groups of refugees. These photos include male, female and children. A news report published by ALJE websites included two photos of a group of female refugees and in the text mentioned pregnant refugees (Hardach, 2015). Another ALJE news story published a photo of two female refugees and a child sleeping on the floor (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 14, 2015). A total of three photos of females were published in ALJE, while no female-only refugee photos were found on ALJA. The female refugees are present in group photos alongside male refugees. The Arabic website included either a group of male refugees, or male, female and children group photos. These results show that the two websites paid little attention to gender diversity. However, this result must be interpreted in the light of refugee demographics: the UNHCR found that the majority of refugees who arrived in Europe in 2015 were men, only 27 percent of the refugees were female. One of the explanations is the fact that Syrian women and girls faced risks of "sexual and gender-based violence" on their journey to Europe: the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) reported "many refugee and migrant women and girls had already been exposed to various forms of SGBV either in their country of origin, first asylum or along the journey to and in Europe" (UNHCR (n.d.)<sup>2</sup>, 2016).

German citizens are the second most frequently portrayed people in the photos published by the ALJE and ALJA websites. The news stories highlighted the humanitarian aspect of the crisis through the photos of Syrian refugees and German citizens. A total of 14 photos of German citizens were published by ALJE channel and only two photos by ALJA. News stories published by the ALJA website provide photos of German citizen welcoming the Syrian refugees, but they are not cited in the texts. The English and Arabic versions of Al Jazeera reports mainly cite governmental officials as their main source of information. One of the exceptions is a news report published by ALJE, headlined “Voices from the streets of Germany”. The article offers people’s opinion on the Syrian refugees’ arrival in Germany. In this article, German TV station worker, Anja Schildknecht, states that “despite the media coverage, the city is not overrun with people. There have been lots of people arriving on trains to much applause and good will, but I worry that the novelty will wear off”. There is a photo of Anja Schildknecht on the street of Frankfurt, whose citizens were welcoming Syrian refugees (McCarthy, 2015). News reports published by ALJA include two photos of German citizens, a male and a female adult at the Frankfurt train station welcoming Syrian refugees (Bilal, 2015). Two photos published by the English website show German protesters carrying the German flag and banners reading “Stop the asylum abuse and excessive foreign infiltration!” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 16, 2015); “GO HOME” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)24, 2015). Both photos present a group of people and members of the German police surrounding the demonstration area. On the Arabic website, there were no photos about the protest.

There is a similarity to the ways ALJE and ALJA used photos of German government officials. Both published photos of political figures. No photos of other foreign politicians were published by the English website.

### **5.6.1 Landscape Photos**

There was a major difference between the channels when it comes to landscape photos (Vailaya and Zhang, 1998, p.6). The English website published 24 landscape photos of an empty refugee camp, the field from where the refugees were making their way to Germany and photos of an empty boat in the sea. No landscape photos were published by the Arabic website.

### **5.7 Videos**

The visual dimension of the news plays an important role in the perception of news media credibility (Slattery, 1992). According to Gaziano and McGrath (1986), in conflict-related news stories, people mostly believe what they see. “They are most likely to believe the news on television because “seeing is believing”” (p. 456). Grimes (1990) stresses that “central in such issues is the argument that audio and video merged in viewer’s minds as more than the reporter’s manner of speech. The CNN technology reporter, Matt McFarland, describes video as being “so immersive and powerful that storytellers would be silly not to embrace it as part of their playbook” (Savitt, 2014).

There was a significant difference in the number of refugee crisis videos published by ALJE and ALJA. During the monitoring period 35 were posted by ALJE and 17 by ALJA.

*Table 5. Videos published by Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic news reports on the Syrian refugees’ arrival in Germany.*

<b>Website</b>	<b>Videos</b>	<b>Only male</b>	<b>Only female</b>	<b>Male and Female</b>
<b>ALJE</b>	35	0	0	35
<b>ALJA</b>	17	0	0	17

Some of the news reports contained more than one video. They contained both analysis of the political context of the refugee crisis and testimonies of refugees, stories about their journey and expectations.

These videos offered visual information aligned with text and photos, highlighting the following aspects of the crisis:

- The humanitarian situation of the refugees: by presenting clips of refugees trying to cross the borders, others in a boat at sea, and refugees in temporary shelters on the Hungarian borders.
- Interviews with refugees speaking about their journey, and interviews with German and European citizens talking about their opinions on the refugee crisis.
- The English website reported a total of 36 interviews with Syrian refugees and six interviews with German and European citizens. The Arabic website published 11 interviews with Syrian refugees.
- The political aspect through interviews with political figures commenting on the crisis.

The analysis revealed that Al Jazeera English focused more on the humanitarian aspect of the crisis by providing a voice to the voiceless and delivering stories of the refugees in their own voices.

The Al Jazeera English report “Germany's intrepid refugee helpers” tells a story of a German women who helped several refugees to illegally enter Germany. The women refused to reveal her name and stated that “Of course I was worried the first time around. There is a worst-case scenario for me. But there is also a worst-case scenario for the person who wants to cross the border - a completely different ballgame”. The article also includes a political statement from Angela Merkel that “Germany will take in more than 800,000 asylum seekers before the end of the year” (Parameswaran & Gaedtke, 2015). The first photo published in the news report presented a group of German citizens holding a sign of “solidarity with refugees”. The second photo was for a promotional poster that reads: 'Now become a fluchthelfer and help people have a better future”. One video was attached to this news report.

The video story “Refugees arriving in Munich met by welcoming crowds” started with the footage of several Syrian refugees heading out of the train arriving in Munich, a happy Syrian kid playing with a German police officer and taking his hat. It was followed by an emotional scene of refugees at the train station, waiting in line to register and receive new clothes, food and water. Germans gathered at the station to cheer and clap. The video included two interviews. The first interview was with Emilia Mueller, the Bavarian social minister, saying, “It’s all running very smoothly”. In a second interview, a male Syrian refugee described what he was running from: “My shop was bombed, my house was bombed, I decided to go from Syria, I hope to find here a better life for me and to my family.” At the end of the video, Al Jazeera English correspondent Rob Rayland said: “A warm welcome in a peaceful land” (Parameswaran & Gaedtke, 2015).

### **5.8 Comments from the audience**

The comments section located at the end of the news story is known as the place where viewers submit their opinions. The comments section was introduced as a new platform for citizens to participate in diverse public discussions, creating a connection between media and citizens (Manosevitch and Walker, 2009, p.6). It has been said that comments sections offer audiences a chance to provide insights on aspects of events not covered by the news, “comments [that] may elicit testimonies from personal experience or specify individual concerns and implications necessary for creating an effective solution” (Manosevitch& Walker, 2009, p.6). The online comments section is a tool for the interaction

between journalists and viewers, as well as an opportunity for viewers to contribute to political discussions.

The analysis of ALJE and ALJA websites shows major differences in their interaction with the audience. The public was engaged on the Arabic website - 30 news reports included 220 posted comments. On the English website only one news story listed comments and that story had three posted comments. According to the Al Jazeera English website, the comments section was aligned with the network's mission to give a voice to the voiceless, to open up a dialogue for active discussions and to allow a global audience to connect with each other (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 17, 2017). However, by the time textual analysis of the comments was about to start both Al Jazeera English and Arabic websites disabled these sections, claiming it has been "hijacked" by anonymous users "spewing vitriol, bigotry, racism and sectarianism" (Mayhew, 2017). Al Jazeera released this statement on August 30, 2017. I had counted the number of comments earlier and when I went back to the data all comments had been removed. Al Jazeera stated that "When we first opened up comments on our website, we hoped that it would serve as a forum for thoughtful and intelligent debate that would allow our global audience to engage with each other. However, the comments section was hijacked by users hiding behind pseudonyms spewing vitriol, bigotry, racism and sectarianism. The possibility of having any form of debate was virtually non-existent" (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 17, 2017). The media network referred to social media as the preferred platform for audience debate, stating that "We encourage our audience to continue to interact with us this way" (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 17, 2017).

## **5.9 Journalistic Forms**

All news stories were also analysed in terms of journalistic form, or genre of the text (Table 8). The majority of them were news reports on the refugee crisis.

Table 5. Journalistic forms

Journalistic Forms		
News Reports	31 (91%)	30 (86%)
Interviews	1 (3%)	3 (8%)
Opinion	2 (6%)	2 (6%)

Media scholars use the term “genre” to discuss journalistic form as a “distinctive type of text, distinctive rhetorical styles, aesthetic conventions and communicative functions” (McNair,1998, p.10). Following the communicative functions of journalism to provide information and interpretation, stories were classified into news, opinions and interviews. The journalistic forms impact the way the crisis was presented in the media. If more reports published (category ‘news’) then commentaries, columns and opinion pieces (category opinion) than informative function of journalism prevails. Bringing more interviews to the coverage offers an opportunity to personalise coverage both in terms of providing information and an interpretation of the event.

There was a striking similarity in the coverage of the refugees’ arrival in Germany by two channels in terms of genre: there were far more news reports than interviews and opinion pieces. On the ALJE website, 91 percent of the stories were news and on ALJA, 86 percent of stories were news. The total number of interviews posted on the websites differed, with more interviews published on the Arabic website (8 percent) then on English (3 percent). The interviewees were primarily political researchers and human rights representatives discussing the humanitarian situation and analysing political perspectives on the crisis. The same number of opinion pieces (two) were published on both channels.

However, the content of pieces differed across the channels. In an opinion piece published by Al Jazeera English on August 28, 2015, Polychroniou (2015) describes the human and political aspects of the refugee crisis, saying that “In the absence of a coherent European migration policy, different policies are being pursued by different member states all while the whole tragic affair has been pushed into the black market and the Mediterranean has become the grave of refugees” (Polychroniou, 2015). The opinion piece published by Al Jazeera Arabic on September 17, 2015, Naoush (2015) argues about the migrants’ effect on the economy in EU states, asking “Why European economy needs migrants?”. The second opinion piece, published by ALJA on September 12, 2015, also stressed the positive aspects of the refugees’ arrival arguing for “The economic benefit from refugees arriving in Europe”

(Marcos, 2015). The two Arabic channel writers argue the economic aspect of the refugees' influx to Europe, while the writer on the English Channel looks deeply at the lack of EU policies towards the massive influx of refugees from political and humanitarian perspectives. These articles targeted different audiences – ALJE international audience and ALJA Arabic audience.

### **5.10 Summary**

This chapter discussed ALJE and ALJA coverage of the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany by examining their selection of news sources, use of photographs and videos, and the choice of journalistic form. Overall, the analysis revealed both Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic highlighted the political and humanitarian aspects of the crisis. The two websites largely depended on political elites, governmental officials, journalists, and UN representatives as their main source of information to report the refugees' plight in Europe. The Syrian refugees had limited chances to tell their own stories. In other words, the Syrian refugees remain voiceless in the text published by ALJE and ALJA websites, but they were present in photos and videos that supplemented texts. The two channels of Al Jazeera used visual tools to bring the voices of refugees into their coverage of the crisis. There were similarities in the choice of the journalistic forms. Both channels published more news than opinion pieces and interviews when it comes to text. The two websites used opinion pieces and the way the crisis was interpreted to the public. Al Jazeera English and Arabic channels applied different approaches in representing the reality of the crisis, attuned with their targeted audiences – ALJE international audience and ALJA Arabic audience.

The next chapter will present the results of the framing analysis and discuss in more detail how news frames relate to the sources cited.

## Chapter 6

### Framing: Who Defines the Crisis?

#### 6.1 Introduction

In presenting the case study on Al Jazeera's coverage of the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany, this chapter looks at the storytelling frame as an element of journalistic practice. It discusses the ways Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic reported the event by investigating how story-telling frames relate to the sources cited.

#### 6.2 Framing of refugee crisis

Scholars have examined how journalistic framing of events corresponds with perceptions of reality (Iyengar & Kinder, 2010; Iyenger, 1991; Reese, 2013). Framing is used to link new and old information, to provide context and to enable audience to locate, perceive, and understand that part of reality that has become news (see Chapter 3). Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic framed the Syrian refugees' journey and arrival in Germany in a similar manner. Most of the news reports published by ALJE and ALJA websites used a combination of political frame and human-interest frame (Table 9).

Table 6. The story-telling frame

Story- telling Frame		
	ALJE	ALJA
Political Frame	0	3
Human Interest Frame	5	5
Mixed Frame	30	27

Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera Arabic covered the crisis by highlighting the debate between EU states over the refugees' situation and by demonstrating the humanitarian situation of the refugees. Two main storylines were identified: the political aspect of the crisis, the refugee's situation as subject of policies and political debates, and the refugee's plight as a humanitarian disaster. As demonstrated earlier, the most frequently used sources were political officials. In other words, the voices of political officials were dominant, giving a tone to the Al Jazeera English and Arabic channels' representation and interpretation of the crisis. Sometimes the emphasis was on politics, sometimes on the

humanitarian disaster but in the vast majority of articles both frames were used to describe the refugee situation.

### **6.3 The Role of Sources in Framing**

It has been said that attribution of information to news sources provides evidence and gives credibility to the story (Hamilton et al., 2012). News sources play an important role in the production of news, affecting the type of frame which journalists use (Cozma& Kozman, 2018, p. 192). Thus, the selection of news sources is a fundamental element of journalism practice that has an impact on media representation of social issues. Adopting the same sources over time creates an impact on the news and the way it is received, influencing what the public learns (Cozma& Kozman, 2018; Gans, 1979). The views of two political leaders that were most frequently mentioned in the ALJE and ALJA reports, German Chancellor, Angela Markell and the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán, determined the framing of the issue as a humanitarian challenge that required a political response - being welcoming or rejecting the refugees.

#### **6.3.1 Episodic and strategic frames**

Three Arabic articles focused only on the political dimension of the crisis, while no English article framed the issue as a political issue alone. This section therefore focuses primarily on the articles that applied both a political and a humanitarian frame by discussing their emphasis on the current situation and the consequences it was likely to have.

The majority of news reports included description and analysis of the EU states' political responses and the humanitarian aspect of the crisis. For example, an Al Jazeera English news story reported that "EU officials [are about] to discuss compulsory refugee quotas. Ministers to meet a day after Germany reintroduced border controls, saying it could no longer cope with arrivals" (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 27, 2015). The story included the German government's and EU governments' views on the crisis, reflecting the ALJE definition of political debate and refugee situation. This story cited political leaders such as the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, who said "If we don't arrive at a fair distribution then the issue of Schengen will arise - we don't want that" and the Czech Prime Minister, Bohuslav Sobotka's who stated that his country wouldn't accept refugee quotas as that "won't work". The article includes opinions of other EU political leaders, among them Hungary's Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, who said: "We understand that this decision was necessary in order to defend Germany's and Europe's values" (Al

Jazeera English (n.d.) 27, 2015). As Iyengar (1991) found “Individuals tend to simplify political issues by reducing them to questions of responsibility, and their opinions on issues flow from their answers to these questions” (p.8). The episodic frame, usually seen in the description of current situations, appeals to emotions. Hallahan (1999) says that audiences are “believed to be more interested in people and more responsive to portrayals involving concrete events and actions (episodes)” (p.221). Baum (2003) also mentions that the episodic frame contains human-interest details, thus, it tends to be more emotional and personal (p.37). These human details in episodic framed articles “put a real and specific ‘face’ on the presentation of a political problem” and offer certain characters “at which the receivers can direct their emotional reactions” (Aaroe, 2011, p. 210).

In the above news story (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 27, 2015), the human-interest frame appears in the video that contains detailed information of a EU Ministers’ meeting but also captures the daily life of the refugee camp in Lesbos, Greece. Along with a summary of the meeting, the reporter includes interviews with three male refugees who talked about their struggle to reach Greece. A Syrian man who lost both of his legs in an ISIL attack at the university in Raqqa, Syria, talks about his life as a refugee. Another video shows Syrian refugee families sleeping on the street, living in very difficult circumstances. In an interview with a female refugee, Abir Kourani said: “Sometimes you feel like we will all die, in the sea, in the sleep, on the road, that’s how you feel when you are without anything” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 27, 2015). In this video, an ALJE correspondent joins refugee families on a journey to reach Germany. The accompanying photo shows three Syrian children sitting on the street. The caption says “Refugees arrive at the Austrian border town of Nickelsdorf. Both Germany and the Czech Republic are tightening border controls” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 27, 2015).

Another example of the episodic frame published by Al Jazeera Arabic, “A common document for a fair distribution of refugees in Europe” (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.) 19, 2015), presents the political views of the German government and the French, German, and the Swiss political responses to the crisis. It includes a photo of the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel and President of the Swiss Confederation, Simonetta Sommaruga, at a press conference (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.) 19, 2015).

Although, the Arabic article focuses on the political aspect of the current crisis (episodic frame) it includes a reference to the cultural and religious underpinning of the political stance that might have

further consequences (strategic frame): “EU states will discuss the quotas distribution which was opposed by several countries that have already warned ‘to keep the continent’s Christian roots’” (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.) 19, 2015). This strategic framing of political decisions based on the religious preferences of the majority of citizens invokes common values and beliefs. As Cadena-Roa (2002) explains, these stage actions have the purpose of “framing situations in ways that appeal to publics’ values and moral convictions, trying to provoke predictable reactions”:

“Because movements have moral and cultural dimensions that involve insurgents’ and publics’ consciousness, beliefs, and practices, the concept of strategic dramaturgy enables the analyst to move away from the cognitive bias of framing and recognize that movements often dramatically invoke values and basic moral principles to frame grievances and legitimate action. Emotions are especially relevant to these dimensions of strategic framing.” (Cadena-Roa, 2002, p. 203)

The social and cultural dimensions of crisis are based on the publics’ values, religious beliefs and practices. A statement “EU states will discuss the quotas distribution which was opposed by several countries that have already warned ‘to keep the continent’s Christian roots’” (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.) 19, 2015) is used to appeal to the sympathy of Arab viewers, therefore, attract more Muslims readers across the world.

Benford and Snow (2000) theorise framing as a strategy to influence public perception. The political leaders understand the significant role of framing in influencing public discourse and perception and seek to exploit it for their own interest (Benford& Snow, 2000; Entman et al., 2009). In this context, the German government response and the solidarity with the refugees’ plight carries a capacity to influence German citizens’ perceptions about refugees. In a news report published by Al Jazeera English, the German Interior Minister, Thomas de Maiziere, states: “Now, hundreds of thousands of Arabic Muslims are arriving, which makes a difference in terms of integration. We will have to prepare for changes everywhere: school, police, housing, courts and the health system,” (Ott, 2015). In the same article, the ALJE report shows German citizens’ solidarity with the refugees by publishing a photo of German citizens who “welcomed arriving refugees with supplies and aid” (Ott, 2015).

### 6.3.2 Focus on refugees

There was a similarity in the use of the human-interest frame by ALJE and ALJA. Five articles using only the human-interest frame were identified on each website. The human-interest media frame demonstrates the emotional angle of a crisis, problem or an event (Valkenburg et al., 1999, p.551), usually based on “a narrative format that focuses on how issues affect particular people” (Steimel, 2010, p. 224). Knight (1999) argues that news frames are a key tool to define and solve major problems and influence public perceptions and Steimel (2010) reveals that the human-interest frame is mostly used to trigger the audience’s emotional response. Semetko and Valkenberg (2000) state that the human-interest frame is dominant in asylum seeker news reporting in both negative and positive portrayals of the issue. The question guiding this part of the study was: How are the Syrian refugees portrayed in Al Jazeera English and Arabic human-interest stories?

The following themes were identified within the human-interest frame applied by ALJE and ALJA in the coverage of the refugee crisis:

*Refugee journey through the Mediterranean Sea.* For example, Al Jazeera Arabic reports that “Dozens of irregular migrants drowned in the Mediterranean” (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.) 24, 2015). The article describes how the Italian and Swedish Coast Guards found 19 dead bodies under a wooden boat that had attempted to bring refugees to Europe. It also reports on the rescue mission to save 439 refugees. The story includes quotes from the Italian Coast Guard who explain the rescue mission and a photo that shows a boat carrying dozens of refugees near the Italian coast (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.) 24, 2015).

*Refugee situation at the EU states borders.* These stories cover how refugees were mistreated by some officials when they reached the shore. Al Jazeera Arabic reports that “Syrian arrived Greek Island. The joy of survival and concern of the future” (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.) 26, 2015) . The article presents different stories of refugees who arrived in Greece hoping to continue their journey and find their place elsewhere in Europe. Photos of the refugees include a close up of a man carrying a child, a group photo of dozens of refugees waiting in the railway to leave Macedonia and a group of refugees sitting in a camp in Athena (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.) 26, 2015). Al Jazeera English took a similar approach. “Thousands of refugees arriving in Hungary have been taken to closely guarded camps surrounded by chain link fencing, barbed wire and patrolled with police dogs,” says the report. The Human Rights Watch’s emergencies director, Peter Bouckaert, is cited saying “Hungary has become a place of

humiliation for Syrian refugees. They are blocked here, they are suffering in the heat, we see children all over the place collapsed in absolute exhaustion” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 29, 2015). This article includes three videos that paint a bleak picture of the situation at the European borders. Sabah, a Syrian female refugee said in an interview that refugees were beaten:

When my husband and I arrived here got to Greece a policeman beat us. He hit my husband and me with a metal stick. I was three months pregnant and I lost my baby. Every day here is like torture. I just can't forget what happened to me and my husband. I don't know why he would beat us. We came to Europe to feel secure. I want to hope for me and my husband. I want to be able to take a shower. I want to sleep. (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 29, 2015)

*Refugees were welcomed by the German government and citizens.* Al Jazeera English reports that the German Vice Chancellor, Sigmar Gabriel, “defended the new checks on Monday, saying they were not designed to keep that fleeing violence in their homeland out of Germany but were aimed at producing a more orderly flow of people. Everyone who applies for asylum on German soil can stay here until a decision is reached. We are not changing that” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.)11, 2015). In another article ALJE reports about a German citizen who welcomed refugees:

Martin Sykora is from Baden Württemberg in southern Germany, but lives in Frankfurt. Besides a small minority of disgusting people setting asylum centres alight, no one is panicking. The refugees need our help, they need food and drink and psychological support. If we want to call ourselves human beings, then we have to help these people. (McCarthy, 2015)

*Refugees' new life in Germany.* In the article “Refugees struggle to assimilate in Germany” (Brenner, 2015), Al Jazeera English provides detailed information about the journey of three refugee brothers from Syria to Germany:

As they crossed the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece on a dangerously overcrowded rubber boat and as they sprinted across fenced borders in Macedonia and Serbia and hid in dense forests to avoid Hungarian police, 19-year-old Ahmed and baby-faced Abdul-Rahman, 14, always focused on the plan to reunite in Berlin with their older brother Sayf and have a chance to live a normal life again. (Brenner, 2015)

The article describes another male refugee, Dugmush, who spent more than a year in Germany to be reunited with his wife and five children who had been living in Jordan. Dugmush stated that “Damascus is my city, but Berlin is very good. I feel thankful for Germany. Vielen dank, Deutschland!” The article includes two photos one for each family (Brenner, 2015).

### **6.3.3 Focus on politics and refugees**

As explained earlier, the majority of articles explained both the political and humanitarian aspects of the crisis and the refugees’ arrival in Germany. The systematisation of main themes in the stories with mixed frame revealed that ALJE and ALJA paid attention to the EU political response and the situation of refugees in different EU member states. For example:

*EU political response.* In an Al Jazeera Arabic report “European debates as immigration crisis escalates” (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.) 22, 2015) a detailed description of EU states’ responses to the massive influx of refugees was reported. The political frame appears in the statements from different political officials in France, Hungary and Austria. The article then describes the successful rescue of 300 refugees that has been achieved by the Italian authorities (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.) 22, 2015). It also reports on the 55 dead bodies found in the Mediterranean Sea. The human-interest frame appears strongly in the visual content. “Searching for a life” is the entry title of the video published in the article. The video shows refugees, including women and children, being violently attacked by the police on the Hungarian border. Another photo shows a boat carrying refugees that has been rescued by a Swedish ship in the Mediterranean Sea (Al Jazeera Arabic (n.d.) 22, 2015).

*Refugees’ situation in different EU states.* Al Jazeera English reports “EU president: Refugee crisis is start of real exodus” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 33, 2015). Similar to the Arabic example above, the political frame appears in the text through government officials’ statements: the British Prime Minister, David Cameron promising that “his country would resettle up to 20,000 Syrians from camps in Turkey, Jordan, and Syria over the next five years”; the French President, Francois Hollande, said that “his country would take in 24,000 refugees over the next two years”; the government of the United States said “it was considering a range of approaches in response to the global refugee crisis including with regard to refugee resettlement” (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 33, 2015). Unlike the Arabic story, the human-

interest frame appeared both in the textual and visual content. The news story refers to thousands of refugees that crossed the borders from Serbia to Hungary and states:

Crowds who had grown tired of waiting for buses at Hungary's first refugee holding centre near the border village of Roszke on Monday tore down flimsy police tape, advanced down a country road and walked around rows of police trying to block them. Officers offered no resistance as about half of the 500-strong crowd reached the M5 highway that connects Serbia and Hungary. They headed north along the shoulder, raising their arms and chanting "Germany! Germany!" (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 33, 2015)

The story then focuses on two refugees in the text and video - ALJE reporter Andrew Simmons says:

They had been poorly treated and did not have access to adequate shelter or sanitation...One refugee said she had been beaten with a stick, while another pleaded with authorities to help her sick child. The five-year-old, who was suffering from heat exhaustion and fever, was eventually helped by Hungarian medical teams and put on a drip. (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 33, 2015)

The human-interest frame appears also in the photograph featured in the news report whose caption says "EU states are divided on a quota system, which allocates refugees to different member countries" (Al Jazeera English (n.d.) 33, 2015). Using different frames can influence the audience's opinions of public issues such as the refugee crisis (Scheufele, 1999) and both Al Jazeera English and Arabic follow this pattern. To provide full coverage of the refugees' stories both online channels provided strong information on the political aspect of the crisis and to appeal to viewers' sympathy, they provided personal stories about the refugees thus attracting more viewers.

#### **6.4 Summary**

This chapter presented results of the Al Jazeera's English and Arabic framing of the refugee crisis. Then two channels reported on both the political and humanitarian aspects of the refugees' situation, using primarily mixed story analysis of the EU political debates over the influx of Syrian refugees, and, using visual tools, videos and photographs, told the story about the refugees' experiences. Al Jazeera English and Arabic news reports applied both episodic and strategic frames (Iyengar, 1990; 1991). The humanitarian aspects of the crisis under the main themes of refugee journey through the Mediterranean

Sea; refugee situation in the EU states borders; refugees were welcomed by the German government and citizens and refugee new life in Germany. These stories provided full coverage of the refugees' humanitarian plight in Europe. The political aspect of the crisis was underlined using two main themes: the EU states' response and refugee's situation in specific countries. Overall, the political frame appeared in the in textual content and the human-interest frame mostly in the news visual content. The analysis showed that ALJE and ALJA used almost similar frames to represent the refugees' plight in Europe.

The next chapter summarises results of the empirical analysis, discusses its significance and limitations and outlines some directions for future research.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter sums up the study results considering Al Jazeera's promise to give a voice to the voiceless. The first part of this chapter provides an overview of the most important findings of the analysis and presents a brief discussion of the role of journalism in society based on the similarities and differences in Al Jazeera's English and Arabic coverage of the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany in 2015. The second part highlights the significance of the study and its limitations and offers some directions for future research.

#### **7.2 Similarities and differences in the coverage**

There was a striking similarity in the coverage of the refugees' arrival in Germany between the two channels. More news reports than interviews and opinion pieces were published. On both channels, foreign governments and the German government were the dominant sources of information. No quotes were published from the Syrian government on both websites, just foreign politicians (German, Hungarian and others) highlighting ALJ's approach to the crisis as a European matter only. Both channels highlighted the political and humanitarian perspectives of the refugee crisis.

The visual part of the online stories provided more space for refugees and citizens of EU countries. Syrian refugees are the most people captured in the news photos published by ALJE and ALJA (45 and 34). However, as the analysis shows, they are visually present, but they are not given a voice in the news texts.

Most of the news stories published by ALJE and ALJA provided specific details on the political situation of the crisis using episodic rather than strategic political frames. Overall, the political frame appeared in - textual content and the human-interest frame mostly in the visual content.

The analysis showed that ALJE and ALJA used almost similar frames – mixed frame to represent the refugees' plight in Europe.

When it comes to differences, several were identified:

- More people were cited and featured in Al Jazeera English (ALJE) than Al Jazeera Arabic (ALJA) (pp.57-58)
- Other media are the third dominant source of information, however significantly more in ALJA reports than in ALJE reports (23 percent versus 10 percent). ALJE cited more representatives of international organisations than ALJA (13 percent versus 4 percent)
- ALJE news reports provided more space for the voice of Syrian refugees (6 percent compared to only 1 percent in the news reports published by the ALJA website)
- Male politicians were used as the key sources of information in both ALJE and ALJA news reports, but to different extents: 35 percent in ALJE vs 55 percent in ALJA
- There was a significant difference in the number of videos published by the two channels: 35 were posted by ALJE and 17 by ALJA
- The English website published 36 interviews with Syrian refugees and six interviews with German and European citizens. The Arabic website published 11 interviews with Syrian refugees and no interviews with European citizens

### **7.3 Giving a voice to the voiceless**

This study presented the historical development of the Al Jazeera station and demonstrated its controversial role in influencing the events in the Middle East by investigating the dynamics between ALJ as a media network and the politics embodied by the Qatari government and the Arab governments.

It also argued that Al Jazeera as a hybrid state network works independently in regular issues which gives it an independent voice as a privately-owned network and reverts to the formal state-sponsored reporting style only through a crisis related to the state. This study investigated if the Al Jazeera media network committed to provide a voice to the voiceless in the coverage of the 2015 Syrian refugee crisis, by conducting a comparative study of the similarities and differences of Al Jazeera English and Arabic coverage of the refugees' arrival in Germany. The aim of the thesis was to contribute to the discussion about the role of Al Jazeera in facilitating public discussion about the crisis.

The main patterns in the news coverage revealed that Al Jazeera English's approach to the crisis followed more strongly the libertarian model of the role of media in society. The analysis revealed that Al Jazeera English more often provided a voice to the voiceless by citing refugees and publishing stories in their voices. The Syrian refugees had no chance to tell their stories in news reports published by Al

Jazeera Arabic. The analysis also revealed that both channels depended strongly on governmental officials as the main source of information. However, Al Jazeera English had more female sources of information and more interviews with refugees. The Syrian refugees appeared more in the visual content photographs and video interviews. The two channels applied different approaches in representing the reality of the refugee's situation in Europe, attuned with the targeted audiences - ALJE international audience and ALJA Arabic audience.

The news reports published by Al Jazeera English and Arabic covered the two main aspects of the refugees' arrival in Germany by using mixed analysis of the political and humanitarian aspects of the crisis. First, the political aspect by presenting EU political leaders' views and comments on the refugees' influx into Europe. The news value of prominence played a role in reporting the political response on the refugees' plight. In other words, the news reports published by ALJE and ALJA presented EU political leaders' views and comments, such as how the Hungarian government had been criticised for its response to the crisis. Hungary became the focus of ALJE and ALJA attention when the government mistreated the refugees and several European governments such as France, Germany and the UK criticised Hungary for its actions towards the refugees and this criticism was reflected in the English and Arabic news. Second, ALJE and ALJA news reports highlighted the humanitarian aspect of the crisis by describing the refugees' journey through the Mediterranean Sea and the refugees' situation in the EU countries' temporary camps, how the refugees were welcomed by the government and citizens of Germany, and how they were mistreated and violently assaulted by other EU states.

#### **7.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research**

The analysis of Al Jazeera's English and Arabic news coverage of the Syrian refugees' arrival in Germany has demonstrated the important role of journalism in society and highlighted the dynamics of the relationship between media and politics. The Syrian refugee crisis is considered the worst humanitarian crisis since the Second World War. This type of study is important for future researchers to increase the level of attention to how the media represent and frame global humanitarian crises. This study provided a comparative analysis and detailed information on how both ALJE and ALJA reported the refugees' arrival in Germany in 2015. Yet, there are limitations which need to be taken into consideration for future research.

The first issue is scale. The research sample involved 35 English articles and 35 Arabic articles, a total of 70 news articles. This study compared all AJLE and AJLA news stories published between August 24 and September 30, 2015. These news articles and timeframe were selected because Al Jazeera's English and Arabic news reports about the refugees wanting to reach Germany and reaching the German borders were published in that time. However, a longer period will be valuable to examine a variety of topics and get a full sense of the similarities and differences in news coverage.

Secondly, it was not possible to review and analyse the audience's voices and how they perceived Al Jazeera's English and Arabic news reports because the comments section was disabled by Al Jazeera's media network. Reviewing the comments section would be important to this research to understand the interaction between journalists and audiences. The analysis of the two channels news reports showed major differences in their interaction with the audience in terms of the number of comments. The public interacted more with the Arabic channel - 30 news reports included 220 posted comments. On the English website, only one news story listed comments and that story had three posted comments. Analysing comments could be a focus of future research.

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